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Slavic languages in contact, 5: Macedonian versus Turkish – Clear and unclear changes of *a* and *e*

Preliminaries

The study of Turkish in Macedonia was launched by the Polish Orientalist Tadeusz Kowalski, who lived and worked in Cracow. The first piece edited by him was a three-line passage of a song composed by a Macedonian soldier of Turkish origin, called *Ročko Assan ōli Ali*, who spent a year in a hospital in Cracow during the World War I. Thus, it is but natural that the song concerned Cracow (Kowalski 1922: 66). The next publication contains the whole text of that song (Nr. 41) as well as 62 other songs and a story along with linguistic comments by the editor (Kowalski 1926). Unfortunately, Kowalski's studies did not lead to the creation of a school exploring Macedonian Turkish. I am happy to publish, at least occasionally, papers concerning that extraordinarily interesting research field while living in the same city in which the first printed Macedonian Turkish folk song was composed, and its editor and researcher Tadeusz Kowalski lived. I also very much hope that my lexicographical suggestion expressed in the last paragraph will have better luck than Kowalski's initiative.

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1. Introductory remarks

It is small wonder that Turkish vowels *a* and *e* are generally rendered as *a* and *e*, respectively, in Macedonian. More intriguing is that the Turkish *a* sometimes yields *e* which seems to point to a Macedonian tendency towards palatalization whereas in other words Turkish *e* is reflected by *a* as if Macedonian displayed a tendency towards velarization of Turkish vowels.[1] This situation is a good starting point to discuss some aspects of vocalic adaptation of Turkish loanwords in Macedonian.

My main source of Macedonian word material is Jašar-Nasteva's monograph (2001), cited as JN here. Her examples, as well as her observations, are also adduced in Novotni, Markoviḱ 2018 but without further discussion.

In both publications sundry forms and sometimes heterogenous processes are presented that certainly deserve further inquiry. My main aim here is to demonstrate, on the basis of clear and unclear adaptation changes, the importance of Macedonian reflexes of Turkish words for both Macedonian and Turkish dialectology.

2. *a > e*

Apart from predictable changes like Tksh. *a(t)* > Mac. *a(t)* and Tksh. *e(t)* > Mac. *e(t)*, three types of adaptive tactics can be observed:

[1]   Tksh. *a* > Mac. *e*
[2]   Tksh. *e* > Mac. *a*
[3]   Tksh. *-at* > Mac. *-et* [2]

The most reasonable thing is to start with [3]. This is a group of especial interest because the Turkish word-final *-at ~ -et* is genetically Arabic, and either a nominal suffix, or the plural form of certain feminine adjectives, which mostly became singular nouns in Turkish. The examples in JN 176 are as follows:

Mac. *zana(j)et ~ zeneet* < Tksh. *zanaat* 'handicraft'
Mac. *kaba(j)et* < Tksh. *kabahat* 'fault'
Mac. *nasiet ~ nasaet* < Tksh. *nasihat* 'advice'
Mac. *tabiet* < Tksh. *tabiat* 'nature'

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[1] As a matter of fact, Tksh. *a* is a central vowel in phonetic terms; nevertheless, it has a phonological value of a velar vowel and is, thus, generally called "velar" in Turkish linguistics. It is expedient to adhere to this usus because some changes are motivated phonologically.

[2] Interestingly enough, no examples of the Tksh. *-et* > Mac. *-at* change seem to be attested.

The Turkish *-at* forms adduced above are all modern literary variants. But the situation was not that uniform in the past as in older Turkish, the Arabic suffix was pronounced both *-at* and *-et*. Even though precise rules governing the choice of the vowel are not very well understood today, one has to bear in mind that more often than not, both possibilities were acceptable in the Ottoman times. Probably the best proof comes from a Turkish grammar by Franciscus Meninski (1680 IV 3) who uses the letter ‹æ› to denote both *a* or *e*, as the distinction was generally dependent on non-linguistic factors such as education or social background of the speaker. A comparison of Macedonian forms with Meninski's transcription of the Turkish word-final syllable is very interesting:

Mac. *zana(j)et* vs. Tksh. ‹ſynā-æt› (Men. II 2990) = *synāat ~ synāet*
Mac. *kaba(j)et* vs. Tksh. ‹kæbāhæt› (Men. II 3609) = *kabāhat ~ kebāhet ~ kabāhet ~ kebāhat*
Mac. *nasiet ~ nasaet* vs. Tksh. ‹næsȳhat› (!) (Men. III 5196) = *nasȳhat ~ nesȳhat*
Mac. *tabiet* vs. Tksh. ‹tæbī-æt› (Men. II 3089) = *tabīat ~ tebīet ~ tabīet ~ tebīat*

In short: Vowel choice in the adaptation process of Arabic (and Persian) loanwords in Turkish depended, as it seems, on a few factors, generally two linguistic ones (the original vowel and the original consonant preceding that vowel) and one of non-linguistic character (social status of a speaker). The distribution of vowels is not consistent in dialects even today.

Two questions might be posed here: How is it possible that the palatal variant *-(j)et* prevails in Macedonian if it was actually typical of elegant Ottoman pronunciation whereas simple people would typically say *-(j)at*?, and: How should the Macedonian *-j-* be explained?[3]

As a matter of fact, every Macedonian word in *-(j)et ~ -(j)at* can reflect not just one but rather one out of three possible Arabo-Turkish suffixes:

[4]   Arabic feminine nouns in *-a(t)* are rendered *-at* (~ *-a*) or *-et* (~*-e*) in Turkish, e.g. *seyahat* 'journey', *devlet* 'state; prosperity, good luck'. Some of those words were known with *-e-* in the past and are only used with *-a-* nowadays (or the other way round), cf. 1680 ‹ſijāhæt› *siyahat ~ siyahet* (Men. II 2725) ~ 1917 ‹sijāhät› *siyahet* (Weil 1917: 85) = modern Tksh *seyahat* 'journey'.

[5]   Plural forms of Arabic feminine nouns end in *-āt*. This suffix was (at least, in the refined Ottoman pronunciation) reflected by *āt*, for instance, *ādet* 'custom, habit' → pl. *ādāt*. However, in the colloquial and dialectal pronunciation, the long vowel has been shortened in closed syllables and only retained its (no more

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[3] The Mac. *-j-* has been thought by some to be a reflex of Tksh. *-h-* (Mac. *kaba(j)et* < Tksh. *kabāhet* etc.) but no such reflex is observed in *nasiet*. Besides, there is no *-h-* in the Turkish etymon of Mac. *zana(j)et*.

phonological) length in open ones, e.g., pl. (lit. *ādāt* >) coll. & dial. *ādat* (nom.) ~ *ādātın* (gen.), and so on.

[6]   Arabic plural forms of feminine adjectives are used as abstract nouns. Their suffix is -*īyāt* in Arabic, its Turkish reflex being -*iyat* ~ -*iyet*. Some Turkish examples: [6a] *edebi* 'literary; cultivated, enlightened; humanist' > *edebiye* (fem.)[4] > *edebiyat* 'literature'; [6b] *Türki* (†) 'Turkish' > *Türkiye* (fem.) 'Turkey' > *Türkiyat* (†) 'Turkology (lit. 'matters Turkish')'; [6c] a special case is a (former) neologism derived not from an Arabic feminine adjective but from a Slavic loanword and constructed by analogy with the Arabic pattern: *kral* 'king' > *kral+iyet* 'kingdom'.

Thus, the Macedonian population could *generally* have heard -*at* ~ -*et* for [4], -*at* for [5] and -*iyat* ~ -*iyet* for [6]. One cannot claim that palatal variants dominate here or that they did ever dominate in Turkish. I am rather inclined to suggest that a sort of unification of all the [4]–[6] suffixes to palatal variants[5] is a Macdeonian rather than a Turkish phenomenon. All in all, this change seems to me unclear.

Unlike the palatal vowel, the emergence of -*j*- in both *kaba(j)et* and *zana(j)et* can be linked to the influence of words such as *kraliyet*, *edebiyat* etc., rather than to an -*h*- in the Turkish etymon. Influence of a foreign pattern is often irregular and that makes it fairly easy to understand why Macedonian -*j*- occurs in both *kaba(j)et* (which has a Turkish etymon with -*h*) and *zana(j)et* (that has no -*h*- in Turkish) but is lacking from *nasiet* (which has an -*h*- in Turkish) and *tabiet* (which has not).

We have thus managed to explain, to a degree, the origin of -*j*- in some Macedonian variants (= an irregular but clear change) but failed to understand the mechanism of the tendency to palatalize Turkish suffixes -*at* ~ -*iy(y)at* (= a relatively regular but unclear change).

3. *e > a*

If there really ever was a Macedonian tendency to favour borrowing Turkish words in their *e*-variants while avoiding their *a*-variants, one cannot easily understand why also a converse change, that is *e > a* can be sometimes observed. It

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[4] Arabic feminine adjectives are not used in modern Turkish because there is no grammatical gender in that language; however, they can still be seen in (mostly obsolete) idiomatic expressions (constructed after Arabic rules) as well as in names of Ottoman institutions like *Medrese-yi edebiye* 'Humanistic College' in 19th century Istanbul.

[5] Counterexamples are not very numerous but they do exist, for instance Mac. *eḱikat* 'truth' (< Tksh. *hakikat* id.), not *eḱiket even though a form with -*et* would perfectly fit rules of vowel harmony and it really is attested in Turkish dialects, e.g. in Erzurum Tksh. *häĝiĝet* id. (Olcay 1966: 121). But note Mac. *e*- in this word for Tksh. (*h*)*a*-. Besides, compare Section 5 "Final remarks" below.

does not occur often but it *is* attested in word-final and word-interial positions. The following examples, both literary and dialectal, are adduced in JN 176:

Mac. *alva* < Tksh. *helva* 'halva'
Mac. *amanet* < Tksh. *emanet* 'trust, trusteeship'
Mac. *anterija* < Tksh. *entari* 'robe, dress'
Mac. *argelie* (dial.) < Tksh *hergele* '1. vulgar fellow; 2. herd'
Mac. *argovan* < Tksh. *erguvan* 'Judas-tree' (~ *ergavan* id. – M.S.)
Mac. *barabar* < Tksh. *beraber* 'together'
Mac. *karvan* < Tksh. *kervan* 'caravan'
Mac. *ravanija* < Tksh. *revani* 'semolina cake'
Mac. *rečal* < Tksh. *reçel* 'jam'
Mac. *zajtin* < Tksh. *zeytin* 'olive'

The words can be divided into four groups:

[7]   Words with a velar vowel in the subsequent syllable – most examples belong into that group: *alva*, *amanet*, *argovan*, *barabar*, *karvan*, *ravanija*;
[8]   Words with a palatal vowel in the subsequent syllable: *argelie*, *zajtin*;
[9]   Words with a palatal vowel in the preceding syllable: *rečal*;
[10]   Words with vowel metathesis: *anterija*.

All the words in [7] can be considered Macedonian reflexes of Anatolian Turkish dialectal words with a harmonically levelled form like *halva*, *karvan* etc. Thus, their etyma first should be sought in Anatolian dialects and then substituted for Turkish literary forms adduced above after JN 176. The vocalic change *e* > *a* occurred in Anatolian dialects rather than in Macedonian which means that group [7] has to be eliminated altogether from analysis of adaptation processes.

Vowel metathesis, as shown in [10], is a rare and irregular phenomenon. Nevertheless, its mechanism is clear: the vowel sequence **e – a – i – a* (in the expected **entarija*) displayed a harmonical chaos, i.e. the series "front – back – front – back". It was somewhat ordered by metathesis leading to a new sequence: *a – e – i – a*, i.e. "back – front – front – back" which is more convenient for Turkish pronunciation habits.

The most interesting groups are [8] and [9], the most unclear word being *rečal* in [9]. No factors can be found in the phonetic structure of these words that could cause velarization. Rather, the opposite can be claimed since both ‹ç› = *č* and ‹y› ~ ‹j› = *Ç* generally tend to palatalize vowels. One of thinkable impulses might have been influence of some other word(s) but this is of course not convincing as long as one cannot suggest specific triggers. Thus, I am inclined to entertain the idea of some special characteristic of a Turkish donor dialect.

The three words in [8] and [9] are, as a matter of fact, Persian loanwords in Turkish: *hergele* < Pers. *ḫargala*, *zeytin* < Pers. (< Arab.) *zaytūn*, *reçel* < Pers. *rīčāl*. First, Pers. ‹a› is to be read [æ], whereas ‹ā› stands for [ɒ]. Second, Pers. ‹a› is generally rendered *e*, and ‹ā› yields *a* in Turkish. Thus, we would expect the Turkish reflex of Pers. *ḫargala* to be *hergele* in Turkish and this is, indeed, the case. However, the Persian and Arabic velar fricative *ḫ* (= IPA *x*) sometimes causes velarization of a subsequent vowel in Turkish, for instance in Arab. *ḫaṣlat* > Tksh. *haslet* 'merit, virtue' (not **heslet*). Because that is only a tendency, not a phonetic law, one can find both Turkish reflexes, that is *a* and *e* (*haslet*, *hergele*) of Arabic and/or Persian group *ḫa*[6]. It is, thus, well possible that Pers. *ḫargala* yielded not only *hergele* but also **hargele* in Turkish. And indeed, that form is attested as a derivational base of Tksh.dial. (Adana, İçel = Mersin) *hargeleci* 'herdsman' (DS 7: 2288) besides dial. (Amasya) *hergeleci* 'cowherd' (ibid. 2344).

Another source of colloquial and dialectal variants, where the etyma of Macedonian words can be looked for, are so-called Turkish transcription texts. Admittedly, I could not find a **reçal* there but *zaytin* is attested in Pietro Ferraguto's *Dittionario* (1611) as ‹szaittún› *zaytun* (Rocchi 2012: 164). – For more about Tksh. **reçal* see section 4 below.

Summing up, we have divided our examples into four groups, the biggest of which is [7]. It contains Macedonian reflexes of Turkish dialectal or colloquial *a*-variants. The smallest group is [10]; its sole example results from metathesis. Both groups are clear cases, as far as their mechanism is considered.

The difference between [7] and [8] is that the words in [7] are all harmonic variants whereas those in [8] are disharmonic.

A probably important feature common to words in [8] and [9] is that their Turkish sources are as a matter of fact loanwords from Persian and their Persian etyma display a short *a* pronounced as a low half-front vowel [æ] that can easily be interpreted both as Turkish open *e* and central *a*. Macedonian words *argelie*, *zajtin* in [8] and *rečal* in [9] will probably have been borrowed from a Turkish dialect in which Persian [æ] was rendered by *a* rather than by *e*.

4. Mac. *reçal* and Turkish *reçel*

The source of the Turkish word *reçel* is Pers. *rīčāl*. Its regular Turkish reflex should be **riçal*, but such a form is missing both from modern literary Turkish and, it seems, also from modern Anatolian dialects. Nevertheless, that variant is

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[6] For a summary of various reflexes of Ar. and Pers. *ḫa* in Turkish see, e.g., Stachowski (in print).

attested in older dictionaries such as F. Meninski (1680 I 2405): ‹rīćiāl› ~ ‹rīćiār› ~ ‹rȳsār› ~ *Turcis* ‹rećel› 'Latwerg, eingemachtes Obst, außgesottener Safft / [...] Przyprawne owoce, konfekt'. Meninski's notation is not unambiguous. It can also be understood to the effect that only ‹rećel› is used in Turkish whereas Turcis was used for 'common people, non-Ottomans'. The form *riçal* also occurs in a few other sources, for instance, in A. Hindoglou's Turkish-French dictionary (1838: 253), with the notation "ritjal, (rétjél)" = *riçal* (*reçel*) 'compote', and without any signal of *reçel* being the only form in Turkish. The fact that *reçel* is enclosed in brackets should probably point to *riçal* as the main literary variant, and *reçel* as the secondary / colloquial / less recommended one.

It seems, thus, that the Ottoman variant *riçal* did exist as a direct reflex of Pers. *rīčāl*, albeit only in the literary Ottoman pronunciation, unknown, or perhaps scarcely known, in Anatolian dialects where, instead, more harmonic variants were in use. It is Macedonian that modifies that simple picture.

If the starting variant was Ott. *riçal* and the ultimate modern Turkish form is *reçel*, then one of the two following evolutionary paths should be correct:

[11]   *riçal* > **riçel* > *reçel*
[12]   *riçal* > **reçal* > *reçel*

The *i–a* > **i–e* change in [11] seems very realistic because it follows the rules of Turkish harmony. It is more probable than the *i–a* > **e–a* change in [12], for which no clear phonetic motivation can be found. But, on the other hand, the Macedonian reflex is exactly what it should not be – the improbable missing link in [12].

In both [11] and [12] two phonetic processes occur. In [11], we first have a progressive back-front assimilaton *i–a* > **i–e*, and then a regressive close-open assimilation **i–e* > *e–e*. The same processes operated in [12], albeit in the reverse order: *i–a* > **e–a* is a regressive close-open assimilation, and **e–a* > *e–e* is a progressive back-front assimilaton. All this means that, according to the evidence of Mac. *rečal*, the evolutionary chain [12] is reliable whereas the status of [11] must be considered unclear. This fact has not been known to Turkology before.

The Macedonian word *rečal* most likely originated from dialectal rather than literary or courtly pronunciation. And this means that the variant **reçal* – or, because of the Macedonian attestation, *reçal* without asterisk – did actually exist not only in the formal, cultivated Ottoman Turkish language, but also in Turkish dialects spoken in Macedonia. Which is another fact that has been previously unknown to Turkology.

5. Final remarks

One word is of course too little to say anything conclusive about the Turkish donor dialect. Worse still, Jašar-Nasteva's Turkish material comes from various regions of the Macedonian linguistic area, as well as from various epochs. In any event, Macedonian texts from southern Albania (Mazon 1936) do not seem to share the palatalization tendency seen in Jašar-Nasteva's materials, quite unlike the (non-Macedonian) Turkish dialect of Erzurum that displays a strong tendency to palatalize, for instance Tksh. lit. *nasihat* 'advice' = Erzurum *nesehet* id. (cf. Mac. *nasiet* ~ *nasaet*); lit. *tabiî* 'natural' = Erzurum *tebi* id. (Tksh. *tabiat* 'nature' [> Mac. *tabiet*] derives from *tabiî*); lit. *kahve* 'coffee' = Erzurum *ǵähve* id.; lit. *mahalle* 'quarter (of a town)' = Erzurum *mehelle* ~ *mehle*, and many others (Olcay 1966 s.v.). In this respect, the Turkish dialect of Erzurum is even closer to Jašar-Nasteva's Macedonian material than the southern Albanian dialects of Macedonian, as presented by Mazon 1936.

An additional problem is the question of possible intermediary languages. Because of phonetic differences, Mac. *ravanija* can hardly be considered a borrowing from Bulg. *revane* but Greek *revaní* ~ *ravaní* is very well suited to fill the place between Tksh. *revani* and Mac. *ravanija*. It is historical rather than linguistic evidence that can decide whether a word was borrowed by the Macedonian language from Turkish or from Greek.

What we urgently need is a comparative dictionary of Turkish loanwords in Macedonian. It does not need to propose precise Turkish etyma. Rather, it should offer a possibly full collection of phonetic and semantic variants from all regions of the Macedonian language area, and this will enable us to find the precise Turkish etyma. It goes without saying that a historical dictionary bringing together all recordings of Turkish words from old Macedonian texts is another great desideratum. Otherwise we will never be free of "concocting grandiose theories" (Martin 1996: 63 [in a very different context]).

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Summary

The paper discusses some changes of *a* and *e*, as observed in Turkish loanwords in Macedonian, which enables us to see how important these words are also for Turkish historical dialectology. In the final part of the study, a lexicographical suggestion is made: What we really need is a comparative (and, if possible, a historical) dictionary of Turkish loanwords in the Macedonian language area. Without it, we will never be in a position to establish their precise etyma.

Keywords: Macedonian, Turkish, areal linguistics, language contact, loanwords.