

Anton Panov's Play *Pečalbari* and Its Role in the Standardization of Macedonian

Anton Panov and his play *Pečalbari* figure prominently in studies on the codification of the standard Macedonian language. Panov, together with Risto Krle and Vasil Ilioski, belongs to the triumvirate of inter-war playwrights. *Pečalbari* has been in print since its first publication in 1937¹ and remains a standard of the Macedonian theater. *Pečalbari*, written in the inter-war period, provides a glimpse into the processes of language standardization. In this paper I will focus on the linguistic development of the play and the manner in which editorial changes reflect processes of standardization, and I will address some of the most salient dialectisms which were to undergo revision between the first and subsequent editions. Other stylistic revisions that took place after the 1949 edition will also be discussed. First, however, I will give a short biography of the author and a summary of the artistic genesis of the play. Later I will survey modifications in each subsequent edition.

Anton Panov was born into a large family on April 13, 1906² in the town of Old Dojran in what is now the southeast of the Republic of Macedonia. His primary schooling reflected the turbulent years into which he was born. He began his schooling in Serbian-controlled schools. Two years later, however, the school he attended was replaced by a Bulgarian one. In 1916 Old Dojran was bombed, the Panov house was destroyed, and the family moved to Strumica, in what was then Bulgaria. Panov considered Strumica his second hometown; he returned there from Skopje after the 1963 earthquake and remained in Strumica until his death in August 1968.

In 1918 Panov resumed his education in Belgrade, but owing to financial difficulties, he left school to pursue a career in music. Panov joined the chorus

¹ The play was first published in serial form in the literary magazine *Luč*, which then appeared as a bound edition, published by Vasilija Dimiterjević in Skopje in 1939. Subsequent Macedonian editions have been published in 1949, 1969, 1981 and 1985. See below for further publishing details. There may be still later editions published in Macedonia, but they are not relevant to this paper.

² There is some uncertainty concerning the year of Panov's birth. Both Aleksiev (1974) and Drugovać (1985) treat this in more detail.

of the Belgrade Opera, where he remained for thirteen years, until the publication of the play *Pečalbari*.

Panov's personal history, his education in Serbian and Bulgarian, his early years in Dojran and Strumica, and the events which led to the writing of the play help explain some, but not all, of the linguistic peculiarities of the text. Panov was writing at a time when Macedonian writers were just beginning to be permitted to publish texts in so-called "dialect" in the nation states that had only recently acquired the territory in which they lived. Panov himself commented on the particular difficulties of Macedonian writers of this period when he wrote in his autobiographical notes (cited in Drugovać 1990: 148): "It was not easy to write in Macedonian under difficult conditions and even more difficult times because, among other things, writers had to work with neither a grammar nor an orthographic dictionary." Nonetheless, the works by these interwar dramatists had significant impact on the subsequent history of Macedonian literature and language standardization. Authors writing about this period of Macedonian national history note the importance of theatrical works in building national sentiment (see for example, Drugovać 1990, Stamatovski 1986 and Risteski 1988).³ Lacking a standard grammar, most authors of Macedonian works at this time wrote in their own dialect, although Panov's first literary publications were poems written in Serbian. In 1925, however, he began to write poems in Macedonian which were published in the literary journal *Luč*, after the publication of *Pečalbari*. Panov clearly had literary ambitions, and at this time he wrote short stories and began a novel.

While living and working in Belgrade, Panov befriended a group of bakers from the western Macedonian village of Miokazi, in the district of Vraneštica, who were working in Belgrade as *pečalbari* 'economic migrants.' Panov envisioned a play about the life of the *pečalbar* and decided to use the western-based dialect and village customs of his *pečalbar* acquaintances as the foundation for such a work. Panov's conscious choice to use a western dialect contributed to the consensus on dialect selection. Panov was mentioned explicitly in the codification debates as an author who saw benefit in the use of west central dialects as a basis for language codification and standardization (see Risteski 1988: 244). In fact, as we will see, Panov's written language contained a mixture of different dialect features. Different editors worked on the text, and this factor, too, contributed to the hybrid language of the first edition.

³ Risteski (1988: 80) even adds: "The [Serbian] government saw that the production of Macedonian dramas was dangerous since it might lead to the creation of a Macedonian literary language."

Because he himself was not from western Macedonia, Panov felt the need to study other dialects. In the early 1930s he traveled to Ohrid for this purpose. When Panov returned to Belgrade, he presented his now completed manuscript to the National Theater in Belgrade. The script was rejected, but Velimir Živojinović-Masuka, a director who was leaving Belgrade to become director of the National Theater in Skopje, was interested in the play. According to Aleksiev (1972: 192–93, 1974: 24), Masuka recognized a major problem with the theater in Skopje, namely, there was a lack of any connection with the majority of Macedonian viewers since no plays were staged in Macedonian. To address this issue, he wanted to present a Macedonian work, by a Macedonian author, in Macedonian. He appointed Slobodan A. Jovanović, a Macedonian from Debar, as production assistant. Jovanović said of the play: "I liked everything about the play except the language. This language was some sort of odd mixture of nearly every Macedonian dialect, and beyond—from Vranje to Gevgelija (*i.e.*, from South Serbian to south-eastern Macedonian dialects) and from Ohrid to Strumica (*i.e.*, from south-western to eastern dialects) (cited in Aleksiev 1974: 26). Jovanović sought further editorial and linguistic assistance from two educated Macedonians from western Macedonia, Miloš Jakovlević of Galičnik and Jevto Popović of Porač (see Aleksiev 1974: 26).

The play premiered in Skopje on March 3, 1936. This was a significant period in the history of Macedonian drama and literature. As indicated above, during this period publication in Macedonian was forbidden or restricted. Ilija Milčin, one of the later editors of the play, wrote about the theater scene in *Nov Den* (1949: 368–39): "up to this time plays were viewed only in foreign languages [*i.e.*, Serbian] at the theaters in Macedonia, which led in 1936–37 to a spontaneous boycott of the theaters. To break the boycott and attract new audiences, permission was granted to stage several plays in Macedonian." Milčin (1949: 369) writes, however: "the plays were allowed to be staged provided they underwent a 'linguistic' and textual 'operation' in order to harmonize them with the line taken by hegemonistic 'national policy.'" Mitrev (1950: 3) writes that the plays were permitted if the language of the texts was presented as south Serbian dialect.⁴ Mitrev (1950: 3) also mentions the need for certain "textual and linguistic 'corrections.'" These forced alterations to the 1939 text may also explain some of its linguistic irregularities.

⁴ Friedman (1975: 94) remarks, however, that even allowing Macedonian to be published at all was a significant event. As he writes: "While Metaxas was imprisoning Macedonians in Greece for speaking their native language, the Serbs were permitting the publication of folkloristic literature in Macedonian."

The play was published first in 1937 in serial form in the journal *Luč*.⁵ It appeared as a bound edition in 1939. A major revised edition came out in 1949 reflecting language standardization and codification. The play, which remains in print, has undergone several different revisions. Not only was the play performed throughout Macedonia in the thirties and forties, but in 1947 the Macedonian National Theater in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria (*i.e.*, in Pirin Macedonia) opened with this play. Abadžiev (1949) treats the success of *Pečalbari* at the National Theater, together with the performance of subsequent Macedonian plays, as instrumental in building Macedonian national consciousness among Macedonians in Pirin. Performances of the play *Pečalbari* are also mentioned in connection with Bulgarian occupation during the Second World War; Mitrev (1950: 16) writes that the Bulgarians also recognized the importance of drama in building national consciousness and, therefore, in attempts to denationalize the Macedonian population demanded that *Pečalbari* be performed in Bulgarian translation. In fact, the publishing house "Hristo Danov" published the second edition of the play in Sofia.

If we look at each of the major editions⁶ between 1939 and 1985 there are four important milestones: the first bound edition of 1939, which is identical to the serialized version published in *Luč* in 1937–38; the revised edition of 1949, which is the first edition published in standard Macedonian; the edition of 1969 which reflects major reworking of several scenes by the author; and the editions of 1981 and after which revert back to the original text of the 1939 and 1949 editions. In the 1939 edition, published by Vasil Dimitriević, all of the dialogue in the play is in Macedonian, but all stage directions are in Serbian. On the title page both Panov's name and the place of publication are given in Serbianized form: *Antonije Panović* and *Skoplje*. The second Macedonian edition, published in Skopje in 1949, conforms to most of the norms of contemporary standard Macedonian. In the later portion of this paper, most of the discussion will center on changes made between these first two editions.

⁵ The play appeared in the following volumes: 1937—1, 2; 1, 5; 1, 6–7; 1938—2, 3; 2–4.

⁶ Aleksiev (1974: 30) cites the following editions: The first bound edition was published in Skopje in 1939. The second edition was published in Sofia by "Hristo Danov" in 1943. The third edition was published by the Državno knigoizdatelstvo na Makedonija in Skopje in 1949. The fourth was published in the author's Serbo-Croatian translation by the publishing house Bratstvo edinstvo in Novi Sad in 1953. The fifth edition of 1968 was published by Mislja in Skopje, while the sixth edition was published the following year, 1969, by Prosveta in Skopje. There have been subsequent editions including the Kultura edition of 1981 and the Mislja edition of 1985 used in this article.

In 1966, three years prior to his death, Panov sent the original bound edition of 1939 to Prof. Horace G. Lunt.⁷ Panov inserted numerous revisions, including a typed draft for a new opening of the second scene of Act I. These revisions were included only in the 1969 and 1974 editions published in Skopje. All subsequent editions are based on the original bound version of 1939 and the 1949 text as edited by Ilija Milčín and Krum Stojanov.

The 1939 edition is indeed an "odd mixture of various dialects," but none of the numerous published introductions to the plays or studies devoted to Panov's work provides any detailed analysis of the linguistic modifications of the text. Because the language modifications of the dramatic text are worthy of a longer, more detailed study, here I will limit myself to several phonetic, morphological, syntactic and lexical features. This preliminary analysis provides a glimpse into how the author and director sought to transcend local dialect and to create a Macedonian work, which would be understood by speakers from different regions. The fact that the play was written, consciously or subconsciously, in a Macedonian hybrid dialect, must have electrified the audience watching plays in Macedonian for the first time. Since the play was not written in any one dialect, but took features from east and west, and north and south, the language of the play must have seemed familiar to everyone in the audience. The play was, indeed, a huge success when it opened. Aleksiev (1972: 195) notes that although it premiered toward the end of the season, it was seen by 11,305 people over the course of its thirty-seven performances. It was the biggest success of the season the following year as well. Aleksiev further remarks (*Ibid.*: 195): "It had similar success in other locations, including Belgrade, Sarajevo, Banja Luka, and other cities beyond the borders of Macedonia." In fact, he notes further (1976: 195) that the newspaper *Pravda* printed a cartoon with the caption: "If it weren't for the play *Pečalbari*, the theater itself would have had to go on *pečalba*!"

The 1939 edition is written in Macedonian orthography with some notable exceptions. Here we will look at several phonological features as reflected in the 1939 text. Standard Macedonian and the western dialects have a five-vowel system /a, e, i, o, u/, but the mid-central vowel schwa is phonemic in many dialects. In various dialects schwa may occur as a reflex of back jer, front jer, back nasal, or in the reflexes of syllabic *r* and *l*, as well as in words of Turkish origin.

In the *Pečalbari* text of 1939 the use of schwa is not systematic in its use nor in its orthographic representation. In most cases, Panov wrote two consonants together, a zero vowel representing schwa, but in other instances he used an apostrophe, the orthographic convention adopted in the standard lan-

⁷ I am deeply indebted to Prof. Lunt for giving this manuscript to me.

guage. He also used *jer* and the west central reflexes. The following variation is typical of this edition:

- (1) Schwa from back nasal: *мж*—*маж* 'man, husband,' *микиот* 'man's, husband's', *п'т*—*пат* 'road'
- (2) Syllabic *r*: *префрлил* 'passed,' but *вѣрне* 'rains'
- (3) Syllabic *l*: *исплна*—*исполни*
- (4) Words of Turkish origin: *пазарлак*—*пазарлак* 'barter'

By the 1949 edition all of these spellings conform to standard Macedonian reflexes and orthographic conventions:

- (5) *маж*, *пат*, *префрли*, *исполни*, *пазарлак*

In standard Macedonian, Common Slavic **tj* and **ktj* give *ќ*, **dj* gives *џ*. These sounds occur in Macedonian also as a result of Turkish loans and in a few other contexts. There is considerable dialect variation in pronunciation ranging from dorso-palatal to palatal (see Vidoeski 1965, 1999 and Friedman 1993a: 255). The current letters, orthographic *ќ* and *џ*, were not proposed until 1944–1945 (see Friedman 1993b: 169–70). Panov is inconsistent in orthographic convention, which may reflect typesetting problems as well as dialect mixing.⁸

In the 1939 edition we see at least the following: *ке*, *к'е*, *нејкет* for *ќе*, the future particle, and *ќјерко* for *ќерко*. While in the 1949 edition only *ќ* is used. In the 1939 edition we see consistent use of *Ѣ*. In standard Macedonian the word for 'foreign' is *туѓи*, in Serbian the form is *туђи*, while in Bulgarian it is *чужди*. Panov uses a hybrid form, which does not seem to be consistent with any dialect, namely *чуђи*.

In standard Macedonian, and the western dialects on which it is based, initial front and back nasals developed into /ja/, e.g., *јазик* 'language,' but in the 1939 text we find examples such as *етрва*, rather than standard *јамрва* 'sister-in-law,' the form which appears in later editions.

The palatal sonorants *l'*, *n'*, *r'* were lost or hardened in Macedonian central dialects, e.g., *луѓе* 'people,' *него* 'him,' *море* 'sea.' In the verbal noun in some western dialects and in the literary language we see the preservation of *њ*, e.g., *мислење* 'thought, idea,' *гледање* 'seeing, view,' but Panov is inconsistent and his verbal nouns reflect both eastern and western dialect influence, e.g., *мислане*, *гледане*, but *питување* 'asking, question.'

⁸ The Macedonian fonts for *ќ* and *џ* were not available for quite some time. In fact, these letters remained a typesetting problem into the 1950s. The journal *Nov Den* had a special note from the editor in its 1945 volume explaining that the fonts were not yet ready. Friedman 1998: 39 cites a similar reference in *Nova Makedonija*.

While /h/ is lost in most of western and part of eastern Macedonia (see Friedman 1993a: 257), the 1939 edition shows the presence of /h/ reflecting eastern dialect influence in some words, e.g., *орех* 'walnut,' *зрех* 'sin' for standard *орес*, *зреш*. In Serbian, labials plus *jot* developed into labial plus *lj*, e.g., *земља* 'land, country.' This epenthetic *l* did not develop in Macedonian, but some Serbianized forms showing this development occur in the 1939 text. Several of these errors were corrected in an errata list at the end of the text, e.g., in one dialogue both *здравје* and *здравље* occur (this was noted by the editor, and the errata lists corrects *здравље* to *здравје*):

- (6) Jordan: Со здравје! Многo здравље на дома!
'[Go] in good health! Good health to everyone at home!'

In the 1939 edition we also see the use of other reflexes as in the standard language, for example, front and back *jer* give *e* and *o* respectively: *ден* 'day,' *сон* 'dream.' We see no evidence here of the development of /ě/ to /a/ after /c/ as in eastern dialects, e.g., *цел* 'whole' occurs consistently.

Other non-standard spellings reflect either dialectal or colloquial speech, for example the loss of the final /t/ in word-final consonant clusters in words such as *радос* 'joy,' *младос* 'youth'; in place of standard *радост*, *младост*, which represent either colloquial allegro speech or southeastern dialect.⁹ Panov is inconsistent, and both forms occur.

When we turn to nominal and verbal morphology, the most striking feature of the 1939 text is the mixture of verbal forms. Variation in present-stem vowels is so great that it is difficult to systematize, therefore, I will limit my remarks on verbal morphology here to the presence of the third-person singular present desinence of *-t*, a western feature, and the eastern feature of verbal copula in the third person of the *l*-past. In the 1939 edition, Panov uses the western feature, prevalent in the Ohrid dialect, of the ending *-t* after stem vowel in the third-person singular.¹⁰ Here are two examples from the 1939 edition and the modifications in the 1949 edition.

⁹ These forms are explicitly mentioned in the transcripts of the Second Language Commission (see Risteski 1988: 375)

¹⁰ Friedman (1975: 94) notes the presence of the third-singular present desinence *-t* as the most salient difference he found in examination of different editions of the works from the 1930s by Krle and Kočov.

- (7) 1939a. Стојчо, кажи кој по го сакјаш да ти *бидет*
 бачо: Јован или Костадин?
 1949b. Стојче, кажи кого го сакаш *повек'е*¹¹ да ти
биде баче: Јован или Костадин?
 'Stojče, tell me who would you like to be your
 brother more: Jovan or Kostadin?'
 (8) 1939a. И на нејај и *вели* ...
 1949b. И нејзе и *вели* ...
 'And he says to her ...'

In the *l*-past the standard language uses the present tense of the verbal copula in all forms except the third person. I will not discuss possible variation in meanings which result from the absence or presence of the verbal copula in the third person (see, for example, Fielder 1996). Here I merely note that this morphological feature is present in the text of the 1939 edition, most likely due to both eastern dialect and possibly Serbian influence. See the examples below.

- (9) 1939a. Да не *е згрешил* пред господ!
 1949b. Да не *згрешил* пред господ!
 'May he not have sinned before God!'
 (10) 1939a. *Фрлил е* мерак на Симка ви!
 1949b. *Фрлил* мерак на Симка ви.
 'He's taken a shine to your Simka!'

The Macedonian pronominal system reflects a wide range of dialectal variation (see Vidoeski 1965, Friedman 1985, and Kramer and Schallert 1994). The 1939 edition reflects, for the most part, standard Macedonian forms. Variation occurs in a number of third-person forms including both subject and object forms. Panov alternates between western *moj* 'he,' *таа* 'she' and northern and eastern *он*.¹² In several instances he uses eastern *них* rather than standard *нив* for the object form of 'them.' The third-person feminine objective form appears as *на неја*, which in later editions is *на неа*.

¹¹ As noted in Note 8 above, the fonts for *ќ*, *џ* were not ready at the time of printing. The 1949 edition consistently uses *к*.

¹² Though as Friedman, 1993a, notes, the forms *он*, *она*, *оно*, *они* are permitted in the literary languages and at the time of publication of his article, these forms were on the increase in Skopje.

There are two striking syntactic features of the 1939 text, both of which might have been introduced by the editors who wished to "correct" the text. Clitic placement follows second position as in Serbian, and clitics are not used consistently for object reduplication. Both of these features are corrected in the 1949 edition to what is now standard, namely clitics precede finite verb forms and follow non-finite ones, and definite objects are reduplicated as are all indirect objects. A number of representative examples are given below:

Finite:

- (11) 1939a. Донеси, Рајно, малко ракија, *да ни* полесно
тече муабетот.
 1949b. Донеси, Рајно, малко ракија, *да ни* *тече*
 полесно зборот.
 'Bring us a little rakija, Rajna, to help our
 conversation flow more easily.'
 (12) 1939a. *Гледаш ја* Симка?
 1949b. *Ја гледаш* Симка?
 'Do you see Simka?'

Non-finite:

- (13) 1939a. Денеска, Јордане, по рано *се* дома *врни*.
 1949b. Денес, Јордане, порано дома *врати се*.
 'Today, Jordan, come home earlier.'
 (14) 1939a. Не *се* *срамувај*.
 1949b. Не *срами се*.
 'Don't be ashamed.'

We see inconsistency in the reduplication of direct object clitics. Whereas the object is reduplicated in Example 12 above, reduplication is absent as well in the 1939 edition:

- (15) 1939a. Симка, оди подмеси *квасот* за утре.
 1949b. Симке, оди подмеси *го квасот* за утре.
 'Simka, go mix the yeast for tomorrow.'
 (16) 1939a. нека ти Симка даде *големиот* *тефтер*.
 1949b. нека ти *го* даде Симка *големиот* *тефтер*.
 'Have Simka give you the large account book.'

When we turn to the lexicon, one of the most striking features is the use of Turkisms. The publishing history of *Pečalbari* reflects the rise and fall and rise again of many Turkish words. Other studies have discussed how Turkisms were deleted from texts, only to reappear as recognition of their importance to both conversational register and stylistic nuance (see, for example, Friedman 1996, Kramer 1992, Belyavski-Frank 1999). The table below is a small sample of Turkisms, showing the replacement, continuation, or deletion and reappearance in subsequent editions of *Pečalbari*.¹³

(17)

1939	1949	1969	1985	Translation
<i>Substitution:</i>				
Сабajле	Из утрина	Изутрина	Изутрина	'in the morning'
Салде	Само	Само	Само	'only'
Адет	Ред	Ред	Ред	'custom'
Акл	Ум	Ум	Ум	'mind'
борц	долг	долг	долг	'debt'

Preservation:

Рат	Раат	Раат	Раат	'pleasure'
Адет	Адет	Адет	Адет	'custom'
Мерак	Мерак	Мерак	Мерак	'pleasure'

Reintroduction:

Муабет	Збор	Збор	Муабет	'conversation'
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Also at issue are some lexical items that are dialectal, archaic or Serbian; for example the verb 'to ask' is *numba/numa* in the 1939 edition. This verb, common in southeastern dialects, Serbian and Bulgarian, is replaced in 1949 by *прашува/праша*. Other words need to be researched further to determine their origin, since they are not listed in the three-volume dictionary, nor mentioned specifically in dialect studies, e.g., *вике* for *веке* 'already,' *вајден* for *овој ден*, *коту* for *како* 'how,' *могај* for *могааш* 'then.'

The above discussion gives a sense of the dialectal complexity of the 1939 edition. When we look at the 1949 edition, however, we see a text that

¹³ These examples represent specific contexts, which does not mean that the particular Turkism is entirely absent. For example, the word *adem* is replaced in some contexts by *ped*, while in others, it remains.

conforms virtually to all the features of standard Macedonian. Orthographically the only oddity is the use of an apostrophe for *ќ* and *џ*. Phonologically we see none of the inconsistencies of the earlier text. Morphologically and syntactically there is little to comment on that differs from the standard language. The language of the play is so colloquial that it would be difficult for one to purge the idiosyncrasies of the earlier text without a solid knowledge of the standard.

The 1949 edition remains, for all intents and purposes, the authoritative edition, but there are many small changes which have occurred in subsequent editions. In some instances, as mentioned above, we see the reintroduction of individual Turkisms, perhaps because after forty years of standardized texts the editors felt confident about reintroducing colloquial speech. There are a number of changes, requiring further study, affecting the definiteness of individual noun phrases. Below are some changes in definiteness which occurred between the 1949 and 1985 editions; in each instance, the 1949 italicized form is indefinite, but definite in 1985:

- (18) 1949a. Па што беше личен, личен како *твој*
Костадин.
1985b. Па што беше личен, личен како *твојот*
Костадин.
'My was he handsome, handsome like your
Kostadin.'
- (19) 1949a. Лесно ти е тебе, да си спомнуваш на *младост*.
1985b. Лесно ти е тебе, да си спомнуваш на *младоста*.
'It's easy for you to talk about youth.'
- (20) 1949a. На работа, вели, тука во *роден* крај.
1985b. На работа, вели, тука во *родниот* крај.
'To work, he says, here in his native land.'

The work of the inter-war playwrights played a major role in the standardization of the Macedonian language. The different editions of *Pečalbari* help us to trace the standardization of this drama from so-called dialect literature to what we can term standard vernacular. Panov may have intended his initial play to reflect the dialect of his *pečalbar* acquaintances in Belgrade. What he produced together with his editors, however, was a hybrid—a language that showed the traces of his education and experience and the speech of subsequent editors and Serbian censors. The 1949 edition shows clearly the rapid shift to a codified norm. This edition reflects the phonological, morphologi-

cal, and syntactic norms of the modern Macedonian standard language. The play has gone through several subsequent editions which reflect changes in focus, namely the artistic proposals of Panov which were subsequently rejected, and modifications in lexicon. These changes are minor compared with those made in the decade between 1939 and 1949. The first edition of the play as performed on the Skopje stage, despite its linguistic inconsistencies, played a significant role not only in the codification of the Macedonian standard language, but also in helping to bring artistic performance to the residents of Macedonia in a language they understood.

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