

Introduction

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Balcania et Slavia. Studies in linguistics is published by the Department of Linguistic and Comparative Cultural Studies at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. The primary goal of the Journal is to bring together original publications in the field of theoretical, areal-typological, contrastive, and diachronic linguistics, which can provide a better understanding of the structure and the history of the Slavic and Balkan languages. In the academic landscape of Italy, the Journal promises to become a unique virtual domain of interdisciplinary research in which the Slavic and the Balkan linguistic areas are put to scrutiny so that they can feed off each other, in both empirical and theoretical terms. As editors, our aim is to publish contributions that bring to light different typological, areal or structural properties of these languages especially if such properties have remained unnoticed in current traditions or even if, however well-known, they call for innovative approaches in order to be better understood and analysed.

Issues of variation and micro-variation will be particularly relevant for the overall subject matter of the Journal because we believe that it is through a comparative description of the variation patterns in the various domains of language that we can gain a deeper view into the comparative grammar of the languages under study. This goes without saying for the well-known multilinguistic and multi-ethnic Balkan area that, due to the tormented Balkan history made of migrations, population mix and failed integrational policies, presents, as many scholars have pointed out, a unique dialectal continuum with patterns of isogloss variation that have not yet received the attention they merit.

The languages of the Balkan Linguistic Union, which comprises Balkan Slavic, Balkan Romance, Greek and Albanian, have come to develop, over the past six or seven centuries, a number of shared grammatical (morphosyntactic) and lexical features currently known as 'Balkan linguistic types'. But, as acknowledged by many scholars, 'Balkan linguistic types' are much more than a random collection of commonly acquired features (loan constructions, calques, syntactic borrowings, etc.) as it is generally the case with contact-induced innovations among two or more neighbouring dialects or languages. Balkanisms are deeply integrated into the structure of some or all Balkan languages, and the specific *Sprachbund* effects they have produced go beyond a simple areal explanation and raise a number of questions that are still open (for discussion, see the collection of articles in Krapova, Joseph 2018): the specific role of contact in bringing about the convergencies, the nature of the convergence itself (grammatical replication, some sort of copying or borrowing of surface structures), the mechanisms of transfer, etc. Another aspect worth exploring is the relation between the Balkan *Sprachbund* and other well-known linguistic areas including Standard Average European (SAE) conceived as a linguistic unity from a broad European perspective (Haspelmath 2001). Old questions relevant for the description of specific Balkan convergencies are also still open for discussion: the degree of Balkanisation of each language spoken in the Balkans; the potential source(s) of each common phenomenon; the number and fate of each Balkanism, in historically reconstructed, as well as in ongoing contact situations. At the current stage of Balkan linguistics, we need to know whether these processes are still going on, in which fields or subfields of grammar, and whether there are significant outcomes of these processes in recent times (see the collection of papers in Sobolev 2021, among many others not cited here for lack of space).

The problem of shared or common linguistic types is particularly relevant also for the Slavic area. A traditional concern in Slavic linguistics has been the issue of divergence in diachronic terms, namely in what ways Slavic languages have evolved in space and time as individual linguistic entities, with some attention also paid to parallel (and non-contact-induced) developments motivated by genetic origin. Recently, however, new perspectives have emerged and have enriched the traditional historic interest, namely those of convergence due to language contact, both intra-Slavic as well as between Slavic and the rest of Europe. There is a renewed interest toward a more profound comparative-typological profile of the Slavic languages in terms of their potential SAE membership, as part of the core or the periphery (see the recent collection of papers in Danylenko, Nomachi 2019). Our Journal seeks to promote original studies aiming at discussing those and similar vitally important issues that will undoubtedly help delineate the Slavic area and define its essential

characteristics in reference to the ‘other’ Europe. We intend to publish innovative research on all topics regarding the diffusion of certain areal properties, grammaticalization in space and time, conservative and innovative tendencies all of which have contributed in one way or another to shape the current Slavic landscape.

Balcania et Slavia is an online peer-reviewed journal, published annually in two issues and available in open access. For our inaugural volume, we placed a call for papers and we also invited some scholars to submit original contributions that present different methodological approaches to different fields of Slavic and Balkan linguistics: phonology, morphology, syntax, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics.

Here is a brief synopsis of the papers included in the first issue and appearing in alphabetical order.

Boban Arsenijević’s paper “No Gender in Gender Agreement: On Declension Classes and Gender in Serbo-croatian” looks into gender agreement in Serbo-Croatian (SC) as a theoretical problem for this language, but also for theories of how agreement mechanisms work in general. The problem posed by SC gender agreement data is that in certain cases two different gender values are triggered by the controlling noun. In the face of these potentially problematic data, the author seeks to disentangle the agreement feature into primitives like [animate] and [human] and proposes a model of how the features compose with each other and interact both with system features (like declension class) as well as with semantic ones. The most important and challenging property of agreement according to the author and his generative-driven approach to the complexities of gender morphology is that gender does not play any role in syntax but gets instantiated only at the level of logical form (LF).

The paper by Marco Biasio “It’s All Under Control! On Perfective Present Forms in BCS Main Clauses” aims at providing a unified analysis of the syntax-pragmatics interface of the (allegedly) anomalous licensing of the perfective present (henceforth Pres^{PF}) in Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian present-tensed main clauses. In Old- and Neo-Štokavian dialects, Pres^{PF} forms cannot refer to eventualities that are anchored to the utterance time. However, there seem to be three apparent exceptions to this structural constraint. They comprise: 1) *abusive metonymic performatives*, i.e. a closed class of disparaging phrases that figuratively perform on the insulted hearer the action referred to in the utterance; 2) running commentaries; 3) contexts featuring the epistemic operator *mòžda* ‘maybe’. Building on some theoretical tenets advocated by neoperformative hypotheses, it is claimed in the paper that, for Pres^{PF} forms to be licensed in BCS main clauses, the uninterpretable feature of control needs to be realised as a functional projection in the SpeechActP layer at the level of the so-called ‘Seat of Knowledge’.

Erzhen Khilkhanova's paper "Language Ideologies and Multilingual Practices of Post-Soviet Migrants from a Translanguaging Perspective" is dedicated to translanguaging, which is a popular topic that attracts the attention of linguists in many countries for a number of reasons. Within the Slavic area, the increase of interest is motivated by migration phenomena and issues of resettlement of former Soviet citizens in the West. The paper describes, discusses and analyses multilingual practices of non-Russian migrants from the former Soviet Union whose native language is Russian. The translanguaging perspective uncovers language ideologies underpinning these practices and serving as the main motivation for their replacement with linguistic assimilation despite the rich repertoire of multilingual resources available to these first-generation migrants.

The study also reveals a change of language ideologies of post-Soviet migrants in the more democratic Western European context towards awareness of language equality and increasing symbolic value of languages for ethnic identification.

In their paper, "Postposed Articles and DP Structures in Torlak", Jelena Zivojinović, Beatrice Azzolina and Veronica Girolami investigate the enclitic article in the DP structure of Torlak, a non-standard Balkan Slavic variety spoken in the Southeastern area of Serbia and in the bordering areas of Bulgaria and Macedonia.

Torlak displays both Balkan and non-Balkan features: like Bulgarian and Macedonian, it presents a postposed enclitic article-like element, but, at the same time, it does not exhibit multiple determination, which in Bulgarian and Macedonian is characterised by the presence of a demonstrative and one or more definite article suffixes within the extended projection of the noun.

The authors' proposal is that, while in Macedonian and Bulgarian the articles seem to have undergone a full grammaticalization into purely functional elements and for this reason they are able to occur with a demonstrative in a multiple determination construction, in Torlak instead, the grammaticalization of the determiner is only partially resulting in an inflectional affix that maintains the demonstrative semantics.

Tsvetana Dimitrova's paper "On the Diachrony of the Clitic Cluster in Bulgarian" traces back the formation of the clitic cluster in Bulgarian starting from the Old Church Slavonic through Middle Bulgarian up to the Early Modern Bulgarian and beyond. The author proposes that the clitic cluster is split in two layers - the main layer consists of a (pronominal) core and a (verbal) periphery, while the secondary layer hosts elements that are not strictly clitic but are clitic-like or semi-clitics. The author reviews a number of data in various diachronic corpora and reaches the conclusion that there has been practically no change in the positions of the elements within the core, while the changes that have occurred have interested the

periphery of the cluster and are due not to structural changes but to changes in the set, i.e. some elements of the pronominal and the auxiliary system have been reanalysed while original clitics of the discourse type have been lost.

We hope that this Journal will become an open forum for interesting discussions where researchers and experts in the field share their work, stimulate novel research paths and advance the study on the various aspects of the Slavic and the Balkan languages.

We are grateful to the members of our Advisory Board for the international prestige they confer to the Journal and for their precious suggestions.

Many thanks go to the Editorial Board members who actively participated in the entire process.

We must also highlight the fundamental work done by our reviewers who are among the most reputable scholars worldwide. They ensured a double-blind peer-review process – with two scholars for each paper – and we would like to thank them all for their efforts and time.

Last but not least, we would like to thank our publisher Edizioni Ca' Foscari, directed by Massimiliano Vianello, for the constant support. Our special thanks go to Mariateresa Sala for her great efficiency and invaluable editorial help.

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