The Romani Indefinite Article in Its Historical and Areal Context

I first met Professor Norbert Boretzky at the Fourth International Seminar for Macedonian Language, Literature and Culture in Ohrid in 1971. I had just finished my first year of graduate school, and it was my first stay in Macedonia. Professor Boretzky showed me unfailing kindness during those pleasant weeks on the shores of Lake Ohrid, and I remember with pleasure our many conversations. Our paths did not cross again for many years, although I was aware of his many important works in Balkan linguistics (e.g., Boretzky 1966, 1975, 1976), and we corresponded from time to time. The First International Congress of Romani Linguistics (Hamburg, 1993) gave us a chance to meet again, and our shared interest in Romani has enabled us to meet more often. Professor Boretzky has contributed some of the most important works of modern Romani linguistics (e.g., Boretzky 1989, 1992, 1994 1995, Boretzky and Igla 1994, to name just a few). In this paper dedicated to Professor Boretzky’s honor I shall combine Balkan and Romani topics by examining a phenomenon that has not been treated as a Balkanism in any of the handbooks from Sandfeld (1930) to Demiraj (1994), but one that is nonetheless amenable to such treatment and raises the crucial question of typological versus areal linguistics, namely the rise of the use of ‘one’ as an indefinite determiner (article). I shall argue that such a development can be treated as a Balkanism in Romani and other Balkan languages.

The grammaticalization of expressions of definiteness is one of the oldest Balkanisms both in terms of possible attestation and in terms of identification as such. Thus, for example, Hamp (1982:79) concludes after careful etymological argument that the name of the ancient site of Drobeta — located on the Danube near modern Turnu Severin in northwestern Oltenia (Romania) — contains “a Latin misunderstanding or misparsing in Moesia Inferior of *druu`a tā, a definite noun phrase with postposed article.” As such, it gives “direct evidence in the Roman period of one of the most notable syntactic constructions of the Balkan Sprachbund, i.e. a specimen from the autochthonous language of the model of the Romanian postposed article which was calqued out of Latin materials.” Moreover, it constitutes “direct attestation for the common possession of this important feature linking modern Albanian with Moesia Inferior.” Similarly, Kopitar (1829:86, 106) focused particularly on the postposed definite article as the most striking example of his characterization of the linguistic territory of what today we could call Balkan Romance, Balkan Slavic, and Albanian as an area where “nur eine sprachform herrscht, aber mit dreierlei Sprachmaterie...” This is arguably the earliest formulation of the principle of areal linguistics underlying the concept of the Balkan Sprachbund. As indicated above, however, that which can be regarded as the inverse of grammaticalized definite reference, namely grammaticalized indefinite reference, has never figured in the catalogue of Balkanisms, just as Romani itself is usually excluded from the canon of Balkan languages in the various handbooks (but cf. Kostov 1973, Friedman 1985, Joseph 1983, Matras 1994a, Igla 1996, and many works by Professor Boretzky). Nonetheless, the marking of indefiniteness by means of a grammaticalized numeral ‘one’ is arguably a feature shared to varying degrees by the Balkan languages and is likewise a feature not inherited from their respective ancestral
languages, when such are attested. This characterization includes Balkan Romani and other significantly Balkanized dialects such as those belonging to the Vlax group (cf. Boretzky 1993:21, 163-203; Boretzky 1994:31,189-258; Hancock 1995:56; Igla 1996:42, 45, 252-75; Matras 1994b:44-49).

All the standard grammars of Albanian, the Balkan Romance languages, Greek, and Turkish (which, although an adstrate language, is nonetheless relevant here) describe grammaticalizations of the respective etymological numerals meaning ‘one’, often with reduced stress, as indefinite articles. In Balkan Slavic, however, this status is less readily accepted. I argued for that status of Bulgarian edin, (edna, etc.) as an indefinite article in Friedman (1976), and (Mayer 1988:121) concludes: “The fact that the use of edin is obligatory in indefinite NPs expressing specificity when the NP does not carry logical stress, at least in initial position, as well as in a non-specific use with personal names denoting members of a class means that there is an indefinite article in Bulgarian, although its range is more limited than, for example, in English.” Nonetheless, Avgustinova (1998:15) writes: “The existence of an indefinite article in Bulgarian, addressed, for example, in Friedman 1976, is still a controversial issue and a matter of on-going linguistic discussion.” As an example we can cite Bojadzhev, Kucarov, and Penčev (1998:470), who state “Ne e rešen vaprošat s t. nar. neopredelitelna člen v bǎlgarskija ezik. [...] Po naše mnenie, na tozi etap ot razvitioto na bǎlgarski ezik ne e logično da se prieme nalicjeto na neopredelitelen člen ot tipa edna kniga ‘A gentleman and a lady are asking for you’; miás filís μας τής έκλεφαν τήν τσάντα ‘They stole the handbag of a friend of ours’; Brēkame èina skýlo
These data are supplemented by Appendix Two, which contains examples from a series of readers (Matras 1996) in three dialects of Romani (in the order given in Appendix Two): Kelderash/Lovari and Gurbet (both of which belong to the Vlax group), followed by Leshaki (Northern Group).

A comparison of the relevant data in Appendix One is summarized in Table One. The languages are presented in the order given in the appendix (except that English is at the end of the table but the beginning of the appendix). An X indicates presence on an indefinite marker in the passage in question, a O indicates absence. An asterisk indicates that the indefinite item is animate, while a dagger indicates that it is the subject of the sentence. A superscript /s/ indicates identifying-specific in Avgustinova’s (1998) terminology, a superscript /g/ indicates her categorizing-generic, while lack of a superscript indicates identifying non-specific. The results are grouped by typeface: Data for languages with unambiguous indefinite article are given in bold face, those for languages with no indefinite article are plain, and those that pattern in between are italic and bold face.

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**TABLE ONE: PRESENCE OF INDEFINITE MARKER**

Despite the small size of the sample used for Table One, it is nonetheless clear that certain patterns can be seen to emerge. The absence of grammaticalized indefinite articles in all ancient languages (Latin, New Testament Greek, Old Church Slavonic) and also from the non-Balkan Slavic languages — represented here by Russian and Serbian — is clearly illustrated by the absence of such forms from all the passages except Mt 8:19, where the numeral ‘one’ is used in all the languages to mean ‘a certain’ or ‘one of the class of’. On the other hand, the patterns in Romanian, Albanian, and Turkish are almost identical to English. The absence from Mt 4:18 in Albanian and Turkish is due to different grammatical constraints that incorporate such objects into the verb either as definite objects (Albanian) or as unmarked accusatives (Turkish). The Romanian exception is the only example of a categorical-generic indefinite article in our small corpus, and in Romanian, as in Modern Greek, such usage is avoided.

The Indic and Balkan Slavic languages provide interesting patterns that are midway between the utter absence of the ancient and non-Balkan Slavic languages and the full grammaticalization of English and the non-Slavic Balkan languages. Although

στό δρόμο καὶ τὸν φέραμε σπίτι; ‘We found a dog on the street and brought him home.’; αὐτὸ τὸ κατέλει ἐναί ἐνός κυρίον ποὺ μὲνει ἐδώ ‘This hat belongs to a gentleman who lives here.’"

3 Although Sanskrit is not represented here (translations of the Bible into Sanskrit exist but were not available to me), it, too, had no indefinite article, nor did Middle Indic (Masica 1991:248). The use of unstressed etymological ‘one’ to mark indefiniteness in Neo-Indic languages of South Asia is an independent development and, unlike the situation in Romani, was not accompanied by the development of a definite article (Masica 1991:370-71).
Macedonian has the most unambiguously grammaticalized indefinite marker, as indicated above, it has the lower frequency of usage in the Balkan Slavic examples — only four occurrences out of nine: All of them are animate and specific-identifying, and it is arguable that object quality in Mk 6:27 is different from that of Jn 9:1, i.e. the act of sending involves an effect of agent on patient, whereas in seeing it is the patient that can be said to affect the agent by being seen.\(^4\) All of the Bulgarian uses in our small sample are identifying, but Avgustinova (1998) has examples of generic-categorizing as well.

When we turn to the Romani examples we find that the usage seems to reflect that of the dominant language of the country in which the translation was published. Thus the Bulgarian Arli translation (Metkov 1995) patterns exactly like the Bulgarian version, whereas the Gurbet version (Dimić 1990) published in Novi Sad is almost identical to the Serbian in its usage, the identifying-specific usage of Mt 8:5 being the only exception. Other Vlax dialectal texts, however, indicate that jekh is also used in those dialects as a true indefinite article (see Boretzky 1994:31,189-258; Hancock 1995:56; Matras 1994b:44-49, as well as Appendix Two). We can therefore discount the data from Dimić (1990) as being unduly influenced by Serbian in the same way that the Modern Greek Gospels are overly influenced by New Testament Greek. The data in appendix Two, however, show that the use of jekh as a grammatical marker of indefiniteness is much more restricted in the Northern dialects that have been spoken outside the Balkans for a longer period of time and among contact languages that do not have indefinite articles. Thus the use of jekh in Leshaki is about half of what it is in Kelderash/Lovari or Gurbet.

What then, are we to make of these data? Can it be argued that the indefinite article represents a Balkan phenomenon, or does the presence of such a grammatical category in languages of Western Europe and South Asia argue for a typological rather than an areal explanation? (Cf. Hamp 1977 on this important distinction.) It is clearly the case that the ancestral languages of Balkan Slavic, Balkan Romance, Balkan Indic (i.e. Romani), and Modern Greek did not possess indefinite articles. We cannot be sure of the ancestor of Albanian, but the possible existence of a definite article in the language of Lower Moesia (Hamp 1982) allows us at least to speculate upon the possibility that an indefinite article might also have been present. The evidence of Old Turkic (Tekin 1968:145) indicates that bir was already involved in such usage at a time when its functional equivalents were not so employed in the Balkan languages.

I would argue that, like the grammaticalization of definiteness, object reduplication, infinitive replacement, analytic comparative adjectives and futures using ‘will’, all of which are to be found in Western Europe, the rise of the indefinite article in the Balkan languages, including Balkan Romani, took place during the period when these languages were in contact with one another, and thus constitutes a Balkanism in this sense. As Topolińska (1995) notes: “Analytic markers of referentiality emerge in periods of convergent development, in conditions of creolization, while synthetic markers are instruments of linguistic divergence.” The fact that this development did not go as far in Balkan Slavic and Balkan Indic as it did in the other Balkan languages (including here Turkish) may be due to the later impetus given to this development. It should also be kept in mind that for Balkan Slavic there is the additional ideologically based discouragement of such usage (e.g. Brezinski 1968:48, see Friedman 1976 for other references) motivated both overtly by the perception that it imitates Western European languages and perhaps covertly by the fact that such usage is different from

\(^4\)This is reflected in many of the world’s languages by the use of oblique (e.g. dative or ablative) cases for the agents of verbs of perception such as seeing, hearing, and feeling.
the rest of Slavic, especially the prestigious Russian (for Bulgarian) and Serbian (for Macedonian -- at least until 1991) and resembles the surrounding non-Slavic Balkan languages. It is certainly the case that colloquial usage is greater than literary usage. (The Modern Greek New Testament is also a case in point in this regard; cf. note two.) The striking differences in various Romani dialects can be attributed to influences from other languages either through literal translation, as in the case of Dimić (1990), or later contact, as in the case of Leshaki illustrated in Appendix Two.

Although Avgustinova (1998:15) refers to “striking typological parallels” in the use of indefinite articles in the various Balkan languages, Hamp’s (1977) distinction among areal, typological, and genetic linguistics — particularly between areal and typological in this instance — is crucial in understanding these phenomena in a broader context. That the developments are convergent is undeniable. Once a genetic explanation is ruled out by evidence, as is the case with indefinite articles in the Balkan languages, convergence in the absence of contact or multilingualism must be treated as typological, but convergence in the presence of such factors has the possibility of an areal explanation. And thus I conclude that the situation of the Balkan indefinite article, including that of Romani, is comparable to that of Balkan infinitive replacement as analyzed by Joseph (1983). Joseph (1983:242-43) points out that although infinitive replacement is found in all the Balkan languages and may well constitute a Balkanism in the sense of a shared innovation due to contact, it is also the case that Albanian and Romanian have new or reinterpreted infinitival constructions. Bulgarian and Greek retain a few traces of old ones, and only Macedonian has completely eliminated the category (but cf. Čašule 1989 on the use of the verbal noun). Similarly, it can be argued that Romanian and Albanian (and Turkish) show the highest degree of grammaticalization of indefiniteness, followed by Greek. Romani, like Balkan Slavic, shows weaker but nonetheless significant degrees of grammatical marking for indefinite specificity. The fact that indefinite articles are considered more a colloquial than a literary feature in at least some Balkan languages and that their use, e.g. in Bulgarian, is overtly discouraged by normativists is another argument in favor of a contact origin, despite the occasional ideological appeal to Western European languages. And so, the use of jekh (jekhe,ek, etc.) in Balkan Romani (and other Romani dialects) as an indefinite article can be argued to represent part of a heretofore unacknowledged Balkan phenomenon, and the comparison with other Balkan languages in turn argues for the grammatical status of the phenomenon.

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Appendix One: Biblical Passages

English
Mk 6:27 And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought
Jn 9:1 And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth
Mt 4:8 Again, the Devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain
4:18 he saw two brethren ... casting a net into the sea
8:2 And behold, there came a leper and worshiped him
8:5 there came unto him a centurion
8:9 For I am a man under authority
8:19 And a certain scribe came
8:24 And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea

Romani (Arli)
Mk 6:27 Taj vednaga o thagar bičhalgjas iekes, kaske vakerjgas te anel o šero leskoro;
Jn 9:1 Taj kana zanakhelas, dikhjas iekhe kore bijando manus
Mt 4:8 Pale Les ingeljas o bang iekhe bute učeste veš,
4:18 dikhjas e due phralen .. kaj čhivenas i mrežva
8:2 Taj, ake iek prokažimo alo paš Leste
8:5 iek šelengoro baro, alo paš Leste
8:9 vi me sem manusk kas si incaripe
8:19 Taj alo iek lilvalo
8:24 Taj, ake, poate dbzida i paejneste ko cikno denizi,

Romani (Gurbet)
Mk 6:27 Athoska bičhalda thagari madaritmatres te džal thaj te anel Jovanosko šoro;
Jn 9:1 Thaj džikaj načehelas dikhla e manušes, savo sas bijadimatar koro.
Mt 4:8 Palem indjardales o beng pe vuc
4:18 dikhla duj phralen ... sar čhuden mačharendje astarde ande mora
8:2 Thaj dikh, melalo lepratar pašunisardape leske
8:5 pašunisajlo leske jekh kapetano
8:9 taj me stijam baro manuš
8:19 Thaj sar avilo lesthe jekh lilamo
8:24 Thaj dikh, baro vazdipe morijaske pajendar dija iu mora

Bulgarian
Mk 6:67 I tutaksi, provodi carţă edină orănikă, komoto zapoveda da donesaţă glavata mu;
Jn 9:1 I kato zaminavawe vid edinogō gelov'ka slep od rođenieto.
Mt 4:8 Pakg go zavoda devol'na na ednā planina mnogo visoka
4:18 vid' dvmimna brate ... qe xv/r laxa m'ra v' mooro
8:2 I eto, edină prokăenă doChde pri nego
8:5 edină stotnik doChde pri nego
8:9 i az' st'qov'kă pod' vlastă
8:19 I doChde edină kнииkă
8:24 I, eto, gol'ma burče se podigna na ezeroto

Macedonian
Mk 6:27 I vednaw, otkako isprati chelat, carot naredi da ja donesat glava negova.

Appendix Two: Biblical Passages

Russian
Mk 6:27 I totqas poslav oručenosa, car$ povelel prinesti golovu ego.
Jn 9:1 I proxode, videl geloveka slepogo ot rodenije.
Mt 4:8 Opets beret Ego diavol na ves$ma vysoku gori
4:18 On uvidel dvux bratsxu ... zadyvahix seti v more
8:2 I vot, podowel prokaenCh
8:5 k Nemu podowel stotnik
8:9 e i podvlastnChs gelovek
8:19 Togda edin kniik padowed skazal emu
8:24 I vot, sdelaos velikoe volnenie na more

Serbian
Mk 6:27 I odmah posla car dželata, i zapovijedi da doneša glavu njegovu
Jn 9:1 I prolazeći vidje čovjeka slijepa od rođenja.
Mt 4:8 Opet uze ga djavo i odveđe na gori vrlo visoku
4:18 vidje dva brata ... gdje meću mreže u more
8:2 I gle, čovjek guhav dodje
8:5 pristupi k njemu kapetan
8:9 i ja sam čovjek pod vlasti
8:19 I pristupivši jedan književnik reče mu
8:24 I gle, oluja velika postade na moru
Old Church Slavonic
Mk 6:27 i abié poslava c—r—§ vojna, povél
pritěsti glavó ego
Jn 9:1 mimo idé vid v—a slapa otër r—s—
a.
Mt 4:8 pakè požǎf gémé néprižn§ na goró
věsokô b’lo
4:18 vid d’va bratra ... v¶métu;ôwta mréa v¶
omé
8:2 i sê prokaér prištôp§ klanâ’avé émou
8:5 prištôpi k¶ námou s¶šnikf
8:9 azf q—k—¶ ëm§ podl vladékó,ô
8:19 prištôp §edínf kônšnikf
8:24 i sê trôšf veli béstf v¶ mori

Greek
Mk 6:27 Káoi èwóus ápoteleías ó Baseileús
stikeusátora, éptetoexi và énvekthína tîw kæpalîn
autôu
Jn 9:1 Káoi parágán éidèn àndropôn tûphôn ek
geneîtís
Mt 4:8 Pålín paralambânai autôn ó diábolos eîs
drós ùrhûlon âlon
4:18 éidèn b’o ùdélêfou ... bâllantas
àmuβhîstropou eîs tîn bâllasou
8:2 Káoi idóu leprós ëlthôn pôsokènîné autôw
8:5 prôsâlîkèn autôw ékastóntarçhos
8:9 cói-yâ àgy ou àndropôs eîwì úpô ëxîsían
8:19 Káoi prôsâlîw ùç γραμμâstekos ëpteîn autôw
8:24 Káoi idóu, seîmôs ìégas ëgénto en tî
bâllasou

Albanian
Mk 6:27 Mbreti menjëherë dërgoi një vrasës
dhe urdhëro t‘ ia sjellë kryet e Gjomon.
Jn 9:1 Duke kaluar rrugës pa një njeri të
verbët, që kishë lindur i verbët
Mt 4:8 Dyallì i çoi sërìsh nê një mal shumë të
lartë
4:18 pa dy vëllezër ... duke hedhur rrjetën nê
det
8:2 Dhe ja, një gërbulan iu afrua
8:5 iu paraqit një cenùron
8:9 edhe unë që nuk jam ijetër, por një njeri i
nënshtruar
8:19 Ndërkaq u afrua një skrib
8:24 Dhe ja, nê det u çua një stuihi e madhe

Romanian
Mk 6:27 A trimes îndată un otaş de pază, cu
porunca de a aduce capul lui Ioan
Jn 9:1 Cînd trecea, Isus a văzut pe un orb
din naştere
Mt 4:8 Diavolul L-a dus apoi pe un munte
foarte înaint
4:18 Isus a văzut doi fraţi ... cari aruncau o
mreajă în mare
8:2 Şi un lepros s’a apropiat de El
8:5 s’a apropiat de El un sutaş
8:9 şi eu sint om supă stăpâniare
8:19 Atunci s’a apropiat de El un cărturar
8:24 Şi deodată s’a stîrnit pe mare o furtuna
aftă de straşnică

Latin
Mk 6:27 sed misso speculatore praecepi
diferrî caput eius in disco et decollât eum in
carcere
Jn 9:1 et praetériens vidit hominem caecum a
nativitate
Mt 4:8 iterum accessit eum diabolus in montem
excessum valde
4:18 vidit duos fratres ... mitentes rete in
mare
8:2 et ecce leprosus veniens...
8:5 accessit ad eum centurio ...
8:9 et ego homo sum sub potestate
8:19 Et accedens unus scriba...
8:24 et ecce motus magnus factus est in mari

Turkish
Mk 6:27 Kîrâl hemen muhaftız askerinden
görderip onun başına getirmesini emretti
Jn 9:1 Ve geçerken anadan doğma kör bir
görü düdü
Mt 4:8 Iblis Îsâyî çok yüksek bir dağa da
gördü
4:18 iki karoşi ... denize ağatarlarken görüdü
8:2 Ve işlem bir cümzlî gelip...
8:5 bir yüzbaşı yalvararak...
8:9 ben de emir altında bir adamım
8:19 Ve bir yazıcı gelip ona;
8:24 Ve iştı, denizde büyük bir firtına oldu
Appendix Two: Comparison of Kelderash/Lovari, Gurbet, and Leshaki
(Matras 1996)

Sas pe kaj nas pe jekh baro žiganja
Sas pe kaj naj sas jekh bari životinja
Sys peske baro kirmo
‘Once uopn a time there was a big animal’
Aj učo sar jekh kher
Taj uč sar jekh čer
I huče syr jekh kher
‘And as large ( tall) as a house’
Vov sas jekh Dinoasauro.
Vov sas jekh Dinoasauro.
Vov sas jekh Dinoasauro.
Sys peske Dinoasauro.
‘It was a dinosaur.
So kere¬ Lazo?
Vov kerel j j jj eeee kkkk hhhh
So dic
vaza
So dikhes pre daja biša?  Me dikhav j j jj eeee kkkk hhhh
‘What is Lazo doing?  He is making a bridge.’
So dīčol po patreto?  Me dikhav jekh vaza.
So dīčol po slika?  Me dikhav jekh vaza.
So dīžhes pre daja biša?  Me dikhav jekh vaza.
‘What do you see in the picture?  I see a vase.’
Skiris jekh kopači?  Na, jekh raca.
Crtos jekh kaš?  Na, jekh raca.
Malines tu jekh rukh?  Na, reca.
‘Are you drawing a tree?  No, a duck’
Si e raja bange?  Kodo si pale jekh xoxamno patreto.
Si e linije banđe?  Gava si pale jekh xoxamni slika.
Sy da kreski bange.  Dava sy pale optično vizja.
‘Are the lines crooked?  It is an optical illusion.’
Me sim o Eino.  Me sim jekh Eskimo-
šavoro.
Me sem o Eino.  Me sem jekh Eskimo-
čavoro.
Me som Eino.  Me som čavoro-Eskimo
I am eino.  I am an Eskino boy.’
Me traiv andre jekh gav.  Si amen jekh kher.
Me traiv andre jekh gav.  Si amen jekh čer
Me šestno som dry gav.  Jamen sy kher.
‘I live in a village.’ ‘We have a house.’
Kada si amari lumja.  Amari lumja si jekh planeta.
Gada si amari phuv.  Amari phuv si jekh planeta.
Daja si ajmary phuv.  Jamari phuv sy jekh planeta.
‘This is our world/earth.  Our earth/world is a planet.’
Zi kaj o Marso trobuj jekh raketa te tradel duj breš.
Dži ko Marso trubul jekh raketa te tradel duj breš.

KO Marso mušyneł duj berš raketa te teadł.
‘It takes a rocket two moaprths to travel to Mars.’
Me sim jekh pajesko levo.
Me sem jekh pajesko lavo.
Me som jekh panitko lvo.
‘I am a sea lion.’
Kado si muro dad.  Les si jekh mustaca.
Kava si mno dad.  Le si mustaka.
Dava sy miro dad.  Les sy ńchorja.
‘This is my father.  He has a moustache.’
Me sīčhavavá jekh bući
Me sićiavana jekh zanato.
Me sykhlakirava man buty.
‘I learn a trade.’
E mam si ande pinca.  Voj phenel:  “Jekh šīmjako si ande pinca.  Mūri loša šaša si la jekh gropa.”
E mami si ando podrumo.  Voj phenel:
“Jekh šīmjako si ando podrumo.  Mīri loša šaša si la jekh xv.”
Grandma is in the basement.  She says:
“We have mouse in the basement.  My red bag has a hole in it.”
Me šuvav jekh phal katar e lada źi kaj e felastra.
Me thav jekh phal katar o sanduko dži ke kendžaravra,
Chuvav jekh baro phal moxtenestyr až ki dudali.
‘I put a big stick from the trunk to the window.’
Me pekvav jekh bokoli mura dejake.  Me lav jekh baro gono aro.
Me pekvav jekh koloko mre dejače.  Me lav jekh baro džako aro.
Me pekvav mre dake marykla.  Me lav jekh baro gono jao.
‘I am baking a cake for my mother.  I take a large sack of flour.’
Kadi si jekh vundžija pe jekh naj.  O naj pe jekh vast.
Godša si jekh bundia pe jekh naj.  O naj pe jekh vah.
Dava sy jekh nay pry jekh gušt.  Gušt pry jekh vast.
‘This is a nail on a finger.  The finger on a hand.’
Si kadi jekh rota?
Si li godi jekh rota?
Dava sy jekh rota?
‘Is that a circle?’