

GREEK AS A BALKAN LANGUAGE (NOT SUCH AN (E)STRANGE IDEA)

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Neighboring Languages with shared linguistic traits:

Albanian

Slavic:

Bulgarian

Macedonian

**some parts (mostly SE Serbian, the Torlak region) of the
Bosnian-Serbian-Croatian-Montenegrin complex)**

Italic (Romance):

Aromanian

Megleno-Romanian

Daco-Romanian

Judezmo (to a lesser extent), Romani, Turkish)

Romani

Turkish

“Sprachbund”:

= a linguistic area where languages, through intense and sustained contact in a mutually multilingual society, have come to converge with one another structurally and lexically and to diverge from the form that they held previously

Plan for today:

- **give a brief historiography of the study of the Greek language in the Balkans**
- **build a case for why detaching the recent history of the Greek language from its Balkan element is a serious mistake**
- **in doing the above, show how many of the differences between Ancient and Modern Greek are due to the Balkan character of the modern language, shaped especially in the Medieval period with the Balkans under Ottoman rule**

What has been said about Greek vis-à-vis the Balkans in some relatively recent treatments of the history of Greek:

- **A. Semenov (1936) *The Greek Language in Its Evolution: An Introduction to Its Scientific Study*: nothing on the Balkan front**
- **H. Tonnet (1993) *Histoire du grec moderne: La formation d'une langue*: nothing on the Balkan front**
- **W. Moleas (2004²) *The Development of the Greek Language*: nothing on the Balkan front**
- **G. Horrocks (2010²): only about 3 pages out of c. 450 on the Balkans**

A. Jannaris (1897) *An Historical Grammar of Greek*: recognizes possible relevance of Balkan languages for some aspects of northern dialects but makes it clear that he does not see much need to pay attention to it:

“We see then that, from a phonological point of view, the northern and southern groups, especially towards their extreme boundaries (e.g. Velvendos in Macedonia -- Crete), exhibit a very marked difference of sonantism (124). It is further evident that the geographical position of the several localities, their isolation or their vicinity to foreign races, their political and internal history, have, to a greater or less extent, conduced to shape the idioms at present spoken in the various Greek communities. That these various dialects have not the same historical value needs no special comment. Thus while northern speech has been influenced by alien (Albanian, etc.) phonology, the dialects of Pontos and South Italy bear unmistakable traits of Turkish and Italo-Venetian influence. Now as phonology in every language is intimately connected with morphology, it inevitably follows that the grammar of the above specified (northern, Pontic and Italian) dialects has been, within Neohellenic times, considerably affected by extraneous influences. At the same time, a careful examination of the southern group will show that, for various reasons, these dialects have withstood foreign influence with far greater success than the northern, and so preserved the ancient phonology, substantially also morphology and syntax (122) with such (chiefly morphological and syntactical) changes and vicissitudes only as would be inevitable from the nature of the case and the culture or spirit of the time. It is for these reasons that students of the post-classical and subsequent history of Greek, in looking for information in the present stage of modern Greek, should direct their attention not so much to the northern as to the *southern* group of Neohellenic dialects.”

Andriotis and Kourmoulis (1968: 30):

“[the Balkan sprachbund is] *une fiction qui n’est perceptible que de très loin*’ and that the commonalities are ‘*tout à fait inorganiques et superficielles.*’

Slavicist (Slovene) Balkanists of early period:

- **Jernej Kopitar (1780-1844)**
- **Franz Miklosich (1813-1891)**

Slavicist (Russian) Balkanists of middle period:

- **Nikolai Trubetskoy (1890-1938)**
- **Roman Jakobson (1896-1982, but cf. work in 1920s and 1930s)**

Slavicist Balkanists of more recent period:

- **Kenneth E. Naylor (1937-1992)**
- **Helmut Schaller**
- **Jack Feuillet**
- **Ronelle Alexander**
- **Petya Asenova**
- **Victor Friedman**
- **Grace Fielder**
- **Andrey Sobelev**

Some Hellenist (and more) Balkanists:

- **Kostas Kazazis (1934-2002)**
- **Eric P. Hamp (1920-2019; but cf. 1954 Harvard Ph.D. on Albanian)**
- **Christos Tzitzilis (c. 1945(?)-)**

NB: it took a non-Slav, non-Slavicist, non-Greek, non-Hellenist scholar, KRISTIAN SANDFELD, the Danish Romance scholar who was a specialist in Romanian, to elevate the study of the Balkans from a linguistic standpoint.

- **His 1926 work, *Balkanfilologien* (in Danish), known mainly from the 1930 French translation, *Linguistique balkanique: Problèmes et résultats*, focused attention on the Balkans as a linguistic area and contact zone with a large number of interesting shared traits that deserve particular attention from scholars.**

[Seeger Center for Hellenic Studies Lecture -- February 10, 2013]

Greece and the Balkans: A Story of a Troubled Relationship (19th- 20th Centuries)

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Before the ideas of Enlightenment and Hellas were infiltrated in the Balkan world, Balkan peoples shared a common mentality. Greek- and Vlach-speaking merchants topped the Christian social pyramid and it was their self-esteem and their economic prosperity which transformed enlightenment ideas into Greek nationalism. The glory of ancient Hellas gave a special meaning to their superiority. Through education it became increasingly clear that Greeks had absolutely no relation with the Slavs, formerly thought to be their brethren in God and in servitude to Islam. In other words Hellenisation could not be accomplished and turned into effective nationalism unless all links with the Balkan peoples were cut off. This paper argues that this process of **estrangement** was no easier or smoother than the transformation of the Greek-orthodox society itself into a Modern Greek nation. In fact the Balkan peoples and states became for the Greeks the convenient point of reference for evaluating social modernisation, politics, financial progress and irredentistic efforts. Furthermore it is argued that this troubled relationship reflects until today the endless political dispute as to the exact position of Greece within the European civilisation.

To justify the title, cf. etymology of *strange*:

STRANGE: late 13c., "from elsewhere, foreign, unknown, unfamiliar," from Old French *estrange* (French *étrange*) "foreign, alien," from Latin *extraneus* "foreign, external," from extra "outside of" (see [extra](#)).

BDJ's claim:

From a linguistic standpoint, there is a longer history of ENGAGEMENT than of ESTRANGEMENT between Greek peoples and the Balkans

THE LANGUAGE BACKGROUND

Languages of the Balkans (= on a geographic basis)

ANCIENT (not all of equal antiquity):

Dacian (Daco-Mysian) [= pre-Romanian??]

Greek

Illyrian [= pre-Albanian??]

Macedonian [??sibling to (all of) Ancient Greek or an Ancient Greek dialect??]

Old Church Slavonic

Phrygian

Pre-Greek (“Pelasgian”)

Thracian [= pre-Albanian????]

+ traces of Continental Celtic and some Germanic (Gothic and/or Norse); possibly also an Armenian presence prehistorically

MODERN [not counting very recent migrations, e.g. by Arabic or Tagalog speakers into Greece]

Albanian

Armenian (spoken in Bulgaria)

Bulgarian

Circassian (Adygey variety; spoken in Kosovo area of (former) Yugoslavia)

German (spoken in Romania)

Greek (including the very divergent dialects like Tsakonian and Pontic (the latter only in Balkans proper via relatively recent migrations))

Hungarian (spoken in Romania)

Italian (spoken in Istria area of (former) Yugoslavia)

Judezmo (also known as Ladino or Judeo-Espagnol)

Macedonian [NB: ≠ Ancient Macedonian]

Romanian (fuller picture to come, below)

Romani [= Indic language of the Roma peoples]

Ruthenian (also known as Rusyn, spoken in Vojvodina area of (former) Yugoslavia (= a dialect of Ukrainian??))

"Serbo-Croatian" [= (now) Bosnian-Croatian-Montenegrin-Serbian]

Slovak (in a small enclave in Vojvodina area of (former) Yugoslavia)

Slovenian (maybe)

Turkish

Balkan Languages (= those participating to some significant extent in Balkan Sprachbund, less-involved languages in *italics*, though degree of involvement varies considerably)

Albanian (major dialects: *Geg* (North) and *Tosk* (South))

Bulgarian

Greek (various dialects, including Tsakonian (but excluding Asia Minor dialects))

***Judezmo* (maybe only at phonological (and to some extent lexical) level at best)**

Macedonian

Romanian (actually more specifically Aromanian (Vlach), and Megleno-Romanian, less so *Daco-Romanian* and even less so *Istro-Romanian*)

Romani (= Indic language of the Roma peoples)

***Serbian* (really only via Torlak dialects of Southeast as most relevant; much less so *Croatian*, *Bosnian*, etc.)**

***Turkish* (more or less, not a "full" structural participant but crucial nonetheless)**

Balkan convergent features (“Balkanisms”)

Those most discussed in the literature, covering morphosyntax (a - g), semantics/pragmatics (h), syntax (i - j), lexical derivation (k), and phonology (l - q):

- a. a reduction in the nominal case system, especially a falling together of genitive and dative cases**
- b. the formation of a future tense based on a reduced, often invariant, form of the verb 'want'**
- c. the use of an enclitic (postposed) definite article, typically occurring after the first word in the noun phrase**
- d. analytic adjectival comparative adjective formations**
- e. marking of personal direct objects with a preposition**
- f. double determination in deixis (= a demonstrative adjective with a definite article and a noun (i.e., “this-the-man”))**

- g. possessive use of dative enclitic pronouns**
- h. the use of verbal forms to distinguish actions on the basis of real or presumed information-source, commonly referred to as marking a witnessed/reported distinction but also including nuances of surprise (admirative) and doubt (dubitative)**
- i. the reduction in use of a nonfinite verbal complement ("infinitive") and its replacement by fully finite complement clauses**
- j. the pleonastic use of weak object pronominal forms together with full noun phrase direct or indirect objects ("object doubling")**
- k. the formation of the "teen" numerals as DIGIT-'on'-TEN**

- l. the presence of a (stressed) mid-to-high central (thus, schwa-like) vowel**
- m. the presence of *i-e-a-o-u* in the vowel inventory without phonological contrasts in quantity, openness, or nasalization**
- n. raising of mid-vowels ([+mid] > [+high])**
- o. voicing of voiceless stops after nasals (NT > ND)**
- p. presence of δ θ γ**
- q. elimination of palatal affricates in favor of dentals**

Distribution of features (* = partial or dialectal realization; “Slavic” = general across Balkan Slavic; “Romance” = general across Balkan Romance), and where Greek stacks up (Grk highlighted in red -- those in which Grk does not participate are highlighted in blue):

- a. a reduction in the nominal case system, especially a falling together of genitive and dative cases [Alb, Grk, Slavic, Romance]**
- b. the formation of a future tense based on a reduced, often invariant, form of the verb 'want' [Alb*, Grk, Slavic, Romance*, Romani]**
- c. the use of an enclitic (postposed) definite article, typically occurring after the first word in the noun phrase [Alb, Slavic, Romance]**
- d. analytic adjectival comparative adjective formations [Alb, Grk, Slavic, Romance, Romani, Trk]**
- e. marking of personal direct objects with a preposition [Slavic*, Romance]**
- f. double determination in deixis (= a demonstrative adjective with a definite article and a noun (i.e., “this-the-man”)) [Alb*, Grk, Slavic*]**
- g. possessive use of dative (genitive) enclitic pronouns [Grk, Slavic, Romance]**

- h.** the use of verbal forms to distinguish actions on the basis of real or presumed information-source, commonly referred to as marking a witnessed/reported distinction but also including nuances of surprise (admirative) and doubt (dubitative) [Alb, Slavic, Trk, Aromanian*]
- i.** the reduction in use of a nonfinite verbal complement ("infinitive") and its replacement by fully finite complement clauses [Alb*, Grk, Slavic, Romance, Romani]
- j.** the pleonastic use of weak object pronominal forms together with full noun phrase direct or indirect objects ("object doubling") [Alb, Grk, Slavic, Romance, Romani]
- k.** the formation of the "teen" numerals as DIGIT-'on'-TEN [Alb, Grk*, Slavic, Romance]

- l.** the presence of a (stressed) mid-to-high central (thus, schwa-like) vowel [Alb, Slavic*, Romance]
- m.** the presence of *i-e-a-o-u* in the vowel inventory without phonological contrasts in quantity, openness, or nasalization [Alb*, Grk, Slavic, Romance, Romani]
- n.** raising of mid-vowels ([+mid] > [+high]) [Alb*, Grk*, Slavic, Judezmo]
- o.** voicing of voiceless stops after nasals (NT > ND) [Alb, Grk, Aromanian]
- p.** presence of *ǰ θ (ɣ)* [Alb, Grk, Slavic*, Aromanian]
- q.** elimination of palatal affricates in favor of dentals [Alb*, Grk, Aromanian, Romani*]

Still others? For Greek, yes, especially if we look to the dialects, and especially the northern dialects:

- for ‘y’all give me!’ (i.e., “Give/PL (to-)me”) as **GIVE-ME-PL**

**Thessalian Greek: δο’μ’τι [ðo’m’ti] (as if Std Mod Grk
δος-μου-τε [ðos-mu-te])**

cf. Alb: *hap-e-ni* ‘open-it-2PL!’ (= “y’all open it!”)

(and not just northern rural dialects -- cf. 1987 radio broadcast from Thessaloniki (admittedly in the north but urban variety with standard, i.e. southern, features):

**Έχε-μού-τε [éxe-mú-te embistosíni] ‘(y’all) have faith in me!’
(= “have-me-2PL faith”)**

- Thessalian Grk: μι τρώγῃτι [*mi trogiti*] (as if StdModGrk *mou trojete* <μου τρώγεται> “to-me it-is-eaten”) = ‘I feel like eating’

cf. Alb *më hahet* “to-me it-is-eaten” (= ‘I feel like eating’)

Mac *mi se jade* “to-me REFL eat” (= ‘I feel like eating’)

Another view of the same data: how many of these represent divergences from earlier stages of Greek? The innovations away from Ancient Greek are highlighted in yellow:

- a. a reduction in the nominal case system, especially a falling together of genitive and dative cases [Alb, Grk, Slavic, Romance]**
- b. the formation of a future tense based on a reduced, often invariant, form of the verb 'want' [Alb*, Grk, Slavic, Romance*, Romani]**
- c. the use of an enclitic (postposed) definite article, typically occurring after the first word in the noun phrase [Alb, Slavic, Romance]**
- d. analytic adjectival comparative adjective formations [Alb, Grk, Slavic, Romance, Romani, Trk]**

- e. marking of personal direct objects with a preposition [Slavic*, Romance]
- f. double determination in deixis (= a demonstrative adjective with a definite article and a noun (i.e., “this-the-man”)) [Alb*, Grk, Slavic*]
- g. possessive use of dative (genitive) enclitic pronouns [Grk, Slavic, Romance]
- h. the use of verbal forms to distinguish actions on the basis of real or presumed information-source, commonly referred to as marking a witnessed/reported distinction but also including nuances of surprise (admirative) and doubt (dubitative) [Alb, Slavic, Aromanian*]

- i. the reduction in use of a nonfinite verbal complement ("infinitive") and its replacement by fully finite complement clauses [Alb*, Grk, Slavic, Romance, Romani]**
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- p.** presence of *ð θ γ* [Alb, Grk, Slavic*, Aromanian]
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and so also with the *do'm'ti* and *mi trogiti* constructions

Features likely to be the result of or enhanced by “alien” influence on Greek, i.e. due to contact with other languages (highlighted in green), as opposed to a Greek-internal development (in yellow):

- a. a reduction in the nominal case system, especially a falling together of genitive and dative cases [Alb, Grk, Slavic, Romance]**
- b. the formation of a future tense based on a reduced, often invariant, form of the verb 'want' [Alb*, Grk, Slavic, Romance*, Romani]**
- c. the use of an enclitic (postposed) definite article, typically occurring after the first word in the noun phrase [Alb, Slavic, Romance]**

- d. analytic adjectival comparative adjective formations [Alb, Grk, Slavic, Romance, Romani, Trk]**
- e. marking of personal direct objects with a preposition [Slavic*, Romance]**
- f. double determination in deixis (= a demonstrative adjective with a definite article and a noun (i.e., “this-the-man”)) [Alb*, Grk, Slavic*]**
- g. possessive use of dative (genitive) enclitic pronouns [Grk, Slavic, Romance]**

- h.** the use of verbal forms to distinguish actions on the basis of real or presumed information-source, commonly referred to as marking a witnessed/reported distinction but also including nuances of surprise (admirative) and doubt (dubitative) [Alb, Slavic, Aromanian*]
- i.** the reduction in use of a nonfinite verbal complement ("infinitive") and its replacement by fully finite complement clauses [Alb*, Grk, Slavic, Romance, Romani]
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p. presence of *đ θ γ* [Alb, Grk, Slavic*, Aromanian]

q. elimination of palatal affricates in favor of dentals [Alb*, Grk, Aromanian, Romani*]

and so also with the *do'm'ti* and *mi trogiti* constructions

And, there is enormous influence on the lexical level, mostly involving loanwords that are **consistent with what is known about contact in the Balkans**, the contact that gave rise to the structural convergence (and thus revealing the sprachbund)

- Hypothesis: Sprachbunds arise under conditions of **sustained, intense, intimate** contact among speakers, with **multilateral multi-lingualism**

THEREFORE, we need: a loan type that ...

- corresponds to these conditions, and ...
- is consistent with Sprachbund formation

Suggestion:

- base loan typology on the mutual interaction, specifically on conversational interaction, between/among speakers

THEREFORE, we need to recognize a type of loans that are:

Essentially Rooted In Conversation

i.e.:

E.R.I.C. loans

These are loans that depend crucially on **speaker-to-speaker interaction** of an **on-going** and **sustained** kind, the sort of contact that can be characterized as **intense** and at the same time **intimate**, as opposed to **occasional** and **casual**.

Motivating the acronymic notion, formally and conceptually:

- **formally, the acronym is a suitable homage to Eric P. Hamp, the dean of Balkan linguistics, a long-time champion of the study of language contact in general and in the Balkans in particular, and a formidable Hellenist who dealt with the full history of the language (Mycenaean to Modern) while also paying close attention to Greek's geographic neighbors**
- **conceptually, the notion offers a way to distinguish between loans that take place under sprachbund-conducive conditions and those that take place under casual contact situations.**

To elaborate:

- **face-to-face interaction, of the sort that would necessarily have occurred under the intense and on-going contact among speakers in the Balkans, is essential for creating and propagating the structural convergences typically taken as diagnostic of a sprachbund**

- **and, that certain kinds of loanwords occur in such a social milieu is a bonus of sorts, and means that the loan words can be both an indicator that contact conducive to the formation of a sprachbund is taking place and a by-product of such contact.**
- **that is, these are loans that tell us something about speaker contact and about the sociolinguistics and the socio-history of the region**

- **this view draws on the notion of “degrees of contact”, as recognized explicitly in the Thomason & Kaufman 1988 “scale of borrowability”, where the borrowing of different types of linguistic material is claimed to correlate with different levels of intensity of contact among speakers.**

- **my claim here is that, consistent with this scale, certain types of loanwords, especially those embedded in discourse and in conversational use and those that go beyond simple exchange of information, correlate with the intense, sustained, and intimate contact that is necessary for the formation of a linguistic area with structural convergence, i.e. a sprachbund.**

- these loans are “**sprachbund-consistent**”, since they represent those lexical elements that most directly reflect the sort of language contact that is consistent with the emergence of a sprachbund, namely sustained intense contact on a day-to-day basis in a multilingual milieu.
- many ERIC loans are members of **closed lexical classes**, representing vocabulary domains that are generally held to be somewhat resistant to borrowing, and yet they are borrowed

Classes of ERIC loans (with examples to follow from around the Balkans, with emphasis on ones showing Greek involvement)

- **Kinship terms**
- **Numerals**
- **Pronouns**
- **Adpositions**
- **Negatives**
- **Complementizers**
- **Discourse elements (connectives, attitudinal expressives, interjections, gestures)**
- **Vocatives**
- **Onomatopoeia**
- **Reduplication (especially of an expressive nature)**
- **Taboo expressions**
- **Idioms (and phraseology more generally, even shared proverbs)**
- **Secret languages, trade languages, and jargonistic usage**
- ...

Examples of Loans in these Classes (a sampling, not exhaustive, with emphasis on cases where Greek is involved)

Kinship terms

- Turkish *baba* ‘father’ => Albanian, Aromanian, Greek *baba* ‘father’ (μπαμπά), labeled an archaism in contemporary Macedonian and Bulgarian sources, suggesting that it was in wider use in earlier times)
- Turkish *nene* ‘mother’ => Albanian *nënë*, Greek νενέ [*nené*]
- Greek τσάτσα [*tsatsa*] ‘aunt’ => Aromanian *țăță* (surely connected to Turkish *çaça* ‘woman who keeps a brothel’ but that is said to be from Greek)

Numerals

- Romani borrowing of '7'/'8'/'9' (from Greek)
- '11' – '19' as 'DIGIT-on-TEN', e.g. Albanian *pesë-mbë-dhjetë* '15' (widely cited in the literature as Slavic in origin but Albanian and Romanian disagree with Slavic in the gender of 'ten' in various formations, so this pattern may have a different origin and may in fact reflect some very early Albanian (“Albanoid”) input (cf. Hamp 1992)); note too Balkan-esque examples from the 5th century AD Greek like τῆς τρίτης ἐπὶ δέκα [*tēs tritēs epi deka*] ‘(of) the third upon ten’ for ‘thirteen’ (thus maybe Greek is involved in this convergence??)

Pronouns

- Greek μου [*mu*] ‘my’ => Aromanian *-m* (vs. native *-n’i* (from Latin *mihi*, presumably via **mnihi*))

Adpositions

- Greek με [*me*] ‘with’, if a borrowing from Albanian *me*, since derivation of Greek from Ancient Greek μετά [*metá*] is problematic (requiring several ad hoc assumptions); alternatively, one can speculate that Alb *me* is a borrowing from Grk (though both could be independent inheritances from a Proto-Indo-European **me* (only in bound forms otherwise in Greek, e.g. μέχρι [*méxri*] ‘up to’))

Negatives

- Greek μη [*mi*] ‘prohibitive negator’ => Vardar Macedonian and Aromanian *mi*
- Greek όχι [*oxi*] ‘no’ => Southern Aromanian *ohi* (Vrabie 2000)
- upward head nod gesture for negativity (found at least in Greek, Romanian, and Turkish — Greek is a likely source, given what is known about Ancient Greek gestures and the verbs ἀνανεύω ‘throw head back; deny; refuse’ κατανεύω ‘bow down; assent’ and the fact that the distribution especially in Italy coincides with geographic limits of Magna Graecia)

Complementizers

- Greek $\delta\tau\iota$ [(h)oti] ‘that’ => Macedonian *oti* ‘that’
- Greek $\delta,\tau\iota$ [(h)o, ti] ‘for that reason’
=> Macedonian/Bulgarian *oti* ‘because’

- **Discourse elements (connectives, attitudinal expressives, interjections, gestures)**

NB: These are ERIC forms, since they serve as the "glue" of everyday interactions between people, and include not just frequent discourse markers and indicators of an individual's status relative to other interlocutors (e.g. solidarity, distancing, etc.) but also those that serve a purely expressive purpose (i.e., elements that add "color" to conversation):

- *ama* ‘but’ (and then some; whatever its origin, it has spread all over the Balkans; cf. Fielder 2010)
- provincial Turkish (nonharmonic, postpositive) *de* => Greek ντε [*de*] (signaling impatience), Albanian *de* (emphatic with imperatives), Macedonian *de* ‘c’mon’
- Greek μάλιστα [*malista*] ‘yes (indeed)’ => Aromanian (dialectal) *malista*

- ‘unceremonious term of address’ (lots of variants, almost all ultimately from Greek; cf. Joseph 1997):

Turkish: *bre, bire, be*

Albanian: *o, ore, or, mor, more, moj, ori, mori, moré, mre, voré, bre*

Romanian: *bre, mă, măi*

Bulgarian: *more, mori, bre*

Macedonian: *more, mori, bre*

Serbian: *more, mori, bre*

Judezmo: *bre*

Greek: *μωρέ, μπρε, βρε, ρε, αρέ, μαρέ, μαρή, ορέ, βορέ...
[moré, bre, vre, re, aré, maré, marí, oré, voré...]*

- Turkish *(h)ay de* => Romanian: *hajde*, Serbian *hajde*, Albanian *hajde*, Greek *άϊντε* [*aide*] 'c'mon'
- Greek *έλα* [*ela*] 'c'mon' => Bulgarian *ela*
- Turkish *aman* 'oh my!' => Bulgarian / Macedonian, *aman*
Greek *αμάν* [*aman*]

Vocatives

- coincidence of Grk VOC.SG of MASC *o*-stem nouns, e.g. Πέτρε [*Petre*] ‘(O) Petros!’ with Blg VOC.SG of MASC *o*-stem nouns, e.g. *Ivane* ‘(O) Ivan’ may have played a role in preservation of Blg VOC versus loss of all other cases
- Albanian *biro* ‘O son!’, *Agimo* ‘O Agim!’, with *-o* apparently from Slavic vocative
- Romanian vocative endings influenced by Slavic, cf. especially *-u-le* (PL), apparently with Slavic vocative particle *-le*

Onomatopoeia (*vel sim.*)

- ‘dog noise’: Albanian *ham-ham*, Romanian *ham*, Greek γάυ-γάυ [γαν γαν] , Turkish *hav hav*, Macedonian *av av*, Romani *hau-hau*, Bulgarian *bau-bau*
- ‘knocking’: Albanian *tak-tak*, Greek τák-τάκ [tak tak]
- ‘noise for attracting a cat’: Greek ψι ψι ψι [psi psi psi]; Bulgarian / Romanian *ps ps ps*

Reduplication (especially of an expressive nature)

- Turkish affective *m*-reduplication (e.g. *kitap-mitap* ‘books and such’) => various languages, e.g.:

Bulgarian *knigi-migi* ‘books and such

Macedonian *kal-mal* ‘mud or whatever’

Albanian *çingra-mingra* ‘trivia’, *çikla-mikla* ‘tiny bits and pieces; crumbs; trivia’, (maybe) *çillimillëk* ‘immaturity; childish behavior; prank’

Greek *τάντζαλα-μάντζαλα* [*tzantzala-mantzala*] ‘this and that’ (“rags and such”), *πιπέρι-μιπέρι* [*piperi-miperi*] ‘pepper and such’, *καφέ-μαφέ* [*kafe-mafe*] ‘coffee and such’, *ιδού-μιδού* [*iðu miðu*] ‘see here, or whatever’ (last three from Byzantios’s *Babylonia*)

- Turkish-style CVC- intensive prefixing (e.g. *beyaz* ‘white’ / *bem-beyaz* ‘pure white’, *çiplak* ‘naked’ / *çir-çiplak* ‘stark naked’):

Greek *τσιπλάκης* [*tsiplakis*] ‘naked’ / *τσιρτσιπλάκης* [*tsir-tsiplakis*] ‘stark naked’

Bulgarian (Shumen dialect, 1920s) *gol-golenicăk* ‘stark naked’

Macedonian *gol-goleničok* ‘stark naked’

Romanian *gol-golut* ‘stark naked’

BCS *go-golest* ‘stark naked’

Taboo expressions

- Turkish *siktir* ‘Go to hell!’ (stronger actually) =>

Judezmo *asiktar senda*, verb *asiktereare*

Greek *ασικτίρ* [*asiktir*]

Macedonian *sikter*

Idiomatic expressions (and **phraseology** more generally, even shared proverbs)

- idiom for ‘get a beating’:

Mac *jade k’otek* ‘get a beating’ (literally “eat a-blow”)

Grk τρώγω ξύλο [*trogo ksilo*] ‘get a beating’ (literally “eat wood”)

--both obviously based on Turkish *kötek yemek* ‘*ibid.*’

- **Various everyday expressions (directionality unclear):**

Greek *πώς είσαι; [pos ise?] (είμαι) καλά [(ime) kala]* ‘how are-you? I-am well’ (thus, ‘be’ with ADVERB)

= **Albanian** *si je? (jam) mirë (mirë as adverb with ‘be’, not adjectival form),*

= **Macedonian** *kako si? dobro* (adverbial form)

= **Bulgarian** *kak si? dobre* (adverbial form)

= **Romani** *sar sijan? shukar*

= **Turkish** *nasılsın? İyi*

- Alb. *sa bën* ‘how much does it cost?’ (literally “how-much does-it-make?”) = Greek *πόσο κάνει* [*poso kani*] ‘idem’
- Greek *το ξέρω απ’ έξω* [*to ksero ap’ ekso*] ‘I know it by heart’ (lit: “it I-know from outside”) = *Agia Varvara Romani* (Messing 1988: 61) *dzanav-les avral* (*avral* = ‘from outside, from abroad’)

Secret languages, trade languages, and jargonistic usage

- **Capidan 1940: “special language” of tailors in a Greek village in the Pindus who otherwise speak Greek but, in this jargon, use a language variety that is largely Aromanian in vocabulary**
- **Vlah and Albanian => SW Macedonian shepherding terminology**

One final clearly conversational example:

- an expression used by some Greeks (maybe obsolete now but it did exist) in the game of “peek-a-boo” that adults and older children play with young children:

Μπούλι μπούλι μπούλι μπούλι τζα

buli buli buli buli ... dza

- the μπούλι *buli* part (repeated four times) comes when the face is covered up by one’s hands and the τζα *dza* part comes when the hands open up to reveal the face

Where does this come from?

- in Greek, μπούλι [*buli*] is just a nonsense word
- τζα [*dza*] (with variant τσα [*tσα*]) = an interjection marking surprise or indicating something like “here I am (somewhat unexpectedly)”

But where does that τζα [dza] come from?

- **the only dictionary to comment on its source says it is a “nursery word”, and its use and form do make sense in that regard, based on special expressive status claimed for Greek [ts]/[dz] (Joseph 1982, 1984, 1994 and elsewhere)**
- these sounds are said to be “allolinguistic”, i.e. showing a marked functional status for linguistic elements involving being on the margins of “core” information-oriented communication (Wescott 1976)**

- **still, even with an allolinguistic rationale for τσα/τζα [tsa/dza], one has to ask why, if the word has a nursery-related origin, it has the particular form that it does.**
- **but, there is a compelling source for τσα/τζα [tsa/dza], from a language outside of Greek:**
- **Albanian has an interjectional word spelled < xa > (phonetically [dza]) that, as listed in Mann 1948, has a meaning ‘here you are’.**

--this presentational meaning fits in well in the game of peek-a-boo as the sound that accompanies the revealing of the face

--so, if this source of the Greek utterance is accepted, this form would have entered Greek either through direct contact with Albanians, e.g. in northwestern Greece, or through Arvanitika, the Albanian dialects spoken mainly in Central Greece, the Peloponnesos, and Attica.

But what about the rest, the *μούλι* [*buli*] part?

- **that too has a compelling source in Albanian:**

- [*buli*]: from Alb verb *mbyll* ‘close, shut’ (3SG.PAST)

- **thus, the phrase in its etymological meaning would be:**

- “[when the hands cover the face] (it-has-)closed,
(it-has-)closed, (it-has-)closed, (it-has-)closed ...
[when the hands open up to reveal the face] Here-it-is!”.

- Phonetically the Greek **μπούλι** [buli] would be an expected rendering of a borrowed Albanian *mbyll*:
 - the initial **μπ-** [b-] for Albanian [mb] conforms to prevailing Greek phonotactics at the likely time of borrowing (with voiced stops without a nasal “prop” being allowed in word-initial position)
 - the **-ου-** [u] for the Albanian front rounded [y] vowel accords with Greek lacking an [y] at this time (NB: even if Arvanitika is the source, with [i] for [y] elsewhere in Alb, since Grk has [u] for earlier [i] in labial contexts).

- **This expression would have been borrowed only through use, presumably by Arvanitika speakers using it to play with Greek babies (and thus made available to Greek speakers) or by Greeks over-hearing Arvanitika speakers using it with their own babies.**

Either way, the **conversational element and ‘**intimate**’ contact are paramount here.**

In the last analysis, therefore, despite calls over the years to ignore the Greek language’s Balkan past (à la Jannaris and Andriotis & Kourmoulis) or even purge it (à la Dizikiríkēs (1975) *Να ξετουρκέψουμε τη γλώσσα μας* [*Na Ksetourkepsoume ti glossa mas*] (*Let’s Deturkify our Language*), even if efforts to distance (“estrangle”) Greece from the Balkans might work on a societal and/or cultural level, ignoring the significant Balkan engagement the Greek language has shown is just not feasible.

And, note that and the prevailing Greek ideology of Greek as “one language” (see Joseph 2009 (*Journal of Greek Linguistics*) for discussion) means that somewhat Balkanized northern dialects cannot simply be ignored

- **and, just to end on a savory note, one can wonder even about cultural distancing from the Balkans, given, e.g., the way in which Greece and Greeks participate in the enjoyment of pan-Balkan foods and drinks:**

Glasses of τσίπουρο / ρακή [*tsipouro* / *raki*]...



Pitas (σπανακοτυρόπιτες [*splanokotiropites*]/*börek*/*banitsa*/*maznik* ...)



Kebabs (σουβλάκι [*suvlaki*] / *qebap* / *kebab* / ...)



Thank you / Ευχαριστώ