Laying it on the line. Morphological transparency in the Balkan linguistic area

The Balkan languages are commonly regarded as displaying a high degree of analytism, which in turn tends to be regarded as morphological simplicity (cf. Hinrichs 2004 on simplicity as 'areal-typological goal'), instantiated in particular by the coding of grammatical information in terms of 'particle + inflected verb' (cf. Fielder 2004 on 'particle analytism'), (1a). However, these languages exhibit also synthetic – morphologically complex – structures, (1b).

(1)	a.	*da*	*napiša* (Bulg)	b.	*na-pis-va-x* (Bulg)
		SBJV	PREF.write.PFV.PRS.3SG		PREF.down-write-IPFV-AOR.1SG

Both analytism and synthetism are equally ascribed to long term intensive language contact and multilingualism: Hinrichs (2004) cites the Balkans as an area of creolisation, Nichols (1992) as one exemplifying morphologically complex residual zones. This seeming contradiction can be related to the application of the problematic notion of 'word' on the one hand, and the scarceness of qualitative and quantitative data on the other. The former involves the danger of equating description and observation by judging the data against the background of contemporary linguistic abstraction. The latter impedes insight into the diverse contact scenarios and the mechanisms triggering morphosyntactic changes, which are thus inferred by drawing on insight from neighbouring disciplines (e.g. historical linguistics, Joseph 1983) and allegedly similar contact situations and results (e.g. creolisation, Hinrichs 2004).
Among the rare sources to shed light on the processes underlying the morphosyntactic development in the Balkan linguistic area is Pulevski's (1875) trilingual dictionary, which can be taken as exemplifying, on the orthographic and morphological level, multilingual speakers' perceptions and conceptions of the languages they are exposed to. Focusing on Macedonian (Mac) and Turkish (Tr), the present paper illustrates the empirical and theoretical insight that can be drawn from this dictionary, in particular from the parallel passages listing word-form equivalents, such as (2) and (3). Examples like these illustrate the multi-directionality of copying strategies (see Johanson 1992) and question the assumption of 'analytic coding'. In (2), the Mac subjunctive complementizer *da* and the AUX.1SG appear as orthographically integrated with the lexical verb *reče* 'say', very much alike the Tr equivalent (with *demek* 'say' as lexical verb). The Tr word-form comprises the complementizer *ći* (= *ki*) and renders the subjunctive meaning by a volitional marker, obviously copying the Slavic pattern.

(2)	*da-su-rekol* (Mac)	*ći-de-sai-dim* (Tr)	(Pulevsiki 1875: 131)
	COMP.SBJV-AUX.1SG-say.PTZ	COMP-say-VOL-PST.1SG	

In (3a), the Mac short/clitic personal pronoun is integrated with the lexical verb, as opposed the long form *tebe* 'you.DAT', (3b). In Tr, the former is rendered with a verbal construction (*metix ederim sana* 'I praise you'), the latter with a nominal one (*metix sana* 'praise to you').

(3)	a.	*fala-ti* (Mac)	*metix eder-m sana* (Tr)	(Pulevski 1875: 153)
		praise.PRS.1SG-CL.2SG.DAT	praise give.PRS.1SG you.DAT	
	b.	*fala tebe* (Mac)	*metix sana* (Tr)	
		praise.PRS.1SG you.DAT	praise you.DAT	

The bidirectional structural assimilation observed for (2) and (3) suggests that instead of being complexified by adding material (as witnessed for the lexicon and for derivational morphology) or simplified by abolishing overt distinctions, Mac (and Tr) morphology is re-used and re-structured. This makes the assumption of 'analytic coding' highly questionable – the more so, as Pulevski lists structures like (2) under 'D' (*da*) instead of 'R' (*reče*).
These observations suggest that simplicity and complexity are not contradictory, but emerge both as effects of an increase in morphological transparency (in the sense of Trudgill 2011: 21).

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