Albanische Forschungen

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Wir sind die Deinen

Studien zur albanischen Sprache, Literatur
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ADIMRATIVITY AND MODALITY IN ALBANIAN-MACEDONIAN LANGUAGE CONTACT

Weigand (1923/24, 1925) was the first to notice certain similarities between the Albanian aditrative (mëna habitore) and Bulgarian (in modern terms, Balkan Slavic) aditrative usage and suggested that the Balkan Slavic usage was the result of Albanian influence. He described the Albanian aditrative as an inverted perfect and cited the following example (transcribed here as in the original) in both articles:

To bilo xubavo v gradu (Bulgarian)
Kjen-ka bukër ndë kësab (Albanian)
‘How fine a town life is!’

The 1925 article generated denial of Albanian influence on Bulgarian by Romanski (1926) and Belevlev (1928), but it was cited approvingly by Sandfeld (1930:119-20). Earlier assertions that the Albanian aditrative derived from an unfattested inverted future are definitively rejected by Demiraj (1971), who also demonstrates the fact that the aditrative is attested in its current form (albeit with variable semantics) in the earliest Albanian writers. Friedman (1980, 1981, 2005) gives an exhaustive summary of previous discussions for Albanian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, and Turkish and also demonstrates the fundamental differences between the Balkan Slavic and Turkish phenomenon, on the one hand, and the Albanian, on the other. The Albanian aditrative is marked for non-confirmativity, i.e. surprise (which requires a contrary expectation, i.e. a previous state of nonbelief), doubt or disbelief, or implication that the information is inferred, reported, etc. It constitutes a distinct set of paradigms in which the present, although derived historically from an inverted perfect, is now a true present, and, moreover, any of the past aditratives (imperfect, perfect, and pluperfect) can substitute for the present precisely in contexts where Balkan Slavic and Turkish have aditrative uses of the perfect (as in the example above, where paska qënë, qënëkë, and pasqësh qënë would all also be possible in the Albanian). By contrast, the Balkan Slavic and Turkish aditratives are actually non-confirmative uses of the unmarked past or

72 Fiedler (2000), S. 88 f.
perfect whose non-confirmative is derived from the contrast with a marked confirmative past. In the Albanian of Macedonia, however, we find a new development of the admiralive, viz., the replacement of the 3 sg. present optative of 'be' qafth with the 3 sg. pres. admiralive of 'be' qenka in the meaning ‘be it’ ... or be it’ or ‘whether ... or’ ... I will argue here that this is a Balkanicism connected with Macedonian influence that derives from an Albanian reinterpretation of a Macedonian optative usage of the Macedonian verbal l-form. as such, it is a relatively rare example of a clapped rather than copied (borrowed) conjunction.

The Macedonian verbal l-form is descended from the Common Slavic resultative participle, which in Old Church Slavonic (cetere paribus), the equivalent of Common Slavic for our purposes here) was used to form the perfect, pluperfect, conditional, and future perfect. In Macedonian, unlike Bulgarian, the l-form lost its ability to function attributively but remained in use for the perfect, pluperfect, and conditional. At some late stage in Common Slavic, i.e., before the rise of the opposition confirmotive/non-confirmative, what was the l-participle...
qofti se ‘it’, it can always be replaced by some other locution (në, po, po tili, etc.).

In the Albanian of Macedonia (at least in the northwest) it appears that the combination of restriction of the Albanian optative to wishes combined with the surface similarity of the Macedonian optative use of the t-form to its non-confirmative use, especially with the verb ‘be’ as in the example from Weigand cited for Bulgarian above (the Macedonian would be the same, mutulis mutandis; see Friedman 1981, 1986 for further discussion), has resulted in a calqued replacement of qofti by qenka in the meaning of ‘whether ... or ...’. Thus, for example, an Albanian politician from Tetovo talking with a colleague in Skopje about the importance of investment made the point that nationality was irrelevant: qenka shqiptar, qenka amerikan, qenka macedonas ... ‘it doesn’t matter’ whether it’s (= let it be) an Albanian, an American, or a Macedonian ...’. The Macedonian for qenka here would be bilo, while standard Albanian would use qofti in this position.

It is worth noting that, based on evidence from a variety of languages (Matras 1998), we have here an interesting and relatively rare example of calquing as opposed to ordinary borrowing in a conjunction. Thus, for example, in the hierarchy of borrowed conjunctions in Romani, ‘but’ is most likely to come from the most recent contact language, ‘of’ from an older contact language, and ‘and’ is least likely to be borrowed (Elišk and Matras 2006: 185). Colloquial Macedonian and Albanian in Macedonia, for example, share Turkish ama for ‘but’ (literary Albanian por and literary Macedonian no). Moreover, in the context of nineteenth and twentieth century nation-state politics, the relative importance of Macedonian for Albanian-speakers sensu largo, is considerably more recent than the importance (and prestige) of Turkish. At the same time, however, day-to-day contacts between Turkish and Albanian dialects at the local level in what is today the Republic of Macedonia have a very long history, and one that is not nearly as contestational as current politics would suggest. Thus, I would argue, the fact that we have here is not borrowing but calquing — and at the middle level in the hierarchy at that — points both to both a high degree of bi- or multi-lingualism between the Albanian and Macedonian language communities, and such a calque also demonstrates the accessibility of verbal forms when used in the function of other parts of speech.

References


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