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**SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE HISTORY AND CURRENT
STATUS OF THIRD-PERSON CLITIC PRONOUNS
IN MACEDONIAN**

The Macedonian literary language has developed a rich inventory of personal pronouns which compensate in some ways for the loss of nominal case. The pronouns have subject, direct object and indirect forms. In addition, the direct object and object pronouns occur in both long, or full, forms and clitic, or short, forms (complete paradigms are given below) In his grammar of the Macedonian literary language, Koneski (1981: 333) notes that there is a great deal of variation in Macedonian dialects in the use of pronominal clitics and that speakers of regional dialects must pay special attention to the acquisition of the literary norm. At the University of Toronto we teach a two-year Macedonian language sequence. The course is taken mainly, but not exclusively, by first-generation Canadian-born children of Macedonians. Many of these students' families are from the south-west corner of Macedonia, from the regions around Kostur, Lerin and Prilep. Acquisition of the pronominal system has consistently proved to be one of their biggest challenges, while for students of non-Macedonian background but with training in other Slavic languages the pronominal system and use of clitics is easily mastered. In order to determine why these forms were so varied and the specific way in which different dialect systems developed we studied the development of the clitics and their dialectal distribution. Throughout this paper we will limit our discussion to the third-person pronouns. In order to understand the current system of clitics it is necessary to look back at the history of their development.

We begin our survey of the historical origins of the currently attested third-person clitic forms in Macedonian dialects with a brief discussion of the orthotonic/clitic system in the Common Slavic

(CSI) first- and second-person pronouns, since these were the only pronouns to exhibit a systematic formal distinction between the two kinds of forms as inherited by Slavic directly from Indo-European (IE), and thus provided a ready framework for analogous developments in the third person, for which the comparative IE evidence presents no consistent etymon (recall that the Slavic third-person paradigm represents a composite of the demonstrative **on-* and the anaphoric pronoun **j-*). This approach seems all the more prudent in view of the fact that the evidence for clitics in the third-person pronoun in Old Church Slavic (OCS) is relatively sparse and somewhat controversial.

It should be borne in mind¹ that even in the first- and second-person pronouns, the only OCS clitic forms inherited directly from IE are the dat. sg. forms *mi*, *ti* (cf. Gk *moi*, *toi*), which serve as the direct prototypes for the Macedonian indirect object clitics, whereas the acc. sg. *mę*, *tę* (the probable prototypes for Macedonian *me*, *te*) represent the original IE orthotonic form (**me-*, cf. Gk *ἐμέ*) extended by a particle (cf. Skt *mā-m*). Thus we find *mę* occurring with pragmatic emphasis in sentence-initial position (e.g., *mę že za nezlobę moję prijetę* [Ps. XL, 13, Sinai Psalter]), whereas true clitics, such as *mi*, could occur only in second, unstressed position, as described in Wackernagel's Rule for the placement of (non-possessive) enclitics in IE. The only evidence for a direct reflex of the original 1sg. acc. clitic is found in older and peripheral forms of Lechitic (hence OPol *czemu mię męczysz* [cf. Greek clitic *me*] vs. post-prepositional *na mię* [cf. orthotonic Skt *ma-m*]). The replacement of the original orthotonic form *mę* by the genitive form *mene* is attested as a less frequent variant as early as OCS (cf. *ěko vy mene* [Mar.]/*mę* [Ass., Sav.] *vъzljubiste*). This innovation is also found in later medieval texts (cf. the occurrence of *mene* instead of *mę* in the Bologna Psalter in the passage quoted above). The spread of the genitive form *mene* to the syntactic position of the accusative in this

¹ Our historical survey is derived principally from Meillet 1934, 1937, except as noted otherwise.

particular paradigm coincided with a stage in which OCS *me, te* could function either as clitics or as orthotonic forms, whereas *mi, ti* behaved as clitics with almost perfect consistency (cf. their non-occurrence after prepositions, their lack of emphasis, and their conformity to Wackernagel's Law; see Gavranek/Havránek 1963: 20-28 for details).

We would claim that the gradual enclinenomisation of originally orthotonic *mę, tę* was partially induced by a reanalysis of (all?) monosyllabic (or CV-structured?) oblique pronominal forms as potentially clitic on the basis of pairs such as dat. sg *mъně-mi, tebě-ti*. This reinterpretation would have been a natural response to the phonologically anomalous structure of *me, te* within the sub-paradigm of oblique orthotonic pronouns, of which all but the accusative were originally either di- or tri-syllabic (cf. *mene, mъně, mъnojъ* vs. *mę*). In contradistinction to *mę*, the genitive *mene* (which already occurred in accusative function in the interrogative *kъto, kogo*) not only exhibited a structure similar to that of the other orthotonic forms, but was also more suitable for unequivocal orthotonic connotation, since the genitive did not inherit a clitic form from IE.

These same two factors (orthotonic stem reinterpretation and genitive-accusative syncretism) also appear to have variously influenced the development of clitic forms in the third person singular, to which we now turn.

As noted above, the third-person pronoun in Slavic represents a composite paradigm, in which the nominative case is based on the demonstrative **on-* (less commonly, **t-/toj-*), while all oblique cases are formed from the anaphoric pronominal stem **j-*. According to Meillet this anaphoric pronoun could be either clitic or orthotonic, which may serve to explain the presence of two variants in the original masc. acc. sg. form, cf. **jon > allegro *jb* vs. *lento *je* (the first component in the secondary formation of the genitive-accusative *jego*, where **-go* is a particle).

In addition to the apparent presence of allegro/lento variants in the masc. acc. sg., the monosyllabic phonological structure of the

acc. sg. form in both the masculine and feminine stood in contrast to the disyllabic structure of the other orthotonic forms (as was the case in the 1st and 2nd persons), cf. 1) acc. sg. fem. *jə* (as in Gk *tān*, Skt *tām*) vs. instr. sg. fem. *jejə* (as in Skt *tāyā*); 2) acc. sg. masc. **jə > i* (as in Gk nom. sg. *hos*) vs. gen. sg. masc. *jego/togo* < **ta-go*, where **ta* = gen.-abl., **-go* = particle (or dat. sg. masc. *jemu*, *tomu*, as in Skt *tāsmāi*, OPr *kasmu*).

While both the masc. and fem. acc. sg. third-person pronouns were susceptible to replacement by suitable disyllabic forms, the innovation occurred earlier in the masculine, due to the historical pattern of gen.-acc. syncretism in Slavic within the animate sub-class of masc. morphological paradigms. Thus, *jego* and **jə > i* (as described in Vaillant 1965:179) exhibit an overlapping pattern of occurrence roughly analogous to that of *mene* and *mę* (as opposed to *mьně* and *mi*), although one should note the persistent appearance of the clitic **jə* after prepositions in OCS (e.g., *i straxь napade na nь* Lk. 1.12, Zographensis). In contradistinction to the masc., the earliest secondary orthotonic acc. sg. form in the fem. third-person pronoun post-dates the OCS period and is not necessarily derived from the gen. sg. The form in question (*jejə*) is already attested in medieval Macedonian texts (see Koneski 1967: 145). Once again, this development is best interpreted within the context of the entire orthotonic oblique paradigm and the anomalous position of monosyllabic *jə* therein. In this connection, it is interesting to recall Meillet's (1965: 435-436) observation that the tonic Gsf *toję* and DLsf *toji* (in contrast to the archaic Skt GAbI *tāsyah*, D *tāsyai*, and L *tāsyam*) were derived from the reinterpreted stem of the archaic Isf *toj-ə* through the addition of the corresponding umlauted nominal desinences **-ę*, **-i* (cf., e.g., *dušę*, *duši* vs. *baby₂*, *babě₂*). In other words, there is evidence for early CSI building of new forms onto a reinterpreted pronominal stem, a process which is recapitulated in the later Balkan Slavic development. In the particular instance of the innovative acc. sg. form *jejə* the process of stem reinterpretation would have been reinforced by the coincidence of the potential innovative form with the already existing instrumental singular. This

coincidence would have contributed to the historical process of case syncretism within this morphological sub-system.²

The OCS evidence for potential prototypes of third-person clitic pronouns other than **jь* is comparatively limited. The forms cited in Vaillant (1965:145-146) are as follows: first, in the gen. sg. fem. we find *ję* (for *jeję*): 1) *i marty sestry ję* 'of her sister' < **sestry jeję* [Jo. XI, 1, Marianus]; 2) *reče že I[su]sъ ne dęi ję* 'Let her alone' [Jn. XII, 7, Marianus]. Vaillant interprets this as avoidance of trivocalic sequences, as in the variantly attested form of the possessive pronoun *moję* (alongside original *mojejъ*). (For a similar interpretation, see Diels 1932: 115, as referred to by Schmalstieg (1982: 63), who claims that these feminine forms reflect an indefinite sub-declension opposed to the longer [putatively definite] forms). Secondly, we find dat. sg. fem. *i* (for *jeji*): *I[su]sъ že reče-i* < **reče jeji* [Mk. VII, 27, Marianus], which Vaillant attributes to haplography (though the same kind of trisyllabic sequence obtains as in the preceding examples). Thirdly, we find gen. sg. masc. *go* (instead of *jego*) and dat. sg. masc. *mu* (for *jemu*) each attested once: *lice-go* [Sinai Psalter 94.2] and *I[su]sъ že reče ne branite-mu* [Mk. 9.39, Marianus], both of which are again attributed by Vaillant to haplography.

These rarely attested forms differ both from original clitics such as *mi* and secondary ones such as *mę* in two important respects: they are limited to post-vocalic positions and they can occur in the genitive, which had no proper clitic form in CSI. On the other hand, their occurrence as genuine sandhi variants of the corresponding full forms is quite plausible, even in the examples which Vaillant ascribes to haplography.

² It is worth noting that *jeję* could actually be derived directly from the original gen. sg. *jeję* in Western Macedonian dialects, if one assumes that the front nasal in this position followed the same development as in **językъ* > *jazik*. Although *ja* is also the most common fem. direct object clitic in Aegean and Eastern Macedonian dialects (where **językъ* typically yields *ezsk*), *je* is also found on the south-eastern periphery (see Vidoeski 1965, Map 17). The possible links between the original gen. sg., the medieval evidence, and the modern dialect forms warrant further investigation.

Им ги дадов книгите на студентите.

them (indirect) them (direct) I gave the books to the students.

'I gave the books to the students.'

Дајте им ги книгите на студентите!

Give (imper.) them (indirect) them (direct) the books to the students!

'Give the books to the students!'

Давајќи им ги книгите на студентите, ништо не реков.

Giving (verbal adverb) them (indirect) them (direct) the books to the students, nothing I said.

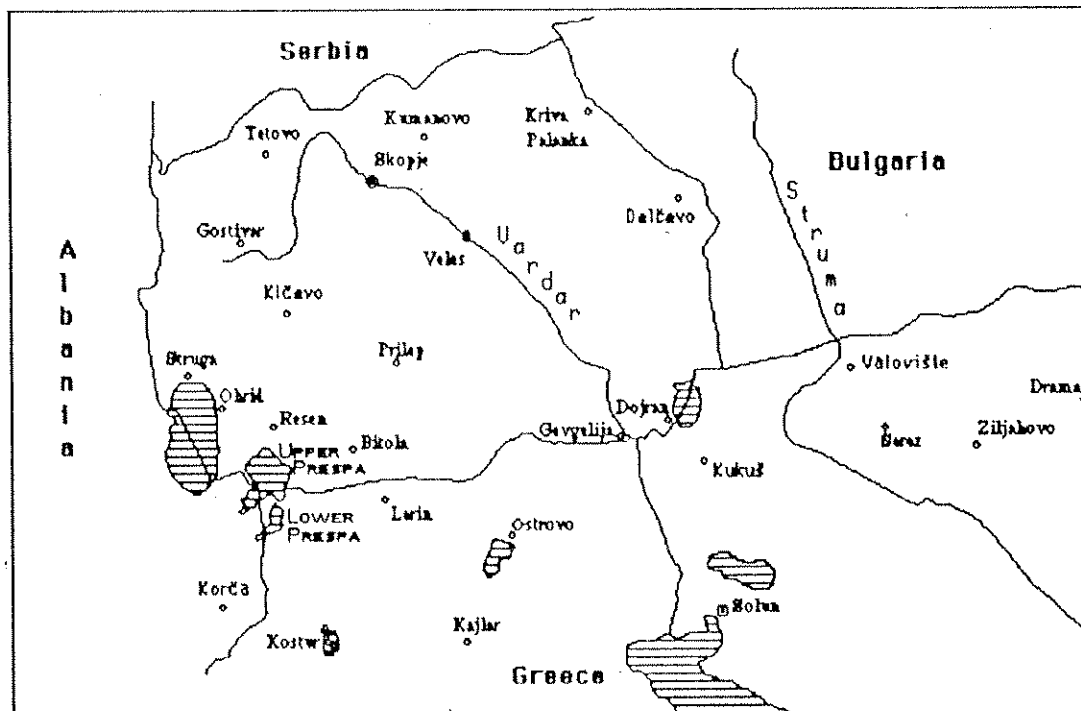
'While giving the books to the students I said nothing.'

Those students who speak some Macedonian at home tend to produce sentences omitting the clitics, as in example (a) below, or they choose clitics with no regard to grammatical gender, as in example (b). Below, following their sentences, which are starred because they violate rules of the standard language, we give the codified norm:

- a. *Дадов книгата на мајка ми.
И ја дадов книгата на мајка ми.
'I gave the book to my mother.'
- b. *Му го дадов книгата на мајка ми.
И ја дадов книгата на мајка ми.
'I gave the book to my mother.'

On the basis of our observations of student use of the pronominal clitics the following questions arose: are the difficulties in acquisition of these forms due to English interference or dialect interference; what factors contributed to the particular distribution of the clitic forms in Macedonian dialects; why is there a tendency to generalise masculine forms; why do we see gender levelling first in the dative case; and finally, is the south-west region of Macedonian linguistic territory unique in the levelling of case and gender distinctions. In the remainder of this paper we will propose tentative answers to these questions.

Discussion of the dialectal distribution of these forms is based in part on the survey by Vidoeski (Vidoeski 1965). Our intention is not to give all the variation, but only those data which are pertinent here. Refer to the map below during the following discussion.



MACEDONIA

Use of the masculine clitic *go* covers most of Macedonian territory. In the north there are dialects which use *ga* and in the south *gu*. The masculine indirect object pronoun *mu* covers all of Macedonian linguistic territory.

The feminine clitic forms show much greater variation. In the standard language and in eastern Macedonian the direct object clitic is *ja*, in the north around Tetovo and Kumanovo the direct object form is *gu*, in most of the western territory, including Skopje, Veles, Prilep, Struga, Ohrid and Resen the direct object clitic is *je*. The feminine indirect object pronoun in the standard language and in the eastern dialect regions is *i*, while in the west it is *je*. In the north there is a pocket which employs *vu*, in most of Aegean Macedonia the feminine indirect object is *mu* and there are also isolated dialect areas using *in* or *xi*.

The forms for the plural third-person clitics are as follows: in the standard language and in the north and east the direct object form is *gi*, in the west it is *i*, in isolated areas one finds *xa* and *in*. The indirect object pronoun is *im* in most of Macedonian linguistic territory, but *em* occurs around Tetovo and in the north west and *mu* occurs in the south in some Aegean Macedonian dialects.

The picture that emerges is one in which much of Macedonian linguistic territory maintains a system of six distinct clitics even though specific forms may be different from the standard:

Tetovo:

| | | |
|--------|-----------|-----------|
| Masc. | <i>go</i> | <i>mu</i> |
| Fem. | <i>ga</i> | <i>je</i> |
| Plural | <i>gi</i> | <i>em</i> |

Gevgelija:

| | | |
|--------|-----------|-----------|
| Masc. | <i>gu</i> | <i>mu</i> |
| Fem. | <i>ja</i> | <i>i</i> |
| Plural | <i>gi</i> | <i>im</i> |

Many dialect areas, however, do not maintain six distinct forms. In those dialects which do not preserve the full complement of six distinct forms there are two pronounced tendencies: (1) case syncretism, that is, in the feminine or plural one form will be generalised for both direct and indirect object; or (2) gender/number syncretism, that is, the masculine dative form *mu* will spread to the feminine and/or plural.

Let us look at some specific examples. For this overview we are again basing our observations on published surveys of dialect data:

Kumanovo:

| | | |
|--------|-----------|-----------|
| Masc. | <i>ga</i> | <i>mu</i> |
| Fem. | <i>gu</i> | <i>i</i> |
| Plural | <i>gi</i> | <i>gi</i> |

The plural accusative *gi* has taken over functions of the dative, e.g. *He ги се дапада на људи*. 'People don't like it.' (Vidoeski 1962: 169)

In western Macedonia and especially in Aegean Macedonia³ the tendency for certain forms to become generalised is particularly pronounced. Below are data from Vevčani in the region of Struga and Dihovo in the region of Bitola (Hendriks 1976; Groen 1977):

Vevčani:

| | | |
|--------|-----------|-----------|
| Masc. | <i>go</i> | <i>mu</i> |
| Fem. | <i>je</i> | <i>je</i> |
| Plural | <i>i</i> | <i>im</i> |

Dihovo:

| | | |
|--------|------------|-----------|
| Masc. | <i>go</i> | <i>mu</i> |
| Fem. | <i>je</i> | <i>mu</i> |
| Plural | <i>i/j</i> | <i>mu</i> |

While the areal distribution of clitics may already appear somewhat complex, the situation at the local level is yet more complex. Specifically, in dialect texts we observe two additional factors which should be considered. First, there is a greater degree of variation within local dialect areas and even in individual speech than is evident from the dialect surveys. For example, in one dialect tale from the village of Debreste in the region of Prilep the same speaker shows vacillation in the feminine accusative form, using *a*, *ja*, and *je*:

³ An excellent discussion of clitic use in south-western Macedonian dialects is found in Peev 1988. While his discussion is more narrowly focused on these dialects, he treats many of the issues raised here.

Да-ми-а-дајш ортомата, к-одам в-ливафе.
 'Give me the rope, I am going to the meadow.'

Не можам да ти-ја-дам
 'I can't give it to you.'

нејкум да ти-је-дам.
 'I won't give it to you.'

Secondly, there appears to be a tendency to avoid reduplication of the same clitic with different case meaning in the same sentence. Thus, we found no examples⁴ in the dialect texts of sentences such as:

? Је је дадов книгата на мајка ми.
 'I gave the book to my mother.'

corresponding to the codified norm:

Ќ ја дадов книгата на мајка ми.

Thirdly, there is a similar tendency to avoid homonymy of forms from different personal paradigms. Thus, we find that *ja* as the reflex of the Asf clitic and *ja* as the 1sg subject form do not tend to co-occur in the same territory (cf. the nearly complementary geographical distribution of the sets 1sg *ja*/Asf *je* and 1sg *jas*/Asf *ja* in the modern dialects, see Maps 1 and 17 in Vidoeski 1965).

All of the above factors may help in explaining the degree of variation: there are competing tendencies toward simplification and avoidance of homonymy. The example above with three forms of the feminine direct object point to the greater phonological instability of the feminine forms, which are either purely vocalic (*i*, *a*) or begin with a palatal glide (*j*-). Compare the corresponding masculine forms (*mu*, *go*) in which the initial consonantal phonemes (*m*-, *g*-)

⁴ The absence of such examples may be just a statistical accident, but it may also point to the avoidance of such syntactic constructions. Field work will surely answer this question.

may have contributed to the preference for these forms to be generalised. But there are other factors which should also be considered.

In dialects which do not maintain a six-way distinction the most usual type of merger is the loss of distinctive dative case forms. There are several possible causes for this development. Friedman (1994) notes that in Bulgarian

object reduplication has been attributed to the simplification or elimination of case systems in favour of analytic constructions. While it is true that reduplication can disambiguate, the fact is that in the vast majority of cases in which it occurs it does not serve this function. Facultativity in Bulgarian mitigates against such a functional explanation. What reduplication does is focus the attention of the addressee on a particular part of the message. And as such serves purposes of communicative dynamism.

Other factors cited for clitic triggering in Bulgarian include: definiteness, specificity and OV word order (marked in relation to SVO). In Leafgren's study on clitic use in Bulgarian (Leafgren 1992), reduplication of the direct object occurs in only 2-3% of those contexts where possible, while the reduplication of the indirect object is found 2.5 times more often. This correlates with Givon's (1976: 152, see also Friedman 1994) claim that indirect objects are more likely to be topics than direct objects. This distribution also reflects the fact that in Macedonian all indirect but only definite direct objects are duplicated. In Albanian reduplication is facultatively omitted for direct objects but not for indirect. Because all indirect objects must have a reduplicated clitic the reduplicated form becomes simply a syntactic signal marking the presence of an indirect object. The reduplication of the direct object is more crucial in terms of discourse structure since it provides more specific information, namely that the direct object is definite.

Macedonian dialects are not unique in having developed an asymmetrical clitic system: in the south-western dialect areas there is a high degree of bilingualism. The languages with which Macedonian may have been in contact (Greek, Albanian, Turkish and

Aromanian) also do not exhibit a six-way distinction in clitics — Turkish and Albanian do not have distinct gender, while Greek merges genders and employs the masculine form for all indirect object plural clitics. If we look outside the Balkans, Spanish, for example, maintains a gender distinction in the direct object masc. *lo* (or *le*) and fem. *la*, but not in the indirect: *le*.

On the basis of the above we add these observations to the growing literature on clitics:

1. There is a cyclical pattern in the history of the pronominal system in Slavic leading to characteristic types of innovation involving tonic/clitic opposition;
2. Masculine forms are phonologically more resilient since they contain a stop (oral *g*-, nasal *m*-) whereas the feminine formant was just a glide (*j*-) and thus susceptible to elision;
3. The isogloss pattern reflects an avoidance of homophony across persons as a driving mechanism, e.g. 1sg nom. *ja/jas* : 3sg acc. fem *je/ja*;
4. There are pragmatic arguments which account for the loss of a distinct dative case;
5. Gender markedness accounts for the generalisation of masculine clitics, masculine is less marked semantically, although morphologically more "pronounced" or "prominent", cf. Modern Greek;
6. Language contact is insufficient as the only explanation for paradigm simplification;
7. Dialect surveys, while a useful tool, cannot take the place of in-depth analysis of individual dialects, since the variation in local systems is greater than acknowledged;
8. In the Macedonian language spoken in Toronto, English does have some impact on the acquisition of the pronominal system.

There are, then, various factors which have contributed to the historical development and distribution of clitics in Macedonian dialects: phonological development, language and inter-dialect contact, sentential pragmatics have all played a role. The Macedonian of our

students reflects this history. The system they employ is clearly influenced by English when they omit clitics, but when they merge genders in the direct and indirect cases they are following a logical analogic levelling tendency which had already been developing in their home dialect. Further work must be done to map more carefully the dialect range of individual forms. The dialect geography of clitic use will surely shed light on a number of questions pertaining to the chronology of case loss and case syncretism.

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