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Indicating Identity and Being Expressive through Phonology: Some Case Studies from the Balkans

By Brian D. Joseph, The Ohio State University

ABSTRACT:

The crucial link between language and identity — on a personal, a societal, and a national level -- is nowhere more evident than in the Balkans. Attitudes about language in general, and about individual languages, play a role in how speakers choose to identify, or not, with particular languages and in how they use language in shaping their identities. But there is a factor in identity formation that is often overlooked, and that is the role of FAMILIARITY. More specifically, identifying one's self with a particular language involves drawing boundaries as to what one claims as ONE'S OWN, as within one's "zone of comfort", so too speak. In this paper, I explore some of the ways that familiarity has had an effect in the Balkans on aspects of language and identity development, with particular attention to the ways in which sounds (phonology) can contribute to aspects of identity.

1. Introduction: Language in the Balkans

Among the many aspects of life and culture that the Balkans are famous for, language and various linguistic matters stand out as of particular interest. In a relatively small land mass, a dozen or so languages, as indicated in (1), are well-represented.[1]

1. Relevant languages in the Balkans

[1] This list leaves aside several languages spoken by small enclaves in the Balkans and which do not figure much, if at all, in the convergences among the languages listed in (1). Such languages include Hungarian, spoken in Romania, and Ruthenian (also known as Rusyn) and Slovak, spoken in the Vojvodina area.

Albanian	Daco-Romanian	Megleno-Romanian
Aromanian	Greek	Romany
Bosnian	Judezmo	Serbian
Bulgarian	Macedonian	Turkish
Croatian		

These languages offer a picture of dialect diversity but also cross-language similarity that has defined a construct – the "Sprachbund" (French *union linguistique*, Russian *jazykovoj sojuz*, English *linguistic league*) – that linguists have come to apply to many other parts of the world. The notion of *Sprachbund* was first enunciated by Trubetskoj 1923, though it is much better known (and more widely cited) in his 1928 reformulation of it at the First International Congress of Linguists. His concern was languages that are geographically related, being in the same region and often coterritorial, but not genetically related (in the technical linguistic sense of deriving from the same historical source) yet nonetheless, due to prolonged contact, show resemblances in form and structure. For him, the Balkan languages — specifically Albanian, Bulgarian, Greek, and Romanian — constituted an example of such a "union" of languages, inasmuch as they showed several common traits in their grammatical structures.

2. Sprachbund (Trubetzkoy 1928 (also enunciated in Trubetskoj 1923):

> *Jede Gesamtheit von Sprachen, die miteinander durch eine erhebliche Zahl von systematischen Übereinstimmungen verbunden sind, nennen wir Sprachgruppe.*
>
> Unter den Sprachgruppen sind zwei Typen zu unterscheiden: Gruppen, bestehend aus Sprachen, die eine grosse Ähnlichkeit in syntaktischer Hinsicht, eine Ähnlichkeit in den Grundsätzen des morphologischen Baus aufweisen, und eine grosse Anzahl gemeinsamer Kulturwörter bieten, manchmal auch äussere Ähnlichkeit im Bestande der Lautsysteme, — dabei aber keine systematischen Lautentsprechungen, keine Übereinstimmungen in der lautlichen Gestalt der morphologischen Elemente und keine gemeinsamen Elementarwörter besitzen, — *solche Sprachgruppen nennen wir Sprachbünde.*
>
> 'We will call a "language group" every community of languages that is connected by a considerable number of systematic correspondences.
>
> There are two types of language groups to be distinguished: Groups comprising languages that display a great similarity with respect to syntax, that show a similarity in the principles of morphological structure, and that offer a large number of common culture words, and often also other similarities in the structure of the sound system, but at the same time have no regular sound correspondences, no agreement in the phonological form of morphological elements, and no common basic vocabulary — such language groups we call *Sprachbünde*.'

This term, or others based on it (especially “linguistic area”, which is perhaps a better English term though “sprachbund” has also been adopted, and Anglicized, and is often encountered these days), has been applied now to other parts of the world, and linguistic areas, or sprachbunds, are recognized for South Asia (Emeneau 1956), Meso-America (Campbell, Kaufman, and Smith-Stark 1986), the Pacific Northwest (Beck 2000), and elsewhere. Yet the Balkans remain the most widely studied and thoroughly documented of these geographic zones of linguistic convergence.

The typical examination of the Balkan Sprachbund focuses on the structural and lexical similarities that the languages show, and Serbian, especially its southeastern dialects, shows several of these characteristics. The list in (3), along with the languages that show the traits, is adapted from what I gave in an encyclopedia article on the Balkans (Joseph 1992/2003) and without being exhaustive, it is representative of the major traits that have attracted attention.

3. Some common Balkan structural characteristics:

a. presence of a (stressed) mid-to-high central vowel (Albanian, Romanian, Bulgarian, some dialects of Macedonian and Serbian, some Romani dialects, and Turkish)

b. presence of i-e-a-o-u in the vowel inventory without phonological contrasts in quantity, openness, or nasalization (Greek, Tosk Albanian, Romanian, Macedonian, Bulgarian, some dialects of Serbian, and Romani)

c. reduction in the nominal case system, especially a falling together of genitive and dative cases (Greek, Albanian, Romanian, Bulgarian and Macedonian)

d. formation of a future tense based on a reduced, often invariant, form of the verb 'want' (Greek, Tosk Albanian, Romanian, Macedonian, Bulgarian, Bosnian, Serbian, Croatian, and Romani)

e. use of an enclitic (postposed) definite article, typically occurring after the first word in the noun phrase (Albanian, Romanian, Macedonian, Bulgarian, and Torlak Serbian)

f. the reduction in use of a nonfinite verbal complement (generally called an "infinitive" in traditional grammar) and its replacement by fully finite complement clauses (Greek, Macedonian, Bulgarian, Bosnian, Serbian (especially Torlak dialects), Croatian, Romani, Albanian, and Romanian.

g. analytic adjectival comparative structures (Greek, Albanian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Romani, and Turkish).

h. the pleonastic use of weak object pronominal forms together with full noun phrase direct or indirect objects (Greek, Albanian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, dialectally in Serbian, and to a limited extent in Romani)

i. lexical parallels, including shared phraseology (e.g. a phrase that is literally "without (an)other" meaning 'without doubt'), and numerous shared loan words many of which are from Turkish.

Many of these shared similarities are the result of long, sustained, and intense contact, of the sort that linguists would characterize as “intimate”, between and among speakers of these different languages, coexisting as they do side-by-side in the same space. It should be noted that Serbian, as well as, to a lesser extent, its closely related neighbors Bosnian and Croatian, figures in several of these shared characteristics, and the Torlak dialects of Southeastern Serbia, even more so, a point that I return to below.

2. Language and Identity in the Balkans

There is, however, another way in which the linguistic scene in the Balkans is of interest, and that is what I would like to focus on here: language is well-known to be an essential part of a speaker's – and a speech community's – identity. That is, on both a personal/individual level and on a societal/group level, language is a crucial expression of who we are as people and who we align ourselves with into groups. How we speak and who we can speak with together help to define who we are. This social dimension to language and language use intersects with structural and lexical aspects of language, in that differences in structure and differences in vocabulary can form "parameters" according to which we classify our own linguistic usage and measure it against the usage of other speakers, making judgments about sameness and difference, and forming our own identities in part by aligning ourselves – or not – with other speakers based on these judgments.

We might even think that the convergence in linguistic structure is a convergence of identity, but such is not the case, as differences remain salient.

Thus within the Bosnian-Serbian-Croatian linguistic complex, it is well recognized that, as Browne (1993: 382) puts it, "speakers [are] conscious of dialect divisions". Speaker awareness is important, since it means that these divisions are not just the result of linguists imposing fine distinctions of a technical nature on these speech communities but rather that they are characteristics that are salient to ordinary speakers. Examples of the sorts of features that divide the languages of the region and that speakers themselves recognize of are not hard to find and they include sound-based ones, as in (4a), structure-based ones, as in (4b), and vocabulary-based ones, as in (4cde):

4. a. the ekavian – (i)jekavian – ikavian distinction (= different realizations of the vowel found in certain words)
   b. differential use of infinitives versus *da*-clauses as the complement of verbs (e.g. *želi pisati* versus *želi da piše* for 'wants to write')
   c. the kajkavian – Čakavian – Štokavian distinction (= different words for 'what')
   d. Croatian *krug* versus Serbian *hleb* for 'bread'
   e. Bosnian use of originally Turkish words like *komšuluk* for 'neighborliness'

The salience of these differentiating features for speakers of the language means that these features represent *emblematic* distinctions, ones that can take on significance for defining one set of language speakers (a "speech community") as opposed to another, and thus ones that can have relevance for the formation and maintenance of identities.

Concentrating now just on Serbian, we can note various features, besides those just mentioned, that are emblematic of regional distinctions within Serbia, such as the occurrence in the Prizren-Timok area insoutheastern Serbia (the so-called Torlak dialect area) of a reduced case system, a future tense formed with invariant *će*, and the occurrence of definite articles with nouns (positioned after the noun), as noted in (5).

5. Torlak dialect features versus Belgrade standard:
a. nominative and generalized oblique case versus five distinct cases

b. future tense *ja će (da) pišem* versus *ja ću pisati* 'I will write'
c. *vukot* 'wolf-the' versus *vuk* '(the) wolf

All of these features, words or structures, potentially have an important role as demarcators of groups and thus play into issues of identity formation, on both a group and an individual level.

I would like here to extend this survey of the interaction of identity and language to a domain that does not get the attention among Balkan linguists that it deserves, that is, aspects of the sound structure of the languages involved, and use that to explore a key notion that plays a role in how we evaluate linguistic similarities and differences as part of the linguistic side of identity formation, namely familiarity.

3. Familiarity, Language, and Identity

Familiarity is, well, a familiar notion, referring to the extent to which we know and understand and have experience with some situation or phenomenon. It refers, in a sense, to our degree of comfort with that situation, the extent to which it feels like something ordinary, and not something extraordinary. In linguistic terms, we might well say it correlates with markedness, in that something unfamiliar is marked whereas the familiar is unmarked.

It is known that familiarity can play a role in the effects of language contact and can help to shape the results of interactions between speakers of different languages. A good example is provided by Asiatic Eskimo, as discussed by Thomason & Kaufman (1988:32-33). They note that loanwords from Russian that entered Eskimo in the 19th century, at a time when these Eskimos were rather unfamiliar with Russian, are directly adapted to native patterns; for instance, there are no initial voiced stops in Eskimo, and Russian words with such a sound, e.g. *bljudce* 'saucer', were borrowed at that time with *#pl-*, e.g. *plusa* for *bljudce*. Significantly, loanwords from Russian that entered Eskimo in the Soviet era in the 20th century are taken in without any alteration, so that, 'saucer' is borrowed (again) in this period with *bl-*. The explanation for this difference, they claim, is the greater degree of familiarity with Russian on the part of Eskimos in the 20th century, the result of their exposure to Russian in the Soviet educational system.

An example that hits somewhat closer to home comes from the study by Herson-Finn 1996 concerning judgments of similarity among languages in the Balkans. In particular, it is known that from a linguist's perspective, based on shared history, Macedonian and Bulgarian are quite similar and in fact are very closely related, forming an eastern subgroup within South Slavic distinct from the western subgroup taking in Serbian, Bosnian, Croatian, and Slovenian. Herson-Finn, however, found that younger (i.e. college-age) Macedonian speakers in the early 1990s judged Serbian to be more similar to Macedonian than Bulgarian, contrary to what a purely linguistic, and generally structurally based, determination would show. She attributes this result to the greater familiarity that these Macedonian speakers had with what was then called Serbo-Croatian, in the then-political context of a greater Yugoslavia and media saturation in Macedonia in Serbo-Croatian; by contrast, Macedonians did not have much exposure to Bulgarian (and recall the political distancing between Macedonians and Bulgarians in that period). That is, familiarity in this case led to a higher degree of recognition of

Serbian on the part of Macedonian speakers, a greater degree of comfort with the language, and thus a judgment of greater similarity between their language and Serbian.

Before continuing with more examples, let us pause for a moment and consider an important dimension to the interpretation of familiarity. In particular, this notion can be understood as an ideologically based notion that interacts with an elasticity of identity boundaries. That is, familiarity involves drawing boundaries between what is within your comfort zone and what lies outside of that zone, what, in a real sense, is part of you and what is not. In this way, familiarity has everything to do with perception, and how we perceive the world to a large extent is colored by our system of beliefs and attitudes, in short by a certain ideology that we bring to the task of living.

I would say that it is not an exaggeration to suggest that our identity too involves drawing boundaries, e.g. between self and others, demarcating what we consider ourselves to be a part of, where we believe we fit in within the larger context of the world in which we operate and live.

Ideology thus plays an integral role in identity formation, and therefore along with language, is a key element in shaping our view of ourselves as individuals and as members of groups.

In drawing boundaries, we demarcate therefore what is familiar from what is foreign, and by thus indicating that some element is not foreign to you, you in a sense build it into your identity since you are overtly not rejecting, not casting out, a component that contains that element.

This may all sound quite abstract, I realize, but I turn now to some concrete examples where familiarity matters in a positive way for the phonological side of language contact and identity in the Balkans, in a way similar to, but interestingly different from, the Asiatic Eskimo case alluded to above. I then consider a case where phonology is relevant to identity formation in a somewhat different, more negative way, in that familiarity is rejected.

4. Familiarity, Phonology, Loanwords, and Identity in the Balkans

Loanwords borrowed from one language into another are often adapted to the phonological patterns of the borrowing language; speakers borrowing the words often substitute their own sounds for the sounds that make up the loanword in its source language. Thus, Serbian *livada* 'meadow' comes from Greek, but the Serbian form has a dental stop [d] instead of the spirant [ð] that is found in the Greek source, since the spirant is absent from the Serbian consonant inventory. But adaptation of loanwords is not the only option, as the two examples in this section show, and the circumstances under which other patterns of borrowing emerge deserve our attention.

4.1. Dialectal Macedonian adoption of Greek loanwords

Macedonian, like Serbian, as far as its standard language is concerned, does not have the spirants [ʝ] or [θ]. However, dialectally, Macedonian shows the adoption of loanwords containing these sounds without alteration. In Boboščica, in Albania, for instance, according to Mazon (1936: 46), [ʝ, θ] occur in loan words from both Albanian and Greek, and the same holds in the Macedonian of Nestram in Greece, according to

Schmieger (1998:56-58), and of Gorno Kalenik and Popəłzani respectively (villages in Greece near the border with Macedonia), as reported by Hill 1991 and Dvorák 1998, who also note the occurrence in those dialects of [γ], mostly in loans from Greek. What is relevant for the general approach taken here is the observation of Mazon (1936: 46) that the adoption in Boboščica of these loans without any adaptation to Macedonian patterns occurs especially among younger speakers, to whom "le dh [i.e. the spirant] albanais est familier". The crucial element in this outcome is familiarity with the donor language. Speakers who have had long-term exposure to and who have developed some knowledge of the source language are comfortable with the sounds and do not alter them, whereas speakers who do not know the source language, adapt the sounds to native patterns.

4.2 Differential Borrowing of Greek Sounds in Aromanian Dialects

A similar situation is to be observed in some dialects of Aromanian, but interestingly, not in all dialects. Dialects that have been in contact with different co-territorial other languages (Greek for Aromanian in Greece, Macedonian (Slavic more generally) for Aromanian in Slavophone territory) different outcomes regarding /ɬ/θ in loanwords.

In particular, Aromanian in Greece shows Greek-like fricatives, /θ, ɬ/ in loanwords from Greek (Sandfeld 1930: 103-4; Marioteanu et al. 1977); that is, the loanwords are taken over without alteration, adopted without adaptation. Some examples are given in (6).

6. θimél^{u} 'foundation' (< Grk. *θemélio*)
anaθima 'curse' (< Grk. *anáθema*)
ɬáscal^{u} 'teacher' (< Grk. *ɬáskalos*)
aɬínat^{u} 'powerless' (< Grk. *aɬínatos*)

The adoption of these loanwords without the nativization of these sounds can be attributed to bilingualism on the part of these Aromanian speakers in Greek, and even more specifically to their familiarity with Greek as a result of that bilingualism. That is, Greek was within their comfort zone, and that afforded them the ability to allow Greek sounds into their Aromanian without altering them at all. The role of familiarity comes through clearly when a comparison is made with Aromanian in Slavophone territory (Saramandu 1984: 432). In this area the ambient second language was different (Slavic), and, significantly, there is a different outcome with Greek loanwords in that stops /t d/ occur for the sounds in Greek loanwords that ended up with fricatives in (6), e.g.:

7. **t**imél'^{u} 'foundation' (Grk. *θemélio*)
dáscal^{u} 'teacher' (Grk. *ɬáskalos*)

Moreover, Friedman 2006 observes that among speakers of Aromanian who do not know Greek or Albanian, especially younger speakers in Macedonia, these fricatives are often replaced by stops. The same explanation holds for these Aromanian facts as for the

Macedonian facts in (4.1). In the region, the second language that Aromanian speakers know and are more familiar with is a Slavic language (Macedonian), where the fricatives in question do not occur, Greek loanwords show adaptation, whereas in the Greek-speaking area, where there is familiarity with Greek, no phonological adaptation occurs.

4.3. Familiarity and Identity Specifically

I have interpreted familiarity in ideological terms here, and have characterized it as rooted in drawing boundaries between self and other, and thus shaping identity in that way. In the case of the entry of Greek sounds into Macedonian and Aromanian, familiarity with the source language meant that these sounds were not alien, were not part of a system belonging to the other, but rather could be easily embraced by these non-Greek speakers; they did not have to be exclusionary with regard to these originally foreign sounds but instead they could let the sounds into their system and thus come to be defined in part by their occurrence.

4.4 Romani Phonology and Another Side of Identity

By contrast, a different sort of outcome is found in Romani, the language of the Gypsies, in the Balkans. In that language, we find an absence of phonological convergence even though there has been intense contact between Romani and other languages. In particular, as described by Friedman 2001, Balkan Romani retains the Romani voiceless aspirated (i.e. followed by a distinct puff of air) consonants (whatever the source, whether from earlier voiceless aspirates, earlier voiced aspirates, or from earlier clusters), as in (8):

8. phral 'brother' (earlier Indic *bh-*, cf. Sanskrit *bhrātar-*)
   phal 'pale' (earlier Indic *ph-*, cf. Sanskrit *phalaka-*)
   khel 'play (earlier Indic *kh-* from *kr-*, cf. Sanskrit *krīḍ-*)

Interestingly, Romani does this even though none of the neighboring languages in the Balkans have distinctive aspirates and even though Romani has been involved in sustained and intense contact with all the languages of the Balkans, a contact situation that has led to Romani speakers being bilingual in their native Romani and other neighboring co-territorial languages. In that way, therefore, Romani speakers are familiar with other languages in the sense relevant for convergence between Macedonian and Greek and between Aromanian and Greek, as described in the previous sections. It seems fair to ask therefore why, if aspirates are unusual in the Balkan context and if the non-Romani sounds should pass the test of familiarity that plays a role in phonological convergence elsewhere in the Balkans, have the aspirates of Romany not succumbed to the influence of the familiar nonaspirating systems.

The answer lies in a different sort of social factor and a different kind of ideology from the boundary-drawing ideology discussed earlier. That is, the social isolation of Romani speakers, inasmuch as they are on the margins of Balkan society, is decisive here. The Rom are indeed bilingual, but Romani bilingualism is unidirectional – the Rom have to learn other languages but the non-Rom do not learn Romani. Maintaining

traditional Romani phonology, with the aspirate consonants, is a way to keep Romani phonologically distinct from surrounding languages and it thereby establishes distance between it and its linguistic neighbors. The phonology is thus a way of distinctively demarcating and defining Romani and of maintaining the social distance between its speakers and other speakers. Put in other terms, even with the familiarity that could in principle give a "comfort zone" that would allow Romani to assimilate to local Balkan phonology, the ideology of separateness of identity, expressed through the phonology, wins out. In a sense, this ideological clash, between maintaining distinctiveness and yielding to familiarity, creates a situation in which phonology iconically marks social distance – within the overall context of Balkan phonology the aspirated consonants are marked and marginal, and at the same time from a societal perspective they are emblematic of the marked and marginal status of Rom speakers.

In Romani, therefore, we see phonology interacting with identity in a separationist way different from its more inclusive role in the case of Macedonian and Aromanian vis-à-vis Greek.

5. Expressivity and Identity

I would like to turn now to another aspect of identity, namely the creativity and expressiveness that marks individuals, since there is a Balkanologically interesting linguistic dimension to that as well. The relevant language in this case is Greek.

This example is especially close to my heart since it involves Greek, the language I have spent most of my scholarly energy on over the years, but it also has a personal local connection, in that in 1984, on my first visit to what was then Yugoslavia, having come here for an international congress (the quintennial meeting of the Association Internationale des Etudes Sud-Est Européennes, AIESEE), I spoke about this particular case of Greek phonology in the very building for the present conference, nearly 25 years ago.

Let me start by reviewing some evidence I have discussed elsewhere (Joseph 1982, 1983, 1984a, 1984b, 1987, 1994, 1997 – see also Joseph & Philippaki-Warburton 1987: 258-261) about a special quality and functional status for the sounds *ts* and *dz* in Greek.

In particular, I have claimed that they are the prime carriers of phonic, that is, sound-based, expressivity. By this I mean that they carry a special expressive quality when they occur in words that goes beyond just being a part of the phonic composition of the word. In a sense, they add meaning or color to the word, and in that way they are different from most sounds in most words.

That is, in a word like *cat*, made up of three distinct sounds (a [k], an [ae], and a [t]), no one of those three sounds adds any particular semantic value to the word; none of the sounds has any meaning in and of itself. Each one is simply one member of a “team” that pulls together to give a phonic realization to the meaning of 'feline animal'.

This situation can be contrasted with *meow*, the word that represents the characteristic sound that a *cat* makes, where each of the sounds (the [m], the [i], and the [aw]) give overt voice, so to speak, to the meaning 'cat noise'.

We can thus talk about [m] in this word as being more expressive than the [k]-sound in *cat*; its occurrence in the word is not as arbitrary as the appearance of [k] in *cat*, and thus the sound itself carries some aspect of meaning in *meow*.

As an aside, we can note that Serbian has a slightly different angle on this issue with these words, in that both the word for 'cat' – *mačka* -- and the word for 'meow' – *mijau* – share the same initial consonant and thus might lead one to think that the form for 'cat' is not as arbitrary as the corresponding English form is.

My claim about Greek [ts] and [dz] is that they are overwhelmingly like the [m] in *meow* and not like the [k] of *cat* in most of their occurrences in words in Greek. This is shown by their preponderance in words with special "affective" quality, so that the occurrence of these sounds seems to be associated with an aspect of meaning on their own. A sampling of these affective words, concentrating just on the *ts*, is given in (9); the relevant classes include those with sound symbolic combinations (9a), diminutive formations (9b), interjections (9c), calls to animals (9d), onomatopoeia and derivative formations (9e), ideophonic adverbial expressions (where the sound evokes a manner of action) (9f), conventionalized forms used by adults to and around children (9g), and a number of words that are colorful, playful, expressive, and in general somewhat slangy, ones that in short lend color to language in ways that go beyond simple conveyance of some denotational sense (9h).

(9) a. sound symbols, e.g.: ***tsi-*** 'small, narrow, thin', as in ***tsi***tóno 'stretch', ***tsí***xla 'thin woman', ***tsí***ta-***tsí***ta 'just, barely (said of a tight fit)'; ***ts V-*** 'sting, tease, bite, burn', as in ***tsú***zo 'sting', ***tsu***knidʃa 'nettle', ***tsi***m(b)úri 'tick' ("small stinging insect"), ***tsi***(m)bó 'pinch', ***tsa***tízo 'I tease', ***tsitsi***rízo 'sizzle, torment slowly', ***tsu***ruflízo 'singe'

b. diminutives with nucleus –***ts***- (cf. also ***tsi-*** 'small' sound symbol): neuter diminutive noun suffix –i***tsi***, as in kori***tsi*** (cf. *kóri* 'girl, daughter'); feminine diminutive noun suffix –i***tsa***,[2] as in lemoni***tsa*** 'little lemon tree'(cf. *lemoniá* 'lemon tree'); nonsuffixed hypocoristics derived directly from names, as in Mí***ts***os (from *dʃimítrios*) and Kó***ts***os (from *Konstandinos*); "diminished" adjectives, as in ɣlikú***ts***ikos 'sweet-ish, cute' (cf. *ɣlikós* 'sweet')

c. interjections, e.g. prí***ts*** 'so what?!; who cares?!', ***ts*** 'NEGATION' (actually an apico-dental click, but conventionally represented in this way), ***ts***a 'noise used in peek-a-boo game'

d. calls to animals, e.g. gú***ts*** 'call to pigs', ***ts***ú(nk)s 'call to donkeys', ó***ts*** 'whoa!'

e. onomatopes and derivatives, e.g. ***ts***ák 'crack!' (cf. ***ts***akízo 'I break'), krí***ts***-krí***ts*** 'crunch!' (cf. kri***ts***anízo 'I crunch'), má***ts***-mú***ts*** 'kissing noise', ***ts***iú-***ts***iú 'bird's chirp', plí***ts***-plá***ts*** 'splish-splash!'

f. ideophonic adverbials, e.g. ***ts***áka-***ts***áka 'immediate quick action; straightaway; directly', ***ts***úku-***ts***úku 'steadily and surely, with a hint of secretive activity', ***ts***áf-***ts***úf 'in an instant'

g. adult conventionalized child-language forms, e.g. ***ts***á***ts***a 'aunty', ***tsi tsi*** 'meat' (also adult slang for 'breast'), pí***ts***i-pí***ts***i '(act of) washing'

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[2] This suffix is especially widespread in the Balkans, and also the subject of some controversy as to its origin; see Georgacas 1982 on this suffix in Greek.

h. expressive, playful, slangy words, e.g.: ***ts****ambunízo* 'whimper; prate; bullshit', ***ts****alavutó* 'do a slovenly job', ***ts****apatsulis* 'slovenly; slattern', *tsókaro* 'vulgar woman' (primary meaning: 'wooden shoe'), ***ts****ili(m)burʃó*' gallivant; fart about', ***ts****i****ts****íʃi* '(stark) naked'.

While all of this is of interest to an appreciation of Greek internally, on its own, there is also an important role played in this analysis by foreign elements and especially those from other Balkan languages. Thus, Balkan phonology contributes to the effect of *ts* in Greek, in two ways.

First, many of the words that contribute to the special lexical distribution of the *ts* and *dz* are borrowings, e.g. *tsapatsulis* (in (9h)) is a borrowing from Turkish *çapaçul* 'untidy, slovenly, and *tsatizo* (in (9a)) from Turkish *çatışmak* 'to quarrel'. Turkish words generally have a lower stylistic status, as noted by Kazazis 1972, and that lower status correlates with greater colloquial character. Colloquial language is generally more expressive and more colorful, more connotative, so that these borrowings would naturally fit into the system marked for expressiveness and the sounds contained in these words would be apropriate carriers of an expressive function in and of themselves.

Second, being expressive really means being out of the ordinary, being striking and attracting attention in some way. By definition foreign elements are extra-ordinary; they are literally "exotic", and thus they carry with them a certain marked and special character.

At this point Slavic comes into play. That is, there are some words with word-initial *ts-* in Greek that are of Slavic origin and can occupy an expressive role due to their "otherness", since they represent words pertaining to rural culture; some of these are rare today, admittedly, but they form a small sector of Greek vocabulary that stands out from the normal everyday words of today and fit in with, and thus reinforce the special status that [ts] has in the standard (and now primarily urban-based) language. Among the Slavic words in Greek with *ts* (cf. Andriotis 1983, citing Weigand) are *tsadíla* 'cheese-straining bag' (Slavic *tsedilo*), *tséligas* 'shepherd' (Slavic *tselnik*), and *tsérʒa* 'woolen blanket' (Slavic *čerga*).

All this is very well and good, but what does it have to do with identity? I would argue that there is a connection. In particular, this discussion reveals a phonological aspect of expressiveness in Greek, fed in part by language contact in the Balkans. Expressiveness is one side of creativity and individuality, one way in which individuals can show their creative side and thus express their creative selves; in that way, expressiveness is a key component to identity on an individual level. Therefore, as far as Greek is concerned, Balkan phonology makes a subtle contribution to one dimension of individual identity.

And, there is some evidence to suggest that at one point in the relatively recent history of Greek, at least, the use of *ts* was discerned as a salient characteristic marking a speaker. That is, *ts* figured into the vocabulary of linguistic differences in Medieval Greek, to judge from the citation in Crusius 1584 of a form that shows a focus on the use of this particular sound (picked up later in Du Cange 1688); what Crusius writes as < tz > is the Medieval Greek spelling for what is given here as *ts*:

> "*tzopelous*... we call those who always use *tz* or *tzinta*, that is with such words as begin or end in that way; thus for *probato* ['sheep'],

probatatzi ['little sheep' (diminutive)], *arni* ['lamb'], *arnatzo* ['little lamb' (diminutive)] ...".

We have talked here about identity in terms of self-identification, but another angle on identity formation is how others view one, and the traits that others use to define one and to set the boundaries of one's identity. It is thus significant that the *ts* sound was striking enough to some Medieval Greek ears that it became enshrined in a lexical item that labelled this linguistic difference. Even if speakers using *ts* a lot may not have called themselves "tzopelous", it seems that others defined them that way, thus demarcating their identity through this linguistic characteristic.

6. Conclusion

It is important to acknowledge that identity, whether on an individual or a group level, is complex and multifaceted and therefore requires examination from many different angles in order to be fully understood. By concentrating on the role of familiarity in general and on the way in which phonology offers a linguistic expression of identity, I hope to have made a small contribution here that furthers our understanding of this much larger entity, and by locating this discussion in the Balkans and placing it against the backdrop of convergence among languages of the Balkans, I hope to have highlighted a part of the world where language and identity have historically been intertwined and are likely to continue to be so.

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