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# The Contact Hypothesis Revised: DOM in the South Slavic Periphery

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## Abstract

The aim of this paper is to provide an explanation of the emergence of DOM in peripheral Macedonian dialects through a reevaluation of the contact hypothesis. The southern and south-western dialects in the contact zones with Greek and Aromanian use a dative-based pattern to mark specific, predominantly human and animate referents. However, the contact hypothesis cannot fully explain the origin of DOM in the southernmost dialects because it overlooks the wider interlingual context within which this change occurred. Relying on the analysis of the examples from the oldest sources with DOM, the author argues in favor of a multifactorial explanation of its origin: contact obscured the case marking functions of clitics and provided an analytic direct object pattern. The introduction of *na*-marking on direct objects satisfied both the semantic and pragmatic requirements of a successful message by discriminating between the syntactic functions and discourse prominence of the object participant.

## Keywords

Balkan Sprachbund – clitics – direct object – case marking – dative pattern – discourse prominence

## 1 Introduction

Differential object marking (henceforth DOM) is a widespread crosslinguistic strategy in which prominent objects ranking high on the animacy hierarchy

receive casemarking, while low ranking objects remain unmarked. DOM is attested in at least 250 genetically different languages such as Spanish, Turkish, Persian, Hindi, Hebrew, etc. (Bossong, 1984).<sup>1</sup> In Romance languages DOM is dative-based; thus Spanish employs the prepositional marker *a* and clitic doubling (von Heusinger and Kaiser, 2003), whereas the Romanian marker *pe* is obligatory for definite direct objects and optional with indefinite but discourse prominent objects (Chiriacescu and von Heusinger, 2010).<sup>2</sup> DOM in Aromanian dialects seems to be attested sporadically across the Balkan area: in the south-western dialects of Ohrid and in the dialect in Krania (Thessaly, Greece). Standard Balkan Slavic languages do not have DOM, except for some dialects where it has the form of the grammaticalized preposition *na*.

Languages differ as to what motivates overt morphological case-marking on their direct objects. The reasons are predominantly sought in pragmatic-semantic features of these marked objects (definiteness, animacy, affectedness), but the role of their discourse features (prominence and topicality) has also been recognized.<sup>3</sup> In fact, the interplay of several hierarchies influences accusative marking of patient-like objects: “P-marking is the more likely, the higher the P is on the animacy, definiteness and person scales” (Haspelmath, 2007: 83), which roughly correspond to the prominence scale (Aissen, 2003).<sup>4</sup> Prominence involves “the centrality of an entity in the discourse” or “the readiness with which an entity presents itself to the speaker as a topic of conversation” (de Swart, 2007: 138).

The phenomenon of DOM in Macedonian dialects was explored mostly by Koneski (1986) and Topolinjska (1995), but also discussed by other authors (Cyxun, 1981; Tošev, 1970; Vidoeski, 1998; Marković, 2007; Bužarovska, 2001 among others). Most of the scholars investigating this specific construction in

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- 1 DOM in Spanish has been extensively investigated (Aissen, 2003; Leonetti, 2004; von Heusinger and Kaiser, 2003, 2007, von Heusinger 2008 among others). Typological variation in systems of differential argument marking (DAM) are discussed in Witzlack-Makarevich and Seržant (2018).
  - 2 The marker *a* also occurs in ditransitive constructions (von Heusinger and Kaiser, 2011). Hill (2013) argues that *pe* in Romanian is not case assigning preposition but a discourse marker.
  - 3 Bossong (1984: 6) distinguishes animacy and referential differentiation depending on whether inherent or pragmatic (referential) features of the direct object referent motivate the use of DOM. In his view, referential differentiation is predominant among the languages with DOM, although a number of authors consider animacy to be the determining parameter (de Swart, 2007; de Swart and de Hoop, 2007; Kitillä, 2006), or the combination of both (“harmonic alignment” in Aissen, 2003). Other authors attribute primacy to topicality (Escandell-Vidal, 2009; Dalrymple and Nikolaeva, 2011; Hill, 2013).
  - 4 It is comprised of animacy scale and definiteness scale. Animacy scale: Human > Animate > Inanimate; Definiteness scale: Personal pronoun > Proper noun > Definite NP > Indefinite specific NP > Non-specific NP. Compare Aissen’s (2003: 437) view that prominence is established by two hierarchies: definiteness and animacy.

Macedonian and Bulgarian dialects do not relate it to DOM and the literature on DOM (Koneski, 1986; Topolinjska, 1995; Asenova and Aleksova, 2008). The first use of this term in Balkan Slavic scholarship is in Adamou (2006: 64; 2009).

The DOM strategy in Balkan Slavic dialects is based on the analytic dative pattern. The allative preposition *na* 'on' regularly encodes a dative relation, but in southern and south-western Macedonian dialects it occurs in direct dependency constructions. In these dialects, the use of *na* with direct objects is governed by semantic and pragmatic considerations because only specific, predominantly animate objects receive differential marking. To prove this hypothesis we analyze the properties of the examples with DOM in two 19<sup>th</sup> century texts written in colloquial dialects. The analysis shows that DOM in Macedonian dialects is sensitive to the pragmatic-semantic features with specificity/definiteness being the necessary precondition. Specific referents are "uniquely identifiable" because "[t]he addressee can identify the speaker's intended referent on the basis of the nominal alone" (Gundel et al., 1993: 217). Although the use of the marker *na* in this respect is similar to the Spanish *a*, *na*-marking has a different sociolinguistic status. DOM in Macedonian is a marginal feature of peripheral dialects, while in Romance languages it belongs to the standard.

During the common Byzantine and Ottoman past, the languages of the Balkans underwent convergent development<sup>5</sup> which brought about significant structural changes shared by the members of the Balkan Sprachbund. These languages, including Balkan Slavic languages, typologically are characterized by explicit analytism: they overtly mark grammatical relations with free morphemes—prepositions, (p)articles, and auxiliaries (Lindstedt, 2014: 169). Macedonian south-west dialects belong to the most balkanized core of the Balkan Sprachbund (Lindstedt, 2000: 234), and therefore constitute convergence areas within the Balkan Sprachbund. Joseph (2010) argues that Balkan Sprachbund should be viewed as a unity of several smaller convergence areas where intense, intimate and mutual multilingualism took place. Bilingual speakers in these multilingual communities must have resorted to the constant code switching as a result of their daily interactions, contributing to greater structural isomorphism at sentence level between the contact languages. It can be argued that such striking similarity of sentence structure in Balkan languages has resulted in a high degree of mutual translatability, which makes it possible

5 The role of Balkan Slavic in the convergence process was that it "accelerated the expansion of the contact-induced changes and strengthened typological links between particular Balkan languages" (Topolińska, 2010: 56).

to employ a morph-for-morph translation of a sentence (cf. Gumperz and Wilson, 1971).<sup>6</sup>

In Macedonian, the tendency for explicit analytic marking of semantic and syntactic relations is most pronounced (Lindstedt, 2019). The presence of DOM in peripheral Macedonian dialects may not have been an exception to this tendency. As suggested by several authors, DOM in these dialects appeared as a result of colloquial contact with two languages: Aromanian and Greek. Aromanian, a DOM language, is considered to have triggered DOM in the Ohrid dialect (Marković, 2007), lending the construction of the type *l vizdui pi Taki* ‘I saw (dom) Taki’. Following Koneski (1986), dialectologists describing southern and south-western Macedonian dialects attribute the presence of DOM to the contact with Aromanian (Vidoeski, 1998; Peev, 1987; Karanfilovski, 2009; Mladenov, 1993; Labroska, 2003; Marković, 2007; Sobolev, 2008), although none of these authors offers an interpretation of DOM based on a distributional analysis.

With regard to the appearance of DOM in the southernmost Macedonian dialects, Topolinjska (1995) suggests Greek influence but links it to the internal changes in their nominal systems. On this view, Greek, a language without DOM,<sup>7</sup> indirectly influenced the southernmost Macedonian dialects in replicating the northern Greek dative–accusative pattern (Bužarovska, 2001).

The following examples illustrate the use of DOM: in Ohrid dialect (1) and in the southernmost dialect (2).

- (1) *Go vidov na čovekot.*  
 3SG.M.ACC.CL see-PST.1SG DOM man-DEF.SG.M  
 ‘I saw the man.’ (Marković, 2007: 94)
- (2) *Gu videh na Taki.*  
 3SG.M.ACC.CL see-PST.1SG DOM Taki  
 ‘I saw Taki.’ (Bužarovska, 2001: 13)<sup>8</sup>

6 Gumperz and Wilson (1971) emphasize the importance of translatability between languages/dialects in contact, i.e. the ability of bilingual speakers to translate a sentence word for word because of a single syntactic surface structure, a result of the codes bilinguals use in code switching situations. These conclusions were drawn from the analysis of bilingual texts of three dialects (two of which are genetically unrelated) spoken in an Indian multilingual village (Kupwar) with “an extraordinary degree of translatability” between the compared sentences (ibid: 154–155).

7 Northern Greek dialects do not have DOM, but have an analytic construction for encoding both dative and accusative dependencies, which is explained in section 4.

8 All dialectal examples are rendered phonetically, as they were written down in dialectal materials. This utterance was used by older informants who spoke the southern dialect of Yannisita (Enidže-Vardar/Pazar) in Greece.

However, the contact with Aromanian<sup>9</sup> has not been fully explored nor recognized as an external motivating factor. Some researches challenge this view (Asenova and Aleksova, 2008; Adamou, 2009), while some do not rank contact as a decisive factor (Topolinjska, 1995). Doubts in contact hypothesis are substantiated by the fact that DOM is absent in some Macedonian dialects (for instance Bitola or Kruševo) in spite of lengthy and close contact between Macedonian and Aromanian population in these regions. The reverse scenario is also true: in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century DOM was widespread in the southernmost dialect near Langada Lake (north and north-east of Thessaloniki, Greece) even though no Aromanian presence was documented in that area (Adamou, 2009).

With respect to the source for DOM in the Ohrid dialect, the contact hypothesis of DOM cannot be dismissed, but contact explanations should be elaborated with more scrutiny. Other factors may have contributed to the irregular use of DOM in this region: internal factors activated by the need for transparency in a multilingual environment, as well as sociolinguistic factors pertaining to the divide between urban and rural speech. Thus, speakers of Ohrid and Struga, many of whom are of Aromanian descent, use *na*-direct objects in colloquial language,<sup>10</sup> whereas this feature is missing in the villages near these towns (Vidoeski, 1998).

The hypothesis about the Greek influence in the appearance of DOM in southernmost Macedonian dialects (spoken in Dojran and in some northern regions in Greece)<sup>11</sup> also needs revision. DOM in these dialects displays two properties: optionality in use and uneven interdialectal distribution. The long contact in the past between southernmost Slavic dialects and northern Greek dialects triggered the appearance of DOM, but this innovation occurred because of the demise of the inherited Slavic case system and its subsequent analytic restructuring (Topolinjska, 1995; Cyxun, 1981).

What should be taken into consideration in the emergence of this dialectal DOM is the Balkan Sprachbund context within which it occurred. Prolonged language contact enhanced the need for successful communication

9 Nowadays, DOM marking is attested in the Aromanian dialect of Ohrid and Struga, where the prepositional marker *pi* regularly marks human objects. But in the dialect of Krania (Thessaly, Greece), the use of *pra/pri* seems to be an optional but preferred strategy with specified human referents: *beulu nu-l kunusku prā elinopul, prā fičorlu* 'The bey did not recognize the Greek boy, the little boy' (Sobolev, 2008: 44).

10 The use of *na*-marked direct objects in the speech of Ohrid and Struga schoolchildren is described in Bužarovska (2017).

11 It should be noted that the materials from the minority dialects in Greece to a great extent reflect a past situation because the younger generation is increasingly becoming monolingual due to education in Greek medium.

in a multilingual environment, including the need for a more transparent marking of the semantic and pragmatic meanings of conveyed messages. The internal factors, such as principles of economy and iconicity, have led to the structural simplification of the case system and subsequent grammaticalization of the adpositional dative marker. By marking the second human discourse participant with the same marker in direct dependency relations, the users of DOM generalize the analytic case marking and simultaneously upgrade the transparency and informativeness of the message. The grammatical simplification in Balkan languages was paired up with pragmatic enrichment of verbal messages: marking the beginning of the communication, attention signals, emphasis on semantically important element of communication, introduction of rheme with clitics, etc. (Civjan, 1979: 284).

The paper adopts an interfaced syntactic-pragmatic approach in the interpretation of the diachronic DOM examples. To explain the principles governing the rise of DOM in these dialects, we draw on the theories of case marking functions (Siewierska and Bakker, 2008) and discourse prominence (Dalrymple and Nikolaeva, 2011; Gundel et al., 1993). As indirect objects prototypically refer to individuated human recipients, the spread of DOM was directed along three dimensions: definiteness, humanness and important discourse status, subsumed here under the term discourse prominence. Prominence (or topic worthiness) depends on semantic parameters conditioned on animacy<sup>12</sup> and definiteness scales. It correlates with topicality, a pragmatic feature of the information structure that expresses the informational status of a referent and “depends on the speaker’s construal of the situation within the given communicative context” (Dalrymple and Nikolaeva, 2011: 52). Although specific human referents are presuppositional, they are topical when they carry the communicative focus of the utterance.

The above discussion suggests that DOM in Macedonian dialects resulted from the interplay of external and internal factors. Assigning a background role to contact, the use of DOM in southernmost Macedonian dialects can be explained by invoking principles of iconicity and economy which work together with semantic and information structure principles. The goal of this paper is to prove that DOM in the southernmost dialects was caused by the communicative necessity of speakers to clarify their message by overtly marking the second human participant and thus ascribe him/her a prominent discourse status.

12 Malchukov (2008: 204) notes that some grammatical categories, like number and agreement, are sensitive to prominence and display animacy effects. Related to animacy and discourse prominence is the speaker’s empathy.

The paper is organized as follows: the next section clarifies the theoretical framework applied in the analysis of dialectal DOM examples. Section 3 offers a summary of the chronological attestation of DOM in Macedonian dialects; the subsequent section presents the results of the diachronic analysis of DOM examples from the oldest written sources; several hypotheses about the emergence of DOM in these dialects are offered in section 5. The conclusion reevaluates the theoretical assumptions in the light of the findings from the presented diachronic analysis.

## 2 Case Relations and Case-marking

It is well known that morphological case has been lost in Balkan Slavic (except in personal pronouns), a change that has created certain difficulties in discriminating between the agent and the patient. Their syntactic roles in a transitive clause are distinguished by case marking, word order and agreement. Inherent and referential features are marked on arguments, but the referring specified arguments in object positions are analytically casemarked by cliticized preverbal short pronouns. Since DOM in Macedonian dialects co-occurs with clitic doubling (obligatory in south-western dialects) it is important to understand the role of clitics in disambiguating objects from subjects. In finite transitive sentences the dependency of definite nominals is signaled by accusative or dative clitics. These anticipating replicas, necessarily repeat the categorical information of person and number (gender in 3p.sing) of the object referent; in fact, clitic doubling was prompted by the loss of case (Ilievski, 1988: 172). Being the only marker of case, the clitic performs several functions: via case marking it differentiates the object from the subject and simultaneously indexes the second participant as affected.

Indirect dependency employs an adpositional strategy: the grammaticalized allative preposition *na* precedes a non-specific or specific nominal or an accusative strong pronoun.<sup>13</sup> Recipient arguments are additionally indicated by obligatory dative proclitics corresponding to the categorical features of the recipient. This means that indirect dependency of definite objects is marked twice: by *na* and by the dative clitic, the latter additionally encodes agreement.

13 Except for the synthetic dative strong pronouns *nejze* (f) 'to her', *nemu* (m) 'to him' and *nam* (pl) 'to us', which in spoken language are replaced by the analytic *na* + accusative form (*casus generalis*), producing forms *na nea*, *na nego*, *na nas*, e.g. *Mu rekov nemu/na nego* 'I told him'. The earliest example of the preposition *na* in dative function (*na* + accusative pronoun) dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century *Bologna Psalter* (Koneski, 1967: 166).

As explained above, DOM in Macedonian regions is based on the dative pattern. In DOM dialects, transitive and ditransitive constructions, especially those involving speech verbs, have overlapped and only the casemarked clitic (and the verb's meaning) indicates the difference. Ambiguity may arise in direct speech with third person participants, particularly with a rhematic post-verbal subject and an unrealized theme as in (3) and (4). Moreover, the accusative clitic may be missing: in some southern and eastern dialects, similarly to other Balkan languages (Bulgarian, Greek), clitic doubling is optional because it has not been fully grammaticalized.

(3) *Go praša Nikola na Petre.*  
 3SG.M.ACC.CL ask-PST.3SG Nikola DOM Petre  
 'Nikola asked Peter.'

(4) *Mu kaža Nikola na Petre.*  
 3SG.M.DAT.CL say-PST.3SG Nikola DAT Petre  
 'Nikola told Peter.'

Why then would speakers introduce *na* whereby erasing the formal distinctions between the two constructions? It seems that *na* signals objecthood, that the second human participant (patient or theme) is affected by the activity of the animate agent.

A closer look into the functions of case marking is necessary to understand their role in the use of DOM. As accepted in the literature (Siewierska and Baker, 2008), case marking on the arguments performs two functions: discriminating and indexing. In a prototypical transitive pattern the former function distinguishes the subject (agent) from the object (patient), while the latter is used "to highlight the semantic closeness of arguments to the prototype of a given role" (Kittilä, 2011: 5). A prototypical patient is an affected (and indefinite) inanimate entity (Comrie, 1989: 128) realized by an accusative noun phrase, though it has been argued that animate patients are more affected than inanimate ones (cf. Næss, 2004).

It is difficult to tease apart these two functions and determine which one played a decisive role in the rise of DOM in Macedonian dialects. A number of authors (de Swart, 2007; Malchukov, 2008) maintain that marking animate patients is consistent with both syntactic and discourse functions: DOM prevents confusion with the subject, and also signals that the animate and specific patient is prominent in discourse. Animacy is more clearly related to the differentiating function of DOM because a marked animate object cannot be confused with an animate subject. On the markedness hypothesis, a patient animate

object diverges from the prototype of a transitive clause (Comrie, 1989; Aissen, 2003).<sup>14</sup> This implies consistent obligatory marking of all human direct objects, but in Macedonian dialects DOM is predominantly preferential. It seems that the introduction of *na* has considerably eased the distinguishability between the two human participants in a clause, especially in southern dialects where clitic doubling is optional.

The second function pertains to the relation of affectedness and prominence in animate patients. Affectedness, as a feature of the discriminatory function of casemarking, is also implied in the indexing function: animate individuated patients are perceived as affected because it is more important to mark affectedness on animate participants. In highly transitive situations animacy and referentiality are responsible for the object's 'individuation', i.e. prominence (Hopper and Thompson, 1980). Malchukov (2008: 211) argues for a correlation between affectedness and degree of prominence, concluding that under the indexing perspective animacy effects are induced indirectly "through correlations between animacy features and role-related characteristics of arguments".

It follows from this discussion that the animacy parameter in casemarking is directly related to the differentiating function, and indirectly to the indexing one because human patients are more salient in discourse and thus perceived to be affected. It is possible that the former function had initially triggered the use of the accusative *na*, but during the grammaticalization of this *na*-pattern the latter (indexing) function prevailed, regulating its use in accordance with the speaker's perception of the degree of the object's prominence and topicality.

The humanness (implying prominence) of the prototypical recipient in the indirect object position rendered by *na* is associated with the human and prominent unprototypical patient in the direct object position. Subsequently, *na*-marking of human patients has spread onto animate and even inanimate patients deemed to be topic worthy participants. Since human recipients, being inherently more topical than theme arguments (Kittilä, 2006; Haspelmath, 2007), are marked by *na* in ditransitive constructions, by analogy *na* was extended to human (also topical) patients in transitive constructions. Thus the syntactic marking on recipients was replicated on human patients with a high discourse status. It seems, therefore, that both animacy (induced by the discriminating function) and discourse prominence (induced by indexing) motivate the use of DOM in southern dialects.

14 Typically, patients are inanimate and indefinite in prototypical transitive situations (Comrie, 1989: 128).

It can be further hypothesized that in contact with a non-Slavic language(s), the two functions compete, which explains the non-obligatory use of DOM in southern Macedonian dialects and its extension to inanimate referents.

### 3 Distribution and Diachrony of DOM

It is important to underline that DOM in Macedonian dialects is not evenly distributed both areally and historically. Today DOM is attested in the southern and southwest region of the Republic of North Macedonia, but the dialects with DOM in the border regions in Greece are predominantly spoken by older speakers due to the limited intergenerational transmission of their mother tongue. *Na*-marked direct objects were attested in a wider belt from Korçë in south-east Albania, through Kastoria and Thessaloniki to Serres in northern Greece (Vidoeski, 1998: 115). Nowadays this feature is present in the southern dialect of Doiran and south-western dialects of Ohrid, Struga and Debar.

To prove the hypothesis that contact was an auxiliary mechanism in the spread of DOM in southernmost dialects, diachronic data from these regions were examined. The data chronologically can be divided into two parts:

- (a) older materials represented by the *Kulakia Gospel* (Mazón and Vaillant, 1938) and by the folk tales collected by Stefan Verkovič (Penušliski, 1985) in the sixth decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century,
- (b) newer dialectal materials collected a hundred years later (Vidoeski, 2000; Peev, 1987; Karanfilovski, 2009; Labroska, 2003 among others).

The present investigation focuses on the analysis of the examples with DOM in the older sources, without aspiring to provide an exhaustive overview of the distribution and chronology of DOM. It is impossible to accurately trace the diachronic development of DOM in these dialects because ample written evidence of spoken language is lacking. During the Byzantine and Ottoman rule, Slavic literary texts strictly followed the written tradition of Church Slavonic.<sup>15</sup>

Koneski's observations (1986) regarding the diachrony of DOM objects help shed light on the development of this phenomenon in the past. It seems that by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century DOM had already taken root in the southernmost dialects, although not earlier and not in the southwest: both the *Konikovo*

15 Regarding spoken language some authors (e.g., Ilievski, 1988: 166) maintain that widespread bilingualism existed between Greek and Slavic populations in contact regions.

*Gospel* (Lindstedt et al., 2008; Lindstedt, 2015)<sup>16</sup> found in the village Konikovo (nowadays Dytiko, near Yanitsa, Greece) and the *Lexicon Tetraglosson*,<sup>17</sup> written at the very end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, do not have this construction.

Relying on diachronic evidence, Koneski (1986: 202) observes that prepositionally marked direct objects were common in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in southernmost dialects. The earliest, and the only example (5) was found in a folk poem from Kilkis (Kukuš, a small border town in Greece) included in the Miladinov Brothers' Collection, published in 1861 in Zagreb.

- (5) *Toga ja ritna ličen sveti Georgi na*  
 then 3SG.F.ACC.CL kick-AOR.3SG handsome saint George DOM
- sura Lamja po kleto srce*  
 dragon-SG.F on cursed heart
- 'Then handsome saint George kicked the dragon on its cursed heart.'

A much higher number of examples with DOM is attested in the *Kulakia Gospel* and Verković's collection of folk tales.<sup>18</sup> Both originate from the same period (1863) in neighboring regions near Thessaloniki (Greece) close to the delta of the Vardar/Axios River. These dialects were referred to by Mazón and Vaillant (1938) as the Low Vardar dialects. The *Kulakia Gospel* was created in Chalastra village (former Kulakia), north-west of Thessaloniki. The text in the *Gospel* was written in the local vernacular dialect using the Greek alphabet. Mazón and Vaillant (ibid.) published the transcribed text in Latin script incorporating an extensive linguistic analysis.

Verković's collection contains folk tales from several villages in northern Greece, such as Ossa (former Visoka) in the Langada region (north-east of Thessaloniki), the village Lehovo (near Florina, Greece), and the small town of Yanitsa (Enidže Vardar).

16 The *Konikovo Gospel* was written at the end of 18<sup>th</sup> or beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century. It contains a Greek evangelarium and its Slavic translation with Greek letters. Both the Greek and the Slavic texts represent the vernacular, not the church language. For more information see <http://www.helsinki.fi/~jslindst/268/>.

17 The *Lexicon Tetraglosson* is a quadrilingual lexicon of Greek, Albanian, Vlach (Aromanian), and "Bulgarian" (Macedonian dialect of Ohrid) written by Daniel Moscopolites, an Aromanian priest from Moscopole. It is assumed that the Slavic version was translated from Greek by Stefan, an Ohrid priest of Aromanian descent (Nichev, 1997).

18 Koneski (1986: 202–206) relies on Mazón and Vaillant (1938) for data about the *Kulakia Gospel*.

Although Koneski (1986: 202–204) claims that this “interesting innovation” is used to mark human direct objects (6), he concedes that the ‘direct *na*-object’ in the *Kulakia Gospel* may co-occur with inanimate referents (7), but does not offer an explanation.

(6) *ja*                      *pitaha*                      *na*                      *babata*  
 3SG.F.ACC.CL          ask-PST.3PL          DOM          old woman-DEF.SG.F  
 ‘They asked the old woman.’

(7) *utidi*                      *da*                      *kupa*                      *na*                      *zemnjata*<sup>19</sup>  
 go-PST.3SG          SBJV          buy-PRS.3SG          DOM          land-DEF.SG.F  
 ‘He/she went to buy the land.’

The oldest texts from Florina (Lerin) and Kastoria (Kostur) region<sup>20</sup> (to the north of the above mentioned dialects) do not have *na*-objects except for one example (8), leading Topolinjska (1995: 93) to conclude that it “predicts a later development”.

(8) *Ščo*                      *íe*                      *me*                      *jajiš*                      *na*                      *mene,*  
 what          FUT          1SG.ACC.CL          eat-PRS.2SG          DOM          me-1SG.ACC  
  
*kažva*                      *ta,*                      *ostaj*                      *me*                      *da*                      *se*                      *zgoja.*  
 tell-PRS.3SG          she          leave-IMPER          1SG.ACC.CL          SBJV          REFL          fatten-PRS.1SG  
 ‘Why do you have to eat me, says she, let me grow fat.’

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century this feature was recorded in the south-west dialect of Kastoria/Kostur (Seliščev, [1918] 1981: 185), and in the southernmost dialect of Karteres/Kiretskoj (a village in Langada region). In example (9) from that region (Cyxun, 1981: 47) *na* is used with the direct object pronoun in the nominative form (*ti* instead of the accusative *tebe*), a fact that betrays the detriment of the case system. In addition, its redundant use (besides the clitic *te*) indicates that the human object is highly topical.

19 In the noun *zemnja* ‘ground, earth’, instead of *zemja*, an epenthetic *n*’ is inserted in *m’a* endings following the Greek demotic use (*potamnia* ‘rivers’). This is noted in many south-slavic dialects (East Serbian) and in Romanian dialects (see Seliščev, [1918] 1981: 148).

20 Topolinjska (1995) refers to Mazón and Vaillant (1938) for older data from Florina (Lerin) and Kastoria (Kostur), small towns in Greece near the border with the Republic of North Macedonia.

- (9) *ne te sakam na ti*  
 NEG 2SG.ACC.CL love-PRS.1SG DOM you-2SG.NOM  
 'I don't love you.'

In the first half of the last century, *na*-marking was attested in a folk tale from the village of Kolchiko/Balevac (Lagadina region, Greece) where the object referent is an animate being: *fati na pčelata* '(he) caught the bee' (Vidoeski, 2000: 344–346).<sup>21</sup> Further evidence for the diffusion of this feature was registered in the dialects to the east (towards Serres/Ser), north (Yanitsa/Enidže Vardar and Kilkis/Kukuš) and west (Kastoria/Kostur) of this southernmost region. The dialectal materials gathered from the informants who had lived in these regions testify to an irregular use of *na*. Thus, in the texts from the village of Paliokastron/Kula near Serres/Ser (Labroska, 2003) half of the direct objects were unmarked. Yet, certain regularity in *na*-object distribution can be observed in all examples provided in these sources (Karanfilovski, 2009; Peev, 1987). It seems that its occurrence was governed by discourse principles – the human and animal referents of the marked objects in these tales are topical, occupying a topicalized (10)<sup>22</sup> or a rhematic position (11). This is particularly evident in the use of *na* with the only inanimate object (12), whose referent (the envelope) is highly relevant for the ensuing turn of events in the narrative.

- (10) *Gu glasaa na nego car.*  
 3SG.M.ACC.CL proclaim-PST.3PL DOM he-3SG.M.ACC king  
 'They proclaimed him king.'

- (11) *Gu iskarat ud vrekjata na too pitelut.*  
 3SG.M.ACC.CL take-PRS.3PL ABL sack-DEF.SG.F DOM DEM rooster-DEF.SG.M  
 'They take that rooster out of the bag.'

- (12) *Vadi molivo, isea na pliko,*  
 take-PRS.3SG pencil-DEF.SG.M cut-PRS.3SG DOM envelope-DEF.SG.M  
  
*poleka poleka go otvoral.*  
 slowly slowly 3SG.M.ACC.CL open-PRF.3SG.M  
 'He took out the pencil, and cut the envelope and slowly, slowly opened it.'

21 The tales are in Vidoeski (2000), but the example was written down by Malecki in the 1930s.

22 Example (10) is from Karanfilovski (2009: 70), (11) from Peev (1987: 292), and (12) from Labroska (2003: 109).

In Kastoria/Kostur region, *na* is completely grammaticalized with animate nouns, as in (13) provided in Vidoeski (1998: 89). More examples come from Nestorio/Nestram and other neighboring villages: *me vide na mene* ‘he saw me’, *a vikna na ženata* ‘called the woman’, *gu vidu na Vaneta* ‘I saw Vane’ (Vidoeski, 1999: 91).

- (13) *Dojdoa psite tam i go zbraa*  
 come-PST.3PL dogs there and 3SG.M.ACC.CL attack-PST.3PL
- na toj čoveko.*  
 DOM DEM man-DEF.SG.M  
 ‘The dogs came there and attacked that man.’

It was only much later (the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) that *na*-marking was noted further to the north: in the towns of Ohrid, Struga and Debar located in the south-west of the Republic of North Macedonia, but not in ethnic Macedonian villages near Ohrid and Struga. Vidoeski (1998: 125) provides an explanation for this fact claiming that the long and steady migration of inhabitants from mountain villages to the Ohrid region resulted in the interruption of the Ohrid–Struga dialect continuum and subsequent isolation of the urban speech. In addition to this sociolinguistic differentiation, the speech of the Moslem Macedonian-speaking population, who were culturally separated from their Christian neighbors, took its own course of development. In the narrow stretch along the Albanian border, Moslem speakers, known as Torbeš, still keep some archaic features (ibid.: 225), including the optional use of synthetic dative and genitive-accusative forms with masculine kinship terms and proper names (*mu reče Stojanu* ‘tell Stoyan’, *go vide Stojana* ‘saw Stoyan’). Another distinctive feature of Torbeš speech in the ethnically mixed Debar region<sup>23</sup> is the use of *na*-direct objects (*go videl na Sareta* ‘saw Sare’, *ke a dārzat na nevestata* ‘they will keep the bride’).

As mentioned earlier, the use of DOM in Ohrid, Struga and Debar is traditionally accounted for by Aromanian influence. However, Tošev (1970) finds the use of *na*-objects in Struga surprising because they were not attested in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Aromanian texts from Struga. He allows for the possibility of Aromanian influence following the migration of Aromanians to Struga (and other towns in Macedonia and Thessaly) after the destruction of Voskopoje/

23 The Debar area, where Albanian-Macedonian bilingualism is common, is populated by ethnic Albanians, Macedonian-speaking Moslems (Torbeš), Macedonians and Turks. The Torbeš population lives in almost all villages in Župa (roughly between Ohrid and Struga) and Gora districts (Vidoeski, 1998: 214).

Moschopolis (Albania) in the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>24</sup> Tošev cites 33 examples of *na*-objects collected from schoolchildren's written assignments in Struga (ibid.: 109). The human *na*-objects<sup>25</sup> cooccur with verbs such as 'ask', 'let', 'see', 'look for', 'beg', 'force', 'wait', 'cheat' and several physical activity verbs with a high degree of affectedness: 'kill', 'grab', 'eat', 'beat', 'shoot', etc. In (14) the dislocated *na*-object is topicalized, as in (15), where the main protagonist is topical due to a sudden change of events (indicated by 'but' and 'then'). In (16) *na* seems to be discriminating: the second participant, the father, is determined by the generalized possessive dative enclitic *mu* (masculine instead of the feminine form), which, in the absence of *na*, creates confusion who met whom.

(14) *Na Đura ne go puštite da odit.*  
 DOM Gjura NEG 3SG.M.ACC.CL let-PRF.3PL SBJV go-PRS.3SG  
 'Gjura was not allowed to leave.'

(15) *Aleksa otišol da krade no togaš na Aleksa*  
 Aleksa go-PRF.3SG SBJV steal-PRS.3SG but then DOM Aleksa  
  
*go fatija.*  
 3SG.M.ACC.CL catch-PST.3PL  
 'Aleksa went to steal something, but then Aleksa was caught.'

(16) *Devojčeto go sretna na tatko mu.*  
 girl-DEF.SG.N 3SG.N/M.ACC.CL meet.PST.3SG DOM father 3SG.M.DAT.CL  
 'The little girl met her father.'

In its advance to the north, DOM also reached the capital Skopje; in the 1960s, its use was registered in the speech of many young people (ibid.: 110). Koneski (1986: 203) notes that this innovation spread without any immediate geographic contact with the original sources of change, so its "peculiar presence" in

24 Before its decline (due to several destructions by the Turks in 1769, 1788 and 1816), Moschopolis, a small Aromanian town near Korçë (Albania) was an important economic and cultural center. The strong connection to the Hellenic tradition in education was reflected in the widespread bilingualism of the Aromanian population, as well as in the activities of some prominent local leaders (for instance, Daniel Moschopolites) aimed at the hellenization of the non-Greek Christian communities in the Balkans (Friedman, 2000b; Mackridge, 2009).

25 The only example that he cites with an inanimate entity *Zede malku smola i ja izbriša na masata*. '(He) took a liitle wax and wiped *dom* the table' must be a mistake, probably due to the inappropriate choice of the verb 'wipe' (instead of 'spread'), in which case *na* is a locative preposition.

Skopje vernacular should be attributed to the migration of speakers who “imported” it from their dialects and influenced other speakers in adopting this pattern.

The use of *na*-objects, which has not been mentioned in the dialectal materials, is also attested in a variety of the dialect spoken in Strumica, a small town near the Bulgarian border. Some speakers from this speech community are descendants of refugees from Kilkis/Kukuš (Greece) who were forced to leave their homes in 1913 during Balkan Wars. Most probably, this feature has been transmitted from one generation to another in the last 100 years, so today even young people mark direct objects when communicating in the local dialect.<sup>26</sup>

To conclude, in Macedonian dialects animacy and the discourse prominence of the patient/theme decide whether the direct object will be case-marked by *na*. Yet some examples above testify that topicality is also involved in *na*-marking. Is it then a real case marker? What were the reasons for the rise of DOM in southernmost dialects? In order to answer these questions the results of the diachronic analysis of dialectal sources are presented in the next section.

#### 4 DOM in the Oldest Sources

This section discusses the distribution and the properties of *na*-objects in the two oldest sources: the *Kulakia Gospel* and the folk tales in Verković's collection. Both manuscripts were created in 1863 in the region north-west of Thessaloniki where Slavic–Greek language contact was most intense. Cyxun (1981: 41) locates the radiation center of the novel marking of direct objects in the “narrow innovation region” near Lagadina region, where the *Gospel* was created.<sup>27</sup> As pointed out in the introduction, this change should be accounted for only against the background of a multilingual context and the fact that the village of Kulakia (Chalastra) had a mixed population of Slavic and Greek descent.

26 To obtain more reliable information on DOM in this speech community, a judgment acceptability test was conducted on a rather small sample of 40 informants. Of 10 examples the following three with a topicalized *na*-object got the highest acceptability score: *Ga pitah na nastavničkata* ‘I asked *dom* the teacher’, *Kola go udri na kučeto!* ‘The car *dom* hit the dog!’, and *Go udri na kučeto, ne na mačeto* ‘He hit *dom* the dog, not *dom* the cat’.

27 This is an area between the mountain range Vertiskos on the west/northwest and Langada Lake on the east, to the north of Thessaloniki (Greece).

The analysis is focused on Verković's collection because of the narrative style of the folk tales, their secular character and the variety of topics. On the other hand, the *Gospel* has a unique status among other dialectal materials because it documents a regular use of DOM. This fact suggests a potential "birthplace" of this innovation.

#### 4.1 *The Kulakia Gospel*

In their linguistic analysis of the *Gospel* text, Mazón and Vaillant (1938: 176–179) discuss the use of *na* with direct objects and suggests that it was a recent local innovation. They are cautious in drawing parallels with the Aromanian pattern because of the different general conditions in "Romanian" and in the dialects spoken in the vicinity of Thessaloniki<sup>28</sup> and argue that the use of *na* with direct objects as in *mi vide mene* 's/he saw me' involves extension of the dative analytic pattern of the type *mi riče na mene* 's/he said to me'. In their view, the "preposition" *na* was optionally used with accented syncretic dative-accusative pronouns (*mene* 'me', *tebe* 'you'), but the confusion between "unstressed" accusative and dative proclitics (e.g. *mi, me* 'me') contributed to the spread of *na*, which came to introduce the "accented" pronominal complement (*mi vide na mene* 's/he saw *dom* me').

The distributional analysis of *na*-objects in the *Gospel* confirms that this pattern was regularly used in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in this dialect: of 277 marked direct objects found in the text only 10 are unmarked. These *na*-objects function as complements of 64 verbs;<sup>29</sup> the most frequent are 'see' (39 tokens), 'listen' and 'ask' (21 tokens), 'send' (20 tokens), 'take' and 'call' (14 tokens), 'know' and 'love' (13 tokens), and 'find/meet' (11 tokens).

The referents of the marked objects predominantly encode a specified human participant in the singular, even if the object is coordinated or heads a relative clause (17). The omission of *na* is uncommon, mostly occurring with the noun *detito* 'the child' as in (18), in which the coordinated object is *na*-marked.

28 In the original: "les conditions généraux n'étant pas les mêmes en roumain et dans les parlers des environs de Salonique" (Mazón and Vaillant, 1938: 176).

29 These are: 'annoint', 'anger', 'arrest', 'ask', 'beg', 'betray', 'baptize', 'buy', 'bless', 'call/summon', 'catch', 'cheat', 'celebrate', 'close', 'comfort', 'crucify', 'cure', 'curse', 'deliver', 'deny', 'destroy', 'divide', 'forgive', 'find', 'hear', 'hire', 'invite', 'keep', 'know', 'kill', 'leave', 'listen/obey', 'lose', 'look for', 'love', 'meet', 'put', 'raise', 'save', 'see/look', 'send', 'separate', 'shake', 'stab', 'take', 'take pity', 'teach', 'tempt', 'torment', 'understand', 'undress', 'wait', 'wipe'.

- (17) *Isus ka a vide na majka mu,*  
 Jesus when 3SG.F.ACC.CL see-PST.3SG DOM mother 3SG.M.DAT.CL

*i na učenikut ... na to što miluvaši (69/3)<sup>30</sup>*  
 and DOM pupil-DEF.SG.M DOM DEM REL love-PST.3SG  
 'When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple ... the one he loved.'

- (18) *I on stana, a zel detito*  
 and he rise-PST.3SG 3SG.F.ACC.CL take-PRF.3SG child-DEF.SG.N

*i na majka. (92/4)*  
 and DOM mother-SG.F  
 'And he got up and took the child and his mother.'

*Na*-marking in six instances is found even with unspecified human objects, as in examples (19) and (20), which indicates high degree of regularization of DOM. In (19), the object is a substantivized adjective *živ* 'the living'.

- (19) *Šo palati na živ su mrtvite? (148/6)*  
 what search-PRS.2PL DOM alive COM dead-DEF.PL  
 'Why do you look for the living among the dead?'

- (20) *Ki prudosa brat na brat i*  
 FUT betray-PRS.3SG brother DOM brother and

*tatko na detito. (137/9)*  
 father DOM child-DEF.SG.N  
 'A brother will betray his brother and a father his child.'

The regularization of DOM marking is reflected in the use of *na* with plural human referents (69 tokens): *a vikal Isus na dvanadeset Učeniciti* 'Jesus summoned the twelve disciples' (74/1), *da miluvat na dušmanite* 'to love your enemies' (34/8). Almost a third of these objects (20 tokens) are pronominal (*na via i pušti Isus, em m kaža na nih* '(dom) them Jesus sent, and he said to them'). The optional use of *na* with plural objects may indicate that only topical objects are marked. Example (21) testifies to the fact that topicality is involved in the fur-

30 The numbers in the parenthesis denote the original number of the paragraph in the Gospel and the line where the example is found.



The most striking property of the *Gospel* text is the extent of confusion of the preverbal clitics in the case-marking function. Thus, the use of the accusative clitics for 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular is characterized by a lack of gender and number distinction, so in addition to *go/gu* 'him', three other pronominal forms occur in free variation: the dative *mu*, the accusative feminine *a*, and the plural accusative *i*. They are found even with the same verb: *gu pita na negu* (7/16, 38/9) vs. *mu pita na negu* (33/3, 46/7) 'he asked him', or *a vidohmi na Afendot* 'we saw (dom) the Lord' (2/11; 153/10) vs. *i vidoa na Stopanot* 'they saw (dom) the Lord' (5/5). Variation can also be found within the same sentence, as in (23).

- (23) *I go fatia aramiite i mu*  
 and 3SG.M.ACC.CL catch-PST.3PL robber-DEF.PL and 3SG.M.DAT.CL
- sublikoa na negu.* (40/9)  
 undress-PST.3PL DOM he-3SG.M.ACC  
 'A man was going down from Jerusalem, some robbers caught and stripped him.'

In line with this tendency, the above clitics *i*, *a*, *mu* are also used to casemark 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular and 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural direct objects: *da i paragorisat na nei* 'to comfort (dom) her' (57/25), *mu paragorisaa na nea* (57/33) 'they comforted (dom) her', *a puštia na nea* 'they sent (dom) her' (32/5); *ka mu vide Isus na nih* 'when Jesus saw (dom) them' (21/4), *mu lekuva na bolnite ljudi* 'he cures (dom) the sick people' (23/1), *ki i zagubi na nih* 'he will kill (dom) them' (28/12).

Moreover, in several instances two juxtaposed accusative clitics may be found with the same topicalized but not *na*-marked object (Jesus), as in (24); or reversely, the accusative clitic was often omitted with the *na*-marked object: *na negu da slušiti* (139/9) vs. *na negu da mu slušiti* (138/12) '(dom) him you should listen to'.

- (24) *Isus Josiuto sin na Nazaret gu*  
 Jesus Joseph-DEF.SG.N son in Nazareth 3SG.M.ACC.CL
- a najdemi.* (85/16)  
 3SG.F.ACC.CL find-PST.1PL  
 'In Nazareth, we found Jesus, the son of Joseph.'

The confused, even erratic clitic use indicates that they substantially lost their case marking function. This is confirmed by examples in which the clitic extended its scope to introduce unspecified nominal complements (cf. *ibid.*: 179): *a vide idno čovek* 'he saw a man', *on a flegal u idno kaik* 'he got into a boat',

and even to signal dependency of a declarative clause: *a znam oti*, ‘I know that...’.

It can be concluded that *na* in this dialect served as a marker of objecthood: it signalled direct dependency of a nominal complement. Thus *na* compensated for the undermined role of the clitics, which demonstrated much fluctuation of usage.

#### 4.2 *Verkovik Tales*

Even a cursory survey of the two analyzed texts shows that the occurrence of *na*-objects in Verković’s tales is not regular. Considering that there are 133 tales, the number of DOM examples in this text is relatively low—only 89—because they are present in less than 30 tales. Such an uneven distribution of *na*-objects may be attributed to at least two reasons: the tales do not accurately reflect the dialect spoken in this region because even smaller local dialects had their own distinctive features. Hence the collector’s interventions into the language cannot be ruled out (Koneski, 1986). Secondly, it is highly possible that DOM at that time was still considered an innovation, not used by all storytellers.

The most frequent verbs that co-occur with *na*-objects are ‘ask’ (30 tokens) and ‘listen’ (20), which together rise to 36 instances<sup>33</sup> out of 89. The next more common verbs (with four to five occurrences) are the speech verbs ‘beg’, ‘scold’, ‘call’, and the physical affectedness verbs ‘hit’ and ‘kill/stab’, followed by ‘see/look’ (three instances), while the rest are represented either with two instances (‘force’, ‘see off’, ‘find’), or are used only once (‘grab’, ‘meet’, ‘press’, ‘let/allow’, ‘wake up’, ‘wash’, etc. including the psych verbs ‘comfort’ and ‘like’). Examples where *na* keeps its locative meaning were excluded, for instance with the verb ‘mount’ which was used both with or without *na* ‘on’: *vjahna (na) konja* ‘mount the horse’. Similarly, several examples with the verb ‘hit’ in constructions of the type ‘give somebody a slap’ were not counted.

It should be pointed out that *na*-marking is still an optional strategy in these narratives. Even the most frequent ‘ask’ does not take *na*-objects in all uses, both in unmarked and marked linearizations: *Go pitat čovekot, toj im veli...* ‘they ask the man, he tells them’ (Penušliski, 1985: 228), *Ponatamu ke najdeš drug kato mene, nego da go pitaš!* ‘Further on, you will find someone like me, him you should ask’ (p: 260).<sup>34</sup> Such variability is found within the same tale: no DOM is used to mark the object (children) in *Ženata gi pita decata* ‘the woman asked the children’ (p: 228), but later in the story when the husband arrives, the object (wife) is marked (25).

33 The collocation *pita na sãnceto* ‘asked (dom) the sun’ was used four times in the same tale.

34 The number in the parenthesis (p: #) indicates the page number in *Stefan Verković, South Macedonian folk tales* (4) (Penušliski, 1985).

- (25) *Tatko mu<sup>35</sup> pita za kokoškata*  
 father 3SG.M.DAT.CL ask-PST.3SG for chicken-DEF.SG.F
- na žena mu.* (p: 228)  
 DOM wife 3SG.F.DAT.CL  
 ‘Their father asked his wife about the chicken.’

Optionality in marking is observed with the other frequent verb, *poslušá* ‘listen/obey’: *Toj ne poslušá na tatko mu* ‘He didn’t listen to (dom) his father’ (p: 395), *Toj majka ne poslušá* ‘He didn’t listen to his mother’ (p: 301).

The high number of *na*-objects with ‘ask’ and ‘listen/obey’ (40%) indicates the affiliation of DOM with particular lexical constructions. Both ‘ask’ and ‘tell’ are extremely frequent speech verbs whose recipient arguments are case-marked differently, probably because the second human argument of ‘ask’ is more patient-like: his/her behavior is manipulated by the agent.<sup>36</sup> Speakers of these dialects have syntactically leveled the two speech verb constructions by analogy with the dative pattern in ‘tell’. What should be taken into consideration is the fact that story tellers predominantly used direct speech: *kaža na* ‘s/he said to’, *pita na* ‘s/he asked (dom)’ without embedding the verbal message in the same sentence. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that *na* spread to other monotransitive verbs from this frequent ditransitive construction. As the frequency distribution shows, the inclusion of other verbs into this pattern probably followed the affectedness parameter, conveyed by common verbs of speech, physical activity and even perception and emotion (‘beg’, ‘scold’, ‘call’, ‘hit’, ‘kill’, ‘stab’, ‘look’, etc.). The push may have come from the dative/accusative northern Greek construction discussed in the following section.

The importance of verbal semantics in the spread of this pattern has been noted in several studies on Spanish DOM (von Heusinger and Kaiser, 2007; von Heusinger, 2008). They argue that DOM prefers verbs that take a human direct object: the higher the verb’s preference for human objects, the more likely its object is differentially marked. The frequency scale of the verbs discussed above (‘ask’, ‘listen/obey’, ‘beg’, ‘scold’, ‘call’, ‘allow’, ‘hit’, ‘kill’, etc.) corresponds to the animacy scale, with the first several verbs selecting only human arguments. Therefore, von Heusinger’s conclusion that: “the lexical semantics of the verb is an additional driving force in the diachronic evolution of DOM” (von Heusinger, 2008: 29) seems to be confirmed by the above findings. In section 3, the

35 Another example of clitic generalization: dative masculine clitic *mu* (3sg) is used instead of the plural form.

36 Givón (2001: 152) classifies *ask* within “attempted manipulation” verbs.

survey of the examples from the urban speech of schoolchildren in Struga (Tošev, 1970) also shows that a similar inventory of verbs was used with human *na*-objects including verbs such as 'look for', 'wait', 'cheat', 'see', 'praise', etc., and high affectedness verbs 'eat', 'beat', 'shoot', etc.

Another factor contributing to the rise of DOM in these dialects is the optionality of clitic doubling. Given that *na*-direct objects always encode specific entities known to both conversational participants, they are optionally replicated by accusative proclitics.<sup>37</sup> In an impoverished case system (typical of these dialects), clitics are instrumental in distinguishing the roles of participants in a transitive situation. Moreover, taking into account the fact that DOM is based on specificity/definiteness, agreement clitics have an important discourse role. Siewierska and Bakker (2008: 293) argue that they serve "as a means of keeping track of referents in the discourse via their index of features. ... [A]greement is thus a form of pronominalization used in preference to free personal pronouns for highly salient discourse referents, which the speaker assumes to be easily accessible to the addressee." Following this line of reasoning, it is possible that when speakers consider the use of a clitic insufficient to indicate salience (and even identification) of the object referent, an additional means is called for—the dative marker *na*. Its role is to assign a prominent discourse status to the human object referent.

An indicative fact is the optionality of clitic doubling: in almost half of the examples in the analyzed tales the clitic is lacking. This is partly due to the frequent use of the verb *poslušā* 'listen/obey' and *moli* 'beg', regularly without an accusative clitic, while with *pita* 'ask' the clitic is used inconsistently. Since an accusative clitic has a discriminatory role, its absence may have been an additional reason for the use of *na*. In some cases disambiguation between the agent and the patient is performed by the genitive-accusative case ending *-a*, still kept in nouns denoting male individuals. In this text, it is found in combination with *na*, illustrated in (26) and (27).

(26) *Izvadi                    sabjata                    i                    go                    zakole*  
 take-PST.3SG    sword-DEF.F    and    3SG.M.ACC.CL    stab-PRF.3SG.M

*na                    kalugjera* (p: 136)

DOM    monk-SG.M.ACC

'He took out the sword and stabbed the monk.'

37 According to von Heusinger and Kaiser (2003), the use of Spanish DOM depends on specificity and animacy, while clitic doubling is determined by definiteness. Clitic doubling very often co-occurs with the particle *a* (ibid: 56–57).

- (27) *Koga videla mnogu grobišta, pitala na*  
 when see-PRF.3SG.F many graves ask-PRF.3SG.F DOM
- carskij čoveka što ja vodeše...* (p: 465)  
 royal man-SG.M.ACC REL 3SG.F.ACC.CL lead-PST.3SG  
 'When she saw many graves, she asked the king's man who was leading her.'

It seems that there is no regular correlation between the use of *-a* and *na* in these folk tales: we find DOM with case-marked objects: *go pita na siromaha* 'he asked the poor man' (p: 73), *pitaj na brata ti* 'ask (dom) your brother' (p: 74), *go zakoli na kalujjera* 'he stabbed (dom) the monk' (p: 136), or no DOM even with case-marked focused participants (*Što ne zakoluvaš Arapina?* 'Why don't you stab the Arab?' (p: 416)).

On the semantic plane, the frequency distribution of *na*-objects corresponds to the animacy scale: of 89 referents (some used twice), the majority encodes human beings, and only several objects refer to personified animals (the snake/bear/frog/ox/horse/chicken), and even fewer objects to inanimates (the sun/finger/pleadings). Plural objects referring to individuals and animals are found only in eight instances: *pita na decata* 'ask (dom) the children' (p: 230), *poslušā na svatovite* 'listened (dom) to his in-laws' (p: 349), *udriva na volovite* 'hit (dom) the oxen' (p: 225), but also with an abstract noun (pleas, tears), as in (28).

- (28) *I Bog poslušā na nejnite molbi i*  
 and Lord listen-PST.3SG DOM her-3DEF.SG.F pleas-PL and
- na gorkite i sālzi* (p: 384)  
 DOM bitter-PL.DEF 3SG.F.DAT.CL tears-PL  
 'And the Lord listened to her pleas and to her bitter tears.'

In the discussion in section 3, the presence of DOM in examples (10–16) was explained in terms of discourse prominence and topicality. Although topicality is difficult to pinpoint in a written text, some syntactic and contextual clues are helpful. In example (29), no ambiguity arises between the subject and the object because they differ in person (*we* vs. *the ox*), yet the direct object is marked by *na*. Previously in the story, the protagonists came across an old ox. This personified animal becomes important for the plot: the protagonists want to ask advice from it and therefore it is highly topical.

- (29) *Ajde da se pitame na tova voll* (p: 244)  
 HORT<sup>38</sup> SBJV REFL ask-PRS.1PL DOM DEM OX  
 'Let's ask this ox!'

A similar topicality explanation can account for the use of *na*-marking on the abstract object 'soul' in (30): the temporal clause with *l'u* 'at the moment' creates suspense. The listener's expectation is resolved in the main clause, where the definite object carries the information focus. However, *na* here may be interpreted as a locative preposition, and not as a topicality marker.

- (30) *Toj e angel, i l'u go vidoh,*  
 he is angel and once 3SG.M.ACC.CL see-PST.1SG  
  
*na dušata me popari.* (p: 56)  
 DOM soul-SG.F.DEF 1SG.ACC.CL burn-PST.3SG  
 'He is an angel, the moment I saw him, he burned my soul/ he burned me on my soul.'

Proper names marked with *na* are not so common because the participants are referred to with kinship or occupational terms. Object personal pronouns, used in 12 instances, often bear an informative (31) or a contrastive stress (32), signalling high topical status. DOM is not used here for disambiguation because the object pronouns are case-marked.

- (31) *ama jaze ne poslušah na tebika i otidoh* (p: 35)  
 but I NEG listen-PST.1SG DOM you-2SG.ACC and go-PST.1SG  
 'But I didn't listen to you and I left.'
- (32) *toj na mene saka da me pogubi* (p: 465)  
 he-3SG.M DOM me-1SG.ACC want-PRS.3SG SBJV 1SG.ACC.CL kill-PRS.3SG  
 'He wants to kill me.'

A tendency to mark topical participants with DOM is observed in contexts where there is a sudden change of situation, crucial to the resolution of a plot. This is signaled by the adverb *l'u* 'at the very moment', the inceptive *fati* 'start' (33), or the adverb 'immediately' (34).

38 *Ajde* is a common Balkan hortative particle.

- (33) *L'u fati da ja pita na žabata*  
 as start-PST.3SG SBJV 3SG.F.ACC.CL ask-PST.3SG DOM frog-DEF.SG.F

*dali ima i drugi žabi sos nea.* (p: 57)  
 if have-PRS.3SG and other frogs-PL COM her-SG.F.ACC  
 'And then he started to ask the frog if there were other frogs with it.'

- (34) *Zaednaš sos sabjata go čini*  
 immediately COM sword-SG.M.DEF 3SG.M.ACC.CL make-PST.3SG

*na protudrako parčinka-parčinka*<sup>39</sup> (p: 137)  
 DOM archdevil-SG.M.DEF piece-piece  
 'Immediately he cuts the archdevil into pieces.'

The fact that *na*-objects occur in the main clause supports the hypothesis about their high topicality. The previously introduced protagonist (the bear) is in the rheme part of the sentence (35). What is important for the story line is that the main protagonists finally found the bear, which participates in the narrative by providing the desired change in the course of events.

- (35) *Kato go najdoha oklavan Arapinot,*  
 when 3SG.M.ACC find-PST.3PL killed-PTCP Arab-DEF.M

*otidoha i na mečkata ja najdoha.* (p: 380)  
 go-PST.3PL and DOM bear-DEF. SG.F 3SG.F.ACC.CL find-PST.3PL  
 'When they found the dead Arab, they left and found the bear.'

The above examples demonstrate the two main functions of the *na*-marker, prominence and topicality, which seem to be ordered implicationaly: the former may imply the latter but not vice versa.

Table 1 presents the numerical findings in the two texts. The comparison of the examples from the *Gospel* and Verkovič's tales leads to the conclusion that DOM marking is more regular in the former: only 3.5% of all direct objects in the *Gospel* were unmarked compared to 37% in Verkovič's tales. Another difference in DOM distribution involves plural object marking: the *Gospel* text has almost three times more *na*-marked plural objects (25%) than the Verkovič text (10%).

39 A calque from the Greek *kommatakia-kommatakia*. Such adverbial reduplication is common in spoken Greek.

TABLE 1 The distribution of *na*-marked objects (DO) in the two oldest texts

	<i>Kulakia Gospel</i>	Verkovič's tales
Marked DO (with <i>na</i> )	277 (96.5%)	89 (73%)
Unmarked DO (without <i>na</i> )	10 (3.5%)	33 (27%)
Total DO	287	122
Marked animal referents	3	7
Marked inanimate referents	4	4
Marked plural referents	69 (25%)	9 (10%)
Verbs with marked DO	64 verbs	25 verbs

To conclude, the use of DOM marking seems to have been governed by different functions in the two examined texts. The language of both analyzed texts testifies of a strong Greek influence both in structure and lexicon.<sup>40</sup> The very regular use of DOM in the *Gospel* indicates that in that dialect *na* was grammaticalized into a case marker. However, the irregularity of DOM marking in Verkovič's tales should rather be attributed to the interplay of animacy and discourse prominence criteria. Is it, then, a case marker or a pragmatic marker? In order to answer this question we should first discuss the possible reasons for its emergence.

## 5 The Origin of DOM: External or Internal Factors?

As was outlined in the introduction, DOM in Macedonian southernmost dialects has been traditionally ascribed to contact, though certain doubts in the validity of the contact hypothesis were presented in the previous discussion.

<sup>40</sup> Apart from morphosyntactic Balkan features, both texts contain numerous Greek and Turkish lexical loans that involve both “cultural” vocabulary and highly colloquial, discourse-based vocabulary used in “everyday interactions among speakers that are essentially conversational in nature” (Friedman and Joseph, 2014: 15). The authors refer to the latter type as *Essentially Rooted In Conversation* (ERIC) loans. Examples of such Greek loans in Verkovič's tales include common lexemes (e.g. *ftesa* ‘be guilty’, *argisa* ‘be late’, *zulepsa* ‘envy’, *panukla* ‘plaque’, etc), idiomatized syntactic constructions (e.g. *vide-paravide* ‘After seeing and realizing that’) and discourse particles (e.g. *ba-* emphatic negation).

Topolinjska (1995: 95) considers the construction in these dialects a syntactic innovation resulting from the contact with Greek: "... it spreads in the dialects which undergo major interference on the part of non-Slavic Balkan languages, above all Greek; i.e. in the dialects in which the inherited Slavic morphosyntactic system is in the process of retreat." She provides an overview of the distribution of *na*-objects in southern Macedonian dialects noting that their occurrence to a great extent coincides with the dialects<sup>41</sup> where other innovations occurred, for instance the generalization of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular accusative clitic to a single case marker of direct dependency (ibid.: 97).

The exposure of southernmost dialects to strong Greek influence primarily created favorable conditions for the emergence of DOM, which as pointed out above, appeared in the narrow innovation region near Lagadina Lake, north of Thessaloniki (Cyxun, 1981: 41).<sup>42</sup>

The intensity of contact with Greek there may be illustrated by example (36) from *našta* (lit. 'our') dialect spoken in the village of Liti (former Ajvati) in Greece (Adamou, 2009: 15). The two contact-induced features in this example show changes in the grammar of nominal and verbal systems: proper names are marked with definite articles and the subjunctive marker *da* is replaced by the Greek equivalent *na* in the dependent clause. In addition, clitic doubling is absent (as in the Greek translation equivalent).

- (36) *da vikniš na Mariata na doj.*  
 SBJV call-PST.2SG DOM maria-DEF.F SBJV come-PRS.3SG  
 'Call Maria to come.'

To account for the use of DOM in the analyzed texts we refer to the corresponding Greek object constructions. The hypothesis is that the syncretism of dative and accusative case markers in the northern Greek dialects<sup>43</sup> in Modern Greek led to the loss of distinction between direct and indirect object constructions in southernmost Macedonian dialects.

In Modern Greek, dependency between the verb and its definite object is indicated by a casemarked preposed definite article marked for agreement

41 In southern Macedonian dialects the accusative relation is encoded by the construction consisting of the clitic *ja* + (*na*) + *noun* (casus generalis), where *ja* was generalized from 3sg.f, while *na* is optional. In some other dialects, the generalized clitic is the masculine *go* (Topolinjska, 1995: 97).

42 This is an area between the mountain range Vertiskos on the west/northwest and Langada lake on the east, near Thessaloniki (Greece).

43 Accusative object pronouns for indirect objects are used north and east of the line which runs down the ridge of Mount Pindos, south of Thessaly, south of Sporades and of Lesbos (Browning, 1969: 123).

with the object noun (*Vlepo tin Maria* ‘I see Maria’, *Vlepo ton Petro* ‘I see Peter’). Dative case was lost in Modern Greek, its functions divided between the genitive and the accusative.<sup>44</sup> In northern Greek dialects the indirect object pronouns are in the accusative, whereas in the southern dialects they are in the genitive (Horrocks, 2010: 116). Northern dialects formally distinguish between adverbial and adnominal uses of pronominal casemarked clitics denoting dependency, i.e. between the clitic marking verbal dependency of the indirect object (accusative) and the possessive clitic marking nominal dependency (dative), as in: *Ipa ton patera tu* ‘lit. I said to father his’, but the southern dialects use the genitive clitic for both dependencies (*Ipa tu patera tu*).

It follows that in northern Greek dialects, both direct and indirect dependency are expressed with a syncretic accusative definite article, for instance *ton* for masculine singular as in *(ton) ipa ton Petro* ‘I told Peter’, whereas object doubling by a preverbal clitic is not obligatory: *(ton) idha ton Petro* ‘I saw Peter’. The same case marker (e.g. *ton*, 3sg masculine) in the pre-object position makes the two syntactic patterns (37 and 38) identical.

- (37) (Ton) *ipa ton Petro*. ‘I told Peter.’  
 (38) (Ton) *idha ton Petro*. ‘I saw Peter.’  
 (39) Mu *kažav na Petre*. ‘I told Peter.’  
 (40) Go *vidov / Petre*. ‘I saw Peter.’

In the analytic dative pattern in Macedonian (and Bulgarian), the preposition *na* occupies the same syntagmatic slot as the Greek casemarked article: *Mu kažav na Petre* ‘I told Peter’ (39). This results in syntagmatic symmetry between the Greek dative/accusative construction and the South Slavic dative construction, whereas the accusative pattern (40) disrupts this structural symmetry

44 The Greek dative-accusative syncretism is related to the gradual loss of dative at the expense of the accusative. The spread of the accusative to the dative domain was first attested in locative constructions (*eis+accusative* instead of *en+dative*) already in the New Testament and the papyri in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century (Horrocks, 2010: 154). The loss of dative was triggered by its unstable position in Byzantine Greek (at least as early as the 9<sup>th</sup> century). The neutralization of vowel length in some nominal paradigms resulted in dative-accusative homophony. Apart from the perils of sound change, the polyfunctional dative case was semantically obscure as it coded both possessive and several adverbial functions. According to Horrocks (ibid: 284), in spoken Koine the functions of the dative were “steadily transferred either to the accusative or genitive noun phrases, which required prepositional support to code indirect objects”. In Modern Greek, the accusative prepositional pattern is preferred in spoken language, e.g. the 3sg masculine marker *ston* (preposition *s+* accusative article *ton*) + acc NP as in *Ipa ston Petro* compared to the genitive-based indirect object pattern in the standard: *tu+gen NP*, as in *Ipa tu Petru* ‘I told Peter’.

due to an empty syntagmatic slot filled with the accusative/dative article *ton* in both Greek patterns. If the preposition *na* in these dialects was perceived as a functional equivalent of the Greek casemarked article, it is highly possible that *na* was inserted in the accusative construction by analogy. In fact, *na* replicates the Greek preposed article that signals dependency. This entails that the iconicity principle facilitated the use of *na* in the accusative construction (40) whereby causing structural equivalence of the new accusative pattern not only with its dative counterpart (39), but also with both case constructions (37 and 38) in contact with Greek dialects. The generalization of the dative pattern modeled after the Greek oblique pattern should be qualified as replication (Heine and Kuteva, 2005, 2006),<sup>45</sup> or construction-oriented pattern-replication (Matras and Sakel, 2007: 843; Matras, 2009: 146), rather than syntactic borrowing (Harris and Campbell, 1995)<sup>46</sup> because only the pattern was copied and *na* was subsequently decategorized via grammaticalization.

Although Adamou (2009) maintains that Aromanian presence is not documented in the wider area of Liti (former Aivati),<sup>47</sup> certain Aromanian influence in the “narrow innovation region” north of Thessaloniki cannot be totally dismissed. For instance, Aromanians (Vlachs) visiting Ajvati village where “našta variety” was spoken (ibid.) are mentioned in local folk songs.<sup>48</sup> Yet, there is no direct evidence regarding the use of DOM markers in Aromanian spoken in this area in comparison to the attested *pi* in the Ohrid dialect (Marković, 2007) or *pri/prā* in Krania in Thessaly, Greece (Sobolev, 2008).

The decisive role of bilinguals in generating contact-induced changes is related to their need to reduce the cognitive load of two language systems. As Matras observes (2009: 151): “There is pressure on bilingual speakers to simplify the selection procedure by reducing the degree of separation between the subsets of the repertoire, allowing the two ‘languages’ to converge.” It is possible then, that bi/multilingual speakers of those Slavic dialects whose analytic case systems were under restructuring chose to replicate a more transparent

45 Defined by Heine and Kuteva (2006: 49) as: “a process whereby a language, called the replica language (R), creates a new grammatical structure (Rx) on the model of some structure (Mx) of another language, called the model language (M)”.

46 Harris and Campbell (1995: 122) use this term for a change in which a foreign syntactic pattern is duplicated and “incorporated into the borrowing language through the influence of a donor pattern found in a contact language”.

47 According to the document from 1906 (<http://www.lithoksou.net/p/oikismo-i-tis-thessa-lonikis-poy-arxizoy-n-apo>), Aivati, a Christian village to the north-east of Thessaloniki (Greece) had 200 homes and two Greek schools (for boys and for girls). Its population spoke a “Slavic idiom” but the majority had learned Greek.

48 In a wedding song from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the author complains that Vlachs have arrived in the village and s/he does not understand their language (Adamou, 2009: 15).

non-Slavic case pattern. Once a borrowed or replicated pattern “takes hold in a language”, its spread is regulated by language-internal mechanisms (cf. Joseph, 2000). Such syntactic patterns contribute to word-for-word translatability of utterances in everyday code-switching practice of bilingual speakers. It is not accidental the “innovation region” of this pattern was in the vicinity of Thessaloniki,<sup>49</sup> an important sea-port and a densely populated multi-lingual urban area during the Byzantine and Ottoman period.

The effects of Greek contact in this region are reflected not only in the destabilization of the pronominal case system, but also in direct borrowing. Matras and Sakel (2007: 834) point out that in language contact situation bilinguals: “avail themselves of the expressive means of both languages, but can only do so if they are able to identify parallel items in the two languages as translation equivalents.”

However, sociolinguistic factors alone are not sufficient to explain a linguistic change, such as the rise of DOM in southern Macedonian dialects. Matras (2007: 68) argues that internal factors are more important because they “license” speakers to “dismantle the mental demarcation boundaries that separate their individual languages”. Therefore, it is assumed here that a combination of radical language changes in the nominal system has created the right ground for the emergence of DOM in southern Macedonian dialects: the existing pattern of dative *na*-constructions, generalization of the preposition *na* for marking dependency relations, generalization or confusion of clitics, the loss of the accusative ending *-a* in masculine (human) nouns.

Exposed to a strong Greek influence in the south, the predominantly analytical case system in these dialects underwent further restructuring. The only remaining case ending was the accusative *-a* in nouns referring to specific male individuals (*brata mu* ‘his brother’, *popova sina* ‘the priest’s son’, etc.). The accusative case even encroached onto the nominative case in a personal pronoun paradigm, as in (41)<sup>50</sup> where the accusative *vas* is used instead of the nominative *vie* ‘you’.

- (41) *Vas*                      *od*      *deva*      *iste?*  
 You-2PL.ACC      ABL      where      are  
 ‘Where are you from?’

49 Joseph (2000: 142) characterizes northern Greece in general, and Thessaloniki in particular, as areas “where since the Medieval period (1000–1600) speakers of Greek, Slavic (i.e. emerging Macedo-Bulgarian), and Albanian would have come in sustained and close contact with one another on a daily basis, providing opportunities for the effects of language shift, imperfect learning, interspeaker accommodation, etc.”

50 The example is from Cyxun (1981: 47). See example (9) *ne te sakam na ti* ‘I don’t love you’ for the opposite use.

As discussed in the previous section, the formal boundary between accusative and dative clitics was blurred, which is illustrated in the example from Vatilak (Topolinjska, 1995: 97): *on mu hvārli klučovite i go veli* 'he threw the keys to him and said to him'. Here the accusative *go* 'him' is used instead of the dative *mu* 'to him', probably following the Northern Greek pattern, where both *mu* and *go* are rendered by the accusative/dative *ton*. The same type of replacement, but now in feminine clitics is often found in Verković's folk tales: *Carot ja veli na devojkata* 'The king says to the girl' (p: 284), *se moli na zmijata i ja veli* 'he begs the snake and says to her' (p: 244) where the accusative *ja* 'her' replaced the dative *i* 'to her'.

Even more radical changes in the nominal system are documented in the language of the *Gospel*. The data presented in the previous section demonstrate the loss of gender and number distinctions both in the nouns and preverbal clitics. The case relations became opaque because 3<sup>rd</sup> person clitics were used to code both direct and indirect dependencies; in addition, gender and number differences were neutralized. These changes seriously affected agreement and case relations.

Moreover, the language in the analyzed texts testifies to the destabilization of other nominal categories. The tendency for generalization and simplification is pronounced<sup>51</sup> in the category of number: the use of a single plural form instead of two forms with monosyllabic masculine nouns (e.g. *sina* instead of *sinovi*), and the regularization of irregular plural marking (*čovjek* 'man' – *čoveci*, instead of *luđe* 'men, people'). Gender was even more affected: plural gender distinctions were neutralized, the differences between some masculine and neuter nouns were erased (Koneski, 1986: 173), some nouns "changed" gender, which is evident in the modifier agreement, e.g. *moj* (m) *pismo* (n) 'my letter', *tretiot* (m) *večer* (f) 'the third evening', etc.

Another factor enabling the intrusion of the marker *na* may have to do with the high frequency of the preposition *na*. Under the influence of the Greek preposition *is* (*s*) the preposition *na* considerably widened its semantic scope in these dialects. Besides the original meaning of surface support (*na* 'on'),<sup>52</sup> it encodes relations of containment (*vo* 'in'), direction (*vo* 'to') and proximity (*kaj* 'at').

51 This tendency is also very strong in the verbal system, for instance, the imperfective aspect in some verbs has been regularized with the addition of the imperfectivizing suffix *-uva*: *zemuva* 'take', *trebuva* 'need', *skoknuva* 'jump', *čuknuva* 'knock', instead of *zema*, *treba*, *skoka*, *čuka*.

52 The goal meaning was retained in *na*, which motivated its extension to the purpose domain.

It is necessary to look at all these language changes as part of a wider process, and not as isolated instances. The narrow innovation region of *na*-objects was part of a wider contact territory<sup>53</sup> within which the analytical dative *na*-construction appeared (Cyxun, 1981: 41). This secondary innovation was “en-grafted” over the primary innovation of the analytic dative constructions: *na + casus generalis* of a noun or a pronoun (producing analytic paradigms *na mene/tebe/nego*, etc.). Nominal case endings were lost, though some dialects kept the accusative *-a* in singular human nouns. The introduction of *na* probably started as a compensating mechanism for the loss of the differentiating function of clitics aiming to restore the distinguishability between the human male object and the human male subject, but later spread to other participants. In its new role of a case marker, *na* made redundant the genitive-accusative masculine inflection *-a*.

Some authors suggest that the ending *-a* represents a DOM strategy in Balkan Slavic languages (Adamou, 2009) given that *-a* marks animacy and might appear to be in complementary distribution with *na*. This hypothesis is appealing but needs more historical backing, because the evidence from the *Kulakia Gospel* shows seldom and optional use of *-a*, in spite of the regular presence of the *na*-pattern. It is true that *na*-objects are not attested in the dialects where the case marker *-a* was preserved: in the *Konikovo Gospel* (end of 18<sup>th</sup> century) masculine nouns bear *-a*: *ami da vidat i Lazara* ‘but for them to see Lazarus’ (Lindstedt et al., 2008: 175) and in the Pomak dialect<sup>54</sup> feminine names ending in consonant get the ending *-a*: *Husein ištja Meriema* ‘Husein liked Meriem’; however, synthetic case has not been fully lost there (Adamou, 2009: 388) as in *davam čokolada detinjem* ‘I give chocolate to the children’.

It can be concluded that DOM in the the innovation zone of Kulakia region and DOM in the dialects to the north of that region were motivated by different reasons: the need for distinguishability between two (human) participants in the former, and the need for topicality in the latter. This hypothesis is supported by the following conclusions drawn from the analysis of the Verkovik folk tales: (a) *na*-marking of objects was an optional strategy mostly limited to verbs that are semantically tied to animacy, (b) its use was motivated by the need to indicate objecthood of human participants, inherently associated with discourse prominence, (c) *na*-marking subsequently spread onto topical participants suspending the animacy parameter.

53 The area between Prespa Lake and the mountain ridge Grammos extending to the south along the rivers Vardar/Axios and its tributary Crna.

54 A Slavic dialect spoken by a predominantly Moslem minority in eastern Thrace, Greece (Adamou, 2010).

Therefore, it is possible to assume an evolutional scenario for DOM in southernmost Macedonian dialects: *na* was triggered by the animacy-based differentiating function of case-marking, cooccurring with verbs that have human referents (agent/theme). The spread of the pattern to physical affectedness verbs increases the prominence-based indexing function (agent/patient). In other words, what started as a differentiating strategy intended to distinguish the roles of human participants (i.e., a case marker in Kulakia dialect), resulted in “promoting” the indexing function inducing prominence or topic worthiness.<sup>55</sup> Speakers in narratives, tend to treat prominent objects as topical (they are discourse-old but important participants), thus associating prominence with topicality. Such a scenario explains the regularity of DOM in the innovation zone of Lagadina (north of Thessaloniki) and a broader referential scope of DOM in other southernmost dialects.

It can be concluded that language-internal processes played an important role in the rise of this innovative pattern. However, the role of contact was to create a multilingual favorable context. Does then the rise of DOM belong to internally or externally motivated changes? It seems that this change defies straightforward classification in either category because the difference between them is a “matter of degree and not a matter of kind” (Joseph, 2000: 158).

## 6 Conclusion

This paper aims to prove that DOM in peripheral Macedonian dialects was caused in contact situations by the interaction of iconicity and economy principles. The iconicity principle involves speakers' need to overtly mark the pragmatic and the semantic aspects of direct dependency of human patients, i.e. to mark prominence differently from agreement. The economy principle is reflected in reducing two oblique case patterns into one to encode objecthood. Contact indirectly triggered the emergence of DOM because of its active role in the demise of the inherited inflected case system and because contact non-Slavic languages used (and still use) a direct dependency pattern with an element preceding the object nominal. In a multilingual environment of the Balkan Sprachbund, speakers' attempt to communicate more effectively resulted

55 De Swart (2007: 133) argues that “there is some evidence for the claim that the prominence-based strategy developed from the recoverability strategy in the history of Spanish”.

in a greater need for clarity of communication (cf. Friedman, 2000a: 1348). The domineering communicative principle in Macedonian dialects was the identification of referents through “strengthening of the markers of referential categories” (Topolińska, 1995: 245). Therefore, the appearance of DOM on specific nominals is not surprising: for a successful communication it was important for the listener to link the individuated and prominent (human) referent in the discourse to its external anchor. Contact with Greek (and Aromanian) offered an appropriate model at a time when case marking suffered losses in categorial distinctions. In contact situations, changes involving extensive grammatical simplification increase the necessity to disambiguate the roles of sentence participants and mark the second human participant as prominent and/or topical.

The marker *na* can be viewed as a discourse device whose emergence reflects the main characteristics of the Balkan Sprachbund–isomorphic structural patterning and translatability. On this view, contact acted as a favorable context within which the grammaticalization of *na* occurred. Therefore, the rise of DOM in southernmost Macedonian dialect exemplifies a contact-related rather than a contact-induced change.

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