

BALKANOLOGIE

Beiträge zur
Sprach- und Kulturwissenschaft

herausgegeben von

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Band 3

LIT

Thede Kahl, Michael Metzeltin,
Helmut Schaller (Hg.)

Balkanismen heute –
Balkanisms Today –
Балканизмы сегодня

LIT

Umschlagbild:
Dreidimensionale Getränkewerbung vor der Altstadtkulisse
von Berat (Albanien).
Foto: Thede Kahl, September 2009



Gedruckt auf alterungsbeständigem Werkdruckpapier entsprechend
ANSI Z3948 DIN ISO 9706

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der
Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind
im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

ISBN 978-3-643-50388-6

© **LIT VERLAG** GmbH & Co. KG
Wien 2012
Krotenthallergasse 10/8
A-1080 Wien
Tel. +43 (0) 1-409 56 61
Fax +43 (0) 1-409 56 97
e-Mail: wien@lit-verlag.at
<http://www.lit-verlag.at>

LIT VERLAG Dr. W. Hopf
Berlin 2012
Verlagskontakt:
Fresnostr. 2
D-48159 Münster
Tel. +49 (0) 2 51-620 320
Fax +49 (0) 2 51-23 19 72
e-Mail: lit@lit-verlag.de
<http://www.lit-verlag.de>

Auslieferung:

Deutschland: LIT Verlag Fresnostr. 2, D-48159 Münster
Tel. +49 (0) 2 51-620 32 22, Fax +49 (0) 2 51-922 60 99, e-Mail: vertrieb@lit-verlag.de
Österreich: Medienlogistik Pichler-ÖBZ, e-Mail: mlo@medien-logistik.at
Schweiz: B + M Buch- und Medienvertrieb, e-Mail: order@buch-medien.ch

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Conjunction Calquing – A Heartland Balkanism

Victor A. FRIEDMAN (Chicago)

It has been well established that conjunctions, like discourse particles, with which they overlap, are subject to borrowing among languages, and, moreover, there is a hierarchy in the likelihood of borrowing according to which disjunctives such as 'but' are more likely candidates than alternative conjunctions such as 'or' which are in turn more likely to be borrowed than combinatory conjunctions such as 'and'. MATRAS (1998) explains this hierarchy in functional-pragmatic terms, the basic idea being that the more of a cognitive break or disconnect in the discourse, the more likely the intrusion of a form from another language that is in some way dominant.¹ Disjunctive alternative conjunctions like either/or, neither/nor, etc. have not been examined in this light but seem to follow the same patterns as simple conjunctions. The borrowing of conjunctions among the Balkan languages has received only limited attention, but the calquing of conjunctions has received none at all. In this paper, I shall demonstrate not only that conjunction calquing is possible and occurs, but that it does so under current conditions that continue the Balkan linguistic league despite a century or more of nation-state boundaries. This in turn helps us to nuance concepts such as *dominance* and *prestige*.

WEIGAND (1923/24, 1925) was the first to notice certain similarities between the Albanian admirative (*mënyra habitore*) and what he called Bulgarian (in modern terms, Balkan Slavic) admirative usage and suggested that the Balkan Slavic usage was the result of Albanian influence. He described the Albanian admirative as an inverted perfect and cited example (1), transcribed here as in the original, in both articles:

- (1) To bilo xubavo v grada! (Bulgarian)
Kjen-ka bukër ndë kasaba! (Albanian)
'How fine town life is!'

The 1925 article generated denials of Albanian influence on Bulgarian by ROMANSKI (1926) and BEŠEVLEV (1928), but it was cited approvingly by SANDFELD (1930: 119–120). Earlier assertions that the Albanian admirative derived from an unattested inverted future have been definitively rejected by DEMIRAJ (1971), who

¹ *Dominant* in this sense is broadly conceived as situational, social, or cognitive. MATRAS (1998) gives a variety of excellent examples illustrating the various ways in which the term *dominant* can be understood, a point to which we shall return.

also demonstrates the fact that the admirative is attested in its current form (albeit with variable semantics) in the earliest Albanian writers (see also FRIEDMAN 2010). 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 admirative 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. The past nature of the Balkan Slavic phenomenon can be seen in the fact that any of the Albanian past admiratives (imperfect, perfect, and pluperfect) can substitute for the present admirative precisely in contexts where Balkan Slavic has an admirative use of the perfect.² This can be seen from (2a–e), where (2a) is the original Bulgarian, (2b) is the Macedonian translation – both with admirative usage of the past *bil* – while (2c–d) are Albanian translations of the same Bulgarian sentence using a perfect and pluperfect admirative, respectively, and (2e) is a translation of a similarly admirative usage of the plural *bili* with an imperfect admirative:

- (2) a. *Brej, hepten magare bil tozi čovek.* (KONSTANTINOV 1895 [1973]: 88, 89)
 b. *Brej, epten magare bil toj čovek!* (KONSTANTINOV 1967: 91, 93)
 c. *Bre! gomar i madh paska qënë ky njeri!* (KONSTANTINOV 1975: 96)
 d. *Ore, fare gomar paskësh qënë ky njeri!* (KONSTANTINOV 1975: 98)
 ‘What an ass that guy is!’
 e. *Ama njerëz fare pa mend qënkëshin këta ...* (KONSTANTINOV 1975: 24)
 ‘What fools are these ...’

By contrast, as I have demonstrated elsewhere (e.g., FRIEDMAN 1981, 1986, 2005) the Balkan Slavic admiratives are actually non-confirmative uses of the unmarked past or perfect whose non-confirmativity is derived from the contrast with a marked confirmative past. In the Albanian of Macedonia, however, we find a new development of the admirative, viz. the replacement of the 3 sg. present optative of ‘be’ *qoftë X, qoftë Y* with the 3 sg. pres. admirative of ‘be’ *qenka X, qenka Y* in the meaning ‘be it X or be it Y’ or ‘whether X or Y’. I will argue here that this is a Balkanism connected with Macedonian influence that derives from an Albanian reinterpretation of a Macedonian optative usage of the Macedonian verbal *l*-form.

2 Another argument for the pastness of the Balkan Slavic usage is the fact that a question with no past reference can use the present admirative in Albanian but not the Balkan Slavic admirative usage of the unmarked past, e.g. Albanian *Ku qenka mjeshtri?* but not Macedonian **Kade bil majstorot* for ‘Where is the boss?’

As such, it is a relatively rare example of a calqued rather than copied (borrowed) conjunction.³

The Macedonian verbal *l*-form is descended from the Common Slavic resultative participle, which in Old Church Slavonic (*ceteris 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 it remained in use for the perfect, pluperfect, and conditional. At some late stage in Common Slavic, i.e. before the rise of the opposition confirmative/non-confirmative, what was the *l*-participle developed an optative usage in the third person singular to replace the third singular imperative which, being homonymous with the second singular imperative, was lost. According to VAILLANT (1966: 97), such usage is found in Czech as well as throughout South Slavic and thus must have arisen prior to their separation. The popular Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian/Montenegrin toast *živ(j)eli* as well as the use of the use of invariant *bilo* in the meaning of ‘any’, e.g. *bilo ko(j) = koj i da e* ‘anybody’ are examples of such optative usage. It is worth noting that in its meaning of ‘any’, East Slavic *(-)bud’/budz’* and Polish *baǰż* seem to preserve the an old optative usage of the third singular imperative.

For Polish, however, TOPOLIŃSKA (2008) points out uses of *było* that also look optative, as in example (3):

3 CAMAJ (1984: 163) makes the important point that in both older and modern Albanian writers, the subjunctive present admirative can be used in the protasis of irreal conditionals, as in his example *të fryke era, s’kishim me ndejë jashtë* ‘If the wind were blowing, we would not sit outside’. NEWMARK, HUBBARD and PRIFTI (1982: 86) also cite the irreal conditional use of the imperfect and pluperfect subjunctive admirative, e.g. ... *fluturojnë e sillen ca re të vogla, të zeza pis, sikur të qenëshin tym prej dinamiti* ‘... there fly around and roam about a few small clouds, pitch black, as if they actually were dynamite smoke’ and *Sikur e gjyshja të mos paskëshin nxjerrë kokën nga qerrja ... kushedi sa gjatë do të kishte mbetur ashtu ...* ‘If his grandmother had not actually stuck her head out of the cart ..., who knows how long he would have remained like that ...’ These modal uses are connected with usages in some of the earliest attested admiratives (see DEMIRAJ 1971) and are, I would argue, a development that is entirely distinct from the non-confirmative meaning (see also LIOSIS 2010 on the modal fate of the admirative in Arvanitika). As CAMAJ (1984: 187) points out, the Albanian optative itself is an internal Albanian development with close morphological ties to the aorist (which, we can add, is the one paradigm absent from the admirative). It would appear that expressions of desire and *irrealis* were in a state of relative flux in Albanian for some time before the attestation of our earliest documents. Nonetheless, the phenomenon we are examining in this article is based on a later Albanian system, where both optative and admirative have achieved their current states, but at the same time a new development is possible.

- (3) było nie było, zrobimy to (Polish)
 'kako da e, kje go napravime toa' (Macedonian gloss)
 'No mater what, we will do it.' (lit. let it be or not be/
 how it is, we will do it.)

She compares this to usages of *buło* in Ukrainian and *bio*, etc. in the former Serbo-Croatian, such as (4):

- (4) Bilo doć! = 'ko ti je kriv što nisi došao' (BCS)
 'You should have come' = whose fault is it you didn't come

VAILLANT (1966: 97) attributes such uses of the *l*-participle to an elliptical optative composed of *da* plus the conditional (3 sg. *bi* plus *l*-participle), e.g., Macedonian *Dal ti Bog dobro!* literally 'May God grant you [that which is] good!'. He also notes that Russian uses of the type *pošël* 'Let's go' have nothing to do with the South and West Slavic phenomenon under consideration here but are rather expressive uses of the past (cf. colloquial English *We're outa here*). It thus seems to be the case that we are dealing with an old isogloss that spread from South to North to include West Slavic and even Ukrainian, but not Russian.

In Macedonian, the *l*-form was reinterpreted as a perfect rather than an elliptical conditional and can thus occur in other persons with the auxiliary of the old perfect rather than the conditional marker, e.g. *Da ne sum te videl!* literally 'May I not have seen you!', i.e. I'd better not see you [around here]. In the course of subsequent centuries, the perfect meaning of the old present resultative perfect using the *l*-form in Macedonian came into competition with that paradigm's non-confirmative meaning, which arose as a result of the development of marked confirmativity in the synthetic pasts (see FRIEDMAN 1986 for detailed discussion). In southwestern Macedonian, with the rise of a new resultative perfect using the auxiliary *ima* 'have' and the neuter verbal adjective, the old perfect using the present of 'be' plus the verbal *l*-form became restricted to non-confirmative usage and, in the extreme southwest, disappeared almost entirely. To the north and east of the Ohrid-Struga region up to the river Vardar (and beyond, since World War Two), the old and new perfects are in competition, and the old perfect using the verbal *l*-form is an unmarked past, but with a chief contextual variant meaning of non-confirmativity (see FRIEDMAN 1977 for detailed explanation).

At the same time, with all these developments, a remnant of the old Late Common Slavic use of the *l*-participle as an optative (without, n.b., an auxiliary in all the languages where it occurs) developed in Macedonian and Bulgarian into a disjunctive alternative conjunction using the third person singular neuter of 'be' *bilo ... bilo ...* in the meaning 'whether ..., or ...'⁴ In its meaning, this construction

4 Some speakers of BCS accept the *bilo ... bilo ...* construction, and it is attested in literature, but other modern speakers today reject such usage.

corresponds to the Albanian use of the 3 sg. present optative *qoftë ... qoftë ...*. In modern Albanian, the optative is more or less limited to expressions such as *rrofsh!* 'thank you' (literally, 'may you live'), *me nder qofsh* 'you're welcome' (literally 'may you be with honor') and a variety of other formulae, blessings, and curses that can use any verb in any person, such that the paradigm is very much alive albeit quite restricted in function. These functions, however, are very tightly connected to the desiderative function of the optative. As such, it rarely occurs outside this function, and when it does, e.g. in the expression *në qoftë se* 'if', it can always be replaced by some other locution (*në, po, po të*, etc.).

In the Albanian of Macedonia (but not that of Kosovo, Montenegro, Albania, or Greece)⁵, 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 *l*-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, *mutatis mutandis*, see FRIEDMAN 1981, 1986 for further discussion), has resulted in a calqued replacement of *qoftë* 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 maqedonas ...* '[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 *qoftë* in this position.

As indicated above, 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 (and elsewhere), 'but' is most likely to come from the most recent contact language, 'or' from an older contact language, and 'and' is least likely to be borrowed (ELŠÍK and MATRAS 2006: 185). Consistent with this hierarchy, colloquial Macedonian and Albanian share Turkish *ama* for 'but' (literary Albanian *por* and literary Macedonian *no*), but have native expressions for 'or' and 'and'. Moreover, in the context of nineteenth and twentieth century nation-state politics, neither Macedonian and Albanian in what is today the Republic of Macedonia occupied positions of prestige prior to World War Two. In terms of the concept of *dominance*, therefore, this calque argues for a source in situations where Macedonian had some sort of contextual dominance not associated with prestige or politics. As MATRAS (1998: 322) makes clear, dominance can be pragmatically conditioned by a variety of factors such as topic, addressee, and conversational expectations that do not necessarily involve prestige. If the first

5 I wish to thank Rexhep Ismajli of the Academy of Arts and Sciences of Kosova and the University of Prishtina for confirming that this usage is limited to Macedonia.

occurrence of the calque was the result of the cognitive dominance of Macedonian in a bilingual speaker, the subsequent spread of the construction to the Albanian dialects of Macedonia in general could have been promoted by other factors. Given that that Albanian optative is used most often for expression of the speaker's desire, its use in a conjunction that expresses indifference or alternatives rather than actual wish may have been contributed to its vulnerability to the calqued alternative. The fact that this Albanian usage is a calque and not a borrowing – and at the middle level in the hierarchy of likelihood – points to a long-standing local bilingualism between the Albanian and Macedonian language communities of the type that give rise to the Balkan sprachbund. Such a calque also demonstrates both the accessibility and the vulnerability of verbal forms when used in the function of other parts of speech. Finally, it is the Albanian calque that illuminates the grammatical complexity of the Macedonian structure.

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