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Borrowing at the Popular Level: Balkan Interjectional Particles of Turkish and Greek Origin

0. Introduction

Scholars who have examined the phenomenon of borrowings between languages have generally distinguished between two types of loans: those that reflect cultural contact and those that have a different, non-culturally based, motivation. Bloomfield 1933, for instance, divided loans into *cultural loans* and *intimate loans*. To exemplify the former, which he took to be an essentially mutual process of exchange of terminology between speakers of different languages, representing different cultures, he noted (pp. 458-9) that:

the recent borrowings of English from French are largely in the sphere of women's clothes, cosmetics, and luxuries. From German we get coarser articles of food (*frankfurter, wiener, hamburger, sauerkraut, pretzel, lager-beer*) and some philosophical and scientific terms (*zeitgeist, wanderlust, umlaut*); from Italian, musical terms (*piano, sonata, scherzo, virtuoso*)

and pointed to words that have spread as loans around the world, e.g. *sugar, pepper, coffee, tea, tobacco*, from various sources and through varied paths of diffusion, and to ancient loans such as *hemp* and its relatives in Indo-European languages, *saddle* in all the Germanic languages, early loans between Germanic speakers and speakers of Latin leading to Old English [wi:n] 'wine' (from Latin *vinum*), and the like. To exemplify intimate borrowing, Bloomfield noted (pp. 461ff.) that "an extreme type ... [is seen] in the contact of immigrants' language with English in the United States", in which "the immigrant, to begin with, makes far more cultural loans" but then other loans enter the immigrant's usage, e.g. *policeman, conductor, street-car*, etc. for which "the cultural reason is less evident"; more generally, any case of contact in which discernible

loans are not obviously linked to cultural objects would qualify as intimate loans. In making these distinctions, Bloomfield was focusing to a certain extent, on the content of the loans, i.e. whether they emanate from culturally-based semantic spheres.

By contrast, Hockett 1958 based a classification of loan words entirely on the motivation for the borrowing, and distinguished between *need borrowings*, essentially corresponding to Bloomfield's cultural loans, and *prestige borrowings*, which corresponded more or less to Bloomfield's intimate loans.

To a certain extent, of course, the terminology that one adopts is irrelevant, since what is crucial is the evidence that borrowings provide for contact between languages and speakers, and for the nature of the contact. Indeed, Bloomfield's discussion of intimate borrowing shows considerable concern for the social circumstances under which intimate loans take place, and thus their motivation, and he recognizes that "intimate borrowing is often one-sided: we distinguish between the *upper* or *dominant* language, spoken by the conquering or otherwise more privileged group, and the *lower* language, spoken by the subject people, or ... by humble immigrants" (1933: 461). Still, the two terminological schemes are not identical, and thus can be subjected to some scrutiny with the aim of evaluating their relative merits.

The Balkans, and more particularly the languages and speakers who have lived in that area and have interacted with one another for centuries, represent an ideal testing ground for a consideration of these different approaches to classifying loans. Loans of both types, cultural/need and intimate/prestige, are to be found between any two of the Balkan languages. To take Greek and Turkish, for instance, one can find numerous culturally-based loans from Turkish into Greek, such as (to borrow from the list in Browning (1983: 97-8)) σεντούκι 'trunk' (Turkish *sanduk*), γελέκι 'vest' (Turkish *yelek*), πλάφι 'pilaf' (Turkish *pilav*), καφές 'coffee' (Turkish *kahve*), ναργιλές 'nargileh' (Turkish *nargele*), τουφέκι 'rifle' (Turkish *tüfek*), μπαρούτι 'gunpowder' (Turkish *barut* ultimately from Greek πυρίτις, according to Andriotis (1983: s.v.)), to name just a few. Similarly, there are numerous loans for which no particular

cultural or need basis can be found, and which therefore would qualify as intimate or prestige-based loans, such as μπαιλντίζω 'I faint' (from the aorist *bayıldı* of Turkish *bayılmak*) or ντουβάρι 'wall' (from Turkish *duvar*), where synonymous native Greek words, λιποθυμώ and τείχος, respectively, were already present in the language. Similar results are possible with virtually any other pair of Balkan languages.

It is the intent of this paper first to evaluate which of these classificatory schemata leads to a better picture of the nature of language contact and speaker contact in the Balkans, and then to consider a number of specific instances of loans that help to sharpen this picture.

1. Prestige versus Intimacy

While these different terms were designed to cover roughly the same territory of borrowings between languages — and indeed, for the most part, either approach achieves a satisfactory classification of the data — it is also the case that they allow for very different views of the social side of a contact situation. Admittedly, the difference between "cultural" and "need" as characterizations of borrowings into English such as *umlaut* or *piano* is not particularly significant, but the difference between prestige borrowing and intimate borrowing can be.

In particular, when one refers to a loan as a prestige borrowing, there is an implication of a certain relationship between speakers of the donor language and speakers of the borrowing language; the assumption is that the donors must have held a position of prestige relative to the borrowers in order for the borrowers to want to borrow a particular term which the donors use. While it is not always obvious what forces lend prestige to the donors, Hockett's approach nonetheless imputes prestige to them. Bloomfield's terminology, on the other hand, suggests a more egalitarian relationship, at least potentially, between the two groups (but note what he said above about the one-sided nature of intimate borrowing, in his view), so that in intimate borrowing situations one might

expect to find borrowings going in both directions between the two languages. In addition, if one takes the approach that prestige must always be involved in nonculturally-based loans, then one runs the risk of making the notion of "prestige" circular and thus devoid of content and explanatory value.

Moreover, prestige may be wrong term, for examples can be found whereby elements of speech communities which have never enjoyed much prestige in a given social context nonetheless find their way into the usage of speakers of a socially higher group. A good case in point is the use of an Albanian suffix *-zə* in the Greek of Megara, as discussed by Furikis 1918 and Joseph 1985a. In that dialect, the forms *λιγάα* and *λιγάτσια*, both meaning 'a little' and both based on Greek *λίγο*- 'little' (the latter with the Megarian form of the Greek diminutive suffix *-ακι*) were reported by Furikis at the turn of the century, and they seem clearly to involve the addition of the Albanian diminutive suffix *-z(ə)* as found in Standard Albanian *lule-z* '(pretty) little flower' or *fole-zə* '(warm) little nest'. This borrowing of a suffix occurred even though Albanians in Greece have never enjoyed any sort of prestige among the Greeks, neither economically, nor socially, nor politically. What is true, however, is that Greeks and Albanians lived side-by-side for centuries in Central Greece, and thus were in constant daily contact with one another; under such intense conditions of contact, the occurrence of intimate, but not necessarily prestige-based, borrowing, is not at all surprising. Moreover, given that the Albanian dialects in Greece, the so-called Arvanítika dialects, have incorporated significant numbers of Greek words (see Tsitsipis 1981 for some discussion and examples), Bloomfield's suggestion that "intimate borrowing is one-sided" can be rejected; the intimate contact conditions between Greeks and Albanians in Central Greece led to loans in both directions.

Thus Bloomfield may have had the more appropriate terminology, but although he was not swayed enough by his assumption that prestige is involved in intimate loans to take the step of labelling such loans as "prestige loans", it is clear that his assumptions about borrowing were not entirely justified. Still, the term "intimate" can be adopted in and of itself, without any of the

associations with prestige that the term might summon up, for it characterizes well the nature of the contact in a situation such as that found in Megara, and moreover allows for bi-directional borrowings of a noncultural nature.

2. Cultural and Intimate Loans in the Balkans

As the example of Megarian Greek λιγάζα shows, the Balkans are an especially appropriate area to examine for both types of loans. The intermingling of different cultures under conditions of intense and close contact has fostered numerous cultural loans between all of the languages in the area as well as a considerable number of intimate loans too.

Inasmuch as the literature on the Balkan languages dealing with loan words is fairly massive, with the greatest attention being paid to cultural loans, it is not necessary here to rehash the relevant evidence. The brief list given above of Turkish cultural loans in Greek is representative. The most useful general surveys of lexical relations among the Balkan languages are to be found in Sandfeld 1930, Schaller 1975, Solta 1980, Banfi 1985, Feuillet 1986, and Asenova 1989. In addition, there are numerous studies of borrowings into and out of particular Balkan languages, for instance Meyer 1894 on Slavic, Albanian, and Romanian loans into Greek, Filipova-Bajrova 1969 on Greek loans into Bulgarian, Grannes 1970 on Turkish loans into Bulgarian, Gamulescu 1974 on Serbo-Croatian loans into Romanian, etc. Standard treatments of the history of individual Balkan languages, for instance Browning 1983 or Costas 1936 for Greek, give considerable space to the lexical contributions that neighboring languages have made, and most of these collections focus on cultural loans. Such cultural borrowings certainly do give evidence of contact, but that contact can often appear to be quite restricted in nature; for instance, if one were to focus just on the numerous Greek loans in the ecclesiastical sphere that entered several of the Balkan languages, e.g. 'αγίασμα 'holy water' --> Bulgarian *agiazma*, Albanian *ajazmë*, Romanian *agheasma*, or 'ηγούμενος 'abbot, prior' --> Bulgarian *igumen*, Serbian *igumen*, Albanian *(i)gumen*, Romanian *igumen*, it might appear that the contact was

limited to certain social groups, e.g. ecclesiasts, and thus not really intimate in nature or at least not generally so.

Thus it is interesting that there is also abundant lexical evidence for intimate loans, i.e. those not based on need or on the borrowing of cultural elements, and thus for the sort of sustained everyday contact in the Balkans that fosters such loans. While such evident non-need-based borrowings as the Turkish loans in Greek listed above show the phenomenon well, the evidence for this type of contact is not limited just to loan words. In particular, the well-known phraseological parallels to be found among at least earlier stages of the Balkan languages — the qualification being necessary since not all of these phrases are still current — as discussed by Papahagi 1908, Sandfeld 1930, and Djamo-Diaconița 1968, among others, involving specialized uses of words (e.g. Albanian *hahet me* = Greek τρώγεται με = Bulgarian *jade se sa* = Romanian *se manâncea cu* 'one quarrels/fights with' (literally "one is eaten with"), idioms (e.g., Albanian *ve në mend* = Greek βάζω με το νου μου = Romanian *îmi pun în minte* 'I think of' (literally "I place in/with (my) mind") and even proverbial expressions (e.g. Greek *δεν κάνουνε όλες οι μύγες μέλι* = Albanian *s'bënjë mjaltë gjithë mizat* = Romanian *nu fac toate muștele miere*, all meaning literally "not all flies make honey" and used as an expression of disgust for lazy people) are exactly the sorts of convergences in languages that one expects to find in situations of sustained and intense contact. Indeed, even the well-known grammatical convergences (absence of an infinitive, enclitic definite article, etc.), some of which are quasi-lexical in nature (e.g. repetition of the verb 'want' with negation for 'whether one wants to or not', as in Greek *θέλει δεν θέλει* = Albanian *dodin s'dodin* = Bulgarian *šče ne šče*), really could only arise in an environment of sustained intense contact among speakers of these various languages.

Admittedly, finding evidence for intimate and intense contact in the Balkans is far from a controversial result. Yet our view of the past in the Balkans is far from complete, so that any further light that can be shed on the type of contact in the Balkans is welcome, even if

it only serves to corroborate the picture that emerges from the sort of evidence discussed above. Consequently, we outline here some interesting additional facts concerning the borrowing of lexical items that can only be intimate in nature and that thus provide some additional confirmation and insight.

In particular, one can observe numerous shared affective elements among the various Balkan languages. By "affective" is meant those elements which have a highly connotative and expressive value, and thus lack both a clear denotation and any referential properties. Such affective elements reside in the most subjective, and thus the most intimate, layers of linguistic competence and linguistic behavior. These loans are thus at the popular level, and so give an added dimension to our understanding of Balkan linguistic contact.

One such area of borrowing involves various interjections and exclamations, and often the borrowing is bidirectional. For instance, the very common Greek exclamatory utterance *αμάν*, meaning something like 'gosh!; oh dear!' (though of course such words generally defy clear translation) derives from the Turkish exclamation *aman* 'oh,! mercy!', while the Turkish exclamation *ba* 'oh!; indeed!' apparently derives from Greek *μπα* 'I say!; well well!' (so Redhouse (1984: s.v.); note that *μπα* in the sense of negation, i.e. 'no way; not a chance' may be a different lexeme altogether, but in any case the Turkish form seems not to have a negative function). Some Balkan borrowed interjectional elements show a very wide distribution; an example is the set of forms that includes Greek *άιντε* 'come on!', Serbo-Croatian *hajde* 'let's go', and Albanian *hajde* 'come on!', which are generally believed to derive from the Modern Greek form, itself supposedly from the earlier imperative *ἄγετε* (so Andriotis (1983: s.v.)) despite the phonological problems with such an etymology, but which are more plausibly ultimately derived (see Joseph 1985b) from Turkish *haydi* 'hurry up; go on; very well' (note the fourteenth century Turkish form *hay de*, and the apparent composition of *hay de* (and thus *haydi*) from the interjection *hay* and the exclamatory *de* — itself most likely derived from the verb *de-mek* 'to say' — two Turkish forms which seem also to have made their way into Greek, cf. exclamatory *άι* 'go (on)!' and *ντε* 'just; gee!').

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Especially interesting in this regard is the family of the Greek interjection/exclamation βρε, defined in Pring (1975: s.v.) as 'unceremonious mode of address or cry of surprise, impatience, etc.' and by Stavropoulos (1988: s.v.) as 'exclamation "hey you!; you there!; well!; just!"' which shows a number of apparent variants in the standard language: βρε, μωρέ, μωρή, and μπρε. As discussed recently by Joseph 1992, not only does this word show enormous variation in form across Greek dialects, with over 50 distinct forms in all being attested (including disyllabic forms without an initial labial, e.g. απέ, or without a liquid e.g. μαή, monosyllabic forms without a liquid, e.g. μω, forms with different vocalism, e.g. μαρή, etc.), but there are also similar forms with similar meanings all over the Balkans (and even languages in other contiguous areas, e.g. Polish and Ukrainian), e.g. Turkish **bre**, **bire**, **be**; Albanian **moré**, **mre**, **oré**, **voré**, **bre**; (Daco-)Romanian **bre**, **mâ**, **mâri**, **mâi**; Aroumanian **are**; Bulgarian, Macedonian, and Serbo-Croatian **more**, **mori**, **bre**.

While a good many of these forms surely have something to do with one another, the exact nature of the interrelationships is not clear, nor are their sources and paths of diffusion. For instance, is Aroumanian **aré** a Hellenism, borrowed from Greek, or is it the source of the Greek **apé**? Is Daco-Romanian **mâri**, so strikingly parallel to Greek **μάρη** found in Thessaly and Macedonia, areas which historically have been populated with speakers of Romanian dialects, (Aroumanian and Megleno-Romanian), derived from Greek? But if it is, that is, if the fact of a Romanian-speaking population in the area is not just a coincidence, then how did the Greek form end up in (standard) Daco-Romanian? Might the Greek form be a borrowing from some variety of Romanian? Also, a truncated form identical to Romanian **mâ** is not found in Greek, although **μω** occurs in Thrace and Macedonia; thus, is **mâ** a Daco-Romanian independent creation, or instead from an as-yet unattested Greek variant, or perhaps an adaptation of Greek **μω**? Similarly, the common Romanian **mâi** is reminiscent of Greek **μαή**, but the Greek form is found only on the island of Kos, so presumably these forms indeed represent the results of an independent convergence.

Although no direct answers are forthcoming for questions such as these, what is crucial about this set of forms is that whatever the exact history of each form in each dialect of each language, they all show some interrelationship and moreover the locus of these forms seems clearly to be Greek (where most, and perhaps all, of the Modern standard and dialectal forms derive ultimately from Ancient Greek *μωρέ*, the masculine vocative of Ancient Greek *μωρός* 'dull, sluggish, foolish, stupid, idiotic'). Moreover, the very nature of these affective words, so clearly in the lower-style, popular, domains of language, points to a period of intense and intimate contact among speakers in the Balkans.

Similarly, other quite colloquial attention-getting interjectional particles in the Balkans show a varied contact-induced origin involving intimate borrowing. For instance, forms corresponding to the Greek presentational element *να* 'here is!; there is!' are found all over the Balkans (and elsewhere, e.g., Ukrainian and Polish), and though the direction of the borrowing is disputed (see Joseph 1981, 1985b and Christides 1987 for some discussion), no one seems to take issue with the assumption that the forms spread through contact and were not, say, the result of independent developments in the various languages. Also, the various uses of an exclamatory element [ya] in several Balkan languages, e.g. in Greek with imperatives (as in *για στάσου* 'hey wait a minute!' or *για κοίτα* 'hey look!') and in Albanian in giving reasons (as in *ja pse* 'that is why') and emphatically introducing statements (as in *ja se ç'duhej të thotë* 'that's what you should have said!'), must surely have sprung from the same source, whatever that may be; an Ancient Greek source, the exclamation *εἶα* 'up! on! away!', generally used with imperatives, is given by Andriotis (1983: s.v.) for the Modern Greek form, from which other languages could have borrowed, but one might wonder as well if the Turkish interjectional element *ya*, of Arabic origin, as in the colloquial usage *ya hey de* 'let's get going (on a hard job)' played a role here. In any case, once again, the borrowing would have to have been at a very colloquial, popular level, as would be expected in intense and sustained intimate contact.

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3. Conclusion

This brief sampling of data relevant to intimate borrowings at a popular level does not exhaust the topic by any means. It is hoped, nonetheless, that considering such loans leads to greater insight into the day-to-day contact that must have taken place in Balkans. It can be noted that cultural loans can occur without significant contact between speech communities and speakers, as with the entry into English of words for concepts from Buddhism, such as **lama** or **Zen**, or from Hinduism such as **karma** or **dharma**, where the contact is at best indirect, perhaps mediated through written sources, and in any case is not via speaker-to-speaker contact.

It is not all that surprising to find evidence of such intimate loans in the Balkans, nor for many of them to have originated among speakers who were not accorded full prestige among the speakers of the borrowing communities. It has been observed, for instance (see, e.g., Kazazis 1972, Joseph 1984), that Turkish loan words in Greek, and all over the Balkans for that matter, tend to be highly expressive and affective in nature and/or associated with folk or low style, as shown clearly by contrasts between synonymous but stylistically differentiated words of native Greek and of Turkish origin respectively, e.g. δωρεάν 'gratis' versus τζάμπα 'for free' (cf. Turkish **caba** 'for nothing'). Moreover, Joseph 1984 has drawn attention to phonosemantic parallels between Greek and Turkish with regard to the affective status accorded words with affricates (Greek τσ / τζ, Turkish ç / c), and to the presence of affective reduplication with **m-** in Greek and in Bulgarian, following Levy 1980 and Grannes 1978, respectively, e.g. Greek πιπέρι-μιπέρι 'pepper and the like', Turkish **kitap-mitap** 'books and such'.

These facts are well-known, but until now, their interpretation and in particular their importance for the light they shed on the nature of Balkan linguistic contact seem not to have been given proper attention. Linguists tend to treat affective and expressive language as somehow being beside the point in linguistic analysis, yet it can be safely asserted that there exist no languages without elements in this lexical domain. Thus it is a fruitful area for study in any language, and when taken seriously in the Balkans, can lead to results that are

in accordance with results obtained from the examination of nonaffective linguistic domains. Together, then, these two areas of study complement one another and enrich the understanding of the sociolinguistic reality behind the Balkan *Sprachbund* and the contact among speakers of these languages.

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