

## SYNTAX OF CLITICS IN BULGARIAN CONTACT DIALECTS

**Elena Ivanova**

St. Petersburg State University  
e.y.ivanova@spbu.ru

The article analyzes interference phenomena in the syntax of clitics in Bulgarian dialects that have been in contact with the Romanian language over a long period of time. The analysis focuses on Bulgarian dialects spoken in the territory of Romania, as well as the specific dialect of Novo Selo in northwestern Bulgaria. It is assumed that both Romanian syntax and dialectal features introduced by Macedonian settlers have influenced this dialect. The principles of clitic order in the sentence, characteristic of Standard Bulgarian, are largely preserved in these dialects. This is mainly due to the fact that both the donor and recipient languages belong to the group of languages with verb-oriented clitics. The analysis shows that in the examined Bulgarian dialects, clitics can appear in initial position, which means that the Tobler-Mussafia law is violated under the influence of the contact languages. At the same time, most of the restrictions on initial clitic placement present in the donor language are shown to be irrelevant.

**Keywords:** contact-induced linguistic changes, Romanian, Tobler-Mussafia law.

## СИНТАКСАТА НА КЛИТИКИТЕ ВО БУГАРСКИТЕ ДИЈАЛЕКТИ ВО ЈАЗИЧЕН КОНТАКТ

**Елена Иванова**

Државен универзитет во Санкт Петербург

e.y.ivanova@spbu.ru

Во статијата се анализираат интерференциските феномени во синтаксата на клитиките во бугарските дијалекти што се во контакт со романскиот јазик во подолг временски период. Во фокусот на анализата се бугарските дијалекти на територијата на Романија, како и специфичниот дијалект на Ново Село во Северозападна Бугарија. Се претпоставува дека романската синтакса и дијалектните особини на македонските доселеници влијаеле врз овој дијалект. Принципите на редоследот на клитиките во реченицата, карактеристични за стандардниот бугарски јазик, се во голема мера зачувани во овие дијалекти. Тоа главно се должи на фактот дека и јазикот давател и јазикот примач припаѓаат на јазици со глаголски ориентирани клитики. Анализата покажува дека во разгледуваните бугарски дијалекти, под влијание на соседните јазици, клитиките можат да заземат иницијална позиција, со што се прекршува законот на Тоблер–Мусафија. Истовремено, поголемиот дел од ограничувањата за иницијалната позиција на клитиките во јазикот давател се покажуваат како ирелевантни.

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## 1 Introduction and general information about contact dialects

Bulgarian is known to be one of the languages in which the so-called Tobler-Mussafia law applies, as it does not allow enclitics to be placed on the left periphery of the clause (e.g., Dimitrova-Vulchanova 1999; Franks 2008; Dimitrova 2023: 54–57). However, in areas of contact with Romanian, a language in which this law does not apply, Bulgarian speakers may use initial clitics, as descriptions of the Greben dialect located in north-eastern Bulgaria (Kochev 1969) or the dialect of the endmost north-western region in Bregovo Municipality demonstrate (Marinov 2008). It is more pronounced in fully foreign-language environments, particularly in Bulgarian dialects on Romanian territory (Mladenov 1993).

The object of our interest in this paper will be two contact areas, each of them exhibiting evidence of the influence of the Romanian language on the Bulgarian dialect. Additionally, in one of these areas, certain phenomena are observed that may have emerged under the influence of Macedonian dialects. Our aim is to compare the possibilities for the realization of clitic initiality in the two regions under review, highlighting both the permissions and constraints regarding the clitic placement at the absolute beginning of the sentence in these Bulgarian contact dialects. A key question is whether the morphosyntactic constraints on the clitic initiality present in the donor language are transferred to the recipient language.

1) The first area is located in the south of Romania in the historical region of Wallachia, where to the north of the Danube numerous villages are inhabited by descendants of Bulgarian settlers who arrived primarily during the 18th and early 19th centuries.<sup>1</sup>

In southern Romania, all groups of Bulgarian dialects found in northern Bulgaria are also represented. The language of these dialects has been described in a number of studies (Bolokan 1968; Dimchev 1974; Sugai 2015a, 2015b, among others), most comprehensively in a monograph by Mladenov – *Bulgarian Dialects in Romania* (Mladenov 1993), and is documented in the *Transdanubian Electronic Corpus* of texts and audio recordings (Mladenova and Mladenova 2001–2018), a supplement to Mladenov’s monograph. Our study uses only a portion of these materials, mainly idioms from the villages of the territory of Muntenia and around the Olt River. They are representative of Bjala-Slatina, Cibrica-Ogosta, Nikopol and Moesian dialects found within the territory of Romania. Although the idioms of each of the considered dialects have their particularities, the situation regarding initial clitics displays common features making it acceptable to apply a generalised analysis to the loci of this area.

As the texts of the *Transdanubian Electronic Corpus* show, the level of Bulgarian language proficiency among the residents varies not by locality or even by village, but at the level of families and individual informants: some informants have high degree of competence in the Slavic idiom, while others can produce only specific utterances. The linguistic behaviour of informants depends largely on factors such as age, education, descent, discourse strategies within the family and community. However, in general, the language situation in the villages under analysis can be characterised as one of non-balanced bilingualism, which is typical of the modern Balkan region as a whole (e.g., Konyor and Sobolev 2017; Morozova and Rusakov 2021). In such situations, “the speakers continue to use their L1, but the sociolinguistically dominant L2 becomes also linguistically dominant for them” (Morozova and Rusakov 2021: 1012). As early as the 1970s, researchers of Bulgarian dialects in Romania noted a high degree of linguistic integration of the Bulgarian population (see Mladenov 1993: 50–54, 364–372). For many informants, Romanian was then (and is now) the dominant language of communication both within and outside the family. Considerable interference is evidenced by a number of structural and lexico-semantic changes that emerged under the influence of

<sup>1</sup> For more details see Romanski (1930), Mladenov (1993), Mladenov, Nyagulov and Zhechev (1994).

Romanian (Dimchev 1974; Mladenov 1993), which we cannot delve into here. We only note that on the Thomason and Kaufman scale (1988: 74), the level of this interference can be estimated to be at least 3 (Ivanova, in press).

2) The second focus of our attention is the village of Novo Selo, which is located on the banks of the Danube River, in the northwestern part of Bulgaria (Vidin Region), a few kilometres east of the mouth of the Timok River. The inhabitants of this village have long been in contact with the Romanian-speaking population, surrounded by neighbouring Romanian-speaking villages. However, there was no active bilingualism at the time of data collection in the 1950s and 1960s (Mladenov 1969: 10; Mladenova 2003: 1), and this remains the case today. Only very elderly individuals still understand Romanian.

The dialect of Novo Selo is an autonomous, coherent and unique idiom. The genetic basis of the dialect is a subject of debate (cf. Mladenov 1969; Sobolev 1995). We will not address this issue here, as for the present work, it suffices to say that alongside the Romanian influence, there are features in this dialect introduced by Macedonian speakers. According to Miletič's hypothesis (Miletič 1901: 639–641), these could have been residents of Tetovo, Kumanovo and Kratovo regions in Macedonia, who also lived for some time in Banat (Mladenova 2003: 1–2).<sup>2</sup>

Thus, although the level of contact with the Romanian-speaking population in the history of this dialect has not been as constant and prolonged as for Bulgarians in Romania, the influence of the Macedonian language has had an effect, in particular, in that some constructions with initial clitics are widely represented in this dialect. “The impact of the two languages with the cancelled constraint on the clitic's initial position had a catalysing effect on this tendency” (Mladenov 1969: 162).

The primary source of material for this paper consists of the linguistic data available in the descriptions of the examined dialects by Maksim Mladenov (Mladenov 1969, 1993), as well as the texts from the aforementioned electronic resource by Olga Mladenova and Darina Mladenova (2001–2018). All these materials represent data from the 1950s and 1960s. Some information about the current state was retrieved from the works of Sugai (Sugai 2015a, b), which have data of 2012–2013 from the Romanian villages of Valea Dragului and Brănești, and from Ivan Iliev's interviews with residents of Novo Selo (Iliev 2018).

The article is further structured as follows: in section 2, which provides an account of the syntax of clitics in Standard Bulgarian, we also examine contact languages with the cancelled Tobler-Mussafia requirement and list their restrictions on the initial position of clitics. Section 3 addresses the paradigmatic and syntagmatic properties of initial clitics in the contact dialects under study, while section 4 presents a summary of the results.

## 2 Linearization of clitics in Modern Bulgarian and in contact languages: a brief survey

**2.1 Modern standard Bulgarian** features clitics<sup>3</sup> from different morphological classes: pronominal clitics (short forms of the dative and accusative cases, including reflexive forms), verbal clitics (forms of the verb *съм* ‘to be’ in the present tense), and discourse particles (the interrogative particle *ли*, dative ethicus *ми*, *ти*, the modal particle *си*).

The analysis of the syntactic behaviour of clitics involves at least two aspects:

1) sequence of clitics with respect to each other (clitic template); see Table 1.

<sup>2</sup> On the Macedonian influence on the dialect, see Stephan Mladenov (Mladenov 1901: 498) and Maxim Mladenov (Mladenov 1969: 71–77, 193–195).

<sup>3</sup> We adopt a syntax-based approach to the identification of clitics: “*syntactic* or ‘special’ clitics in terms of (Zwicky 1977) are elements taking syntactic positions non-available for *phrases*, i.e. multi-word constituents with head and complement elements”. (Zimmerling 2022: 7)

2) the rules for the cluster placement in a sentence.

We will focus only in the latter aspect, as in the dialects under study the clitic template does not differ significantly from Standard Bulgarian,<sup>4</sup> while the placement of a cluster of clitics in a sentence exhibits its own peculiarities.

**Table 1.** The order of clitics in a non-interrogative Bulgarian sentence  
(according to Ivanova and Gradinarova 2015: 512)

1	2	3	4	5	6
Future tense particle <i>ще</i> / negative particle <i>не</i> <sup>5</sup>	Verbal enclitics of the present tense, except 3.sg.: <i>съм, си, сме, сте, са</i>	Dativus ethicus <i>ми, ти</i> / modal particle <i>си</i>	Pronominal dative enclitics <i>ми, ти, му, ѝ, му; ни, ви, им,</i> / reflexive pronominal <i>си</i>	Pronominal accusative enclitics <i>ме, го, я, го; ни, ви, ги</i> / reflexive pronominal <i>се</i>	Verbal enclitic of the present tense <i>е</i> (3.sg.)

We focus only on clause-level clitics. Phrase-level clitics, in particular those of the nominal phrase/prepositional phrase, are discussed only insofar as they can be extracted from the phrase. In Bulgarian, these include the possessive clitics (genetically derived from the dative pronouns), which are subject to the operation of possessor raising and can be inserted into a chain of sentential clitics if the position of the dative clitic is not occupied (Schürcks and Wunderlich 2003: 11; Cinque and Krapova 2009), see section 3.<sup>6</sup>

Clitic clustering in Modern Bulgarian is described in the literature as involving elements that are both verb-adjacent and 2P elements (Dimitrova-Vulchanova 1999; Zimmerling 2012a, b; Zimmerling 2022: 12; Dimitrova 2023). The requirement for clitic-verb adjacency implies that clitics are in the immediate vicinity of the verb (before or after it), which is both their syntactic and, usually, prosodic host (Dimitrova 2023: 55–56). This is illustrated by examples (1a) with the initial subject *мой* ‘he’, (1b) with the initial adverb *вече* ‘already’, and (2) with the initial verb.

(1) XP–CL–V:

- a. *Той ми*<sub>1sg.dat</sub> *се*<sub>refl</sub> *обеди вече.*  
‘He has already called me.’  
b. *Вече ми*<sub>1sg.dat</sub> *се*<sub>refl</sub> *обеди.*

(2) V–CL:

- Обеди ми*<sub>1sg.dat</sub> *се*<sub>refl</sub> *вече.*  
‘[He] has already called me.’

<sup>4</sup> The most significant divergence is not in the sequence of the clitics, but in the position of the negative particle *не*, which in some Bulgarian dialects in Romania (Bjala-Slatina, Nikopol, Cibrica-Ogosta dialects) is adjacent to the verb (Mladenov 1993). Considerable shifts in the cluster are found in the Vidin-Lom dialects (Mladenov 1993: 81), which we do not analyze here.

<sup>5</sup> It would be reasonable to consider *ще* and *не* not as parts of the Bulgarian cluster, but as so-called *clitic bases* (Zimmerling 2022: 12).

<sup>6</sup> For detailed rules for clustering of pronominal clitics including the possessive dative and the combinatorics of particles of pronominal origin see Petrova and Ivanova (2017: 85–91).

The initial phrase (XP) in Bulgarian can also represent a group of constituents with equal communicative status, as in (3), cf. “Bg [Bulgarian] is the only Slavic language, where main clauses with long topicalized constituents before the clitics can be communicatively neutral”. (Zimmerling and Kosta 2013: 194)

- (3) XP [XP<sub>1</sub>+XP<sub>2</sub>] –CL–V:  
 [Вчера рано сутринта Иван] ми<sub>1sg.dat</sub> се<sub>refl</sub> обади.  
 ‘Early yesterday morning Ivan called me’ (Ivanova and Gradinarova 2015: 531)

The second position feature (*2P clitics*), as applied to Bulgarian as a language with verb-adjacent clitics, means that clitics are oriented to the left periphery of the clause. This is realized as the 2P position under the basic word order, as in the above examples. The 2P-position of clitics in the Bulgarian sentence is not an absolute rule, but only a tendency, which, however, has been statistically confirmed: a recent study of the corpus of spoken Bulgarian (<http://www.bgspeech.net/>) by Dimitrova revealed that under basic word order, pronoun clitics occupy the second position in more than 80 percent of their occurrences (Dimitrova 2023: 52).

As in most languages with clitic clusters, Bulgarian has syntactic barriers that give rise to derived context-specific word orders moving the cluster of clitics to the right of the left boundary of the sentence<sup>7</sup>. Interrogative utterances have a wider set of barriers than declarative ones, to the effect that even the XP-V-Q -CL order is allowed, which is ruled out for non-interrogative sentences, as seen in (4) with a barrier (/) after the subject *мой* ‘he’:

- (4) S //V–Q – CL [CL.3SG.DAT–CL.3SG.ACC–CL.3SG.PRS]  
 Той // върнал ли му го е?  
 ‘Has he returned it to him?’

3) Bulgarian is one of the languages where the Tobler-Mussafia law applies, see, e. g., Franks (2008), Dimitrova-Vulchanova (1999), Dimitrova (2023: 54–57).

In the dialects discussed below, all the linear-syntactic properties of clitics are observed, except for parameter 3, i.e., they allow clitics to be placed on the clausal left edge. In (5), we can clearly see the difference between the realization of word order in the Bulgarian standard language and in the Bulgarian dialects of Romania. The first line comes from a dialectologist (A), a native speaker of the standard language, who, following the standard rules, places the pronoun clitic *му* in the postverbal position. By contrast, the informant (B) in his reply begins the clause with this clitic:

- (5) A. туряте му<sub>3sg.dat.m</sub> сол  
 B. Сол. да| му<sub>3sg.dat.m</sub> турим сол (R, Calomfirești, M-1)<sup>8</sup>  
 ‘You put salt into it [soured milk]’  
 ‘Salt. Yes, we put salt into it.’

<sup>7</sup> For more details see Dimitrova-Vulchanova (1999), Dimitrova-Vulchanova and Hellan (1999), Zimmerling (2012b: 19–20), Zimmerling (2013: 113–118).

<sup>8</sup> Examples are given in the transcription of their sources and are presented in the following way: examples from the Bulgarian dialects of Romania bear the mark “R” (if known, the exact locus is specified), for the dialect of Novo Selo the mark “NS” is used. Next, the source of the example is indicated: M1 – the *Transdanubian Electronic Corpus*, M-2 – Mladenov 1993, M-3 – Mladenov 1969, or other printed source. The number after the colon (in some examples below) indicates the page number of the printed source.

The initial position of clitics in these dialects undoubtedly has a contact-induced nature. Before we address its realization in more detail, a few remarks will be made about the clitic placement in the languages that influenced the borrowing.

**2.2 Romanian** belongs to the group of languages *with VP-internal clitics* (Zimmerling 2022: 9), like other Romance languages, Modern Greek, and Albanian. Although the syntax of clitics in languages with VP-internal clitics and those with verb-adjacent clitics is somewhat different, in both types of languages pronominal clitics are verb-oriented.

In Romanian, pronoun clitics are usually placed preverbally, with the exception of a few morphosyntactic contexts. According to Gerstenberger (2022), Romanian weak pronouns occur in preverbal position with finite (6a), non-finite verb forms, and negated imperative forms, and in postverbal position with participles/gerunds as well as with non-negated imperative verb forms (6b).<sup>9</sup>

- (6) a. *Mi*<sub>1sg.dat</sub> *le*<sub>3pl.acc.f</sub> *dai acum*. ‘You give them to me now.’  
 b. *Dă-mi*<sub>1sg.dat</sub> *-le*<sub>3pl.acc.f</sub> *acum!* ‘Give them to me now!’ (Gerstenberger 2022: 57)

There is also a phonological restriction for the pronoun /o/, 3.sg.acc.f. As Gerstenberger (2022: 41) notes: “Preverbally, it occurs only if there is no auxiliary starting with a vowel.”

- (7) a. *Mi*<sub>1sg.dat</sub> *-o*<sub>3sg.acc.f</sub> *dai*.  
 You give her/it to me.’  
 b. *Mi*<sub>1sg.dat</sub> *-ai dat-o*<sub>3sg.acc.f</sub>  
 ‘You have given her/it to me.’ (Gerstenberger 2022: 57)

**2.3 Macedonian** belongs to languages with VP-adjacent clitics (Zimmerling 2022: 9) and to those that allow the front position before clitics to be unfilled (Dimitrova-Vulchanova 1999: 74). Restrictions on initial clitics depend not only on the finiteness/non-finiteness of the predicate, but above all on its type – verbal or non-verbal. According to a formulation by Zimmerling, “Macedonian is a language with so-called *clause shifting* <...>, where the linearization strategy and the prosodic orientation of clitics (proclitics vs strict enclitics vs universal clitics) crucially depend on the clause type” (Zimmerling 2022: 13).

This allows to place Macedonian language in an “extremely rare” typological group of CL1/CL2 languages (Zimmerling 2015: 467).<sup>10</sup>

The main types of sentences that restrict the initiality of clitics in Macedonian are those with a nominal predicate (see example 8a with a noun predicate and 8b with an adjective predicate) and those with an imperative (9a). Notably, the restrictions on the imperative apply not only to the positive, but also to the negative forms (9b). Non-finite forms also impose restrictions: clitics are postverbal when used with adverbial participles (9c), and variation in placement is allowed with other participles (9d). Sentences with finite verbal predicates do not have morphosyntactic restrictions on the initiality of clitics (10).

- (8) a. *Правник сум*<sub>1sg.prs</sub> (\**Сум правник*) (Mišeska Tomić 2008: 48)  
 ‘I am a lawyer’  
 b. *Болен ѝ*<sub>3sg.dat.f</sub> *e*<sub>3sg.prs</sub> *сином* (ibid: 33)  
 ‘Her son is sick / She has a sick son.’

<sup>9</sup> See also Niculescu (2008).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. the analysis in Alexander (1994: 3–8) and Mišeska Tomić (2008: 9–52).

- (9) a. *Земѝ 20*<sub>3sg.acc.m</sub> (ibid: 51)  
‘Take it.’
- b. *Не давај му*<sub>3sg.dat</sub> *20*<sub>3sg.acc.m</sub> (ibid: 52)  
‘Don’t give it to him.’
- c. *Даважки му*<sub>3sg.dat</sub> *20*<sub>3sg.acc.m</sub>  
‘Giving him it.’ (Dimitrova-Vulchanova 1999: 76)
- d. *Му*<sub>3sg.dat.m</sub> *е*<sub>3sg.prs</sub> *речено да дојде / Речено му*<sub>3sg.dat.m</sub> *е*<sub>3sg.prs</sub> *да дојде*  
‘He is told to come.’ (Mišeska Tomić 2008: 44)
- (10) *Ми*<sub>1sg.dat</sub> *се*<sub>refl</sub> *истури млекото*. (Mitkovska 2011: 87)  
‘The milk spilt on me.’

The extent to which these Romanian and Macedonian restrictions are reflected in the dialects under discussion will be addressed below.

### 3 Initial clitics in Bulgarian dialects of Romania and in the Novo-Selo dialect

In the dialects under study, initial clitics have a wide distribution. The wide range of their paradigmatic and syntagmatic possibilities becomes particularly evident when they are compared to dialects that have a weak degree of contact with Romanian, such as the Greben dialect in Bulgaria (Kochev 1969), where only residual contact-induced phenomena are present. As shown in Ivanova (2024) and Ivanova (in press), in the Greben dialect, initial clitics: a) have a restricted paradigm (3rd person auxiliary verbs do not appear at the beginning of a sentence), b) cannot function as represent copulas, c) are allowed only in declarative sentences, d) are optional.

In this context, the examined dialects of Romania and the Novo-Selo dialect demonstrate an obvious expansion of the initiality feature and display similar tendencies in the extension of clitic placement possibilities.

1. The clitics that can start a clause have no categorial constraints: they can be verbal and pronominal, including particles of pronominal origin, such as the reflexive *се* and *си*. Inflected clitics are represented in the material of the dialects by full paradigms. Below are the examples from the Bulgarian idioms of Romania (11) and from the Novo Selo dialect (12).

- (11) a. *Е*<sub>3sg.prs</sub> *извадила пилетата* (R, Stoenеști, M-2: 383)  
‘She took out the chickens.’
- b. *2У*<sub>3sg.acc.m</sub> *зеа на рџете* (R, Băleni-Sârbi, M-1)  
‘He was taken in their arms.’
- c. *си*<sub>refl.dat</sub> *вџрви свадбџтъ нџпрет* (R, Bila, M-1)  
‘The wedding is going on’
- (12) a. *Е*<sub>3sg.prs</sub> *бил бџчварин* (NS, M-3: 304)  
‘He was a barrel maker.’
- b. *Мџ*<sub>1sg.acc</sub> *зрџбе* (NS, M-3: 117)  
‘I’m itchy.’
- c. *Сџ*<sub>refl</sub> *дигнџшџмо у двџнаес чџса* (NS, M-3: 302)  
‘We used to get up at twelve o’clock.’

In the analyzed material, there are no contexts with initial *dativus ethicus*, which is due to the functional peculiarities of the latter – namely, its occurrence within fixed structures (such

as *Такива ми ти работи* ‘That's how it is’) and the emotional colouring of the utterance. The initial positioning in the examined dialects, on the other hand, is mainly linked to the communicatively neutral sentence opening (see below).

2. The initial placement of clitics in the dialects under study does not depend on the morphological form or finiteness of the predicate. Initial clitics occur with both verbal and nominal predicates.

- (13) a. *Съм*<sub>1sg.prs</sub> *на шейсет и три години* (R, Coteana, M-1)  
‘I'm 63 years old.’  
b. *Съм*<sub>1sg.prs</sub> *из Руманија* (R, Băleni-Sârbi, M-1)  
‘I am from Romania.’  
c. *Съм*<sub>1sg.prs</sub> *касиер* (R, Valea Dragului, Dimchev 1974: 256)  
‘I'm a cashier.’  
d. *Ми*<sub>1sg.dat</sub> *ѝ*<sub>3sg.prs</sub> *гланну* (R, Chiajna, M-2: 377)  
‘I'm hungry.’
- (14) a. *Ми*<sub>1sg.dat</sub> *е*<sub>3sg.prs</sub> *стра* (NS, M-3: 163)  
‘I am afraid.’  
b. *Ми*<sub>1sg.dat</sub> *е*<sub>3sg.prs</sub> *сме* (NS, M-3: 163)  
‘It's funny to me.’

It should be noted, however, that no examples with an initial copula as in (13a, b, c) have been found in the dialect of Novo Selo. Mladenov, who, importantly, was himself a native speaker of the dialect, also observed that the verb *съм* ‘in independent use’ (not as part of a verbal form, cf. the perfect form *е бил* in [12a]) does not appear at the beginning of a sentence in this dialect (Mladenov 1969: 163).

The influence of the constraints inherent in the Macedonian language cannot be ruled out here: in Macedonian, as shown in 2.3, the copula in sentences with nominal predicate cannot be positioned initially, as in examples (8a, b) above.

In both areas, the initial position can be occupied by a verbal clitic with a participial predicate. This is especially relevant in the idiom of Novo Selo, where the variations of clitic placement with participial forms, peculiar to Macedonian (as in 9d above), do not seem to apply. The preposed copula, on the contrary, is typical in this dialect:

- (15) *Съм*<sub>1sg.prs</sub> *станът у комуна Ѓепуреши* (R, Iepurești, M-2: 378)  
‘I was born in the municipality Iepurești.’
- (16) *Съм*<sub>1sg.prs</sub> *легнут по бурту* (NS, M-3: 184)  
‘I'm lying on my front.’

As for adverbial participles, the dialect texts under study do not provide sufficient data to examine their ordering in relation to pronominal clitics.

3. In both the Bulgarian dialects of Romania and the Novo-Selo dialect, possessive datives have been observed in the initial position. This occurs in constructions where the external possessor is expressed by a short dative form, typically allowing a combined possessive and argument interpretation.

- (17) a. *Му*<sub>1sg.dat</sub> *и*<sub>3sg.prs</sub> *имету Ѐозин Жизела* (R, Cioplea, M-2: 383)  
 ‘My name is Josine Gisela.’  
 b. *И*<sub>3sg.dat.f</sub> *умр’а чил’аку* (R, Valea Dragului, Sugai 2015a: 105)  
 ‘Her husband died.’, lit. ‘to her.’
- (18) a. *Му*<sub>1sg.dat</sub> *потечъ кръв из нос* (NS, M-3: 132)  
 ‘I got a nose bleed.’  
 b. *Му*<sub>3sg.dat.m</sub> *излезъл кукуй нь чъло* (NS, M-3: 135)  
 ‘He's got a lump on his forehead.’

An expansion of the options for the initial possessive dative in the Bulgarian dialects of Romania can be observed in the example below. In (19), from the Moesian dialect, the absolute initial position is occupied by the possessive clitic *му*, which doubles the prepositional phrase *на мунчето*.

- (19) *Му*<sub>j</sub> *имиту [на мунчету туй]*<sub>j</sub> *Кент* (R, Brănești, Sugai 2015a:105)  
 lit. ‘To him, the name [of the boy this] Kent’ / ‘The name of this boy is Kent.’

The prevalence of such expressions of possessiveness in the Bulgarian dialects is a predictable linguistic outcome of contact. The basic strategy for modern Romanian involves the use of structures with an external possessor, rather than DP-internal clitics: “DP-internal clitics are nowadays used mainly for stylistic reasons, in poetry or (highly) poetic texts. They are perceived as outdated and are no longer productive” (Hill and Tasmowski 2008: 367–368; Niculescu 2008: 487–499). In Macedonian as well, the structure with external possessor is firmly established (cf. 8b), while DP-internal clitics have a limited range of use (Mišeska Tomić 2008: 23–35; Mitkovska 2011; Mitkovska 2014: 109–130). Moreover, some external datives allow only a possessive interpretation, e. g., *Ти го чув името* (Mišeska Tomić 2008: 33; see also Mitkovska 2011: 93–100).

4. In both areas, initial clitics are allowed not only in declarative sentences but also in general yes-no questions:

- (20) *Ти*<sub>2sg.dat</sub> *цѣ*<sub>refl</sub> *досна?* (R, Iepurești, M-2: 383)  
 ‘Did you feel like sleeping?’
- (21) *Си*<sub>2sg.prs</sub> *за*<sub>3sg.acc.n</sub> *узел?* (NS, M-3: 183)  
 ‘Did you take this?’

The only exception in both areas is the positive imperative form, with obligatory postverbal positioning of clitics:

- (22) *питѣйте* *мѣ*<sub>1sg.acc</sub> (R, Valea Dragului, M-1)  
 ‘Ask me.’
- (23) *Узи* *си*<sub>refl.dat</sub> *мърку леп* (NS, M-3: 73)  
 ‘Get yourself some bread.’

5. In both areas, the construction with pronoun reduplication is actively used. Particularly relevant to our discussion is the widespread use – unlike in colloquial Bulgarian and most Bulgarian dialects (Krapova and Tiševa 2006) – of the construction with right dislocation (Sugai 2015b: 97–100), which allows the occurrence of initial clitics. Such a communicative

syntactic pattern reflects a broader trend towards the grammaticalization of pronominal reduplication of the object (cf. Sugai 2015b).

(24) *Им*<sub>3pl.dat</sub> *цѣлувѣ ръкъ нѣ кумѣ и куматѣ* (R, M-2: 233)  
‘She kisses their hands, of godfather and godmother.’

(25) *Га*<sub>3sg.acc.m</sub> *убили бѣшту ни* (NS, M-3: 74)  
‘He was killed, our father.’

6. Initial clitics in the informants’ usage have come to be associated with a communicatively neutral status in clause initial position (also evidenced by an increased use of right dislocation in instances of pronominal reduplication). Our observations of the texts from Bulgarian dialects in Romania show that the initial clitic order is the default option for most informants, that is, the initial positioning of clitics is used as a primary narrative strategy.

The pattern appears most consistently in narratives recounting a sequence of actions, when the speaker simply conveys their chronological order. This is illustrated in the informant’s response (26) to the question of how to cook *kachamak* (a type of maize porridge):

(26) *качамак? къ?|| гу*<sub>3sg.acc.m</sub> *турии нѣ огън’ѣ| го*<sub>3sg.acc.m</sub> *вариши| го*<sub>3sg.acc.m</sub> *бъркъши|*  
*го*<sub>3sg.acc.m</sub> *вариши| го*<sub>3sg.acc.m</sub> *бъркъши ду куѣ го нѣпраши къчѣмак* (R, Calomfirești, M-1)  
‘Kachamak? How? You put it on fire, boil it, stir it, boil it, stir it, until you’ve made kachamak.’

The postverbal position of clitics in similar communicative-syntactic conditions (if the informant uses this option at all) typically signals a departure from the norm; that is, it correlates with the presence of information-structural triggers or occurs in special constructions involving postposition, such as lexical repetition with syntactic extension in (27).

(27) *сетне ѿ*<sub>3sg.acc.f</sub> *дѣрпѣми| дѣрпѣми ѿ*<sub>3sg.acc.f</sub> *дудет съ утлени*  
‘Then we tug it, tug it until it comes off.’ (R, Valea Dragului, M-1)

However, the factors influencing the choice between initial and non-initial position for some informants still require further investigation.

#### 4 Concluding remarks

The expansion of paradigmatic and syntactic possibilities for initial clitics as a contact-induced phenomenon in the dialects under consideration follows similar patterns: the involvement of different morphological classes of clitics, the expansion of constructions that permit initial clitics (including nominal constructions, constructions with external possessors, and constructions with pronominal reduplication of the right-dislocation type), and the inclusion of not only declarative but also interrogative sentences. At the same time, the restrictions on clitic initiality from the donor language become irrelevant. An exception to this is the absence of constructions with an initial copular verb in the present tense in the Novo Selo dialect, mirroring the restrictions found in Macedonian. However, other Macedonian postverbal position rules are not represented: clitics with participial predicates always take the preverbal position, (cf. [9b] and [15–16]); the postverbal position with the negative imperative is not

allowed. A common type of clause that prevents clitic initiality is the positive imperative, which reflects a relict phenomenon found both within and outside the Balkans.

The initial position of clitics appears to be quite borrowable in Bulgarian when in contact with languages with cancelled Tobler-Mussafia requirement. We cannot delve into the peculiarities of cliticization in Bulgarian that favor this type of borrowing (Ivanova in press), but this transfer is undoubtedly facilitated by the word order in the donor languages. This is related to the role of the verb complex in sentence structure and the parallelism in the pronoun-verb sequence across the Balkan languages (Friedman and Joseph in press).

Any instance of borrowing calls for the discovery of motivation, which, in turn, can account for the greater or lesser borrowability of various phenomena (Matras 2020: 173–175, 252–257).

Thus, a functional trigger of clitic initiality in contact areas is the simplification of the linear-syntagmatic structure, serving as a means to promote uniformity within the bilingual linguistic repertoire (Matras 2020: 257). This simplification is evident in the fact that a native speaker of these Bulgarian dialects does not need the additional movement required in standard Bulgarian, namely, the step of moving clitics to the postverbal position in those (quite frequent) cases where the position before the verb-clitic complex remains unfilled. Indirect evidence supporting simplification as a motivation for borrowing is the disregard, in the recipient language, of most clitic postposition rules from the donor language, as demonstrated by the reviewed dialects.

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