

LOST IN THE BALKANS: DIFFERENTIAL PLACE MARKING IN THE AROMANIAN VARIETIES

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The phenomenon of Differential Place Marking (Haspelmath 2019), also called zero-marking of spatial relations (Stolz et al 2014), has often been mentioned in the languages of the Balkans. Examples of such differential marking have been documented in the Aromanian varieties (Kramer 1981; Caragiu-Marioțeanu 1975), Modern Greek (Holton et al 1997), Macedonian (Koneski 1965), Ancient Greek (Luraghi 2017), and Latin (Haspelmath 2019; Kramer 1981). However, while the presence of Differential Place Marking has been widely acknowledged, detailed descriptions of such patterns in different varieties are still lacking. Our aim is to present and discuss linguistic data from Aromanian and other Balkan Romance varieties (Istroromanian and Meglen Vlach) to better understand the inter- and intra-dialectal variation of Differential Place Marking. We study and compare their occurrences in the linguistic transcripts from different synchronic Aromanian varieties: from Kruševo (Gołąb 1984), Ohrid and Struga (Marković 2007), and Turia/Kranéa (Bara et al 2005). The results of the comparative analysis suggest that the dialectal and diachronic picture is not uniform. Various semantic factors, such as the type of noun indicating location (proper vs. common) and whether the location is perceived as proximal or distant seem to play a key role.

Key words: Aromanian dialects, Differential Place Marking, language contact, Balkanisms.

ИЗГУБЕНИ НА БАЛКАНОТ: ЛОКАТИВНОТО ДИФЕРЕНЦИЈАЛНО МАРКИРАЊЕ ВО АРОМАНСКИТЕ ДИЈАЛЕКТИ

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Феноменот на диференцијално локативно обележување (Haspelmath 2019), познат и како нулто обележување на просторните релации (Stolz et al. 2014), е карактеристичен за јазиците на Балканот. Примери за вакво диференцијално обележување се документирани во ароманските говори (Kramer 1981; Saragiu-Marioțeanu 1975) и во балканските јазици: грчкиот (Holton et al. 1997), македонскиот (Koneski 1965); во класичните јазици: старогрчкиот (Luraghi 2017) и латинскиот (Haspelmath 2019; Kramer 1981). Но, иако диференцијалното локативно обележување се смета за балканска карактеристика, сè уште нема детални описи за нејзината дистрибуција во различни говори. Целта на нашето истражување е да ги анализираме јазичните податоци од ароманските и од другите балкано-романски варијанти (исторороманскиот и мегленовлашкиот) за подобро да ја разбереме дијалекталната варијабилност на диференцијалното локативно обележување. Ги анализираме примерите без предлог во јазичните транскрипти од неколку современи аромански варијанти: од Крушево (Goiaș 1984), Охрид и Струга (Марковиќ 2007), како и од Турија/Кранеа (Bara et al. 2005). Нашата компаративна анализа покажува дека дијалектолошката и дијахрониската слика на оваа појава не е униформна. Различни семантички фактори, како што е типот на именката во топонимот (општа наспроти лична) и растојанието до определеното место играат главна улога во употребата на диференцијалното локативно маркирање.

Клучни зборови: Аромански дијалекти, диференцијално локативно обележување, јазичен контакт, балканизми.

1 Introduction

Phenomena of Differential Place Marking (Haspelmath 2019), also known as zero-marking of spatial relations (Stolz et al. 2014), have received increasing attention in the linguistic research over the past decades. In such zero-marking constructions, speakers omit any overt marking that indicate spatial roles of Location, Direction or Source/Ablative.¹ Such patterns are also observable in many spoken varieties of Europe, e.g., in spoken British English (1) and Swiss German (2).²

- (1) You're "going Marbella" for the hols. (English, <https://www.thetimes.com>)
- (2) *Gö-mmer* *HB?*
 go.1SG.PL-we.NOM main.station(M)
 'Are we going to HB (main station in Zurich)?' (Swiss German, Zurich; own example)

In English and Swiss German, one would expect an overt marking with a preposition, in (1) *to* and in Swiss German 2 *zu* + *DEF*. In both cases, zero-marking of spatial relations is highly marked and appears to signal the use of a specific spoken register.³

Such phenomena are not unknown to Balkan linguistics. Sandfeld (1930) noted instances of zero-marking, i.e., without any preposition, in marking patterns of Direction in Albanian (3), Balkan Romance (4), Balkan Slavic (5), and Greek (6).

- (3) *Laskoviq-Ø* *vajta*
 Laskovik-NOM/ACC.SG.INDF go.1SG.AOR
 'I went to Laskovik.' (Albanian, Sandfeld 1930: 111)
- (4) *mi* *duc* *Sărun-ă*
 I.ACC go.1SG.PRS Thessaloniki(F)-NOM/ACC.SG.INDF
 'I go to Thessaloniki.' (Aromanian, Sandfeld 1930: 111)
- (5) *site* *sel'an-i-Ø* *'od-el-e* *cărkov-Ø*
 all.PL villager(M)-PL-INDF go.IPFV-PTCP-PL church(F)-SG.INDF
- 'All the villagers went to church.' (Balkan Slavic, Sandfeld 1930: 111)
- (6) *πά-ω* *σχολεί-ο*
 go.PFV-1SG.PRS school(N)-NOM/ACC.SG
 'I go/will go to school.' (Greek, Sandfeld 1930: 110)

Examples (3) to (6) show that the zero-marking is not only attested in all four Balkan varieties, but that it can also occur with different noun types, both proper and common nouns. Vidoeski (1999: 25) considered the "loss of the preposition" one of the more recent Balkanisms. Stolz et al. (2014: 76) argue that the zero-marking patterns are "suggestive of an areal feature which, however, does not count as a fully-blown Balkanism."

¹ See Stolz et al. (2014) or Haspelmath (2019) for the definitions of these comparative concepts (Haspelmath 2010).

² We would like to thank Prof. Dr. Adam Ledgeway for pointing out the existence of this structure in spoken British English.

³ Future studies might be able to shed new light on the use of the pattern in these varieties.

These zero-marking patterns have also attracted attention from a typological perspective. Stolz et al. (2014) and Haspelmath (2019) observed that such patterns tend to be more frequent with proper nouns than with common nouns, and are more common in patterns of Location and Direction than those indicating Source or Ablative. In their cross-linguistic study of the phenomenon, Stolz et al. (2014) examined these patterns in various Balkan varieties. In addition to South Macedonian and non-standard Greek varieties, they included the Aromanian variety spoken in Kruševo (Republic of North Macedonia), as a representative case. Their analyses were based on the linguistic data presented in Gołąb (1984). According to the findings of their large-scale study, zero-marking in Aromanian is limited to toponyms denoting cities and only appears in contexts of Location and Direction, but not Source (Stolz et al 2014: 73–75). This observation is largely in line with Sandfeld's (1930: 111) claim that these patterns in Aromanian mostly occur with toponyms.

Similar phenomena of zero-marking of spatial relations were also mentioned in the description of the Pindean variety of Aromanian in Turia/Kranéa in Greece (Bara et al 2005: 54–55). Among the examples provided, however, there are also cases of zero-marking with common nouns like *filāk'ia* 'prison'.

Hence, the question arises as to whether there is inter- and intra-diatopic variation in the zero-marking patterns of the Aromanian varieties. To address this, we aim to shed new light on these patterns analysing data from different diatopic varieties.

1.1 Research Questions

Given the divergence among existing descriptions of zero-marking patterns across the individual varieties, we decided to conduct a pilot study to gain a preliminary, comparative impression of the diatopic variation of zero-marking of spatial relations in the Aromanian varieties. This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. Are phenomena of Differential Place Marking observable in different branches of Aromanian, i.e., Fărshărot variety in Ohrid and Struga, Gramostean variety in Kruševo (both in North Macedonia), and in the Pindean variety of Turia/Kranéa (Greece)?
2. Are these Differential Place Marking or zero-marking patterns consistent across varieties, or there is evidence of both inter- and intra-diatopic variation?
3. Which semantic factors play a major role in explaining the cases of zero-marking in spatial relations? Do the patterns align with the proposed typological hierarchies, i.e., are they restricted or more wide-spread with proper nouns than with common nouns (Haspelmath 2019; Stolz et al 2014)? Is there also an asymmetry in the marking of Source compared to Location and Direction?

To address these research questions, we analyse the transcripts from linguistic fieldwork conducted on different Aromanian varieties. The data collection methodology and analysis are presented in the following section.

2 Methods

In our study, we consider the following three Aromanian varieties in the Republic of North Macedonia and Greece:



Figure 1. The Aromanian varieties included in the study.

We chose these three varieties for a number of reasons. On the one hand, they represent three different branches of Aromanian according to Saramandu (2014). Nonetheless, there is no clear consensus among scholars on the dialectological classification of Aromanian. Caragiu-Marioțeanu (1975: 264–265) and Kahl (2007: 131) argue for a bi-partition (Fărshărot vs. non-Fărshărot varieties) of the Aromanian varieties based on phonological and morphological features. However, this disagreement does not affect our study, as the three selected varieties still cover both proposed branches. On the other hand, there is sufficient linguistic data to allow for a deeper and broader understanding of the situation in the individual varieties thanks to the descriptions provided by Gołab (1984), Bara et al (2005), and Marković (2007). Moreover, these transcripts have a linguistic, dialectological focus and therefore do not suffer from interference stemming from literary tradition or political views.⁴ Since zero-marking phenomena are already considered dialectal (and probably less prestigious) even in spoken Greek and Macedonian (Stolz et al 2014: 304–305), one can reasonably assume that similar tendencies are observable in Aromanian literary texts and/or culturally-oriented collections (e.g., collections of local tales, etc.).

In the next step, we examined the transcripts for possible marking patterns of Location, Direction, and Ablative/Source. Since there is no systematic corpus of the Aromanian varieties (yet), we relied on OCR to process the texts. We searched for toponyms, different common nouns that are typically prone to zero-marking in different Balkan languages (Sandfeld 1930;

⁴ We have also considered literary texts, local newspapers and other sources in Aromanian. However, many of them seemed to show interferences from other literary languages, such as Daco-Romanian, Greek, and/or Albanian due to their respective written traditions.

Holton et al 1997: 335), such as the local forms for *school*, *church*, *prison*,⁵ as well as verbs of motion, e.g., *to go*, *to arrive*, *to leave*. We then compiled all identified occurrences (more than 330) into the XML file in the supplementary materials to ensure the data adhere to FAIR principles⁶ (Wilkinson et al. 2016). We also included marking patterns with the preposition *pãñã*⁷ ‘till, until, towards’ in the compiled file, but decided to exclude these from the analysis for two reasons: first, there are only a few examples in the linguistic data; second, its semantics can be considered more marked than those of the other prepositions of Location and Direction *la/tu/ən*. In the compiled XML file, we used different variables to describe the constructions, e.g., type of verb/noun, different characteristics of the noun/prepositional phrase (Location vs. Direction vs. Ablative/Source semantics, proper vs. common noun, definite vs. indefinite), whether there is any preposition and the expected preposition for the given variety. This approach enabled a deeper understanding of the different factors that might influence marking patterns in Aromanian.

3 Results

As the results of this comparative analysis show, we can observe phenomena of zero-marking patterns of spatial relations in all three Aromanian varieties. We classify the general patterns as follows: zero-marking patterns of Location/Direction with toponyms (section 3.1), with common nouns (3.2), and Differential Place Marking of Source (3.3).

3.1 Zero-marking of spatial relations (Location and Direction) with toponyms

In all three Aromanian varieties, Differential Place Marking patterns are attested with toponyms. However, these patterns are only observable with local toponyms, i.e., names of villages and towns/cities, as in examples (7) to (10), and not regions or countries (11).

- (7) *Am ti nãžeri Skopj-a*
 have.1SG.PRS of go.INF Skopje(F)-NOM/ACC.SG.DEF
 ‘I have to go to Skopje.’ (Fărshãrot Aromanian, Ohrid & Struga; Markovič 2007: 158)

- (8) [...] *ci s-ãre fapt-ə*
 [...] that 3SG/PL.REFL=have.3SG.PRS.AUX make.PTCP-F.SG
Óhãrd-a tu mähãl-ă.
 Ohrid(M)-NOM/ACC.SG.DEF in/to district(F)-NOM/ACC.SG.INDF
 ‘[...] that was born in Ohrid, in a district.’ (Gramostean Aromanian, Kruševo; Gołab 1984: 145)

- (9) [...] *si-d'uți gr'ebin-e.*
 [...] 3SG.REFL.DAT=go.3SG.PRS Grevena-NOM/ACC.SG.INDF
 ‘[...] he goes to Grevena.’ (Pindean Aromanian, Turia/Kranéa; Bara, et al 2005: 115)

⁵ Unlike Sandfeld (1930) and Holton (1997), we had to exclude the vast majority of occurrences for house/home as they were mainly marked through the adverb *acasã*, like in many Romance varieties.

⁶ FAIR stands for findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable data.

⁷ There is no standardised transcript for Aromanian. In the examples, we keep the transcription provided by the authors. In our own transcripts we follow Cunia’s (2010).

- (10) [...] *m'ini mi te'a gr'ebin-e, tã*
 [...] I.ACC I.ACC bring.3SG.IMP Grevena-NOM/ACC.SG.INDF in/to
 nosokom'i-u.
 hospital(N)-NOM/ACC.SG.INDF [...]
 '[...] he brought me to the Grebine, to the hospital [...].’ (Pindean Aromanian,
 Turia/Kranéa; Bara et al 2005: 241)
- (11) [...] *š vrém ta-s-fúg tu*
 [...] and want.1SG.IMP FUT-SBJV-flee.1SG.PRS in/to
 Elád-ə.
 Greece(F)-NOM/ACC.SG.INDF
 '[...] and I wanted to flee to Greece.’ (Gramostean Aromanian, Kruševo; Goľab
 1984: 144)

However, zero-marking does not occur with all toponyms to the same extent. In the Färshärot varieties of Ohrid and Struga, it seems to be systematic with larger cities such as Ohrid, Bitola, and Skopje, but not with local village names like Gorna Belica (12) or Gorica (13).

- (12) *Tu Beala z-'dormi bună.*
 In/to Gorna.Belica.NOM/ACC.SG.DEF 3SG/PL.REFL=sleep.3SG.PRS well
 ‘One sleeps well in Gorna Belica.’ (Färshärot Aromanian, Ohrid & Struga; Marković
 2007: 130)
- (13) *Sil'-a 'esti dus-Ø tu*
 Sila(M)-NOM/ACC.SG.DEF be.1SG.PRS.AUX go.PTCP-M.SG in/to
 Goric-a
 Gorica(F)-NOM/ACC.SG.DEF
 ‘Sila went to Gorica.’ (Färshärot Aromanian, Ohrid & Struga; Marković 2007: 146)

In the other two varieties, the size of the settlement does not seem to play a significant role. Zero-marking is overwhelmingly predominant with local toponyms such as Bitola, Kruševo, Ohrid, and Skopje. There seem to be occurrences of prepositional marking with more distant toponyms like *Biligrádu* ‘Belgrade’ and *Póle* ‘Istanbul’, but not with *Bešli* ‘Vienna’ and *Parísl'i* ‘Paris’:⁸

- (14) [...] *mi dúk^u ən Pól-e.*
 [...] I.ACC.REFL go=1SG.PRS in/to İstanbul-NOM/ACC.SG.INDF
 ‘[...] I go to İstanbul.’ (Gramostean Aromanian, Kruševo; Goľab 1984: 244)
- (15) *mi dúku Beš-li.*
 I.ACC go=1SG.PRS Vienna(M).NOM/ACC.SG.DEF
 ‘[...] I go to Vienna.’ (Gramostean Aromanian, Kruševo; Goľab 1984: 208)

The only apparent explanation for this difference in marking patterns could be the presence of a Definiteness marker with the toponyms Paris and Vienna. However, other indefinite

⁸ Note here also the use of the preposition *ən* and not *tu* as in the Färshärot variety of the region.

toponyms, such as *Bitule*, also exhibit zero-marking. Therefore, additional data are needed to clarify the underlying factors.

In the Pindean variety of Turia/Kranéa, variation is also attested. In this case, there seems to be a general variation between nouns with and without preposition (16).

- (16) *nu-ave'a* *k'al-i* *au'a* *tā*
 NEG=have.3SG.IMPF STREET(F)-NOM/ACC.SG.DEF here in/to
gr'ebine
 Grevena(F).NOM/ACC.SG.INDF
 'There was no street in Grevena.' (Pindean Aromanian, Turia/Kranéa; Bara et al 2005: 253)

Nonetheless, zero-marking is clearly predominant with toponyms in the Aromanian variety of Turia/Kranéa. Moreover, there is no significant difference in the tendency towards either zero- or overt-marking of spatial relations between Location and Direction in any of the varieties.

3.2 Zero-marking of spatial relations

In this subsection, we look at Location and Direction with common nouns. In the linguistic transcripts from the Aromanian varieties spoken in Kruševo and Turia/Kranéa, we also observe instances of zero-marking for Location and Direction with common nouns. Interestingly, the two varieties do not show these patterns with the same common nouns. We found cases of zero marking with the noun *skulíe* 'school' (17)⁹ in Kruševo, while in Turia/Kranéa it occurs with *filāk'ii* 'prison' and *ho'arā* 'village', as in (19) and (20).

- (17) *Míne* *ši* *frác-l'i* *amei* *ənvicám*
 I.NOM/ACC and brother(M)-NOM/ACC.PL-DEF 1SG.POSS.M.PL learn.1SG.IMP
skulíe-e [...]
 school(F)-NOM/ACC.SG.INDF [...]
 'My brothers and I learned at school [...].' (Gramostean Aromanian, Kruševo; Gołąb 1984: 144)

- (18) *əmvéc^u* *la* *skulíe*.
 teach.1SG.PRS at/to school(F)-NOM/ACC.SG.INDF
 'I teach at school.' (Gramostean Aromanian, Kruševo; Gołąb 1984: 143)

- (19) *ālu* *bāg'arā* *filāk'ii*
 he.ACC.M.SG put.1SG.PRS prison(F)-NOM/ACC.SG.INDF
L'ārs-a.
 Larissa(F)-NOM.ACC.SG.DEF
 'They put him into prison in Larissa.' (Pindean Aromanian, Turia/Kranéa; Bara et al 2005: 54)

⁹ Examples (17) and (18) also show that the verb *nvets/əmvéc* means 'to learn/to teach' in Aromanian, unlike in many other Romance varieties.

- (20) *kum fuḍ* *di trāk'olu* *'unā*
 how leave/flee.3SG.PST of Trakol(M).NOM/ACC.SG.INDF INDF.NOM/ACC.SG.F
ho'ar-ā
 village(F)-NOM/ACC.SG.INDF
 'How he left/fled from Trakol to a village.' (Pindean Aromanian, Turia/Kranéa; Bara et al 2005: 54)

As (18) shows, *skulie* can also occur with the preposition *la*. The same is true for *ho'ar-ā* and *filāk'ii*, which can appear with the preposition *tu* in the Turia/Kranéa variety. Thus, this indicates intra-diatopic variation. However, given a small number of occurrences with these common nouns, we cannot make any claims about the possible factors influencing these marking patterns. Nonetheless, the zero-marking patterns do not seem to be as predominant with these common nouns as with the proper nouns.

In addition, no cases of zero-marking were observed with any other common noun, e.g., *kəsəbə* 'city', *nosokom'iu* 'hospital', *plat'eia* 'square', *bise'arkā* 'church'.

3.3 Differential Place Marking with Source/Ablative

There are also occurrences of Differential Place Marking in the marking of Ablative or Source in the Aromanian variety of Turia/Kranéa:

- (21) *ḡambr'o-lu* *īar'a* *di tu a'estu*
 groom(M)-NOM/ACC.SG.DEF be.3SG.IMPF from/of in/to DEM.PROX.M.SG
māhāl-ā.
 district(F)-NOM/ACC.SG.INDF
 'The groom was from this district.' (Pindean, Aromanian, Turia/Kranéa; Bara et al 1984: 114)

- (22) *īci* *duku* *di la bāse'arik-ā*
 there/then go.1SG.PRS of/from in/to church(F)-NOM/ACC.SG.INDF
ak'asā
 home
 'then I went from church home.' (Pindean Aromanian, Turia/Kranéa; Bara et al 2005: 471)

- (23) *v'in'i* *'alt-u-Ø* *fil'ak'u-Ø*
 come.3SG.PRS other-NOM/ACC.SG.M-INDF prisoner(M)-NOM/ACC.SG-INDF
di gr'ebin-e.
 of/from Grevena(F)-NOM/ACC.SG.INDF
 'another prisoner comes from Grevena.' (Pindean Aromanian, Turia/Kranéa; Bara et al 2005: 244)

- (24) [...] *kum fuḍ* *di trāk'olu*
 [...] how flee.3SG.PST from/of Trakol(M)-NOM/ACC.SG.INDF
'unā *ho'ar-ā*.
 INDF.F.NOM/ACC.SG school(F)-NOM/ACC.SG.INDF
 '[...] how he fled from Trakol to a village.' (Pindean Aromanian, Turia/Kranéa; Bara et al 2005: 241)

Examples (21) to (24) are not zero-marking patterns *stricto sensu*, but they show that the marking patterns are not identical. Common nouns (21 and 22) use the preposition clustering *di* ‘of/from’ + *tu/la* ‘in/at’ to mark Source. Proper nouns (23 and 24) can only use the preposition *di*. Thus, there is an asymmetry in the marking patterns, with the proper nouns showing ‘a shorter marking pattern’ as predicted (Haspelmath 2019: 319).

In the linguistic data from the Fārshārot variety of Ohrid and Struga, there are only examples of Source with proper nouns. These cases are particularly intriguing as they use only the preposition *di*. A few examples suggest similar tendencies in Kruševo.

- (25) *Inši* *di=tu* *ód-ə* [...] .
 exit.3sg.pst from.at=to room(f)-nom/acc.sg.indf [...] .
 ‘S/he gets out of a room [...].’ (Gramostean Aromanian, Kruševo; Gołąb 1984: 165)

- (26) *N’-aveám* *tát-ə=n’u* *din*
 I.DAT=have.1SG.IMPF father(M)-NOM/ACC.SG.INDF=1SG.DAT from=at/to
 Kəstúr-Ø.
 Kastoria(M)-NOM/ACC.SG.INDF
 ‘I had a father from Kastoria.’ (Gramostean Aromanian, Kruševo; Gołąb 1984: 165)

- (27) *N’-aveám* *dad-ə,* *laiu,*
 I.DAT=have.1SG.IMPF mother(F)-NOM/ACC.SG.INDF black.NOM/ACC.SG.M.INDF
di *Nevésk-a.*
 from Neveska/Nymfaio(F)-NOM/ACC.SG.DEF
 ‘I had a mother from Neveska/Nymfaio.’ (Gramostean Aromanian, Kruševo; Gołąb 1984: 165)

Example (26) shows a different preposition cluster compared to the common noun in (25). In (27), there is only the Source preposition *di*. However, these examples should also be approached with caution, as both can be interpreted not only as Source, but also as Possessive from a semantic perspective.

4 Discussion

The results from section 3 suggest that phenomena of Differential Place Marking or zero-marking occur in the three Aromanian varieties. However, the three varieties seem to show inter- as well as intra-diatopic variation, as seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Patterns of Differential Place Marking in the Aromanian varieties.

	Toponyms proximal cities	Toponyms proximal villages	Toponyms coun-tries/regions	Common nouns	Source with cities
Fārshārot (Ohrid, Struga)	Yes	No	No	No	No
Gramostean (Kruševo)	Yes	Yes	No	Some	Not clear
Pindean (Turia/Kranéa)	Yes	Yes	No	Some	Yes

Zero-marking of spatial relations (Location and Direction) with local toponyms can be observed in the transcripts of all three varieties. In the Fārshārot variety of Ohrid and Struga, it is restricted to the names of proximal towns, while in Gramostean of Kruševo and in Pindean from Turia/Kranéa it can be also attested with village names. None of the varieties use the zero-marked pattern with names of larger regions or countries.

In the Aromanian variety of Kruševo, zero-marking is clearly predominant for proximal city names; for the proper names of Bitola, Kruševo, and Skopje, only zero-marked forms were found. With more distant toponyms such as Belgrade, Vienna, Istanbul, and Paris, there was variation. Morphosyntactic features of the nouns did not provide a clear explanation for these differences. Geographic proximity might be the most likely factor, though more data would be needed to make any claims.¹⁰ In the Pindean variety of Turia/Kranéa, we observe free variation between zero-marking and the preposition, although the zero-marking is clearly predominant with proper names. Factors such as Definiteness or the distinction between Location and Direction do not appear to play a significant role, neither in the variety of Kruševo, nor in that of Turia/Kranéa.

As discussed in the previous section, we have also encountered cases of zero marking for Location and Direction with a restricted number of common nouns in the Gramostean variety of Kruševo and in the Pindean variety of Turia/Kranéa. The common nouns that showed such zero-marking with Location and Direction were not entirely unexpected. Many of them, such as *skulie* ‘school’ in Kruševo and *filāk* ‘ii’ ‘prison’, *ho'arā* in Turia/Kranéa, have also been noted in other Balkan varieties, including Balkan Slavic and Greek (Sandfeld 1930; Holton et al 1997; Vidoeski 1999). What is crucial is that zero-marking in the Aromanian varieties does not seem to be restricted to only one preposition *tu* or *la*. In neither of the two varieties is zero-marking predominant; and these findings should be treated with caution as the absolute number of occurrences with common nouns remains low. Nonetheless, the existence of these zero-marking patterns already points to a more complex situation in the Aromanian varieties than was suggested by Stolz et al. (2014).

Since zero-marking patterns can be observed in all the synchronic Aromanian varieties included in the study, one might assume that such patterns were also present in earlier linguistic documents of Aromanian. However, we did not observe any occurrence in Kristophson's (1974) critical edition of the *Tetraglosson* of Daniel Moscopolites from 1794, neither in the Aromanian passages (28 and 29) nor in the Balkan Slavic text (30).

¹⁰ Proximity as a factor in the zero-marking patterns was also mentioned during a private conversation with Afrodita Totsili, a native speaker of the local variety of Kruševo, who unfortunately passed away in 2024. A future, systematic study with a larger number of native speakers of the Kruševo variety might shed some light on this issue.

whether multi-lingual individuals use and accept zero-marking patterns to the same extent across the different varieties. Finally, it is worth investigating whether there are differences between monolingual and multilingual speakers.

The cases of Differential Place Marking for the comparative concept of Source/Ablative in the Aromanian variety of Turia/Kranéa are also intriguing. They are not zero-marking *stricto sensu* as the preposition *di* ‘from’ is still present to mark Source. Nonetheless, there is again the opposition between proper nouns and common nouns, as the former do not show the prepositional clusters. Hence, their marking patterns are asymmetric, and the place name is indeed shorter, as predicted by Haspelmath (2019: 319). Similar prepositional clusters have also been attested with common nouns in Macedonian (Ganenkova 2015: 197):

- (32) *ist-o taka mi se sluč-i vrvii*
 same-N.SG like.that 1SG.DAT REFL.ACC happen.3SG.AOR pass.3SG.PRS
ed-en dečk-o-Ø od vo kol-a-Ø [...]
 one-M.SG boy(M)-SG-INDF from in/to car(F)-SG-INDF [...]
 ‘This also happened to me, a guy came out of a car [...].’ (Macedonian,
<https://forum.femina.mk>)

Preposition clustering with common nouns as in (32)¹² is possible in spoken Macedonian. At the same time, zero-marking with toponyms (and common nouns) is also widely attested in the Macedonian varieties (Vidoeski 1999: 25). Thus, the situation is comparable to the patterns in the Aromanian variety of Turia/Kranéa. This raises the question of whether the tendencies regarding preposition clustering would also be similar, i.e., that preposition clusters are only possible with common nouns or they also occur with proper nouns.

5 Conclusion

The results of this preliminary study suggest that patterns of Differential Place Marking/zero-marking are frequent across different branches of Aromanian and not only in the Gramostean variety of Kruševo. However, the analyses of Fārshārot in Ohrid and Struga, Gramostean in Kruševo, and Pindean in Turia/Kranéa provide a more complex picture with differences in the individual zero-marking patterns.

The zero-marking patterns in the varieties are not random. Rather, they seem to follow the hierarchies established in linguistic typology (Stolz et al 2014; Haspelmath 2019): they are predominant with proper nouns for local toponyms (cities and to a certain extent smaller localities) in all three varieties considered. They can even be observed with common nouns like *skuliie* ‘school’ in Kruševo, *filāk’ii* ‘prison’ and *ho’arā* ‘village’ in Turia/Kranéa, although to a lesser extent. There are no zero-marking patterns with Source *stricto sensu*, i.e., without any preposition.

Nonetheless, our analysis of the linguistic data suggests that there is more intra-diatopic variation with common nouns, while the zero-marking patterns are less predominant in both varieties (Kruševo and Turia/Kranéa). The low absolute numbers of occurrences are also to be taken into account.

Therefore, a systematic study of the phenomenon of zero-marking pattern – taking into account the inter- as well as intra-diatopic variation in Aromanian – would be necessary. A combination of tasks from language production and grammaticality judgment tests could

¹² We are aware of the typo in *vrvi* by the author, but opted to stick to their original writing.

provide new interesting insights into the boundaries and possible grey zone of such patterns: for instance, distinctions might emerge between proximal and distant punctual toponyms, or between small-scale toponyms for mountains/hills/regions and common nouns referring to geographical entities (e.g., “district”, “village”). A future study could also include other Balkan varieties where these phenomena have been attested, e.g., Bugurdži Romani, Greek, Macedonian (Stolz et al 2014: 76). The last two varieties seem to be the most promising as many native speakers of Aromanian are also proficient in Greek and/or Macedonian. To state possible contact-induced interference, fragments of speech of bilingual speakers can be compared to those of monolingual speakers. In addition, one could also include diachronic data from different Aromanian varieties, although it might be problematic to consider such texts as they mainly come from a literary tradition and are often translations. The *Tetraglosson* by Daniel Moscopolites (1794) exemplifies this issue in Aromanian, Balkan Slavic, and Greek.

Therefore, paying further attention to the patterns of zero-marking in both synchronic and diachronic varieties of the Balkan varieties can yield relevant results – not only for the comparative research of the Balkans, but also for general linguistic typology and studies of language contact.

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List of Abbreviations

ACC – Accusative; AOR – Aorist tense; AUX – Auxiliary verb; DAT – Dative; DEF – Definiteness; DEM – Demonstrative; F – Feminine; FUT – Future tense; GEN – Genitive; IMPF – Imperfect tense; INDF – Indefiniteness; INF – Infinitive; M – Masculine; N – Neuter; NOM – Nominative; PL – Plural; PRS – Present tense; PST – Past tense; PTCP – Participle; REFL – Reflexive; SBJV – Subjunctive; SG – Singular.

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