Balkan Romani Modality and
Other Balkan Languages[0]

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In this article I shall consider the place of the Romani (Rmi) subordinating conjunction *te* in relation to the equivalent words of the other Balkan languages: Bulg, Mac *da*, Alb të, Gk *ná*, Rum *së*.[1] I shall refer to these words collectively as the *Dental Modal Subordinator* (DMS), as they all begin with a dental or alveolar consonant, and all are used to subordinate verb forms in modal constructions. Following Gołąb (1964), Kuryłowicz (1956), Janakiev (1962), and others, I accept the definition of *modal* as referring to verbal constructions denoting ontologically nonreal events. Thus, for example, the act of going in Alb *Dua të shkoj*, Bulg *Az iskam da xodja*, Gk *Thélō ná páō*, Mac *Sakam da odam*, Rmi *Me mangava te džav*, Rum *Vreau së merg* 'I want to go' is desired but not real. To this must be added the fact that the DMS will convey the aspectuality rather than the modality of the subordinated event when the main verb denotes a real beginning, middle, or end, e.g., Alb *Po filloj të shkruaj*, Bulg *Az počvam da piša*, Gk *Arkhízō ná gráphō*, Mac *Počnuvam da pišuvam*, Rmi *Me lav te hramonav*, Rum *Incep së scriu* 'I am beginning to write.' This intersection of aspect and modality is found in many languages (cf., Aronson 1977), but the fact that the primary meaning of the DMS is modal can be seen from the fact that when it is used in isolation, the subordinated verb is invariably modal in meaning, either optative-imperative (directive)--English *let, may*, etc.--or conditional--English *if*. This can be seen from the phrase Alb *Të këndoj*, Bulg *Da peja*, Gk *Ná tragoudō*, Mac *Da peam*, Rmi *Te giljavav*, Rum *Së cént* 'Let me sing/If I sing...,' which can be a simple directive statement or the protasis of a conditional sentence, depending on the context.[2] These four types of constructions, which can be called dependent modal, dependent aspectual, directive, and conditional, are the four basic types of constructions employing the DMS (Kramer 1983).[3]

The DMS is one of the so-called classic features said to contribute to the definition and distinction of the Balkan linguistic league. The use of DMS constructions as equivalents of infinitive constructions is considered typically Balkan, although, as Joseph (1983) has demonstrated, the degree of presence or absence of true infinitival constructions varies from one language to another. Nonetheless, despite the language-specific differences in the use of the DMS, it remains one of those features most characteristic of the Balkan languages proper. It is one which separates them from those languages which are spoken in the Balkans but are not truly members of the Balkan linguistic league, e.g., Armenian, Circassian, German, Hungarian. Even the Balkan dialects of Turkish, which, as I have argued elsewhere (Friedman 1982), contain significantly more Balkan features than Literary Turkish, can only calque DMS constructions by means of the synthetic optative, e.g., *Läzɜm gideyim* (Mac *Treba da odam*, Alb *Duhet të shkoj*) 'I need to go.' They thus lack the analyticity characteristic of the Balkan league. It can also be noted that the replacement of the infinitive with a subjunctive *ke*

(*que*) construction in Judezmo does occur, but the infinitive is still more common (Joseph 1983:252-53). Romani, however, which is generally omitted from discussions of Balkan linguistics (but see Kostov 1973), displays DMS usage which is typically Balkan. In the remainder of this paper, I will take up two morphosyntactic considerations in the establishment of the position of Romani in a comparative Balkan context with regard to DMS usage.

The first of these considerations is that of the boundedness and markedness of finite forms and the existence of cooccurence limitations. Albanian and Rumanian both lack the superordinate aspectual opposition perfective/imperfective but have morphologically marked forms occurring uniquely with the DMS, e.g., Alb *puth* (2-3sg) vs *të puthësh/puthë (2sg/3sg),* Rum *sărută* vs *să sărute* (3sg/pl), 'kiss'. Of the two languages' forms, the Albanian are more strictly bound than the Rumanian, as the the latter can occur by themselves in some contexts, while the former never occur without the DMS, e.g. Rum *Fie!* 'Let it be [so]!' but not Alb **Jetë!*[4]

The three languages with a perfective/imperfective opposition-- Bulgarian, Greek, and Macedonian--do not have special forms bound to the DMS (the DMS can occur with both aspects), but they do have limitations on the occurrence of the perfective present which involve the DMS. The perfective present in all three languages normally occurs only in subordination to a modal word or other subordinator, and one of the most common of these is the DMS; others include the future marker, words for 'if,' etc., e.g., Bulg *celuvam* vs *šte/da celuna,* Gk *filǒ* vs *thá//ná filésō,* Mac *bacuvam* vs *ḱe/da bacam* 'kiss' (1sg imperfective vs future marker/DMS + 1sg perfective).[5] The actual degree of limitation on unbound occurrences of the present perfective varies among the three languages. There is greatest freedom in Bulgarian, especially in the western dialects, least in Macedonian, likewise especially in the western dialects, with Greek in an intermediate position. Thus, for example, Bulgarian permits a variety of free-standing perfective presents, e.g., *Napraviš tova i vsičko e gotovo* '[If/When you] do this, and everything will be all set' (Aronson 1977:25).[6] In Greek, independent perfective presents are limited to a few idiomatic expressions, e.g., *gýgei dé fýgei* 'whether he goes or not' (from *éite fýgei éite dé fýgei*) (Kostas Kazazis: personal communication). In Literary Macedonian and the western dialects upon which it is based, unsubordinated perfective presents do not occur (Vidoeski 1962/63:92-94).[7]

Romani, like Albanian and Rumanian, lacks a fully developed perfective/imperfective opposition.[8] In the Balkan dialects, however, there are two present tense paradigms, a long form with final -a and a short form without it. Table 1 gives the present tense paradigms of the verb meaning 'do'.

	LONG		SHORT	
	sg	pl	sg	pl
1	kerava	kera[s]a	kerav	kera[s]
2	kere[s]a	kerena	kere[s]	keren
3	kerela	kerena	kerel	keren

TABLE 1: ROMANI 'DO'[9]

In general, long forms occur in independent clauses, and short forms are used after the DMS and other particles. The short form also occurs sometimes in independent position, but the long form is almost never encountered in dependent position, as in the following examples:[10]

(1)   *Me kerava buti.*
'I am working.'

(2)   *Me ka kerav buti.*
'I will work.'

(3)   *So te derav?*
'What am I to do?'

(4)   *Mi bori khelel.*
'My bride is dancing.'

Romani thus occupies an intermediate position between Albanian and Rumanian on the one hand and Bulgarian, Greek, and Macedonian on the other. In the case of Albanian and Romanian, there is a special limited form (hereafter, LF) which is uniquely bound to the DMS and vice versa. In Romani, as in Balkan Slavic and Greek, the LF is more or less bound to a set of words including the DMS, but as in Albanian and Rumanian, the DMS is restricted in its occurrence to the LF. Romani is also in an intermediate position with regard to the strictness with which these conditions are realized. Albanian and Macedonian are the strictest, since they do not allow the LF to occur entirely independently. Greek and Romanian are less strict, since such occurences are permissible but rare, while Romani and Bulgarian are the least strict, since the independent LF is a normal, albeit contextually restricted, occurence. Table 2 is a graphic illustration of these facts in the form of a continuum. In this table, the plus sign means 'is uniquely limited to/occurs only with'.

ALB	RUM	RMI	BULG	GK	MAC
DMS	DMS/0	DMS&c./o	LF	LF	LF
+	+	+	+	+	+
LF	LF	LF	DMS&c./o	DMS&c.(0)	DMS&c.

TABLE 2: DMS CONTINUUM

The second of the two morphosyntactic considerations is the divergences in the rules governing the use of the DMS. Taking the DMS as the point of orientation, there are four possible types of noncorresponding constructions: (1) nonfinite form, (2) zero, (3) other subordinator, (4) other subordinator with DMS. As an example, Balkan translations of the expression meaning 'before + verb', e.g., 'before I go' can be cited. Balkan Slavic and Romani all have simple DMS constructions: Bulg *predi da otida*, Mac *pred da otidam*, Rmi *anglal te džav*. Rumanian, however, has a nonfinite form (type1); Greek has the option of omitting the DMS (type 2); and Albanian uses another subordinator (*se* 'that') with the DMS (type 4): Rum *înainte de a merge*, GK *prin [ná] fýgō*, Alb *para se të shkoj*. As was already seen, all of the Balkan languages use the DMS alone in directive expressions of the type meaning 'let/may it be,' but these languages differ in the variant expressions used in this same meaning. Rumanian permits omission of the DMS (type 2). Bulgarian, Greek, Macedonian, and Romani have particles which can substitute for the DMS (type 3): Bulg, Mac, Rmi *ned[a]*, Gk *ás*. Albanian, Bulgarian, and Rumanian permit collocations of other words with the DMS (type 4): Alb *le të*, Bulg *neka da*, Rum *hai să*. Similarly, Bulgarian and Greek permit the use of the DMS with verbs of perception, whereas the other languages do not (type 3): Bulg *vidjah da/če*, Gk *eíde ná/poú*, but Alb *pashë se*, Mac *vidov kako*, Rmi *dikhljum kaj*, Rum *am văzut că* 'I saw that." Another difference is to be found in expressions of ability, i.e., after verbs meaning 'be able.' Rumanian (*poate*), Romani (*šaj*), and, marginally, Bulgarian (*može*) can omit the DMS, in which case Bulgarian and Rumanian use a nonfinite construction (type 1) while Romani uses a finite one (type 2). Albanian (*mund*), Greek (*mporíë*) and Macedonian (*može*) only have DMS constructions. In expressions meaning 'without + verb' (cf. 'before + verb' above), Albanian must use a nonfinite construction (type 1: *pa* + participle), while the remaining languages have a DMS construction (Bulg, Mac *bez da*, Gk *xorís ná*, Rmi *bi te*, Rum *fără să*), although Rumanian has the option of using a nonfinite construction, and some dialects of Balkan Romani (e.g., Mačkara and Kaburdžije) follow the Albanian model (Marcel Coritade: personal communication), i.e., these languages have possible type 1 constructions. All of the Balkan languages have the option of a plain DMS or a type 4 construction to render the meaning 'in order to': Alb *që të*, Bulg, Mac *za da*, Gk *giá ná*, Rmi *dži te*, Rum *ca să*.

These various types of noncorrespondence are summarized in Table 3, where dashes indicate the exclusive use of a DMS construction and parentheses are used to indicate types which occur in addition to a DMS construction.

	ALB	RUM	RMI	BULG	GK	MAC
without	1	(1)	(1)	---	--	---
be able to	---	(1)	(1)	(1)	--	---
before	4	1	---	---	(2)	---
let/may	(4)	(2/4)	(3)	(3/4)	(3)	(3)
see that	3	3	[3][11]	(3)	(3)	3
in order to	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)

TABLE 3: NONCORRESPONDENCE TYPES

The data summarized in Table 3 is not intended to be exhaustive, but only to indicate the range of possibilities which must be taken into account in writing rules for a comparative Balkan grammar (cf. Kazazis 1968). Thus, although the same rules can account for DMS usage up to a point, there will also have to be a set of interconnected branching rules to account for dialectal variation and the different possibilities of noncorrespondence. The precise pattern of these rules is beyond the scope of this article, but it should be clear from what has been said that the Romani DMS occupies a central place in this Balkan phenomenon.

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[1] The Romani data for this article are taken from dialects of the southern Balkan peninsula belonging to the group known as *Balkan Romani* (see note 8 for further details). These dialects are spoken in parts of Albania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey and, among other things, display Turkish lexical influence where some other dialects reflect Romanian influence, e.g., *lafi* vs *vorba* 'word,' *dunja* vs *lumnja* 'world.' The other major Romani dialect group spoken in the Balkans (and also elsewhere) is often called the *Vlah* group, a name which alludes to the significant Romanian influence just mentioned. The phenomena described in this article are found in both Balkan and non-Balkan Romani dialects both in and beyond the Balkans, and they have been ascribed to the influence of other Balkan languages (see Ventcel' and Čerenkov 1976:314). The extent to which these phenomena occur in various dialects of Romani and the question of influence vs convergence are beyond the scope of this paper and require further investigation.

[2] The use of Rum *să* in a conditional protasis is extremely limited in Literary Romanian and is generally dialectal.

[3] By *basic* I mean common to all the jBalkan languages.

[4] In dialectal and some colloquial Albanian, *të* can be omitted in certain contexts:

(i) *Moj, do na sjellësh gotat...?* Laço 1983:27)

        Hey, are ya gonna bring us the glasses?

This usage is not, strictly speaking, literary, however, and is nevertheless quite different from the Rumanian phenomenon, since some sort of modal marker must still be present. Unless otherwise stated, the data presented here are from the literary standards, as it would be impossible to give a complete account of dialectal variation in the space of this article. With regard to the fact that the JAlbanian subjunctive cannot stand alone, it can also be pointed out that Albanian is unique among the Balkan languages in that it has a synthetic optative, e.g., *Qofsh!* 'Let it be [so]!'
5The single slash indicates that the two words can occur separately or together; the double slash indicates that they only occur separately. It can also be noted here that some Greek dialects permit the future marker and DMS to occur together, as does Romani.

[6] The Šop dialects permit an especially wide range of occurrences of free-standing present perfectives; for further details see Maslov (1959:242).

[7] Unsubordinated perfective presents do occur in the eastern dialects, and the negator *ne* can function as a sort of subordinator permitting perfective presents even in the west, e.g., *Zošto ne sedneš?* 'Why don't you sit down?', but not *Zošto sedneš? Interrogation may also be a factor here, and in any case these examples are extremely limited, as they are in Greek (see Kramer 1983).

[8] Some dialects of Romani have developed a type of prefixal aktionsart similar to that which is found in kSlavic or German, but this does not appear to constitute a true superordinate aspectual system. It is possible that a nascent aspectual opposition is developing in southern Yugoslavia, but this process requires further investigation (see Jusuf and Kepeski 1980:114-15).

[9] The treatment of intervocalic /s/ in certain forms is a question which remains to be settled for Literary Romani. The Arlija dialects preserve it, whereas the Džambaz dialects eliminate it in, e.g., the 2 sg and 1 pl, and as a result also from the corresponding short forms.

[10] Long forms can occur with a borrowed Macedonian modal marker, *bi*, which is used to form conditionals. The precise use and meaning, however, require further investigation (see Jusuf and Kepeski 1980:120-23).

[11] There are dialects of Romani which permit the DMS with verbs of perception, but they are not among those being considered here, hence the use of square brackets for this particular case.

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