Changes of the Preposition Functions in Isolated Greek Dialects in Bulgaria

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Abstract:

The broadening of the preposition functions is a natural result of the analytical evolution, the latter being the most important feature of the Balkan Linguistic Union.

On the territory of the Balkan Peninsula there are still dialects that are isolated from the languages they belong to and function in a foreign language environment. In the syntax of the isolated dialects, the most abstract (grammaticalized) prepositions have taken over the functions of several other prepositions. In the Greek dialects in Bulgaria it is the preposition *pe* (< από), which has been developed by changing its primary meaning of moving away, namely: starting point in time and space; cause; origin; agent in passive construction, etc., and now it replaces in the first place the preposition *με*, and then partially the prepositions *σε* and *για*.

It is interesting to note that the same phenomenon is observed in two other isolated Balkan dialects in Bulgaria: in the Albanian dialect in the village of Mandritsa (Southern Bulgaria), and in the Munten-Oltentia Rumanian dialects in settlements on the southern bank of the Danube (Northern Bulgaria).

In this special state of isolated Balkan dialects it cannot be definitively proved that the source of interference is the contact language. Still, they react as other languages do in regions of language contacts by undergoing changes not reproducing models of the local language.

Key words: *Languages in contact, Isolated Balkan dialects, Grammaticalized prepositions: από*

1. Analyticity and the destiny of the preposition in the Balkan languages

Analyticity is one of the most important features of the Balkan Linguistic Union. The narrowing of the declension pattern and the corresponding broadening of the preposition functions is a natural result of the analytical development. The most abstract prepositions, which had grammatical meanings, acquired parallel functions to the corresponding prepositions in each of the Balkan languages.

2. The prepositions in isolated Balkan dialects

On the territory of the Balkan Peninsula there are still dialects that are isolated from the languages they belong to and function in a foreign language environment[1]. Usually such dialects, outside the political borders, maintain areal continuity with the language which they belong to genetically and represent its periphery. Such is the case with the dialect

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[1] The data used in this study come from field studies carried out by a French-Bulgarian team working within the framework of the "Rila 2/11 Program", 2005 – 2007 in settlements of northern Greek dialects in Bourgas, Sozopol, Pomorie, Nessebăr; it also makes use of data from earlier years. The cited Greek examples were transcribed by Eleni Valma.

of the descendants of the ancient Greek colonists, inhabiting nowadays the towns and cities on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. At times, as a result of migration, dialects become totally isolated from the integral territory of the respective language. That was the case of the Sarakatsani (Bulgarian каракачани, Karakachani) in Bulgaria. Both dialects are related to the Northern Greek dialects.

In the isolated Balkan dialects on the territory of Bulgaria there has been a tendency of the transformation of some of the prepositions into a universal vehicle for the manifestation of syntactic relations, notwithstanding its initially established characteristics.

In the historical development of the old grammaticalized prepositions there is also a representative number of cases whereby these prepositions have taken up functions of prepositions close in meaning and use: as far back as Latin the preposition *de* took over the prepositions *ab* and *ex* (Реферовская 1966: 140), and in ancient Greek ἀπό started being used instead of ἐξ, παρά and ὑπό (Thumb 1910:98).

In the Greek dialect, spoken on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, this is the case with the preposition *pe* [2] (< ἀπό); however, some special changes in the functions of ἀπό are not observed in the *Sarakatsani* dialect. The aim of this paper is to draw attention to some uses of the proposition ἀπό 'from/of/by' in the Greek dialects spoken in Bulgaria. A prerequisite to it is outlining its characteristics in common Greek.

3. The preposition ἀπό 'from/of/by' in Greek

The system of relations expressed by the corresponding prepositions in Alb. *nga/prej*, Bulg. *om* [ot], Gr. *ἀπό*, Roum. *de* has been developed by broadening their common primary meaning of *moving away* namely: starting point in time and space; cause; origin; agent in passive structures, etc.

In the Greek prepositional system the preposition *ἀπό* has the following characteristic features:

● It is related to the old prepositions, i.e. it has completely lost any link with its original lexical meaning; even the etymological analysis can adduce only correspondences with Indo-European (Chantraine 1977).
● It is related to the group of the most characteristic grammaticalized prepositions together with its correspondences in the other Balkan languages. It is one of the most frequently used, together with *με, σε, γιά* (Τριανταφυλλίδης 1978:387).
● This is the only one of the old prepositions which functions also as a prefix (Τριανταφυλλίδης 1978:386). By way of comparison, in Bulgarian all the prepositions are also prefixes, preserving some obsolete meanings of the respective prepositions only in the formation of some words, - e.g.. *c-* [s-] in *с-лизам* [s-lizam] 'go/come/get down', *с-валям* [s-valjam] 'to take down', *с-веждам* [s-vezhdam] 'come, bow /boil down', 'take/pull/drag down' (movement from top to bottom, a meaning in Old Bulgarian which is preserved in other Slavic languages).

The following examples with the prefix *ἀπό-* are excerpted from the dialect of Sozopol (Σταλίδης, forthcoming), yet some of them are common Greek:

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[2] For other forms cf. Σταλίδης, Κ. Γ. Η πρόθεση «από» στο γλωσσικό ιδίωμα των κατοίκων από τη Σωζόπολη της Ανατολικής Ρωμυλίας (forthcoming).

-*ποκόβω* = *απογαλακτίζω το μωρό, αποθηλάζω, αποκόβω* 'stop breastfeeding (a baby)',

[< *αποκόβω* 'cut off or down completely' < *απὸ* + *κόπτω*];

(A semantic and word-formation parallel with the Bulg. *от- бивам* [ot-bivam].)

- *πομένω* [< *απομένω* 'be left (in a certain place or condition) 'remain' < *απὸ* + *μένω*];

- *πορρίχνω* 'obstetrics miscarry 'abort' [< *απορίχνω* 'throw away' < *απὸ* + *ρίχνω*][3].

(A semantic and word-formation parallel with the Bulg. *по-мятам* [po-mjatam].)

● The most abstract grammatical meanings – indirect object and possession, – the final "havens" of the dative and genitive inflexion in the Balkan languages, are manifested by means of syntactic structures with the preposition *на* [na] only in Bulgarian, the latter corresponding to *σε*. In Greek the inflected form realizing indirect object competes with the prepositional-case structure (*σε* + Acc.):

*Το απόγευμα θα ακολουθήσει η εκλογή των πέντε αντιπροέδρων, θέσεις που κατανέμονται στα τρία πρώτα κόμματα ως εξής: Ο πρώτος, δεύτερος και τρίτος αντιπρόεδρος θα ανήκει **στη** ΝΔ, ο τέταρτος **στο** ΠΑΣΟΚ και ο πέμπτος **στο** ΚΚΕ.* (Μακεδονία 27.07.2007 http://web-corpora.net/Greek Corpus/search/index.php? interface_language=en (accessed on January 10, 2018)

'In the afternoon, the elections of the five deputy chairpersons will continue; these are places that are distributed among the leading three parties as follows: first, second and third deputy chair-person will go to the New Democracy, the fourth – to PASOK and the fifth – to the Communist Party of Greece.'

However, the possessive relations are manifested only with the Genitive (with some exceptions in the dialect of the *Sarakatsani* , who use also the preposition *σε*).

In Greek, the preposition *από* (and also its correspondences in the other languages of the Balkan Linguistic Union) can express *possession* provided the latter is close to the idea of *exiting/ detachment* (partitiveness, provenance), even as a synonym of *Genitivus possessivus* (Τζάρτζανος 1946: 86, 116). In the Greek dialects of the Bulgarian Black Sea coast such a use of *από* is also attested:

(1) **Pe** ti jajà mu sto spìt, milùsan òli elinikà. (Nesebăr)
'At my grandma's house they all spoke Greek.'

The expression of possession as provenance with the preposition *ot* occurs in early Old Bulgarian, i.e. in the 10th – 11th c. (Мирчев 1978:281-282); nowadays it is attested with varying frequency of occurrence in the South-Western Bulgarian dialects in the regions of Resen, Voden/ Edessa, Lerin/ Florina, Kostour/ Kastoria, Debur, Blagoevgrad, Prilep, Ohrid (Василева 1931:461-462; Милетич 1935: 65).

The northern Greek dialects of Thessaly and Macedonia, where the *από*-possessive structures are concentrated as Thumb attests (Thumb 1910:30), together with those of

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[3] In this case the English translation follows J. Georgacas, *A Modern Greek-English Dictionary* kompos.edu.gr

the South-Western Bulgarian dialects (Macedonia), form an areal continuum of Roman type in the expression of possession, the latter may have been boosted up by the bilingualism of the Aromanian population in Macedonia.

3.1. Borrowing of prepositional functions under the conditions of bilingualism

Borrowings from the surrounding language, which is also dominant socially and culturally, are to be expected and are considered normal. In our case it is observed that specific uses of the Greek preposition *από*, which are not attested in its corresponding prepositions in Bulgarian and Albanian, were adopted by the South Albanian and Western Bulgarian dialects, the latter being in contact with the Greek language. It will suffice to mention only a few of them:

• The spatial meaning of "catching" is realized in the Albanian dialects of Zagorie and Myzeqe with the preposition *prej* 'from' instead of the preposition *për* ' for':

   E zuri prej qafe (Zagorie) 'He caught him by the neck.' (Totoni 1962:206)
   E kap pi veshi (Seman, Myzeqe) 'He caught his ear.' (Thomai 1961:109), as in Greek:
   πιάνω απ᾽το χαίρι 'I catch his hand', *δένω απ᾽το δέντρο* 'I bind with the tree' (Thumb 1910:96);

The expression of *content*, *storage capacity* that affects the government of the verb "fill (full)", under the influence of Greek, where after *γεμίζω/γεμάτος* 'fill/ full' it is *από* that is used: *γεμίζει από παιδιά* 'full of children', but *με* 'with' is also acceptable: *στρώμα γεμάτο με μαλλί* 'a mattress stuffed with wool' (Τζάρτζανος 1946 89-90), in the dialect of Gotse Delchev (Nevrokop, South-Western Bulgaria). It is a Bulgarian dialect which has taken over the Greek structure: *Пазар'е е пъл'ан' от нарот* [Pazar'e e păl'an ot narot] for „pălen s narod" 'The market place was full of people.' (Мирчев 1936: 109).

3.2. The internal development of prepositional functions under the conditions of isolation

The functions of the prepositions cannot always be explained in terms of the influence of the language of socio-cultural interaction. In this special state of isolated Balkan dialects it cannot be definitively proved that the source of interference is the contact language. Still, they react as other languages do in regions of language contacts by undergoing changes not reproducing models of the local language.
3.2.1. Superficially, it seems strange that the **preposition *από* replaces *με*.** The preposition *από* 'from', whose basic meaning is 'moving away' is in contrast with the preposition *με* 'with' in its commitative sense.
   Expressing relations of *reciprocity, compatibility* is the most frequent deviation from the specific nature of the preposition *από* and is manifested in the internal development of the isolated Greek dialects along the Black Sea coast. Compare:

(2) *ðiò forà pìga do* [στην Ελλάδα] **apò** *ti mamà m, i mamà m ec èna xròno pu pèθane.*(Sozopol)

'I went twice there [to Greece] with my mother; a year must have passed since my mother died.'

(3) *nàxume pàre ðòse* **pe** *tis γermanùs* (Burgas Zmarò) 'to have any dealings with the Germans'

(4) *èkane kompànja* **pe** *tis zopolìtis* (Burgas Zmarò) 'he was the company of *sozopolchani* (citizens of Sozopol) '

(5) **pe** *òlus tis patriòtiðes* (Burgas Zmarò)) 'with all compatriots'

(6) *Tsurèki to lète esìs? Emìs kuzunàkja,* **me** *susàmi apò pàno,* **be** *badèmja,* **be** *badèmja, pos to lène sta elinikà ðen to ksèro.*(Sozopol) 'Do you call that tsoureki? We call them kozounatsi, with sesame seeds on top, with almonds, what do you call them in Greek, I don't know.'

Somewhat equivocally, under this group the examples with the verb *ερωτεύομαι* 'be in love/ fall in love' (7) can be subsumed, the latter being transitive in Greek and does not take prepositional links, and with the noun *έρωτας* 'love' (8):

(7) *erotèftikane pe ton àndra tis και πàρθικαν* (Pomorie)
'they fell in love with her man and took each other (=got married)'
[cf. *Αγαπώ τους ναυτικούς, ξεκάθαρα, τελεία και παύλα. Με γοητεύουν, παθιάζομαι,* **τους ερωτεύομαι**, *τους λατρεύω*...(Μακεδονία 2007.12.17. http://web-corpora.net/Greek Corpus/search/index.php? interface_language=en (accessed on January 10, 2018)
'I love the sailors, clear, that's all, that's it. They charm me, I am inspired (by them), I am in   love with them, I adore them.']

(8) *o peθeròz mu ìce megàlo èrota pe ti peθerà mu* (Nesebăr)
'my father-in-law had great love for my mother-in-law'

[cf. *Έχει έρωτα* **για / με** *το κυνήγι / την επιστήμη / την αλήθεια* (kompos.edu.gr) 'has love for hunting/ science/ truth']

Typical functions of the preposition *με* such as the expression of *means, tool, manner* of the activity are also manifested in the dialect by the preposition *από*:

(9) *Pos ta νγàzume* **pe** *ti sìndaksi.* (Pomorie, Zmaro) 'How do we get along living on a pension.'

(10)   *Pe sìndaksi mòni zùme.* (Pomorie, Aleksandra) 'We live only on the pension.'

(11)   *(I sìndaksi) to kànane* **pe** *to telìa.* (Pomorie, Zmaro); *to èkanas* **pe** *tòtʃki* (Pomorie, Aleksandra)

'(The pension) is done in terms of points.'
[a technique of calculating the pensions in Bulgaria in the 90's of the 20th c.; Bulg. *tòčki* 'points']

(12) **pe** *psilò vaθmi: pe trìa ce o joz mu pe ek*∫ (Pomorie, Zmaro)

'with top grades: (he) with three, whereas my son – with six.'

3.2.2. In some cases **it cannot be certainly posited** what kind of relationship is expressed by the preposition *από*: for example, after a final verb (*πάει*) whether it is a substitute of the prepositions *σε* 'in, to' or *για* 'to, for' (13), and in other cases – whether that is not due to contamination between the functions of *από* for (locative-) provenance and of *σε* for positioning in space or simply – change of the communicative intention in the process of articulating the utterance (14):

(13) *o babàz mu, o papùz mu...o babàz mu* **pe** *tin psarosìni*[4] [= ψάρευμα] *pài. Mòni ti θàlasa ìksere.* (Sozopol) 'My father, my grandfather... (if we are talking about them), my father used to go out fishing. The only thing he knew was the sea.'
[in response to the question *Έxete kanèna pu dùleve stin θàlasa apò tin ikojènià sas ?* 'Do you have anyone I your family who used to work out at sea?']

(14) *jìme jenimèni* **ap** *ti zòpoli.* (Sozopol) 'I was born in Sozopol. (/ I am from Sozopol).'

To the same indefinite group the uses approximating *partitiveness* whose meaning is *detachment of a part from the whole, the latter expressing an aggregate* (typical of *από* and its corresponding prepositions in the Balkan languages), can be added, e.g. *Οι περισσότεροι από τους φίλους μας.* 'Most of our friends.' (kompos.edu.gr), Bulg. *Двама от гостите* [Dvama ot gostite] 'Two of the guests'. In these constructions the detached part from the aggregate is not always explicitly expressed, e.g. *Έχεις από κείνο το γλυκό;* (kompos.edu.gr) 'Do you have from that sweet preserve?', Bulg. *Отрежи ми от белия хляб!* [Otrezhi mi ot belija hljab!] 'Cut me (a slice) from the white bread!'. A similar syntactic structure occurs in the Greek dialects along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, where partitiveness is expressed solely by the preposition *από* (15) – structured without the preposition, the utterance would be semantically equivalent but would lack the idea of partitiveness:

(15) *Esìs* **apò** *to aftokìnito èxete*? (Sozopol) 'Have you got a car? (literally, „of a car")'

It is interesting that a typological parallel can be drawn with the Western Bulgarian dialects (the regions of Trăn, Kyustendil, Radomir, Sofia, and also in Macedonia), e.g.

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[4] Local word formation following the pattern of *βιασύνη, αργοσύνη, καλοσύνη. αγαθοσύνη, δικαιοσύνη* [Αντίστροφο Λεξικό (Αναστασιάδη-Συμεωνίδη): *-σύνη* http://www.greek-language.gr/greekLang/modern_greek/tools/lexica/reverse/search.html?start=20&lq=%CF%83%CF%8D%CE%BD%CE%B7&dq=],

(16) *Дал Господ и **од** млекце, и **од** сиренце.* (Trăn) [Dal Gospod i od mlekce i od sirence]
    'God['s bounty] gave us both milk and cheese.'

(17) *Имаш ли **от** пари?* (region of Kyustendil) [Imash li ot pari]
'(lit.) Have you from money? [= Are you well-to-do?]' (Костова 1965:114-115)

3.2.3. Generally, the preposition *apò* in the Black Sea settlements does not deviate from the common Greek use of 'moving away', of the point of departure in time (18) or in space (19), but some of its connections, in view of the contextual meaning of the phrase, leave some doubt about it (20):

(18) *ksèrume **pe** peðià* (Pomorie) 'we have known (Greek) since childhood.'
    [As in *Ξεκίνησε απ'το πρωί.* 'He left in the morning.'; *Είμαι εδώ από τις τρεις.* 'I've been here since three.' (kompos.edu.gr)]

(19) *èprepe na fiji **pe** to stratò* (Burgas) 'he had to escape from (service in) the army'
    [cf. *Γιατί έφυγε από τη δουλειά;* 'Why did (he) skip work?' (kompos.edu.gr)]

(20) *Ce o patèraz du ìdane **pe** dèka xrònia dìmarxos sti mesèvria.* (Nesebăr)
    'His father was also a mayor of Mesemvria (for the period of?) ten years.'

It can be accepted that in (21) *po* expresses *distribution,* specific to the Greek use of the preposition *από*, e.g. *Πήραν από δύο τετράδια* 'They took two copy-books each.'; *Να μπαίνουν μέσα από ένας* 'They should come in one by one.' (kompos.edu.gr) or *succession* by means of the Bulgarian preposition *po* and a result of *code mixing*?

(21) *I jajà m i smaràgda ðen ìksere, àma èmaθe na ðiavàzi monàxi, ta silàfise lòγo **po** lòγo.* (Pomorie) 'Grandma Smaragda didn't know [how to read] but she taught herself to read, syllable by syllable.'

Alternatively, *succession* in Greek is ordinarily expressed by forms linked with the preposition *με* 'with' – indefinite and definite – of one and the same noun: *Μέρα με τη μέρα,* 'day after day' *Μέρα με τη μέρα γινόταν αγνώριστος.* 'Day after day/ with every day gone by he was becoming unrecognizable.' (kompos.edu.gr).

4. Parallel phenomena in other isolated Balkan dialects in Bulgaria

It is interesting to note that the same phenomenon is observed in two other isolated Balkan dialects in Bulgaria: in the Albanian dialect in the village of Mandritsa[5] (Southern Bulgaria) and in the Rumanian dialects in Bulgaria in the settlements on the

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[5] The village of Mandritsa originated as a shepherds' settlement probably before the end of the 18th c. and is situated 30 km. away from Edirne. After 1912 it remained in Bulgaria. Its inhabitants are migrants from Korçë and Vithkuqi, the dialect being South Tosk (South Albanian).

southern bank of the Danube (the regions of Vidin and Lovech), which form part of the Munten-Oltentia dialects.

4.1. In the village of **Mandritsa** this is the preposition *dë / ndë* (= *në* in literary Albanian < *ndë*), the most grammaticalized in generally in Albanian, which replaces not only other prepositions, but expresses also case functions (22):

> (22) *Pjellë **dë** Mandrica. Rron **dë** Mandrica. Atje u zëmë **ndë** punë, atje qetmë **dë** pensje. Martova **dë** një buri. Pesëmëdhjetë vjeç kle sekretar **dë** săveti.* 'I was born in Mandrica. I live in Mandritsa. That's where we got to work and lived till retirement age. I married a man. For fifteen years he was secretary of the municipality'. (Soultana Alexandrova's story 10.11. 2007).

> (23) *Dy muaj, dy muaj **dë** dimrë vemi **dë** Dimitrovgrad.* 'For a month or two in winter we would go to Dimitrovgrad.' (Soultana Alexandrova);

4.2. In the **Munten-Oltentia Rumanian dialects in Bulgaria** the preposition *de* has taken over the functions of several other prepositions: *din, a/la, cu, în, pentru*, e.g.:

> *fată de sat* (= din)*,* 'a girl from the village';
> *s-a dus dă Tărnovo* (= la) 'I am going to Tărnovo';
> *s-a însurat dă bulgar* (= cu) 'She married a Bulgarian';
> *pâine dă săptămână* (= pentru) 'bread for the week'.

The preposition *pe* has broadened its functions (Neagoe, Mărgărit 2006: CVI), still among the examples of the cited linguists there are examples which correspond to the closely homophonous Bulgarian preposition *po* (cf. the Greek example (21)), e.g.

> *profesor **pe** (= de) limba bulgară,* 'a teacher of Bulgarian'
> *el e **pe** (= de) profesia tracrorist,* 'he is a tractor driver by occupation'
> ***pă** (= după) soţ sânt Siderova.* 'Siderov is my husband's surname.'

5. Conclusions

In the present paper the emphasis is laid on the changes in the use of the prepositions in isolated Balkan dialects which are outside the influence of the contact foreign literary languages, but are the result of internal development, specific to them only, and not to the languages they form part of.

It is only natural to resort to the use of the most frequent prepositions which have become instrumental in the expression of various syntactic relations: *në* in Albanian and *de* in Romanian. In Greek, logically, it is the preposition *σε* that is to be expected to be their correspondent in status*,* the latter, just like *në* in Albanian, embraces the functions of two Bulgarian prepositions – both of *na* a tool for expressing the most abstract of grammatical meanings – indirect object and possession – , and also of *v*. In the Black Sea Greek dialects, however, a similar line of development is observed with *από*. A possible explanation is that both in these dialects and in the other Northern Greek dialects the Dative was replaced by the Accusative and the Indirect Object was initially manifested without a preposition whereas the Genitive inflected construction in both the

literary language and in the other dialects competes with the prepositional case form – *σε* + Accusative.

It can be summed up that, finally, in the isolated Balkan dialects a tendency towards broadening of the use of a preposition is directed towards simplification of the system. As a rule, they react as other languages do in regions of language contacts: Thus, for example, according to the eminent luminary in general linguistics V. Zvegintsev, the more intensified simplification of the language system of the northern English dialects in comparison with those of the south was due to the former's contacts with Danish. [Cf. „The contact and the interaction of the two languages can result in the simplification of their structures. In cases of such mutual influences there are no structural features which pass from one language to the other; their change is always in the direction of simplifying the grammatical structure." (Звегинцев 1962:225-226)].

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