Postposed Articles and DP Structures in Torlak

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Abstract This article sheds light on postposed articles and DP structures in Torlak, a non-standardised Balkan Slavic variety. Torlak and specifically Trgoviste-Torlak, unlike Bulgarian and Macedonian, does not exhibit MD. We argue that this scenery is due to a partial grammaticalization of the determiner, which is arguably an inflectional affix and maintains the demonstrative feature. In addition, we verify the nature of the Torlak DP and we make some considerations on the intermediate nature of this element with respect to the grammaticalization path, followed by the other Balkan Slavic varieties.

Keywords Torlak. Balkan Slavic. Multiple determination. Articles. DP structure.

1   Introduction

Torlak is a non-standard Old-Shtokavian Slavic variety spoken in the southern or southeastern area of Serbia and in the bordering areas of Bulgaria and Macedonia (see **fig. 1** below). It is also called the Prizren-Timok dialect in the attempt to delimit its distribution within the boundaries of Serbia. This variety has recently started getting more attention from the scientific community, mainly dealing with a variety of phenomena related to the central and north-eastern Timok area.[1] So far, the literature has focused on the postposition of the article and on the use of pronominal clitics, claiming that Torlak is a transitional area having both Balkan and non-Balkan features. For instance, it has second-position clitics as Serbo-Croatian, but makes consistent use of direct object clitic reduplication as Bulgarian and Macedonian.[2]

When it comes to the use of articles, the Trgovište-Torlak variety presents an overt postposed *t*-type particle deriving from the demonstrative pronoun *taj*/*ta*/*to* 'that', for instance:

(1) a. Bulgarian

dete-to

child.DET

'the child'

b. Albanian

ribar-at

fisherman.DET

'the fisherman'

c. Romanian

žena-ta

woman.DET

'the woman'

The particle can also enclitisize to the (first) adjective, for instance in (2), whereas the presence of a demonstrative pronoun incorporates the determiner as in (3).

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[1] Runić 2013a; 2013b; Vuković, Samardžić 2015; Makarova et al. 2020; Vuković 2021, among others.

[2] Cf. Runić 2014, 11-94 for an overview of the clitic system; Živojinović 2021 for a comparative perspective on the use of clitics in Torlak.

(2)

ubavo-to	*malecko*	*dete*
beautiful.DET	little	child

'beautiful little child'

(3)

Ja	*gu*	*čuvam*	*kako*	*golupče,*	*u*
I	her	guard/raise.PRES.1SG	as	pigeon	in
onuj	*buljinu*	*što*	*kuka*	*cel*	
that	owl	that	complain/cry.PRES.3SG	entire	

a	*ona*	*izraste*
but	she	grow.PRF.3SG
noć		
night		

'I raise her like a pigeon (kindly), but she grew into that owl that cries all night'

The productivity and distribution of such particles seems to be considerably subjected to diatopic variation. Indeed, the literature on postposed articles and DP structures in the north-eastern and central areas shows instead some inconsistencies; for example, Runić (2014, 66) suggests that Torlak[3] is an article-less variety, whereas Vuković and Samardžić (2015) present the distribution of the postposed overt article. However, the former study is based on a data collection in urban areas, such as the central Niš and Leskovac area, whereas the latter relies on fieldwork data gathered in north-eastern isolated and urban areas of the Timok Valley. Indeed, Vuković and Samardžić (2015) show that the postposed article[4] is productive in isolated rural areas (e.g. *đubre-to* 'the garbage') that are less influenced by the Serbo-Croatian superstratum.

Our research presents a contribution in the study of the postposed articles and DP structures by providing novel data from the southern sub-variety of Trgovište, which borders Macedonia and Bulgaria (see the indication in **fig. 1**). The data was collected in the rural areas of Trgovište through the recordings of natural speech of 8 participants whose age range is 70-90.

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3 PTS (Prizren-Timok Serbian) in Runić's terms (2014).

4 Specifically, Vuković and Samardžić (2015) argue that the Timok area maintains all three types of articles, namely the distal *t*- and *n*- types, deriving from demonstrative pronouns *taj, ta, to* and *onaj, ona, ono* 'that' as in *brat-at* 'the brother/that brother' and *vrata-na* 'the door/that door' respectively, and the proximal *v*-type, as in *baba-va* 'the grandmother/this grandmother'.

This investigation is an additional puzzle piece to Stanković (2013) who scrutinises three Torlak isoglosses[5] along with Macedonian in terms of Bošković's generalisations (2008), showing that DP/NP partition is not a sustainable description for these varieties. What

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[5] Stanković (2013) relies on the partition of Torlak varieties provided by Ivić (1994), who distinguishes the following isoglosses: Kosovsko-Resavski, Prizrensko-Južnomoravski, Svrljiško-Zaplanjski and Timočko-Lužnički. Trgovište-Torlak is located within Prizrensko-južnomoravski, an article-less variety (cf. Ivić 1994).

ALL and LWA indicate article-less languages and languages with articles respectively. Trgovište-Torlak is located within Prizrensko-južnomoravski (PJ).

Stanković (2013), who assumes that the southern Torlak isogloss is an article-less variety, proposes is rather a phonologically null vs. saturated DP structure on the basis of a set of structural and lexical properties which the isoglosses may or may not share.

In this article we will address the postposition of articles by testing the nature of the Torlak enclitics and we delineate its domain by framing Trgovište-Torlak within the Balkan Slavic context. Paragraph 2 of this article illustrates the existing proposals on the Balkan DP structure, which mainly focus on Bulgarian and Macedonian data. Paragraph 3 tests the nature of the Torlak article-like particles following Halpern (1992), whereas paragraph 4 provides further clues on the Torlak DP layer. Finally, paragraph 5 presents a brief comparative analysis with respect to the multiple determination phenomenon as opposed to Bulgarian and Macedonian and provides a note on the development of the Torlak article.

2　State of the Art

The issue surrounding the structure of postposed article has been a central topic in the generative literature.[6] Accordingly, several proposals were put forward in order to explain the structure of the DP in the Balkan languages.

In the following paragraphs, we will revise some of the most influential assumptions regarding the DP in Balkan Slavic essentially referring to Balkan Slavic languages, i.e. Bulgarian and Macedonian, to provide an appropriate starting point for the analysis of our Torlak data. In addition, some considerations on the nature of the postposed article will follow. As such, we will mostly build on Halpern (1992) and Franks (2001) to shed light on the affixal properties of the postposed article found in Trgovište-Torlak.

2.1　Early Proposals on the Balkan DP

The extensive bulk of literature on postposed articles has established a clear relationship between the presence of this affixal-like marker of definiteness in languages like Romanian, Albanian, Bulgarian and Macedonian to the Balkan *Sprachbund*, for instance:

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[6] Tomić 1996; Dimitrova-Vulchanova, Giusti 1995; 1998; Franks 2001; Rudin 2018a; 2018b for Balkan Slavic; Cornilescu 2016 for Romanian, among others.

(4) a. Bulgarian

kniga-ta
book.DET
'the book'

b. Albanian

krevat-i
bed.DET
'the bed'

c. Romanian

baiat-ul
boy.DET
'the boy'

Nonetheless, the assumption on whether the postposed article can be considered an actual inflectional marker has been widely debated. We will return to the affixal nature of the postposed article with specific reference to Torlak in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5. However, it seems crucial to point out two major lines of research that consider postposed articles either as (i) proper clitics (Scatton 1980; Tomić 1996) or (ii) inflectional affixes (Halpern 1992; Franks 2001; Rudin 2018a; 2018c; Embick, Noyer 2001 among others).

Tomić (1996), for instance, argues for a clitic-like nature of the article, which is to be found in a Wackernagel position within the DP. She claims that the postposed article is generated on the D°, triggering the movement of the highest, leftmost head to SpecDP. The movement of the noun, or whichever element follows the clitic, be it an adjective, numeral, or possessive, is considered a type of transformation applying from D-structure to S-structure in pure government and binding terms. In other words, the article as a nominal clitic is generated in D° and triggers the movement of N to SpecDP, which ends up in a spec-head relation with the article. However, even though Tomić (1996) assumes that nominal clitics, i.e. articles and possessive clitics, are Wackernagel clitics, she also admits that they seem to show some typical properties that are normally ascribed to affixes.[7]

For this reason, Dimotrova-Vulchanova and Giusti (1998) dispensed with N-to-D movement,[8] arguing that Bulgarian does not dis-

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[7] An anonymous reviewer also points out the fact that, if we were to follow the idea that the article is merged in D, coordinated Ns would display the article only on the first noun contrary to fact.

[8] See also Bošković 2019 for a more detailed explanation to discard N-D raising in affixal article languages.

play any instance of movement of the noun to a higher position, as opposed to the optional movement of N, which is found in both Albanian and Romanian. This assumption allows the authors, on the one hand, to rule out the movement of N to D in the narrow syntax and, on the other hand, to rely on the movement of N to D at LF in order to check definiteness [Def] features. Franks' (2001) proposal goes along these lines, assuming movement of the highest head below D at LF including AP, which, following Abney's (1987) account, dominates NP.[9]

These two accounts, therefore, provide a solid basis to consider the article in Balkan Slavic (and non-Balkan Slavic languages) a proper affix, regardless of their assumptions related to movement operations taking place at LF.

2.2 Current Assumptions on the Structure of the Balkan DP

Abstracting away from the proposals that were analysed in § 2.1, we now review Rudin's (2018a; 2018b) assumptions as a starting point to better capture the structure of the Torlak DP. For now, we will consider the relationship between D° and X° as an agreement relation for definiteness, bearing in mind the existence of different proposals (Koev 2011; Petroj 2020 among others) which argue for phi-features and definiteness agreement.[10]

Considering the structure in (5), Rudin (2018a; 2018b) adopts an Abney-type of structure in which the AP dominates the NP.[11] She claims that D, being phonologically null, bears definiteness features that enter in an agreement relation with the articled word, namely the first head below the DP.

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9   In Dimitrova-Vulchanova, Giusti 1998, the AP moves entirely to SpecDP and it checks [Def] features within the AP projection.

10   In a slightly different way, Giusti (2015) argues for the absence of a [Def] feature, introducing a scattered head bundled with other features proper to the nominal group, which could explain the presence of the inflectional article especially in the case of Romanian.

11   An anonymous reviewer points out that the head status of adjectives in structures like (2) is challenged by the fact that it fails to describe cases like the following:

>   [$_{DP}$ [$_{AP}$ glavna-ta po značenie] pričina] Bg. (Cinque 2010, 47)
>   Lit. 'the main in importance reason'.

We acknowledge Cinque (2010) in asserting the phrasal status of adjectives and their adjunction to the NP. However, we believe that, for the purposes of this paper, both accounts, i.e. AP dominating NP or AP adjunction to NP, allow us to describe the behaviour of definiteness agreement with respect to post-posted articles in these Balkan Slavic varieties. Rudin (2018a) also points out that, even by adopting the perspective of adjunction, definiteness agreement still appears on the highest leftmost head, namely A.

(5)

DP
├── D [+Def]
└── AP
    ├── A — *novi-te*
    └── NP — *telefoni*
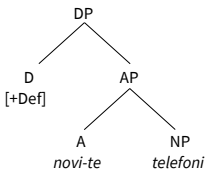
As it is shown above, the agreement relation between the adjective and the [Def] feature allows us to explain the presence of the inflectional article on the highest head below D, in this case, AP. Following the idea put forward in Rudin (2018a; 2018b), we could try to describe definiteness agreement through the operation Agree (Chomsky 2000; 2001) by adopting a bidirectional approach (see for instance Baker 2008; Bjorkman, Zeijlstra 2019 among others).

(6)

DP
├── D ▾[iDef]
│   └── X+art [uDef]
└── XP
    └── …
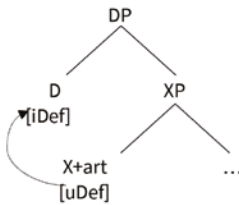
As show in (6), the uninterpretable [Def] feature acts as a probe for the interpretable [Def] feature on D; it therefore looks up, as an instance of upward Agree, and checks its [uDef].[12]

According to these theoretical premises, in principle, it could be possible to apply the structure in (6) to the Torlak DP. However, before turning to the analysis of the DP of this Balkan Slavic variety, some considerations on postposed articles as inflectional markers for definiteness are needed.

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12 Franks (2020) proposes to consider this type of agreement in terms of feature sharing, where D assigns definiteness features to XP that, in turn, shares them with the head X. As such, this account considers definiteness agreement as a more morphological process than the operation Agree and crucially as a more local relation.

3 Testing the Nature of the Enclitic Article

In the previous subsections, we mainly argued for the presence of an affixal-like postposed article specifically for Bulgarian and Macedonian. At this point of the analysis, it is necessary to understand where Trgovište Torlak stands concerning the nature of the enclitic particles and whether the assumptions that were put forward for Bulgarian and Macedonian still hold for this Balkan Slavic variety. The analysis covering our Torlak data is carried out below, after providing a quick review of the main phonological arguments to consider postposed articles as actual suffixes as outlined in Halpern (1992) and subsequently applied to Bulgarian in Franks (2001).

Halpern (1992) proposes four "tests" to validate the hypothesis that articles are actual suffixes, i.e. final-devoicing as shown in (7), consonant-schwa metathesis as shown in (8), changes in the placement of the stress as shown in (9) and the appearance of a special form of the stem in the articled word as shown in (10).

(7) a. Bulgarian
bratovčed [bratofčet]
'cousin' (Franks 2001)

b. Bulgarian
bratovčedât [bratofčedət]
cousin.DET
'the cousin' (Franks 2001)

(8) a. Bulgarian
*grâk******
'Greek' (Franks 2001)
* The letter *â* represents a schwa.

b. Bulgarian
gârkât
Greek.DET
'the Greek' (Franks 2001)

(9) a. Macedonian
brAtučed
'cousin' (Tomić 1996, 531-2)

b. Macedonian

bratUčedot
cousin.DET
'the cousin' (Tomić 1996, 531-2)

(10) a. Bulgarian

interesen   grad
interesting   city
'the interesting city'

b. Bulgarian

interesnijat   grad
interesting.DET   city
'the interesting city'

These tests, carried out by Franks (2001), clearly show the affixal nature of the post-posted article in Bulgarian ruling out their clitic-like nature. Building on these assumptions, it is now crucial to understand whether the Torlak article displays any difference with respect to the neighbouring Slavic languages.

Firstly, final devoicing is a systematic phenomenon in Trgovište-Torlak, as in *brod-brot* 'ship', *grad-grat* 'town', *Glog-Glok*,[13] *leb-lep* 'bread'. Devoicing is blocked by the addition of the suffixal element that forms CVC syllables, for instance *grat* 'town' vs. *gradat* 'the town'.

The second test determined by Halpern (1992) is more problematic, as confirmed by Franks (2010, 111-13), who instead argues that the metathesis is the result of a schwa epenthesis (see (4) above). On this note, we do not identify relevant examples in our Trgovište-Torlak corpus either related to (ii) or (iii). Nonetheless, it is worth noting that 3+ syllable words containing a postposed *t-* particle bear the stress on the antepenultimate syllable, as in *trAktor-at* 'the tractor'.

The word length however plays a role, thereby allowing us to apply Halpren's fourth test, which broadly affirms that the masculine form of the article only attaches to long adjectival stems. This is clearly visible in adjectives such as *ubav* 'beautiful', or *nov* 'new', which do not allow forms such as **ubav-at muž* or **nov-at stol*, but require a restructuring of the syllable arrangement in the adjective, obtaining *ubavijat muž* 'the beautiful husband' or *novijat stol* 'the new table'.

The application of the tests related to the nature of the enclitics provides therefore a partial outcome. By claiming such results, we intend that the *t*-particle may not be a fully functional suffix ele-

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13 *Glog* is a village located in the area of Trgovište/Vranje.

ment, but it could be retaining some degree of lexical value, hence the absence of the particle in examples containing a demonstrative (cf. (3) illustrated above).

4 Looking for the Torlak DP Layer

Coming back to the analysis of the Balkan Slavic DP, it seems clear that the assumptions that we put forward in § 2.2 may be challenged by the behaviour of the Torlak article with respect to Halpern's tests. As we previously argued, these articles partially fit the tests, showing different outcomes compared to the Bulgarian and Macedonian ones. Considering these results, it may be useful to go deeper into the analysis of the Torlak DP, testing whether this understudied variety fits Bošković's (2008; 2012) diagnostics as an NP or DP language. Tasseva-Kurktchieva and Dubinsky's (2018) study already applied some of Bošković's (2012) 18 diagnostics on Bulgarian and their results showed that this Balkan Slavic language falls in a category that is neither the one of full DP nor a full NP language. Their proposal is that Bulgarian is, in fact, a weak DP language that projects the DP layer only in the presence of the definite article. Following from their results, we applied the same diagnostics, checking the behaviour of the structures listed in table 1, to Trgovište-Torlak in order to find out its status and the behaviour of the DP projection in this understudied variety.

Table 1 Syntactic contexts based on Bošković 2008

(i) Clitic doubling
(ii) Left-branch extraction
(iii) Negation raising
(iv) Scrambling
(v) Presence of majority superlative reading
(vi) Superiority and Multiple Wh-Fronting
(vii) Adnominal Genitives
(viii) Head-Internal Relatives and Locality

Specifically, clitic doubling and the related generalisations have been widely discussed in Živojinović (2021), claiming that Trgovište-Torlak stands in a compromise position showing overt postposed articles and allowing clitic doubling, but having Wackernagel-type clitics (11). On this matter, Bošković generalises that (i) second position clitic systems are only found in NP languages, (ii) only languages with articles may allow clitic doubling, (iii) there is no clitic doubling with second-position clitics.

(11)

Odamna	*ga*	*upozna*	*Milovana.*
long_time_ago	him.CL.ACC	met	Milovan

'I met Milovan a long time ago'.

When it comes to left-branch extraction, Trgovište-Torlak does not allow such structures (12), following Bošković (2008) who affirms that only languages without articles may allow LBE.

(12)

*Maleckoto	*vido*	*dete.*
little.DET	saw	child

While Torlak does not allow scrambling, as predicted for languages with articles, the Neg-raising test requires some further explanation. Precisely, Bošković (2008) claims that the negation in a matrix clause negates the content of a subordinate clause and in such contexts it makes use of a licensed negative polarity item. However, Stanković (2013) observes that languages without articles, such as Serbo-Croatian, exhibit Neg-raising, but do not license an NPI with verbs such as *believe*. This observation can be extended to Trgovište-Torlak as well.

(13)

Ivan	*ne*	*veruje*	*da*	*Bog[k]*	*postoji.*
Ivan	not	believe	that	God	exists

'Ivan does not believe that God exists'. (Cf. Stanković 2013)

Trgovište-Torlak does not show the majority superlative reading unlike varieties such as Slovenian (for instance, *Največ ljudi pije pivo* 'Most people drink beer'). Similarly, it does not show strict superiority effects to multiple wh- fronting, an expected feature of varieties with articles (e.g. *Koj koga vidi? / Koga koj vidi?* lit. Who whom sees/ whom who sees). On the same line, our Torlak subvariety does not provide examples of two adnominal genitives and only allows head-external relatives.

Once again, the overall position of Trgovište-Torlak seems to be a compromise one, partially fitting Bošković's (2008) generalisations and presenting features belonging to article, but also article-less varieties.

5 Discussion and Further Remarks

The discussion on definite articles in Torlak and the analysis of the previous sections allows us to make some further remarks, specifically concerning the comparison among Bulgarian, Macedonian, and Torlak. An interesting phenomenon worth discussing, which interests mostly Bulgarian and Macedonian, falls under the name of Multiple Determination (MD). The presence (or absence) of MD provides us with the opportunity to shed some light on the properties of the suffixal articles found in the three languages in question. The framework that we adopt follows Rudin (2018c) with the addition of a novel proposal aiming at explaining the anomalous behaviour of Torlak compared to the other neighbouring varieties. Namely, we will call into question the process of partial or total grammaticalization of the article and its outcome in the different languages.

5.1 Multiple Determination

As anticipated, one of the phenomena that is worth analysing to better understand the characteristics and peculiarities of the DP in Torlak is Multiple Determination (MD). MD is defined as the presence, inside the DP layer, of a double or multiple realisation of the DP in certain environments (Alexiadou 2014). There are different hypotheses that try to explain the functioning of MD, two of the most relevant are (i) the split DP-Hypothesis and (ii) the 'distributed' DP-Hypothesis. According to the first one, the DP is divided into at least two layers that contribute differently to the meaning of the structure. This distinction is between a part where deixis is encoded and another part where determination is: [DP1 Deixis [DP2 Determination]]. According to the other hypothesis, instead, the Det can realise several other non-D related projections within the extended projection of the noun.

In the Balkan Slavic languages analysed, namely Bulgarian and Macedonian, MD is characterised by the presence of a Demonstrative and one or more definite article suffixes (Rudin 2018c), like the examples in (14) show:

(14)

a. Bulgarian

tija	*novi-te*	*telefoni*
these	new.DET	phones

'these new phones'

b. Macedonian

tie	*ubavi-te*	*fustani*
these	pretty.DET	dresses

'these pretty.DET dresses'

According to Rudin (2018c), in Bulgarian and Macedonian MD is used in colloquial speech and has a specific pragmatic reading that can be judged either positively or negatively by the speakers. However, as it will be demonstrated below, the situation concerning MD in Torlak is dramatically different. In particular, any instance of MD is judged ungrammatical by speakers of this language. Consider for instance (15).
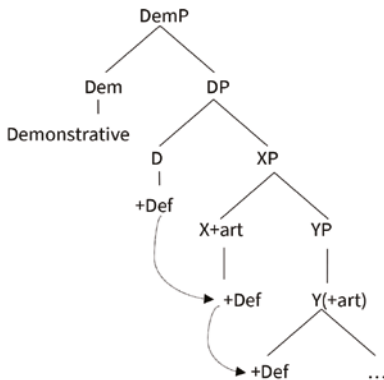
(15) Torlak

| ***ovoj***	*ubavo-**to***	*dete*
this	beautiful.DET	child

'this beautiful.DET child'

Going back to the structural analysis of the DP, we assume that in case of MD, the Dem is located higher up in the structure. Furthermore, we hypothesise that in Bulgarian and Macedonian there is a split in the DP and that the features that enter in an agreement relation are those present in the D head while those belonging to the Dem are only deictic. As such, since the featural content of the two heads does not interfere with one another, MD is allowed (a). In Torlak, instead, there is no split in the DP between the features of the Dem and of the D head and for this reason agreement is possible only from one head at a time (b). The two structures in (16) are taken from Rudin (2018c).

(16)
a.

b.
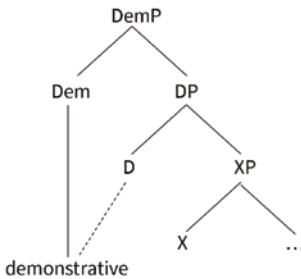
5.2 Grammaticalization Hypothesis

The peculiar characteristics of the DP in Torlak, which seems to behave differently with respect to other Balkan Slavic languages like Bulgarian and Macedonian, can be explained as caused by a process of partial grammaticalization. The grammaticalization path that is taken into consideration here is the one used to describe some Scandinavian varieties too, for instance Nynorsk Norwegian, namely *content item > grammatical word > clitic > inflectional affix* (Faarlund 2018, 618, the original theoretical framework from Hopper, Traugott 2003). In the case of 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 MD construction. In Torlak, instead, the grammaticalization of the Det is only partial resulting in an inflectional affix that maintains the demonstrative semantics. We argue that the peculiarity of the situation in Torlak is that the Dem and the Det share the features that are semantically encoding part of their meaning, namely the demonstrative ones. This sharing is not allowed because the two heads are not differentiated enough due to the grammaticalization of the determiner, that is only partially undergone in Torlak. This claim is also supported by the results of the tests carried out in the previous sections, which confirm a compromise position of the article.[14] In the case of Bulgarian and Macedonian, instead, the complete process of grammaticalization renders the Det a purely functional element that does not enter into competition with the Dem for the semantic features encoding [+Dem] and hence the construction

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14   An anonymous reviewer asks whether Torlak affixes encode deictic differences as the Macedonian article and the variety of Bulgarian spoken in the Rhodope mountains. As we previously argued, Trgovište-Torlak only displays a t-type of article; however, some other varieties of Torlak (cf. Vuković, Samardžić 2015 for the Timok area) may retain this distinction.

allows for MD. Being grammaticalization a gradual process, even in Bulgarian and Macedonian it is possible to find articles that have not completely undergone semantic bleaching.

6   Conclusion

In this paper we attempted to provide a contribution to the study of the Balkan Slavic postposed article by providing novel data from an understudied non-standardised variety. The study highlights yet again the transitional nature of Torlak that balances Balkan and non-Balkan features. Indeed, Torlak and specifically Trgovište-Torlak present a postposed suffixal article-like element, but they do not allow the use of multiple determination. We argued that this behaviour with respect to MD is explained by a lack of a split in the D features in Torlak, which is instead present in the neighbouring Bulgarian and Macedonian. To conclude the article, we noted that the peculiar behaviour of the DP in Torlak could be due to a partial grammaticalization.

Abbreviations

ACC	Accusative
CL	Clitic
CVC	Consonant-vowel-consonant
DET	Determiner
DP	Determiner phrase
LBE	Left branch extraction
NP	Noun phrase
NPI	Negative polarity item
PRES	Present
PRF	Perfect
SG	Singular
XP	X phrase

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