

Macedonian-Epirote isoglosses

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Abstract

Intra-dialect relations in wider dialectal regions have hardly been studied. The main reason for this is the lack of a linguistic atlas, that is, the mapping of isoglosses in a way that would allow us to accurately monitor the direction of their spread as well as their extent.

Macedonian-Epirote isoglosses can be divided into two basic groups: (i) those that have wider distribution in Epirus (first-person plural suffixes in the active past tense, special forms of palatalization, forms of consonant assimilation, etc.) and smaller distribution in Macedonia, limited to the Macedonian dialects neighbouring on Epirus; these dialects can be considered as the tip of wider Epirote isoglosses, (ii) those that have wider distribution in a large part of the Northern dialects (evaluative morphemes, formation of comparatives, columnar stress in verbal forms, etc.) and play a significant role in the general division of this dialectal group.

Given that Epirus is considered a relatively isolated region, it is necessary to examine the circumstances that led to the appearance of isoglosses (the product of direct language contact between neighbouring dialects, the end result of recent population movements or the remnants of older, broader isoglosses that split up due to historical reasons?).

Key-words: northern Greek dialects, dialect contact, language contact, Macedonian-Epirote isoglosses

1. Introduction

As noted by Dyer (2002: 99)¹, while contact at the level of languages has been the subject of study for decades (Weinreich 1953), research on contact between dialects as a mechanism of dialect change and formation has only been conducted in recent years following Trudgill's book *Dialects in contact* (1986). It goes without saying that this also applies to research on relations between Modern Greek dialects. Intra-dialect relations in wider dialectal regions have hardly been studied. The main reason for this is the lack of a linguistic atlas, that is, the mapping of isoglosses in a way that would allow us to accurately monitor the direction of their spread and their extent.

As stated by Tzitzilis in the *Introduction* to the volume on Modern Greek dialects (see also Papadamou 2018), the dialects we study in the framework of Modern Greek dialects should be integrated in overlapping circles. They should first be integrated into broader dialectal groups representing the basic zones into which the Greek language is divided, according to proposals on the classification of Modern Greek dialects based on specific isoglosses; they should then be integrated into smaller zones resulting from the further division or divisions of basic dialectal zones.

¹ «While research on languages in contact has been underway for half a century, (Weinreich 1953), it is only in the last decade, following Trudgill's *Dialects in contact* (1986) that sociolinguists have begun to work intensively on dialect contact as a mechanism of dialect change and new dialect formation».

During the comparative study of dialects of Macedonia and Epirus (which include the Greek dialects of southern Albania), the position of the compared dialects is studied based on the model of overlapping circles. Based on Tzitzilis' proposal (*Introduction*), which we have adopted, Modern Greek dialects are basically divided into Asia Minor dialects and non-Asia Minor dialects (or continental Greece and Greek-island dialects). The non-Asia Minor dialects are divided into southern and northern dialects, and the northern dialects are further divided into north-eastern and south-western dialects. Both the dialects of Macedonia and those of Epirus, which are the subject of our article, fall under the non-Asia Minor dialects; however they have intra-dialect differences that affect their further integration into dialectal groups.

As a whole, the dialects of Macedonia belong to the group of northern dialects with the exception of the dialects of Kastoria and Naousa, which belong to the semi-northern dialects of the narrowing type (Tzitzilis & Margariti-Ronga, *forth.*). Based on the subdivision of northern dialects into north-eastern and south-western dialects, the first group includes dialects of Eastern Macedonia and the eastern part of Central Macedonia, while the second group includes dialects of Western Macedonia and the western part of Central Macedonia. The dialects of Epirus present a more complex image. Most of the Epirote dialects belong to the northern dialects and, in particular, to the south-western zone of this group; another part belongs to the semi-northern dialects of the eliminative type and a third part belongs to the southern dialects (Kyriazis & Spyrou 2011). In our study of the Macedonian-Epirote isoglosses, we will focus mainly on the similarities between the dialects of Western Macedonia and the neighbouring northern and semi-northern Epirote dialects which, as we have stated, come within the south-western zone of northern dialects.

When looking into the relations between dialects, we must distinguish the common elements that arise from the contact between them, from the elements resulting from the fact that the dialects belong to a dialectal continuum (i.e. the common elements are attributed to genetic relations and not to contact). In particular, when studying Macedonian-Epirote isoglosses, we must examine whether they form part of a Macedonian-Epirote continuum or whether they are the result of language contact, as well as the direction of these contacts.

Given that Epirus is considered a relatively isolated region, it is necessary to examine the circumstances that led to the appearance of Macedonian-Epirote isoglosses (the product of direct language contact between neighbouring dialects, the result of recent population movements or the remnants of older, wider isoglosses that split up due to historical reasons?).

Isoglosses will first be studied based on the twenty-four basic characteristics proposed by Tzitzilis, and then based on certain other characteristics that reflect a particular relationship between Western Macedonia and Epirus.

2. Isoglosses based on the 24 characteristics

In the *Introduction*, Tzitzilis selects twenty-four key characteristics that belong to all levels of language analysis in order to outline and classify Modern Greek dialects. These criteria, which have also been adopted by other researchers, will form the basis of the comparative study of Macedonian-Epirote isoglosses. At the same time, as previously stated, a second group of isoglosses will be used, which includes characteristics that do

not come under the twenty-four key characteristics. They have been selected on the basis of their significance to the creation of micro-dialectal groups and reflect a particular relationship between Western Macedonia and Epirus².

According to Tzitzilis and Margariti-Ronga (forth.), the twenty-four key characteristics used for the dialectal division of northern dialects can be divided into two groups: the first group includes characteristics which occur with or without exception in all Northern dialects, and the second includes characteristics that are differentiated by regions. We rely on a similar division of the phenomena into two groups when examining the isoglosses that occur in the northern and semi-northern dialects of Macedonia and Epirus, as well as in southern dialects of Epirus.

2.1 Characteristics of the first group

- (i) The lack of discrimination between simple and double consonants. Double consonants are unknown to all northern dialects, including those of Macedonia and Epirus.
- (ii) The retention, as a rule, of /k/ and /x/ before front vowels.
- (iii) The lack of a tendency towards open syllables, which is enhanced in northern dialects by the regular elimination of the unstressed endings /i/ and /u/.
- (iv) The elimination of the final -v in neuter nouns; the elimination of -v in this position is universal.
- (v) The lack of epenthesis (anaptyxis) of -γ- in verbs ending in -εύω, e.g. χορεύω 'to dance', as well as in other labial verbs, e.g. κόβω 'to cut'.
- (vi) the use of τί as the neuter interrogative pronoun (Contossopoulos 1983-1984).
- (vii) The formation of passive aorist with the -κα extension, e.g. λύθηκα 'I untied myself'.
- (viii) The use of the suffixes -ουν(ε) and -αν(ε) in the third-person plural present active and past tenses respectively, e.g. γράφ(ου)ν and έγραφαν 'they are writing' and 'they were writing'. The suffixes -ουσι and -ασι are completely unknown to the dialects in the regions we are researching.
- (ix) The preposing of the weak forms of personal pronouns in specific syntactical environments, e.g. σι είδα, elsewhere είδα σε 'I saw you' (Cyprus, Crete, etc.).
- (x) The elimination of the unstressed augment ε-: εγνώριζα > γνώρ'ζα 'I knew'.
- (xi) The use of semantically diminutive forms in the place of older, original ones, e.g. κηφάλλ', but cf. κεφαλή 'head' in part of the southern dialects.

2.2 Characteristics of the second group

² The data is mainly based on Tzitzilis and Margariti-Ronga (forth.), other published works and our personal fieldwork.

The second group includes characteristics that differ in the individual dialects, thus contributing to the identification of subdialects; the characteristics of this group lead us to the identification of specific Macedonian-Epirote isoglosses:

- (i) The narrowing or raising of the unstressed /e/ and /o/ to /i/ and /u/ respectively, and the loss of the unstressed /i/ and /u/, these characteristics constituting basic features of the northern dialects. Contrary to the dialects of Macedonia, which are relatively homogeneous since they all belong to the northern dialects (with the exception of the dialects of Kastoria and Naousa, in which a semi-northern dialect is spoken), the dialects of Epirus are divided, as we have already stated, into three zones: northern dialects, semi-northern dialects of the eliminative type and southern dialects or rather dialects with southern vocalism.
- (ii) The retention or the elimination of the nasal element in the nasal clusters /mb/, /nd/, /ng/. The nasal element is preserved in all dialects of Western Macedonia and Epirus (with a few rare exceptions). The situation is different in Central and Eastern Macedonia, where the majority of nasal clusters lose the nasal element.
- (iii) synthesis of the sequences /ia/, /io/ and /ea/, /eo/. The /ea/, /eo/ sequences evolve differently than the /ia/, /io/ sequences in Western Macedonia (Siatista, Kozani, Katafygi, Velventos, etc.), Thessaly and in other northern dialects (Pylaia, Kavakli, Monastiri, Mountainous Pieria, etc.) (see Katsanis 1984· Margariti-Ronga 1986· Newton 1972: 33). The evolution of these sequences is the same throughout Epirus.
- (iv) The existence or non-existence of palatoalveolar consonants: the dialects of Macedonia have a series of palatoalveolar fricatives and affricates with phonological value (/ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/). On the contrary, the dialects of Epirus present a relative incongruity that mainly relates to the environments in which these phonemes occur.
- (v) The presence of a columnar verbal stress, with the exception of the region of Himara, e.g. *ἐφαγαμᾶν* ‘we ate’(Sarakatsans), *ἐφαγάμῃ* (Western Macedonia), *εφαγάτε* ‘you ate’ (Konitsa).
- (vi) The expression of the indirect object in the accusative case in all Macedonian dialects with certain exceptions (Siatista, Katafygi, Eptachori, Chrysi, etc.), and in the genitive case in all Epirote dialects.
 - (vii) The absence of a distinction between the nominative and the accusative plural in masculine nouns ending in -οῦς/-ός, with the nominative form prevailing in the dialects of Western Macedonia and generally in Macedonia, e.g. nom. οἱ λαγοί, acc. τῶς λαγοί ‘rabbits’, while the distinction is maintained in the largest part of Epirus.
- (viii) The use of the sigmatic imperfect of oxytone verbs in the dialects of Western Macedonia and Macedonia in general, and in a part of Epirus (Konitsa, Zagori), but not in Ioannina, where the suffix -αγα is used (see Tzitzilis & Ronga, forth.).
- (ix) The use of the second-person plural suffix -ετε (> -ιτι) or -ατε in the active past tense; the suffix -ετε (> -έτι/-ιτι), e.g. *ἐτριπέτι* ‘you rubbed’, is dominant in the dialects of Western Macedonia and of Macedonia in general. In Epirus, the suffix -ετε is used in the regions of Konitsa, e.g.

- εφαγέτε ‘you ate’, and Ioannina. The suffix –ατε prevails in the remaining regions (Thesprotia, Greek dialects of Southern Albania).
- (x) The presence of vocalic extensions in the third-person singular in oxytone verbs in the dialects of Western Macedonia and of Macedonia in general, e.g. αγαπώ, αγαπάς, αγαπάει ‘I love, you love, he/she/it loves’ and their extension to first-person singular in the dialects of Epirus, e.g. αγαπάου, αγαπάς, αγαπάει. Thesprotia: καρτεράω, ‘to wait’ (Mitsis 2002: 14).
- (xi) The use of privative adjectives in -στος in the dialects of Western Macedonia and Macedonia in general, e.g. αξούρ’στος ‘unshaven’, and in -γος and less frequently in -στος in the dialects of Epirus, e.g. αξ’ούρ’γους, αγύρ’γους ‘not returned’ (Ioannina, Bongas 1964: 18), ανμοίραγους ‘undistributed’ (Western Xerovouni, Sevis 1997: 18), απέραστους, απέραγους ‘impassable’(Zagori), απέραγο (Vissani, Stoupis 2003: 309).
- (xii) The use of a system with two or three demonstrative pronouns; a non-functional system of three demonstrative pronouns is used in Western Macedonia, that is, without a clear distinction between the pronouns αυτός and ιτούτους ‘this one’, both denoting near deixis, while in part of Epirus and Germa, use is made of a functional system of three demonstrative pronouns. On the contrary, the tripartite distinction is clear in demonstrative adverbs: ιδώ ‘here’, κεί ‘there’, αφοτύ ‘there’ (close to the listener’).
- (xiii) The irrealis is expressed in Macedonia (Kastoria, Kozani, Grevena, Siatista, Galatini, Blatsi) by the markers χανα (see Kalinderis 1982: 368), χαλα, χαλια, and less frequently by χαλ’να, which are past tense markers, e.g. άμα δεν έβριχιν, χανα πάου στου χουράφ ‘if it weren’t raining, I would go to the field’. In Epirus, however, it is common to express past tense through the main verb, e.g. να ’χετ’ έρθ’ λίγο γλήγορα, να κάναμ’ τούτο το μouxαμπέτ’ ‘if you had come a little earlier, we would have had this conversation’ (Arta Avlona, Himara) Kyriazis, D. & A. Spyrou 2011: 183· Kyriazis 2012: 892).

3. Isoglosses based on common characteristics that do not come under the twenty-four key characteristics

3.1 Morphological characteristics:

- (i) Double-gender nouns. One of the key characteristics of western northern dialects is the presence of double gender nouns of a specific form. The most common form of double-gender nouns is that of nouns occurring as masculine in singular and as neuter in plural. These nouns belong to [-animates] and usually to [-humans], and express parts of the body, geographical terms, etc., e.g. γρόθους, pl. γρόθια ‘fist(s)’, γόφους, pl. γόφια ‘hip(s)’. These occur in Western Macedonia, Epirus and Thessaly.
- (ii) Synthetic comparatives. The dialects of Western Macedonia, as well as the dialects of Epirus, present synthetic comparatives, e.g. μαυρότιρους ‘blacker’. In the Greek dialects of Southern Albania, the comparative form

- is usually accompanied by the particle *πιο* ‘more’, e.g. *πιο μαυρότερος* ‘more blacker’.
- (iii) The suffixes in first and second-person plural in active past tense. The suffixes *-αμε* and *-ατε*, which are used in Standard Modern Greek and in most dialects, correspond to the suffixes *-αμαν* and *-αταν* in several Epirote and neighbouring Western Macedonian and Thessalian dialects. These suffixes were evidently formed by analogy with the third-person plural suffix *-αν* (see Tzitzilis *Introduction* and Papadamou 2018).
 - (iv) The forms of second-person plural imperative in the mediopassive voice ending in *-σας*. One of the most typical features of the verbal system used in the dialects of Western Macedonia, which can also be found in certain Epirote dialects (Molista, Ioannina, etc.), is the formation of the second-person plural imperative in the mediopassive voice with the inflectional morpheme *-σας*, e.g. *λούσας* = *λουστείτε* ‘wash your hair’, *ντύσας* = *ντυθείτε* ‘get dressed’. With regard to the origin of the morpheme, see Thavoris 1977 and Papadamou 2018.
 - (v) Aorist in *-κα*. The formation of the active aorist in *-κα* appears in a specific group of verbs ending in *-άνω*, such as *φτάνω* ‘to reach’, *φτιάνω* ‘to make’, *πιάνω* ‘to catch’ (aorist: *έφτακα*, *έφτειακα*, *έπιακα*), etc., which are found in Western Macedonian dialects (Grammochoria in Kastoria Prefecture), in Epirus and extend to the Heptanese (Ionian Islands) and Southern Italy (see Tzitzilis *Introduction*· Spyrou 2011· Papadamou 2018).
 - (vi) Negative pronouns. Negative pronouns are formed on the basis of elements of negative polarity, which are enhanced by the implicative marker *καν* and thus become clearly negative pronouns, e.g. *κανένας* ‘somebody’ - *κάγκανένας* ‘nobody’, *κανκαμία* ‘nobody’. They occur in Epirus, in Western Macedonia and in Thessaly, e.g. *κάγγαένας*, *καγγάνας*, *καγγαμινιά* ‘nobody’ (Kozani).
 - (vii) Gerunds in *-ιούντας*. According to Tzitzilis (*Introduction*), one of the consequences of turning an active participle into an adverb is the elimination of the distinction between the participles of oxytone verbs in the first and second class. In Standard Modern Greek and in most Modern Greek dialects, the elimination of the distinction is achieved through the prevalence of the participles of the oxytones in the first class, e.g. *χτυπό* ‘to hit’ *χτυπώντας*, as well as *μπορώ* ‘can’ *μπορόντας*. However, in certain dialects it appears that the participles of the second class have prevailed, which refer to the suffix *-ούντα*. The suffix of the gerund in these dialects has the form *-ιούντα* and *-ιούντας*, in other words, the semivowel is inserted before the suffix *-ούντα*. These gerund forms seem to be centred around Macedonia (see *γλιούντας* ‘laughing’, *πρινιούντας* ‘passing’, Kostarazi, Livadero, etc.), however they also extend to Epirus (see *περβατιούντας* ‘walking’, *ρωτιούντας* ‘asking’, *τραγωδιούντας* ‘singing’ (Konitsa) and Thrace).
 - (viii) Vocative interjection [o] *ώ!* Andriotis (Andriotis 1974, 611) considers that the vocative interjection [o] *ώ!* belongs to the category of archaisms and tells us that it has survived in the dialects of Lesbos, Naxos and Siatista. However, as stated by Tzitzilis in the *Introduction*, this interjection is used in many more Modern Greek dialects. We should consider the core of its

geographic distribution to be Epirus (Sarakatsans, Delvino, Ioannina, etc.), Western Macedonia (Germa, Kotyli, Katafygi, Siatista, Galatini, Western Voio, Avgerinos, etc.) and the western part of Central Macedonia (Roumlouki, Mountainous Pieria, etc.). With regard to the Balkan aspect of the morpheme, see Papadamou 2018. For the importance of the study of the Balkan aspect of Greek dialectal elements, see Joseph 2007)

- (ix) The vocative morpheme *μω!* The dialects of Epirus and Western Macedonia use the vocative morpheme *μω* instead of *μωρή*, e.g. *μω νύφη!* ‘hey, bride’.

3.2 Derivational characteristics:

- (i) Derivational morpheme *-αμιά*. The morpheme is mainly found in the dialects of Epirus, and less frequently in those of Western Macedonia and Southern Italy, in a series of words that usually denote a grain stem or a field sowed with grains, e.g. *βριζαμιά*, *σιταραμιά*, *κριθαραμιά* (Thesprotia, etc.) (Tzitzilis 2017).
- (ii) Derivational morpheme *-αβους*. The suffix *-αβους* is one of the very few morphemes of Slavic origin in the Greek language. It occurs only in Modern Greek dialects (Macedonia, Thessaly and less frequently in Epirus). An interesting point to note is that in certain dialects, in a small group of adjectives that indicate colour or properties that are usually related to colour, apart from the Slavic derivational morpheme *-av*, the loan of a specific Slavic derivational model is attested, which leads to the appearance of the enlarged derivational morpheme *-ούλιαβους*; the morpheme is a rendering of the diminutive morpheme *-ik-* and of the morpheme *-av*, and is used to express undertone colour adjectives. Thus, based on the Slavic model *zelen* ‘green’ > *zelen-ik* ‘greeny’ > *zelen-ik-av* ‘greenish’, the dialectal *πρασ’νούλιαβους* ‘greenish’ < *πρασινούλης* ‘greeny’ (< *πράσινος* ‘green’ + diminutive *-ούλης*) + *-αβους*) was formed (see Tzitzilis 1997-1998: 22, Papadamou 2017). This derivational model is only found in certain dialects of Western Macedonia (Grammochoria in Kastoria Prefecture, Galatini, etc.) and Epirus (Konitsa), where the morpheme indicates also the diminution of a property, e.g. *ασπρούλαβος* ‘slightly white’, *κοκκινούλαβος* ‘slightly red’, *μαυρούλαβος* ‘slightly black’, *ξινούλαβο* ‘slightly souer’, *πικρούλαβος* ‘slightly bitter’ (Konitsa, Rempelis 1953: 251).
- (iii) The prefixoid *καμου-*. It is the most typical prefixoid in the areas we are studying. This particular element belongs to the category of morphemes that express emotional involvement, affection and compassion: having the meaning of ‘poor soul’: *καμουκώστας* ‘poor Kostas’, *καμουπαίδ* ‘poor child’, *καμουνικοκυρά* ‘poor housewife’ (Chrysi), *καμουβασίλου* ‘poor Vasilou’, *καμουκόρη* ‘poor daughter’ (Kotyli), *καμουπιδί* ‘poor child’, *καμουμαρία* ‘poor Maria’, *καμουπαπά* ‘poor priest’, *καμουγιάνν* ‘poor Giannis’, *καμουπατέρα* ‘poor father’, *καμουμάνα* ‘poor mother’ (Germa), *καμουπαίδ* ‘poor child’ (Siatista). The morpheme is usually used with words that have a vocative function, but is also found – albeit less

frequently – with words having other functions, e.g. των είδα των καγουπατέρα μ’ ‘I saw my poor father’ (Kotyli), ήρθι ου καγουγιώργους απ’ του χουράφ’ ‘Poor Giorgos came from the field’ (Kotyli), etc. In Epirus it is found as the first component of nouns, e.g. καγουμάνα ‘poor mother’, καγουπαϊδ’ ‘poor child’, καγου-Ήπειρους ‘poor Epirus’, καγουπαστραδά ‘basic cleanliness’, and also of verbs, e.g. τί να καγουκάν’ κι αυτή! ‘There’s nothing much the poor woman can do’ (Bongas 1964: 171).

3.3 Phonological characteristics:

- (i) A special form of velar softening (tsitacism), which is recorded in the northern dialects of Kastoria, Western Voio and Epirus, is the evolution of /k/ in the second position of the primary or secondary cluster /sk/ into /štš/, e.g. σκόβω > στῆύβου [stʃivʌ] ‘to bend’.
- (ii) Assimilation of the cluster /rn/ > /r/. The assimilation of /rn/ > /r/ is encountered in the Epirote and neighbouring western Macedonian dialects, e.g. σβάρνα > σβάρα ‘harrow’, φούρνος > φούρος ‘oven’ This phenomenon is also common in Albanian and Aromanian. With regard to the Balkan aspect of the phenomenon, see Tzitzilis (2018).

3.4 Phonological particularities of individual lexemes:

- (i) Form of the adverb of place αποπάνω ‘on, over, top’. The adverb αποπάνω has a variety of forms in Modern Greek dialects (see IANE). We will focus on the forms of αχ’πάν’, which is found in Epirus (Bongas 1964, presenting also the αγπάν’ form), in Central Greece (Evrytania) (IANE) and in Western Macedonia (Grammochoria, see Papadamou 2018), and αποπάνω (Kastoria, Paxoi Sifnos. Symi.), αουπάνω, αουπάνου, αουπάν’, αγοπάνω, αγουπάνω (Epirus) (IANE). According to IANE, in the forms beginning with αχ- and αγ-, the χ/γ is attributed to blending with the preposition εκ. According to Tzitzilis (*Introduction*), the following interpretation is more likely: αποπάνω > απουπάνω > αουπάνου, with the dissimilatory loss of /p/ > *αφπάνου, with glide consonantalization, (cf. τα ωτία > ταουτία > ταυτία [taftia] ‘ears’) > αχπάν(ου) with labial dissimilation. The αγοπάνω and αγουπάνω forms derive from αοπάνω and αουπάνω, respectively, with the regular epenthesis of the intervocalic /γ/. The analysis of data on the geographic distribution of forms beginning with αχ- and αγ- leads us to a western isogloss of the northern dialects, which includes Evrytania, Epirus and Western Macedonia. A more or less similar distribution also applies to dissimilatory forms (αουπάνω) which, as previously mentioned, constitute the directly preceding phonological stage of αχπάν’. These forms, with the exception of their presence on certain remote islands, are found in Aetolia, Epirus and Macedonia.
- (ii) Both in Western Macedonia and in Epirus, the initial consonant of the verb κυλιέμαι ‘to roll’ is voiced: γκυλιέμι (Kastoria), γκ’λιέμι (Epirus), γκύλ’σμα ‘κύλισμα’ etc. (Bongas 1964, 101), γκ’λώ (Siatista), γκ’λιούμι (Kozani).

3.5 Lexical isoglosses

Below is a short list of words limited to the regions in our research:

- (i) κάχτα ‘walnut’, Western Macedonia (Kozani, Kastoria), Epirus (Konitsa, Delvino)
- (ii) νταίνω ‘to meet’, Western Macedonia (Kozani, Kastoria), Epirus (Konitsa, Delvino)
- (iii) ζάρκος ‘naked’, Western Macedonia (Kozani, Kastoria), Epirus (Konitsa, Delvino); it is used together with γκόλιος, which is of Slavic origin, and is mainly used in reference to humans.

4. Remarks on the common characteristics that do not come under the twenty-four key characteristics

Based on their distribution across Macedonian-Epirote isoglosses, they are divided into three categories:

- (i) Those that are widespread across Epirus and are rarely found, and indeed only in dialects neighbouring on Epirote dialects, in Macedonia: the suffixes *-αμαν* and *-αταν* in first and second-person plural in the active past tense and the evolution of /rn/ > /r/.
- (ii) Those that are widespread across Macedonia and are rarely found, and indeed only in dialects neighbouring on Macedonian dialects, in Epirus: The forms of second-person plural imperative in the mediopassive voice ending in *-σας* and the suffix *-αβους*.
- (iii) Those that have a balanced distribution in Macedonia and Epirus: double-gender nouns, gerunds in *-ιούντας*, negative pronouns, the evaluative prefix *καψου-* and others.

In the first two cases, one can say that they are the tip of Epirote and Macedonian isoglosses, without the term ‘tip’ hiding any indirect references to Epirote and Macedonian influences, respectively. It should be noted that these phenomena are unknown outside the regions on which we are focusing our research.

The third case involves phenomena that are also found outside of these regions; however they occur more frequently in these regions. Particularly with regard to the phenomena in this category, it is difficult to determine the direction of their spread.

Based on the criterion of origin, we can divide the Macedonian and Epirote isoglosses into two categories:

- (i) Those resulting from internal developments: the forms of the second-person plural imperative in the mediopassive voice ending in *-σας*, the suffixes *-αμαν* and *-αταν* in first and second-person plural in the active past tense, etc. This concerns the majority of isoglosses.

- (ii) Those resulting from language contact: the derivational morpheme -αβους and the evolution of /rn/ > /r/.

It is certainly not easy to answer the question of whether certain phenomena are the result of intra-dialect relations. Based on the data we have at our disposal, it is difficult to decide whether the phenomena with widespread distribution in one of the two regions being researched, which are exclusively found in neighbouring dialects of the other region, constitute part of pre-existing dialectal continuums or are attributed to population movements or intra-dialect influences.

5. Conclusions

The dialects of Macedonia, and particularly of Western Macedonia, form part of a dialectal continuum, which also includes the dialects of Epirus. The Greek dialects of Albania constitute part of this continuum.

Dialects with a semi-northern and southern vocalism appear in the western zone of the continuum, thus rendering Epirus a transitional region in terms of this characteristic. The isoglosses which, regardless of the form of vocalism (northern, semi-northern, southern), connect Epirote dialects to Western Macedonian dialects, and which are unknown to southern Greek dialects, include: columnar verbal stress, synthetic formation of the comparative, double-gender nouns, which evolve further in these dialects as their plural becomes singular, e.g. *πλούτος* ‘wealth’, pl. *πλούτια* > sing. *πλούτι*, the vocative morphemes *ω* (ο) and *μω*, common lexical elements such as *κάχτα* ‘walnut’, etc.

According to Tzitzilis (*Introduction*), two dialectal continuums can be found in Epirus, an eastern one, namely the Macedonian-Epirote dialectal continuum, which is the subject of this paper, as well as a western one, which includes the dialects of Himara and extends to the Heptanese and Southern Italy (see Kyriazis in this volume).

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