

IRENA SAWICKA
(Nicolas Copernicus University, Toruń)

INITIAL AND NON-INITIAL CLUSTERS OF A NASAL SONANT AND HOMORGANIC STOP IN THE BALKANIC LANGUAGES

The Balkanic Sprachbund is a linguistic community which is defined by morphosyntactic features. However it also has some phonetic peculiarities of which the most specific ones are: 1. traces of the occurrence in all "proper" Balkanic languages of the common phoneme (a nasal shwa) in Medieval Ages, and 2. specific functioning of the clusters containing a nasal sonant and a homorganic occlusive. The second feature is constituted by a set of various phenomena (quite trivial, as well as very unusual ones) which occur in Greek, Albanian, Macedonian, Italian, Arumanian. Processes regarding these clusters are extremely concentrated in the area of the central-western part of the Balkanic Sprachbund. The common denominator of these — sometimes very different phenomena — is a tendency towards monophonemic value of the clusters in question. As a result of such a tendency an enormous number of options occur in the Balkanic dialects — where clusters very often function as facultative realizations of voiced stops, or vice versa. The most unusual feature — when we regard it in European perspective — is the occurrence of the NT clusters at the beginning of words.

The Balkanic peninsula is in Europe but the Balkanic linguistics is quite exotic thanks to an extremely deep convergence which led to the creation of the Balkanic community of languages belonging to the different families. This group of languages is distinguished on the basis of the criteria of geographical linguistics. The Balkan Sprachbund has the unified grammar which is realized in different lexicons. The Balkan Sprachbund is defined by morphosyntactic features, however, scholars usually list among balkanisms also two phonetic features. The presence of the shwa-like phoneme is the first one and the occurrence of the word-initial clusters containing a nasal sonant standing before the stop of the same

¹ For the details see I. Sawicka, *The Balkansprachbund in the Light of Phonetic Features*, Energeia, Warszawa 1997, and I. Sawicka, *Функционирование групп согласных типа НД в балканских языках*, Материалы конференции посвященной 90-летию со дня рождения Агнии Васильевны Десницкой, Санкт-Петербург, Наука, 2002, 195-198.

place of articulation (further ND/NT) is the second feature. This is not really true. The shwa-like phoneme does not occur on the whole Balkanic area (Greek, Macedonian and northern Albanian do not have it). Indeed in all proper Balkanic languages in the +/- XIth century there existed a nasal shwa as a separate phoneme. It could develop in each of these languages separately — nevertheless the sound is rare and the fact is striking. The second feature — initial ND/NT clusters — appear only in Standard Albanian¹ and in some dialects.

Before I pass to the presentation of this phenomenon and connected phenomena, I must say that, nevertheless, the Balkanic Sprachbund manifests itself also on the phonetic level, although the extensions of the morphosyntactic and phonetic Sprachbünde do not overlap. According to the phonetic features the Balkanic area can be divided into three subareas. The first one, the eastern one, is in fact a southern exposure of the Jakobson's Euro-Asiatic phonetic Sprachbund. The southern periphery of the Balkans makes part of the Mediterranean phonotactic Sprachbund. What rests is the Central Phonetic Balkanic area. It is characterized by a number of phonetic features of various extensions. The most unusual feature of this area is a specific functioning of the clusters in question. The common denominator of these, sometimes very different phenomena is a tendency towards monophonemic value of these clusters. As a result of such a tendency a huge number of options occurs in the Balkanic dialects — because clusters very often function as facultative realizations of voiced stops, or vice versa. This problem regards Greek, Albanian, Macedonian, Arumanian, Southern Italian and particular dialects of other linguistic idioms of the Balkans.

The problem has two aspects: the paradigmatic and the syntagmatic one. The former is especially evident in Greek, the later one — mainly in Albanian.

In the early history of the Greek language the intervocalic voiced stops underwent lenition. As a result in the contemporary Demotic language voiced stops can stand only in word initial position or as members of consonant clusters. In intervocalic position we have voiced fricatives instead. However, today, voiced fricatives cannot be treated as combinatory allophones of stops. Today the ND clusters may be regarded the voiced counterparts of voiceless stops. These clusters have combinatory allophones without nasalization in word initial position. Non-educated Greek does not even hear the difference between, for example, [nd] and [d] or [mb] and [b], and in loans he usually automatically pronounces each intervocalic voiced stop with prenasalization. Such phonological relations are characteristic of the colloquial Demotic Greek and of the Southern dialects, where the ND

clusters can be treated as separate phonemes. It happens that borrowings are pronounced in several ways, for example [menta] is often pronounced as [menda] (because in Greek sonorization is regular after nasals) or even as [meda] (because there is no perceptive difference between [d] and [nd]). In northern Greek dialects these clusters were simplified — nasals were dropped. (New such clusters emerged after the reduction of unstressed high vowels). However traces of the same systemic relations may be found in neighbouring dialects in loans from Greek and even in particular dialectal processes, cf. dialectal Macedonian [junguslavija], [baraŋga], Romani [romendar] < [romenar] ‘from Roms’, [Zamba] from Slavic [Zaba] but with the non-etymological nasal which can be due either to Greek or to Albanian influence, etc. Of the systemic processes the most striking is the preservation in certain Macedonian dialects of the Proto-Slavic nasal vowels only before stops, especially before voiced stops, cf. in some villages we have [dap] ‘oak’ sg., but [dambi] — pl.

In the early history of Albanian lenition occurred as well (cf. *mjek* from Latin *medicus*, *djall* from *diabolus*, and others), but, unlike in Greek, the process has no traces in distribution of stops in contemporary Albanian.

The possibility of monophonemic interpretation of the ND clusters has been mentioned also in the case of northern Albanian, where, as in Greek, there are no such clusters with voiceless stops and realization of clusters with voiced stops is very confluent, similar to geminated or long nasal sonants, cf. *mbret* [m^bret], [m^mret] ‘king’ (from Latin *imperator*), etc. Very similar is the Southern Italian gemination of the ND clusters. In Southern Italian the clusters with voiced stops changed into geminates, whereas voiceless stops after nasals underwent sonorization, cf. *quandu* from *quanto* ‘how much’ and *quannu* from *quando* ‘when’. (There are in Italian examples of dissimilation of geminates as well, cf. *fiamba* from *fiamma* ‘fire’).

Sonorization of stops after nasals is a very frequent phenomenon in the Balkans — it took place in Greek, in Northern Albanian, in Arvanitika, in Arbareish, in Romani, and in Southern Italian.

A tendency towards monophonemicization also occurs on a broad area of the Balkans, although it has full realization only in Southern Greek. As a result of such a tendency a number of unmotivated sounds appears in the Balkanic dialects: non-etymological nasals before stops or non-etymological stops after nasals. Some of these changes have a systemic value. Such is, among others, the appearance of the so-called „buffer” consonant — a non-etymological stop in the middle of consonant clusters. This is characteristic of Northern Greek dialects and neighbouring Slavic and Albanian dialects. Absolutely regular, for example, is the change of [ml], [mr]

into [mbl], [mbr], cf. Greek [xamomilo] > [xamomlu] > [xamomblu], Albanian [embri] < [emri], [numbri] < [numri], [zəmbra] < [zəmbra], Slavic [mbleko] < [mleko], [umbri] < [umri]. In those Southern Macedonian dialects where nasal vowels were preserved longer and had desynchronized realization a buffer stop also appeared, and, as a result, nasalization is preserved not only before stops, but also before fricatives, cf. **męso* > [menso] > [mentso] > [mencu], **gąsь* > [gəns] > [gənts] > [gənc].

Syntagmatic aspect of this problem concerns the occurrence of the ND clusters word initially. If in a dialect there are no other initial clusters containing a sonant before an obstruent — that would be an argument for monophonemic interpretation of the ND clusters and, in such a case, the syllable pattern is the one-peak pattern. But if in a dialect other clusters of a sonant plus an obstruent occur, than we have to do with the two-peak syllable pattern. Both situations are found in Albanian. However, the most frequent situation is the situation where we have initial clusters with voiced and voiceless stops after nasal sonants and no other initial clusters with a sonant before an obstruent. This occurs in Southern Albanian and in the Standard form of the Albanian language — the interpretation of the syllable pattern in such a case may be that this is the one-peak syllable pattern but nasal sonants belong to the distributional class of obstruents.

Initial ND clusters appear frequently also in Italian dialects, cf. *mbrellu* < *ombrello*, *nducere* < *inducere*, *mbresto* < *presto*; they appear in emotionally marked utterances in Greek cf. *disu ipa* > [ndisu ipa] ‘put on your clothes’, *bes epitelus* > [mbes epitelus] ‘come in’; initial ND clusters happen in the Slavic and Romani dialects of Albanian diaspora, cf. Mac. [mbugat] < [bogat], Romani *ngarav* ‘I carry’, etc. Whereas in the Romance dialects and in Albanian the phenomenon is mainly due to the reduction of unstressed short vowels, in Greek it is exclusively the result of functional and perceptive equivalence of the ND clusters and the voiced stops. Vowel reduction occurred in other Romance dialects of the Balkans as well, cf. in Arumanian [ndreptu] < *in directo*, [mpartu] < *impartire* (in Papahagi's notation, but other authors put a reduced sound before the sonant, cf. Gołąb's notation: [ɤmpartu], Dalametra's: ‘mpart).

To sum up: we have in the central part of the Balkans an extreme concentration of various processes connected with the functioning of these clusters. These are following phenomena:

- sonorization of stops after nasal sonants,
- very confluent pronunciation of the clusters in question,
- gemination of ND,
- the occurrence of these clusters at the beginning of words,

— functional equivalence of these clusters and voiced stops,
 — the occurrence of various non-etymological sounds: voiced stops after nasal sonants (Alb. [amberika], [aspirind]) or nasal sonants before stops (Alb. [voŋgəl] < [vogəl], [mbða] < [məða], [andresa] < [adresa], Mac. [maŋgla] < məgla < mgl̥a < mgl̥a < *mьgla).

In Northern Greek we sometimes find accumulation of nearly all these processes in single examples, cf. nom. sg. [i porta], acc. sg. [tin porta] — this shifts into [tim porta] then into [tim borta] and, as a result, we get [i borta] in nominativ. In such examples usually the sonant passes from the article to the noun cf. [tin daksi] ‘order’ acc. > [ti ndaksi].

Резиме

Ирена Савицка

КЛАСТЕРИ СА НАЗАЛНИМ СОНАНТОМ И ХОМОРГАНИЧКИМ ОКЛУЗИВОМ У БАЛКАНСКИМ ЈЕЗИЦИМА

Балкански језички савез је језичка заједница која је одређена морфосинтаксичким обележјима. За њу су, ипак, карактеристичне и неке фонетске особености, од којих су најспецифичније следеће: 1. у „правим“ балканским језицима постоје трагови заједничке фонеме (назално шва) из средњег века, 2. специфичан начин функционисања кластера с назалним сонантом и хоморганичким оклузивом. Ову другу црту конституише група фонетских појава које се срећу у грчком, албанском, македонском, италијанском и арумунском, посебно у западном делу центра балканског језичког савеза. Тим понекад врло различитим феноменима заједничка је тенденција ка употреби датих кластера у монофонемској вредности. Последица те тенденције је велики број могућности које се срећу у поменутим балканским језицима, где дати кластери често функционишу као звучни завршеци или *vis versa*. Гледајући из европске перспективе, најнеобичнија црта је појављивање тих кластера на почетку речи.