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# Bridging Linguistics and Economics

Linguistics has had a significant and evident impact on economics, and vice versa. However, this mutually beneficial relationship has so far remained under-exploited. This rich volume brings together an international range of scholars, to bridge the gap between these two distinct but increasingly inter-related disciplines. It covers areas such as the role of economic factors in the maintenance or loss of languages, the relationship between speakers' language choices and economic practices, the relevance of economic development to the spread of modern communication technology, and the role of language in economic development. It represents a critical call to arms for researchers and students in both fields to engage in better informed ways with the work of the other. By sharing both linguistic and economic ideas, the editors and the other contributors foster a clear dialogue between the two disciplines, which will inform the rapidly emerging field of 'language economics'.

CÉCILE B. VIGOUROUX is an Associate Professor of French Sociolinguistics at Simon Fraser University, Canada. She has co-edited with Salikoko S. Mufwene *Globalization and Language Vitality* (2008) and *Colonisation, globalisation, vitalité du français* (2014).

SALIKOKO S. MUFWENE is the Frank J. McLoraine Distinguished Professor Linguistics at the University of Chicago. He holds a Médaillle du Collège de France and was inducted as a fellow of the Linguistic Society of America for his distinguished contribution to linguistics. He is the founding editor of Cambridge Approaches to Language Contact.

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*Edited by*

Cécile B. Vigouroux

*Simon Fraser University*

Salikoko S. Mufwene

*University of Chicago*



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# 5 The Economics of Language Diversity and Language Resilience in the Balkans

*Adam D. Clark-Joseph and Brian D. Joseph*

## 5.1 Introduction

The Balkans, an area covering much of southeastern Europe from the southern borders of Austria and Hungary to the Greek Peloponnesus, by some accounts,[1] and encompassing a considerable number of nation-states, ethnicities, and languages, has long been known as a hotbed of linguistic diversity. Indeed, in ancient times, depending on how one counts languages (as opposed to dialects of the same language) and working with very scanty material, there were anywhere from ten to twenty indigenous languages in the region (Katičić 1976). Our focus here, however, is not on the distant past but rather on the present, where the area is still seriously multilingual although in most instances with very different languages from those long ago. Still, studying the present linguistic situation requires some historical consideration, as the modern situation took shape most dramatically during the Ottoman Empire, when there was Turkish rule over much of the area.

Each of the nations in the Balkans today is home to several languages with long-standing (minority) communities; this is true even in countries like Greece that do not have a tradition of recognizing minorities in their midst. The key Balkan languages of interest here are Albanian, taking in both major dialect groups, Geg (in the north) and Tosk (in the south); Greek, the standard language as well as regional dialects within Greece and some neighboring countries; Italic, that is to say, modern Romance, encompassing Aromanian (spoken in Albania, Greece, and Macedonia), Megleno-Romanian (spoken in a few small enclaves in Greece and Macedonia), and Daco-Romanian (spoken in Romania), as well as Judezmo, also known as Judeo-Spanish, with some speakers still in Greece, Macedonia, and Romania; the Indo-Aryan language Romani, brought by the Roms into the Balkans in the twelfth century; various Slavic languages, in

[1] The actual geographic boundaries of the Balkans have been a matter of some debate; whereas the Adriatic and Ionian Seas to the west offer a clear demarcation, as do the Aegean Sea to the south and the Black Sea to the east, the northern boundary is an open question. We give the national borders here only as one approximation of where the northern boundary might lie. See Friedman and Joseph (2020: Chapter 1) for some discussion.

particular Bulgarian, Macedonian, and Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian-Montenegrin (which some reckon as three or four distinct languages); and Turkish.

This multilingualism makes for an interesting linguistic "marketplace," where numerous speakers are constantly confronted with choices to make as to language use and where economics in a broad sense can come into play. Certainly, *economic factors*, such as access to means of earning a livelihood, play a role in driving language choice. However, we take ECONOMICS here to mean consideration of the much more general issue of "efficient allocation of scarce resources" and, by extension, of how people respond to incentives.

The concept of "scarce resources" applies to language choice in several ways. First, not all speakers have access to all relevant languages in a given society in the same way and to the same degree. Second, learning languages, even in a natural learning environment, consumes time – the ultimate scarce resource. Finally, individual instances of communication generally use one language to the exclusion of others.[2] A particular message can certainly be *repeated* in a second language but only at some additional cost, such as the additional expenditure of time for verbal repetition. The bilingual signage in Figure 5.1[3] provides a more concrete example: two road signs cost more than one road sign.

Viewed from this perspective, language choice in contexts of multilingualism can be studied through the economic lens of rational decision making and "utility maximization," trying to tease out what incentivizes the use of more than one language or of some particular language out of a choice of various languages.[4] Accordingly, with the Balkan linguistic situation as the focus, we plan here to examine ways in which language use and language choice in the Balkans interact with economic forces. Ultimately, our focus is on a variety of Greek for which a number of relevant aspects can be examined, but observations are made throughout concerning other languages in the Balkans as viewed through our economic prism, with some pointed remarks on Turkish in Section 5.5. In this way, even with Greek occupying center stage as a case study, a fuller picture emerges from the examination of the economics of a wide range of Balkan language use.

Our analysis draws on economic principles and reasoning but not on formal tools such as models and regressions. One of our ancillary goals is to

[2] We recognize that there can be code-switching within an utterance between the multiple languages, though in such cases, one could argue that there is a single shared set of codes interlocutors have access to. We note too that even in code-switching, one language alternates with the other; it is not the case that both languages are used simultaneously by the same speaker, with one language literally superimposed on the other.

[3] All photographs shown in this chapter were taken by Brian D. Joseph in Albania during 2011–18.

[4] Our analysis does not require the idealized, full-blown notion of "rationality" standard in the economic literature. The more empirically plausible notion of "bounded rationality" (Simon 1955) suffices for our purposes.


Figure 5.1 Bilingual Albanian–Greek road signs (September 2011).

demonstrate (to non-economists) that economic concepts can yield valuable insights in linguistic analyses, even absent such formal rigor. At the same time, we wish to stress that formal economic modeling and econometric inference may offer still further insights.[5] A number of topics that we discuss lend themselves naturally to rigorous economic treatment; for example, the issues illustrated by the road-sign example have the strong flavor of a "menu-cost" model.[6] Though peripheral to our main exposition, we nonetheless hope to encourage economic research on these various topics.

## 5.2 Language as Social (and Human) Capital in the Balkans

There is a particular notion about the value attached to multilingualism that is common to most of the languages and cultures in the Balkans. As expressed through proverbs, languages in the Balkans are seen as human capital so

[5] One notable exception: continuous-time models will not offer any added insights.
[6] See, for example, Akerlof and Yellen (1985).

that multilingualism is value added. Friedman (1997: 33) characterizes this ideology as "languages = wealth" and illustrates it with the following proverbs from Macedonian in (1) and from Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian in (2):

(1) *Jazicite se bogatstvo*
languages.the are.3PL wealth
("Languages are wealth.")

(2) *Koliko jezici govoriš, toliko ljudi vr[j]ediš*
how.many languages speak.2SG so.many people be.worth.2SG
("The number of languages you speak is the number of people you are worth.")

A parallel to (2) from Albanian is the following:[7]

(3) *Sa më shumë gjuhë të dish,*
how.many more many languages knowSUBJUNCTIVE.2SG
*aq më tepër vlen*
so.many more additionally be.worth.2SG
("As many languages as you might know, that many more you are worth.")

Moreover, we know that people in the Balkans were aware of the languages of others around them and expended some effort learning and using those languages because of the shared words and grammatical features the various languages show, items that passed from one language into another (and another and another). Such linguistic borrowing, whether of words or of affixes that make up words or even of syntactic and semantic structures, is well documented for the Balkans. The classic work of Kristian Sandfeld (1930) and subsequent handbooks (Schaller 1975, among numerous others) have helped to establish the field of Balkan linguistics and with it a substantial body of material pertaining to the ongoing contact among speakers of different languages in the area. Among these features are some that are common to virtually all the languages. Such features include the wide use of finite subordinate clauses and the very restricted use, if at all, of infinitival subordination (giving literally "I intend that I win" rather than "I intend to win"), the doubling of object nouns by weak pronouns (giving literally "I see him John" rather than "I see John"), and the positioning of the definite article after the first element in the noun phrase (giving literally "man the good" rather than "the good man"), missing only in Greek. In addition, there are more highly localized features, ones that are found in just a subset of the languages. One feature of that sort is the use of an impersonal non-active verb form with a weak personal pronoun

[7] Friedman (p.c., 2014) is the source of this one from Albanian; he has collected other parallel proverbs from all around the Balkans and reports on them in Friedman and Joseph (2020: Chapter 0).

in the meaning "feel like VERB-ing" (e.g. Albanian *më hahet* "I feel like eating," literally "to-me it-is-eaten"), which is restricted to Albanian, Aromanian, Macedonian, and just one variety of Greek, interestingly, that is found in the north of Greece in the area of Kastoria and Florina, where Greek speakers have been in contact with speakers of these other languages that have this construction.

What such linguistic facts tell us is that speakers in this region must have been speaking to one another, presumably trying out the language of the others with those others. There was value attached, though, to the ability to carry out such interactions with others, as the proverbs show. That is, being able to speak with others was not just a matter of expediency but presumably carried some social, and economic, worth as well. Absent this additional worth, we would not expect any speaker to expend time and effort learning other languages beyond the point where the marginal "cost" of learning began to exceed the direct benefit from a marginal improvement in communication. However, the intangible prestige, social currency as it were, associated with multilingualism would provide an incentive for speakers to continue to expand their linguistic horizons beyond that point.

## 5.3 Distribution of Languages

While there is a geographic component to the distribution of the languages, with more speakers of Greek in Greece than elsewhere and more than speakers of other languages, and a similar pattern for the other countries and other languages, it is nonetheless the case that there is considerable multilingualism throughout the entire territory of the Balkans. This is so because the linguistic distribution has not been just a matter of geography; the use and the communicative functions of the languages are important aspects to consider as well.[8] Each of the languages had a different utility under different circumstances, partly based on economic factors.

Historically, in the medieval Balkans during the Ottoman period, which extended into the early twentieth century for a large part of the Balkans, Turkish was the lingua franca in towns and urban centers. It was the language of administration, and of commerce and trade and, among Muslims, was important for its connection to religion as well. Moreover, there was prestige associated with it; as Skok (1935: 258) put it,

> Ce n'était pas là seulement la langue des conquérants, des soldats et des représentants du gouvernement, comme on le pensait faussement, mais aussi la langue d'une civilisation considerée par les sujets parlants balkaniques comme supérieure à la leur.

[8] Adamou (2012) adds the ideology associated with language choice as another factor; see Section 5.5.

And there were parts of the Balkans, especially in Thrace and what is now Eastern Bulgaria, where significant numbers of ethnic Turks and Turkish speakers had settled in villages and rural areas.

Other languages, however, had different functions, e.g. use in the home, and therefore allowed users to accomplish different things. Moreover, not everyone participated in this linguistic marketplace in the same way, in part for cultural reasons but also due to the different advantages conferred by the use of one or the other of the languages. Whether participation in the marketplace was caused by an individual's station in life or was instead an endogenous outcome perhaps cannot be answered.[9]

Thus, for instance, there was one-way bilingualism with Romani and Judezmo, in that the Roms and the Sephardic Jews learned the other ambient languages of the speakers they had to interact with, but speakers of those languages almost never learned Romani or Judezmo. Given the somewhat isolated and isolating social circumstances for the Roms and the Jews, there was no real advantage to learning Romani or Judezmo for a non-Rom or non-Jew. Further, there was gendered bilingualism in some areas, for instance, in Aromanian villages in Greece, as described by Récatas (1934), and in Bulgarian villages, as described by Stojanov (1952), whereby men were the bilinguals because they were out and about in the society at large while women stayed at home. The women, therefore, did not have the exposure necessary for effective bilingualism, although they were aware of the other language. These men were engaged in economic activity outside the home, via work of various sorts, and it was that activity that led them to need skills in the other language of the area. Moreover, Stojanov (1952: 218), in a point reiterated by Grannes (1996: 4 [= 1988: 225]), claimed that this linguistic skill gave the man an advantage at home in that "when it was necessary to conceal something from their wives, the men spoke Turkish"; in that sense, there was a benefit on the internal home front as well as on the external work front that would counterbalance the "cost" of learning the outside language.

The language use situation in modern times is similar in some ways to the medieval situation but different from it in certain other respects. In particular, a non-regional language, English, functions in many parts of the Balkans, especially cities, in much the way that Turkish did during Ottoman times (Friedman 2011). Thus, there is multilingualism, but it is of a different character and has a different socioeconomic distribution. In urbanized areas, for instance, at least among the elites in the populace, the multilingualism is more in line with the Western European model in that it involves Balkan national languages and Western European languages, especially English but

[9] We can hope that circumstances might be uncovered some day from which a suitable "natural experiment" could emerge to resolve this question of endogeneity.

also French and German to some extent, rather than multiple indigenous languages. By contrast, the more traditional Ottoman-era-style multilingualism is still the norm outside of urban centers, viz. in areas of regional dialects, away from the influence of standard languages, and among the underclasses. One can say, therefore, that there is a socioeconomic dimension to present-day multilingualism that has consequences on the global front, as urban elites are positioned globally while rural folk and the underclasses are positioned more locally and regionally.[10]

Going along with this sort of multilingualism, it must be noted that ideologies of unity through language that arose in the nineteenth century in a period of nation building in the region are still very much alive today. There are now many small nation-states in the Balkans – seven arising out of the former Yugoslavia in addition to the five others with longer (recent) histories – and each is fueled in part by a notion that national unity can be achieved by the imposition of a national language.[11] Whatever success these national linguistic projects may have had – and there is doubt on that front, to be sure – one could argue that it has led to polarization in the region just by virtue of there being now so many small nations aspiring to be monolingual.

## 5.4 Language Endangerment versus Language Resilience/Sustainability

There is yet another dimension to the intersection of economics and language, namely, the issue of how languages can come to be endangered and how languages – to be understood here as shorthand for "speakers of a language" – face the challenges posed by endangering pressures. There are many stories to be told here, but Collins (2015: xv), writing about the Maya-Mam language of Guatemala, is particularly eloquent and insightful regarding the forces that are endangering Mam by impinging on its use:

> Mam is endangered, as are all Mayan languages. This doesn't mean that the languages and cultures are on the verge of collapse, but that a perfect storm of factors – education, university studies, the internet, political power, national and international trade, travel, economic achievement, among other issues – all depend on success in Spanish. This puts a lot of pressure on Mam families to simply chuck their native language and "move forward" by means of Spanish. But much is lost when language and culture are abandoned.

[10] See Section 5.5 for more discussion of the modern situation.

[11] For a particularly lucid exposé of the effort to "Bulgarize" minorities in Bulgaria, see Eminov (1990, 1997).

And he continues,

> There's little doubt as to why Mam is endangered. Indeed, that it survives at all is a tribute to the tenacity of a people apart. There is tremendous pressure to abandon Mam and adopt Spanish from both outside the language group (the government, the schools, the economy, and the larger Guatemalan society); inside (parents who have decided that Spanish will serve them and their children better than Mam); bilingual school-teachers who buy into subtractive bilingualism; and others who are embarrassed to speak Mam in public. Nevertheless, many people love their language and culture and are committed to keeping them alive both in their hearts and on their tongues. (p. 60)

Putting all of Collins's observations together, it is fair to say that Mam speakers are confronted by the need to make choices as to language use at every turn. Indeed, he says explicitly (p. xv) that "[q]uestions of this nature used to be largely theoretical, but now virtually all Mam men and women face them to one degree or another." Thus, in understanding why Mam speakers might make the choice in favor of Mam or in favor of Spanish, there is really a matter of incentivization to consider – an issue that is inherently economic in nature by our definition in Section 5.1. As Collins notes, there seem to be a number of incentives pointing speakers in the direction of Spanish.

To return to the Balkans, Mam offers an instructive contrast. The situation for the Greek language in Southern Albania is superficially similar to that for Mam but with somewhat different results, in that the language is fairly robust by various measures. Population estimates vary widely, depending on the source, but most seem to agree that there could be as many as 100,000 speakers of Greek in the area, and maybe more, with the bulk of the Greek population to be found in three urban centers (Ayii Saranda, Aryirokastro, and Himara) and in numerous villages, including some quite high up in the mountains, that surround these urban sites; admittedly, it is not clear that all such speakers are fully fluent native speakers, but there are certainly a significant number of speakers, many living in a Greek-language environment.[12]

[12] We draw here on the fieldwork that was carried out by the second author between 2010 and 2018, largely with Dr. Christopher Brown of the Ohio State University and Dr. Aristotelis Spirou, then of the University of Tirana, and in more recent years, as well as with Russian colleagues Alexander Novik and Andrey Sobolev of the University of St. Petersburg. Some of the relevant demographic results are reported in Brown and Joseph (2013). The estimate of the number of speakers is just that, an estimate, as reliable census figures are hard to obtain for various reasons; see Pettifer (2001) for discussion of the history of the region and the population estimates. The figure of 100,000 comes from Jeffries (2002), who cites a wide range of estimates but seems to credit the estimate of the *Eastern European Newsletter*, as he labels its figure as "a *probable* 100,000" (emphasis added/ADCJ-BDJ). For what it is worth, the latest census, from 2011, with data available at www.instat.gov.al/en/census/census-2011/census-data.aspx (accessed May 23, 2016) and reflecting the results compiled by the Instituti i Statistikeve (Institute of Statistics) of the Republic of Albania, gives figures of 24,243 for those listing Greek as their "ethnic and cultural affiliation" (*përkatësia etnike dhe kulturore*) and 15,196 for those listing Greek as their "mother tongue" (*gjuha amtare*).

Nonetheless, it is the case that Greek in the area is threatened by schooling in Albanian, a general lack of schooling in Greek, and by widespread, even if not de jure, discouragement of the use of the language for an extended period in the twentieth century, e.g. during the Communist era (1945–91). Admittedly, such is not so now, as Greek can be and is used quite openly in these cities and villages, but the effects of such discouragement cannot be ignored. For instance, one speaker, discussed in Brown and Joseph (2013), who grew up during the Communist rule of Albania, had a Greek mother, but she was unwilling to speak Greek with him; it has only been later in his life, due to business interests he had in Ioannina and other cities in Greece, that he has made an effort to learn and use Greek. His Greek, while quite passable, is far from the natively fluent form it would have had if he had been speaking the language at home from early on.

At the same time, however, Greek fills many "niches" in the overall "ecology" of language use in the area (cf. Brown & Joseph 2013 for this terminology, inspired by Mufwene 2001, 2005, 2008), in ways that add to its robustness. In particular, as noted earlier, it is found in both urban and rural settings, including remote mountain villages, and in those settings, it is spoken by speakers of all ages, from young children who learn and use it in their homes to octogenarians; it is used in the public markets of the Southern Albanian urban areas and thus is a language of local commerce, and it is found on public signage in some parts of the region (see Figure 5.1 [Section 5.1] and Figure 5.2).

Moreover, Greek serves extra-territorial economic functions via ties it affords to business interests in Greece (as with the speaker cited earlier) and via needs created by tourists coming from Greece.[13] Indeed, several students of Greek interviewed in 2012 (see Brown & Joseph 2013) mentioned the commercial prospects that Greek offered them as a reason for their formal study of the language, and it has a strong connection to a religion of importance to the Greeks of the region, namely, Greek Orthodoxy. Moreover, there are physical and technological aspects to the position of Greek in the region that contribute to its relative strength. In particular, it is aided by geographic proximity to Greece and relatively easy access to Greece, for there is direct communication with Greece via boat connections to Corfu (see footnote 13) and daily buses from the three main cities; for evidence of bus connections from Himara to Greece, see Figure 5.3, taken in 2014, and Figure 5.4, taken in 2018.

[13] The Greek island of Kerkyra (better known in English as *Corfu* – and in Albanian known as *Korfuz*) is just a hydrofoil ride of less than an hour from Ayii Saranda, and the Corfu-to-Saranda run thus makes for a convenient point of entry into Albania. And many of the tourists are Greek; on a summer evening on the boardwalk of Ayii Saranda, one can hear Greek widely spoken among people who are clearly visitors (e.g. inasmuch as they are shopping at souvenir stands).


Figure 5.2 Bilingual sign for Kamara Square in Divri (March 2012).

Further, there is also ready access to the Greek media,[14] and the signal of Greek wireless telecommunication services can be picked up at various points in the region, giving a distinctly Greek feel to some aspects of cellphone use.

It is relevant to note too that there has been interest by Greek governmental entities in the area, as seen, for instance, in something as mundane as the financing and placing of trash cans throughout Himara by various arms of the Greek government, specifically the Service of International Developmental Cooperation, Ministry of the Exterior for the former, and the Ministry of the Interior, Public Administration, and Decentralization for the latter (see Figures 5.5 and 5.6). A visit to Himara in June 2018 revealed that these trash cans have been replaced by ordinary, unlabeled containers (see Figure 5.7), but their presence in Himara for even a few years attests to outside interest by official Greece in the region.

[14] The second author happened to be in Himara during the 2014 FIFA World Cup football championship and observed that one could watch the matches in Greek at a Greek bar or in Albanian at an Albanian bar; in some cases the bars were right next to one another.


Figure 5.3 Bus schedule in Himara (June 2014); items 3 and 4 indicate buses from Himara to Athens, Greece (twice a day).

There has also been intervention by the Greek government in helping to establish Modern Greek Studies programs at the University of Gjirokastër (in Greek, Aryirokastro), where students study Greek (even Greek speakers, learning the standard form of the language) to prepare for jobs involving Greek, e.g. translation services, and at the University of Tirana (the capital city, in Central Albania).

A further relevant factor here is that after 1990, with the collapse of Communism, many Greek speakers went to Greece to work, as did many non-Greek Albanians. The exodus during this period thus caused Greek to lose some speakers. However, this loss has proved beneficial in the end to the resilience of Greek as many have now returned to the area with strengthened ties to Greece and to the Greek language and with children who, likewise, due to having grown up in Greece and having learned Greek there, have strong ties to Greek and Greece. Furthermore, as argued in Brown and Joseph (2013), the Albanians who worked in Greece learned Greek, have brought


Figure 5.4 Bus schedule in Himara (June 2018), indicating daily buses from Himara to Athens, Patras, and Ioannina, in Greece.

that knowledge back with them, and have also contributed to the overall wider use of Greek in the area. They are able to interact with the Greeks of Southern Albania in their language. Such is the case too with their children, who are effectively bilingual now and thus also contribute to the stronger vitality of Greek in the region.

## 5.5 Other Languages Considered: The Case of Turkish Today

Comments have been made here throughout about the situation, both historically and in the present day, in the Balkans with languages other than Greek. By way of offering a point of comparison and contrast between Greek and another language of the region, a few more focused remarks on Turkish are offered here.

We can start by recalling the earlier observation about the distribution of Turkish in the Ottoman period. Turkish was a key language during Ottoman

Figure 5.5 A trash can along the Himara beachfront, funded by the Greek government (June 2014).

times, associated with administration and religion and found mainly in towns and urban centers. In some areas of the Balkans, however, there was a significant Turkish population in rural areas too so that there were numerous villages where Turkish was the main language. This was true especially in Thrace, now part of Greece, in what is now the western part of Turkey, the part considered to be in Europe, known historically as part of Roumelia, and in what is now Eastern Bulgaria.

Today, in the post-Ottoman era, the picture differs somewhat but not all that much. Adamou (2012: 8) describes the transition as follows:

> During Ottoman rule (15th–19th centuries), Turkish was the most widespread vehicular language in the Balkans, used for trade, administration, and education (whether religious or not) … after Ottoman rule collapsed, only Muslim communities retained an intense contact with Turkish.

These Muslim communities included Turkish, Romani, and Bulgarian speakers (also known as Pomaks). Despite efforts in some countries to control

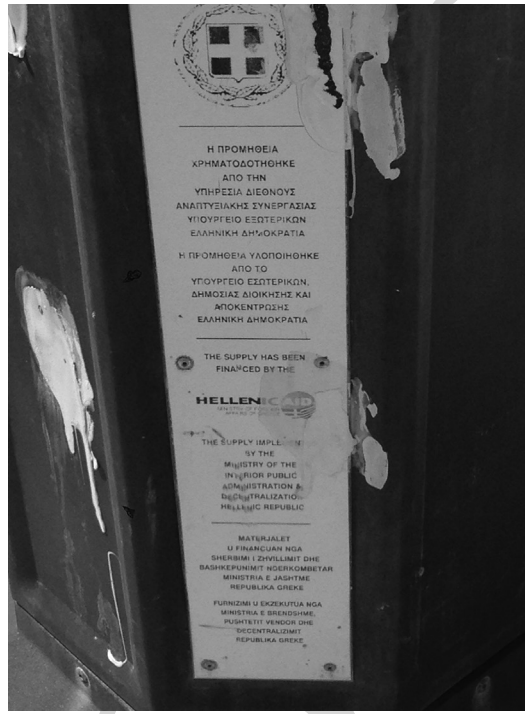


Figure 5.6 A close-up of the trash can from Figure 5.5, showing its provenience (financing by the Service of International Developmental Cooperation, Ministry of the Exterior of the Hellenic Republic, and execution by the Ministry of the Interior, Public Administration, and Decentralization of the Hellenic Republic).

minority language use – see footnote 11 regarding Bulgaria and the next quote regarding Greece – Turkish remains important among Muslims in Bulgaria and Greece. Eminov (1997: 164) describes the Bulgarian situation thus:

> Over the past half century, the general trend was toward greater facility in Bulgarian ~~but~~ by an ever greater proportion of the ethnic Turkish population. Nonetheless, even though most Turks in Bulgaria spoke Bulgarian quite comfortably, Turkish remained the primary language and was used almost exclusively at home. Many Turks, especially young ones, switched between the two languages many times a day. … Some more isolated Turkish communities had less Bulgarian influence, while Turks in larger cities had more.

Moreover, not only has Turkish been maintained in these areas but it is also gaining ground, adding new speakers; here is how Adamou (2012: 9) describes what happened in Greece:

Figure 5.7 An unlabeled trash can along the Himara beachfront (June 2018).

During the second half of the twentieth century, an influential homogenization process affected the Muslim Roma and Pomak communities of Greek Thrace both linguistically, with Turkish progressively becoming the communities' first language, and religiously, with the Sunni majority prevailing over the Shia minority. Within this process, several Romani- and Pomak-speaking communities shifted to Turkish.

She ultimately argues that the spread of Turkish among Roms in Thrace is a matter of language ideology and not "functional domain reduction" (p. 10); she sees the process as being driven by "highly connected individuals [who] start the shifting process" (p. 10), individuals for whom "[t]he decision [to use Turkish] is closely related to the ideological and political background of the external networks in which [they] participate" (p. 29). Be that as it may, even so, there are ample opportunities and sufficient incentivization for others to follow that lead and take part in the language shift, in that there are Koranic schools and access to Turkish media, as well as various social events, e.g. weddings, that call for Turkish, and so on.

## 5.6 Conclusion

To return to Greek in Southern Albania, this variety shows how a language, or more accurately, its speakers, can "stand up" against a perfect storm of pressures that could, in principle, threaten its very existence. It is particularly telling, given the context here of examining the intersection of language use and economic considerations, that even with the various societal and cultural niches into which Greek fits in terms of demographics, religion, and the like, there is a solid economic niche for Greek in Southern Albania. That is, there is tourism that depends on Greek, business contacts with companies in Greece that depend on Greek, workers in Greece from the area who depend on Greek, and other such factors. It may well be, in the end, that such economic motivation overrides all else and is the key factor behind the successful survival of Greek in what may be considered a threatening and thus potentially difficult situation in recent decades in Southern Albania.


Figure 5.8 A grill in Tirana with Greek signage that reads, in Greek letters, *i kaliteri pita*, Greek for "the best pitta" (June 2014).

This success may even be spreading, as there are some indications that Greek enjoys a certain cachet elsewhere in Albania as well. In the capital city, Tirana, for instance, located more or less in the center of Albania along a north-south axis, fairly distant from the far south,[15] and without the considerable number of Greek speakers one finds in the south, it is possible to find commercial establishments that have promotional signage in Greek, as indicated in Figure 5.8.

Such signage suggests not only that Greek is robust in the south but also that others, outside of the south, look on Greek with some degree of favor. Based on all the foregoing, it is fair to say, to end on a perhaps forced economic metaphor, that Greek's linguistic capital in Albania is far from being exhausted and, for now at least, might constitute a good investment, promising a reasonable return.

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[15] It takes approximately five hours by car to go from Tirana to Saranda, a distance of some 260 kilometers.

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