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THE DEFINITE ARTICLE IN BULGARIAN AND MACEDONIAN

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The post-positive definite article is traditionally considered to be one of the most characteristic features of Bulgarian and Macedonian.¹ It is especially noteworthy for its mixture of suffixal and nonsuffixal qualities. Like a suffix, it serves a grammatical function: to mark the category of *definiteness*. Unlike a suffix, it is an inflected form which constitutes a single accentual unit with an already existing word. This unique combination of traits is undoubtedly responsible for the disagreement among scholars with respect to its morphological status. An examination of existing literature shows that it has been called a suffix, a particle, and an ending.² There is disagreement concerning its accentual status as well. In this area, however, we note a rather interesting pattern. Non-native scholars typically classify the article as an enclitic. Native scholars do not, as is evidenced not only by their consistent failure to use this term in discussing it, but also to include it in the lists of enclitics which appear in sections on stress. The purpose of this paper is to check the enclitic status of the article in Contemporary Standard Bulgarian (CSB) and Contemporary Standard Macedonian (CSM). This will be done by comparing its junctural and accentual properties with those of the undisputed enclitics in each language.³

Junctural Properties. We are accustomed to thinking of enclitics as morphemes defined exclusively in terms of certain accentual properties. However, junctural properties are also relevant. It is no accident in this regard that enclitics are normally referred to as stressless *words*, not *suffixes*. The reason is that the boundary formed by an accented word and an enclitic is characterized by the same phenomena with respect to the neutralization of the voiced/voiceless opposition as that formed by two accented words. In particular:⁴

(a) All instances of V#C, those of C#V where C is a voiceless obstruent, and those of C#C where (1) both consonants are obstruents which agree in voice, or (2) the first consonant is a voiceless obstruent and the second a sonorant, or (3) the first consonant is a sonorant—remain unchanged; for example:

V#C

CSB {baštá#mi} → [baštá mi] 'my father'

CSB {baštá#ti} → [baštá ti] 'your father'

CSM {sestra#mi} → [séstra mi] 'my sister'

CSM {sestra#ti} → [séstra ti] 'your sister'

C#V

CSB {brát#i} → [brát i] 'her brother'

CSM {svat#i} → [svát i] 'her in-law'

C#C

(1) CSB {brát#ti} → [brát ti] 'your brother'

CSM {svat#ti} → [svát ti] 'your in-law'

(2) CSB {brát#mi} → [brát mi] 'my brother'

CSM {svat#mi} → [svát mi] 'my in-law'

(3) CSB {čéren#li#e} → [čéren li e] 'Is it a black one?'

CSB {kúpil#səm} → [kúpil səm] 'I bought'

CSM {sin#mi} → [sín mi] 'my son'

CSM {sin#ti} → [sín ti] 'your son'

(b) All instances of C#C where the consonants are obstruents which do not agree in voice undergo a regressive assimilation for this feature; for example:

CSB {xúbav#si} → [xúbaf si] 'You are handsome.'

CSM {maž#ti} → [máš ti] 'your husband'

(c) All instances of C#V where C is a voiced obstruent and those of C#C where the first consonant is a voiced obstruent and the second a sonorant devolve the obstruent; for example:

C#V

CSB {grád#e} → [grát e] 'It is a city.'

CSM {maž#i} → [máš i] 'her husband'

C#C

CSB {grád#li#e} → [grát li e] 'Is it a city?'

CSM {maž#mi} → [máš mi] 'my husband' ⁵

Of these, only (c) is restricted to #; (a) and (b) are also relevant for the boundary which precedes an inflectional or derivational suffix. It follows that a morpheme occurring immediately to the right of a boundary characterized by (a) or (b) cannot be uniquely defined with respect to junctural phenomena. It is compatible with either enclitic or nonenclitic (i.e., suffixal) status. In contrast, a morpheme occurring immediately to the right of a boundary characterized by (c) is uniquely enclitic provided it is inherently stressless. Otherwise, it is an accented word.

We are now ready to consider the definite article. Since it has two canonical shapes, VC and CV, there are four sequences possible at the boundary which it forms with a preceding accented word: C=V, C=C, V=C, and V=V. The last does not occur because the VC form of the article is always preceded by a consonant in contrast to the CV form, which may be

preceded by either a consonant or a vowel. Since there are instances of C=V where C is a voiced obstruent and C=C where the first consonant is a voiced obstruent and the second a sonorant, i.e., instances of these sequences which fall within the domain of (c), the enclitic status of VC in both languages and CV in Macedonian can be determined. It is possible to test the latter because the consonant of the CV form in Macedonian can be a sonorant (i.e., [v] or [n]) as well as an obstruent (i.e., [t]). In Bulgarian, however, the segment in question is always an obstruent (i.e., [t]), which places all instances of C=C within the domain of (b) and, therefore, makes the status of CV indeterminate. All that can be said is that the junctural properties of the boundary formed by an accented word and the CV form of the article in Bulgarian neither preclude nor entail enclitic status for CV. In practice, this means that whatever status VC is shown to have by the application of (c) can also be assigned to CV.

There is no doubt concerning the VC form of the article. The voiced/voiceless opposition is not neutralized at the C=V juncture in either language, which means that VC is unambiguously nonenclitic in both; e.g., CSB {grad=ət} → [gradət] 'the city,' CSM {maž=ot} → [mážot] 'the husband.' There are two additional pieces of evidence for the suffixal status of VC in Bulgarian: (1) Those sequences of liquid + schwa which regularly metathesize before inflectional suffixes, but not enclitics, undergo metathesis before VC; e.g., CSB {grák=ət} → [górkat] 'the Greek' with metathesis, cf. plural {grák+i} → [górci] 'Greeks' also with metathesis but {grák#e} → [grák e] 'he is a Greek' without it. (2) Those sequences of obstruent + schwa + sonorant which regularly lose schwa before inflectional suffixes, but not enclitics, lose it before VC; e.g., CSB {arxaízəm=ət} → [arxaízmət] 'the archaism' with loss, cf., plural {arxaízəm+i} → [arxaízmi] 'archaisms' also with loss but {arxaízəm#e} → [arxaízəm e] 'it is an archaism' without it.⁶

The status of CV in Macedonian is not so clear-cut. There is no explicit comment on the C=C juncture in any of the handbooks, which is not surprising in view of the very small number of nouns which end in a voiced obstruent and take CV as opposed to VC (e.g., *zapoved* 'command,' *nadež* 'hope,' *čelad* 'children,' and a few other feminine nouns). Nevertheless, Koneski gives us a hint. In his discussion of the spelling of the voiced/voiceless alternation (§ 63 g), he notes that the devoicing of a voiced obstruent is not spelled before the initial *t* of the article; e.g., *zapovedta* is phonetically [zapóvetta], *nadežta* is phonetically [nádešta], *čeladta* is phonetically [čélatta]. The fact that he makes no mention of the orthographic retention of voiced obstruents before CV when C is a sonorant suggests that these spellings are accurate reflections of what is pronounced. If this is true, CV is nonenclitic. In fact, the spelling system provides further

evidence for this interpretation. It is generally true that automatic changes in the final segment of a word are not spelled in Macedonian. Internally, however, they are in some cases. Here we may note that the automatic loss of {t} between {s} and a consonant, which is spelled internally, is spelled at the juncture formed by an accented word and the definite article; e.g., {radost=ta} → *radosta* 'the happiness,' {radost=va} → *radosva* 'this happiness,' {radost=na} → *radosna* 'that happiness'; cf., feminine singular {mest+n+a} → *mesna* 'local' also with loss.⁷

With respect to boundary phenomena, then, the term *enclitic* is not appropriate for the article as a whole, i.e., for VC and CV taken together, in either Bulgarian or Macedonian. In the former, VC is unambiguously nonenclitic while CV is indeterminate and therefore compatible with nonenclitic status. In Macedonian, both VC and CV are unambiguously nonenclitic.

Accentual Properties. We have noted that enclitics are defined as *words* with no inherent stress which form a single accentual unit with a preceding accented word. Our consideration of voicing phenomena has shown that the forms of the article are nonenclitic juncturally; i.e., they are not words. Technically, therefore, we need go no further. Since the forms of the article fail to meet at least one of the requirements for enclitic status, we can conclude that they are not enclitics; assuming, of course, that we do not want to change the definition of this term. To be complete, however, we will compare their accentual properties with those of the undisputed enclitics. For Macedonian, there is nothing of significance to be gained from this because nonenclitics, enclitics, and the forms of the article all behave the same way with regard to the assignment of antepenult stress in the phonological word: they are counted; e.g., *pregóvori* 'negotiations,' cf., the singular form *prégovor*; *donesí mi ja* 'bring it to me,' cf., *dónesi kníga* 'bring a book' without enclitics; *pretsedátelot* 'the president,' cf., the unarticulated form *pretsédatel*; *svékřvata* 'the mother-in-law,' cf., the unarticulated form *svékřva*. For Bulgarian, such a comparison is fruitful. Even if the forms of the article were words from the junctural point of view in that language, they would not qualify as enclitics because they can occur stressed like ordinary syllabic suffixes while the undisputed enclitics cannot; e.g.,

gradát 'the city' but *grád e* 'it is a city'

pamettá 'the memory' but *pámet e* 'it is a memory'

sedemté 'the seven' but *sédem li e* 'is it (a) seven?'

Conclusion. There is no doubt that non-native scholars have been incorrect in their classification of the definite article in Bulgarian and Macedonian as an enclitic. We have seen that it is unambiguously nonenclitic juncturally in both languages and accentually in Bulgarian. Although it has some of the formal properties of a suffix, it cannot be termed a suffix in the usual sense of the word for three reasons: (1) it is an inflected form; (2) it

is added to an already existing word; and (3) its relative position is defined in terms of a syntactic constituent, i.e., the noun phrase. It is of particular interest that native scholars have concluded that the article is not an enclitic but have not felt obliged to argue the point, presumably because they consider it obvious. In dealing with the article, they have apparently relied on their intuition, which has been correct. Non-native scholars, lacking native intuition, have probably relied on their knowledge of history in calling the article an enclitic. Historically, the article was indeed an enclitic in both Bulgarian and Macedonian. Synchronically, however, it is not.⁸

NOTES

- 1 This is a revised version of a paper presented at the 1975 meeting of AATSEEL in Chicago.
- 2 For example, the term *suffix* is used by B. Koneski, *Gramatika na makedonskiot literaturni jazik*, 3rd ed. (Skopje: Kultura, 1967), II, § 30; H. G. Lunt, *Grammar of the Macedonian Literary Language* (Skopje: Državno knigoizdatelstvo na NR Makedonija, 1952), § 2.410; and F. Sławski, *Gramatyka języka bułgarskiego* (Warsaw: Państwowe wydawnictwo naukowe, 1954), § 122. The term *particle* is used by L. Andrejčin, *Osnovna bŭlgarska gramatika* (Sofia: Xemus, 1944), § 160. The term *ending* is used by Ju. S. Maslov, *Očerok bolgarskoj grammatiki* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo literatury na inostrannyx jazykax, 1956), § 78. H. I. Aronson, *Bulgarian Inflectional Morphophonology* (The Hague: Mouton, 1968), 50–51; L. Beaulieux, *Grammaire de la langue bulgare*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Institut d'Etudes slaves, 1950), § 30; and R. P. Usikova, *Morfologija imeni suščestvitel'nogo i glagola v sovremenom makedonskom literaturnom jazyke* (Skopje: Univerzitetska pečatnica, 1967), 32–34 refer to the article exclusively as *the article* implying, perhaps, that it is unique. St. Stojanov makes this view explicit for Bulgarian in *Členuvane na imenata v bŭlgarskija ezik* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1965), 10–11 by rejecting the terms *suffix*, *particle*, and *ending*. He claims that the only standard term applicable to the article is *morpheme* qualified by a statement of the characteristics which are unique to it.
- 3 The undisputed enclitics common to both languages are certain particles (e.g., interrogative *li*) as well as the dative and accusative short forms of the personal pronouns. In Bulgarian, the present tense forms of the verb *sŭm* 'be' are also enclitics when they are not preceded by the negative particle *ne*.
- 4 Note the following conventions: (1) Underlying (i.e., morphophonemic) representations are enclosed in braces. Phonetic representations are enclosed in square brackets. Transliterations are given in italics. (2) Stress is not marked in Macedonian underlying representations because it is predictable. It falls on the antepenult in words of three or more syllables; otherwise, on the first or only syllable. (3) The boundary between two accented words or an accented word and an enclitic is denoted by #. The boundary between two nonenclitic morphemes is denoted by +. The boundary between an accented word and a form of the definite article is denoted by =. (4) V abbreviates *vowel*; C abbreviates *consonant*.
- 5 To my knowledge, none of the handbooks comments on the fate of the voiced/voiceless opposition at the juncture of an accented word and an enclitic when the

latter begins with a vowel or a sonorant. However, my statement that the opposition is neutralized is more than an assumption. Several years ago, Professor Horace G. Lunt of Harvard University wrote to Professor Blaže Koneski at the University of Skopje on my behalf to request that he clarify the situation for Macedonian. Instead of relying on his own speech, Koneski decided to conduct a small experiment. He asked four performers at Radio-Televizija in Skopje to read the following text aloud and then to recite it from memory several minutes later: Tie se kako kučeto i mačeto. Koj e kriv? Taa ke reče "maž mi," a maž i ke reče "žena mi." Odi razberi gi! 'They are like a dog and a cat. Who is wrong? She says, "my husband," and her husband says, "my wife." Go understand them!'

There were four informants: A and B from Štip, C from Veles, and D from Prilep. All had lived in Skopje for some time and were between the ages of thirty and forty. They knew nothing of Koneski's purpose. Following are the results of the experiment:

	reading		memory	
A	[máš mi]	[máš i]	[máš mi]	[máš i]
B	[máž mi]	[máš i]	[máš mi]	[mážot i]
C	[máž mi]	[máž i]	[máš mi]	[máš i]
D	[máš mi]	[máž i]	[máž mi]	[máž i]

(Note that B substituted *mažot i* for *maž i* when reciting.)

There can be little doubt that the spelling of the forms was important in the pronunciations elicited during the readings. B and C pronounced [ž] when reading, except for the former's pronunciation of [máš i], but [š] when reciting. This is not surprising. It is reasonable to assume that the informants' status as performers resulted in what may be termed a *stage pronunciation* while reading (see V. Doneva, "Za neкои osobenosti vo izgovorot na zvučnite soglaski na krajot na zborot vo scenskiot govor," *Makedonski jazik*, XX, 95–104). When reciting, they apparently reverted to standard usage. D's pronunciation is more difficult to interpret. The fact that he used [š] when reading ([máš mi]) but [ž] when reciting ([máž mi]) may indicate that the neutralization of the opposition in question is optional in his speech. Koneski noted that, in his own speech, the neutralization does indeed seem to be optional.

Although further investigation on a larger scale is necessary, the results of Koneski's experiment seem clear enough. Voicing neutralization at the juncture of an accented word and an enclitic which begins with a vowel or a sonorant is at least possible, and probably usual, in Macedonian. In practice, this means that all speakers can make a distinction between *maži* 'husbands' ([máži]) and *maž i* 'her husband' ([máš i]) if there is any possibility of misunderstanding on the part of the hearer. Some speakers may pronounce them the same ([máži], [máž i]) if the context makes the meaning clear. An experiment similar to Koneski's conducted on native speakers of Bulgarian would surely yield the same results. Note, however, that the frames _____ *mi* 'my _____' and _____ *i* 'her _____' could not be used to provide the required sequences of word-final voiced obstruent followed by enclitic initial vowel or sonorant because Bulgarian nouns in the possessive construction normally take the definite article; e.g., *molivot mi* 'my pencil,' *molivot i* 'her pencil.' Nouns of kinship are the only ones which generally occur without the article in this construction, but *máž* 'husband,' the only such term to end in a voiced obstruent, requires it; e.g., *žena mi* 'my wife,' but *mažot mi* 'my

husband.' However, two suitable frames do exist in Bulgarian: _____ *e* 'It is a(n) _____.' and _____ *li e* 'Is it a(n) _____?'

- 6 Unlike voicing neutralization, metathesis and loss of schwa are not automatic changes. There are exceptions to both (see Aronson, 121–24, 147–49). Hence, although noteworthy, they cannot be considered conclusive indications of the nonenclitic status of VC as can voicing neutralization.
- 7 This change is not reflected orthographically in Bulgarian; e.g., *radosttá* 'the happiness' with retention of word-final *t* before the initial *t* of the article. It should be noted that the forms of the article are written as part of the word to which they are added in both Bulgarian and Macedonian. This in itself is significant because it distinguishes them from the undisputed enclitics, which are always written as separate words.
- 8 In both Bulgarian and Macedonian, the VC form of the article has an alternative shape, *i(j)VC*, which appears in the masculine singular of all adjectives with a zero ending; e.g., CSB *xubav* 'beautiful,' cf., the definite form *xubavijat*; CSM *golem* 'big,' cf., the definite form *golemiot*. This alternant is also nonenclitic. The opposition of voiced to voiceless is not neutralized before it in either language; e.g., CSB {*xúbav=i(j)ət#máŝ*} → [*xúbavi(j)ət máš*] 'the handsome man,' CSM {*ubav=i(j)ot#maž*} → [*ubávi(j)ot máš*] with the same meaning. In Bulgarian, it may be stressed, although rarely; e.g., *dobríjat mǎž* 'the good man.' Also in Bulgarian, it causes the deletion of stem vowels which are regularly eliminated before inflectional suffixes but not enclitics; e.g., {*dobór=i(j)ət*} → [*dobrí(j)ət*]; cf. feminine singular {*dobər+á*} → [*dobrá*] also with deletion but {*dobór#e*} → [*dobór e*] 'it is a good one,' without it. This change is not automatic (see Aronson, 127–29).

A final comment is in order. We have assumed the canonical forms of the definite article to be VC/*i(j)VC* and CV. Alternatively, it would be possible to assign the *i(j)* of *i(j)VC* to the adjective. This would make the masculine singular form of the article VC for adjectives as well as nouns. Each masculine singular adjective with a zero ending would have a variant in *i(j)* before the article; e.g., *nov* 'new,' *novi(j)=VC*. There is one other possibility which should be mentioned. The failure of voicing neutralization to occur before VC in the articulated form of masculine singular nouns ending in a voiced obstruent could be taken as evidence that the V of VC should be assigned to the noun. For uniformity, the *i(j)V* of *i(j)VC* would be assigned to the adjective. Within this framework, the canonical forms of the definite article would be C and CV, both of which would be compatible with either enclitic or nonenclitic status juncturally. Each masculine singular noun would have a variant in V and each adjective a variant in *i(j)V* before the article; e.g., *grad*, *gradV=C*; *nov*, *novi(j)V=C*. Since native scholars consistently assign the vowel in question to the article, this alternative loses much of its appeal. Further, even if it were accepted, there would still be evidence for the nonenclitic status of the article (i.e., C and CV taken together) in both languages; namely, the ability of the CV form to be stressed in Bulgarian and the orthographic loss of word-final *t* when preceded by *s* and followed by CV in Macedonian.