

## Change and Variation in a Trilingual Setting: Evidentiality in Pomak (Slavic, Greece)

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**Change and Variation in a Trilingual Setting:  
Evidentiality in Pomak (Slavic, Greece)**

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*Abstract:* In Pomak (Greece), we attest to the loss of a morphologically overt expression of mediate information, passing through a stage of variation (determined by syntactic, semantic, and discursive criteria). This change takes place in a trilingual setting where the main contact language (Greek) has no grammaticalized form to express mediate information, while the second contact language (Turkish), has a verbal past paradigm specialized for evidentiality. This phenomenon is analyzed within a multiple causation approach in which language contact acts as a catalyst.

Variation in language is known to be one path toward change, but little is known about the role of variation in language contact settings. Most studies seem to agree that language contact does tend to affect linguistic variables and lead to change (Matras 2007; L glise 2007). Friedman noted in the specific case of evidentiality and clitic doubling in the Balkan area that “the synchronic Balkan situation thus reflects the diachronic development from variation through to complete grammaticalization as a result of grammatical competition” (Friedman 1994a: 102), and stressed that “the grammaticalization of discourse functions tends to occur in those regions where multilingualism is most complex” (Friedman 1994a: 113). Case studies seem to be the best approach to making theoretical advances on variation in language contact settings, with a careful examination of the various factors usually involved in such a change.

This study presents data from a variety of Pomak spoken in Greece that exhibits the loss of a morphologically overt expression of mediate information over three generations and its replacement by a non-overt expression, through the perfect paradigm. In a corpus of tales and jokes (Adamou 2005) collected in a village in the Xanthi prefecture<sup>1</sup> (Greece), we observe that the older speakers use a specialized verbal form for mediate information, while the younger ones have replaced it with the perfect form. The formal difference between the two lies in the presence (for the perfect form) or absence (for the mediate information form) of the auxiliary, which is also the typical expression of mediate information in the other South Slavic languages (section 1.3). Thus the older speakers say:

- (1) *na'an'iš im'a-l-o sf'adba*  
once have-MED-3SG.N marriage  
“Once upon a time there was (-AUX) a marriage...”

(Adamou 2008: M70/ Pmk, Ell, Tur)

The younger ones instead use the perfect form with the auxiliary “be,” even in the stereotypical introductory formula:

- (2) *najan'uš je im'a-l-o jan'o aiš'e*  
once AUX(be).3SG have-APTCP-N one Aishe  
| \_\_\_\_\_ PRF \_\_\_\_\_ |  
“Once upon a time there was (+AUX) an Aishe...”

(Adamou 2008: F7/ Pmk, Ell)

This change passes through a short variation stage between the old specialized form of mediate information and the perfect form, as observed in the tales published in Kokkas (2004b). Variation is therefore age-related (concerning speakers aged 30 to 40) and is determined by a limited number of syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic criteria described in detail in section 3.3.

This grammatical change is taking place in an increasingly trilingual setting, in which Greek and Turkish are the prestige languages, but unlike in other Pomak villages no shift to Turkish is observed. The main contact language is Greek (see section 4.3), a language with no equivalent category in its verbal system, and which could thus act as a catalyst for this change. The influence of Greek has indeed been decisive on this point in other Slavic languages spoken by Christian communities who shifted to Greek during the twentieth century (Adamou 2008). Turkish, by contrast, has a very dynamic marker for evidentiality, namely *-miş*. We would expect a conceptual influence from Turkish here, but it seems that in the actual contact setting, and given the absence of a direct structural equivalence with the Pomak marking, Turkish evidentiality is not a sufficiently important influence to block the grammatical change taking place in Pomak.

Even though language contact is an important factor to take into consideration, the change observed in Pomak is better understood through a multiple causation approach (Matras 2007; Thomason 2007; Chamoreau and Goury 2010). Loss of an overt expression of mediate

information is clearly determined by the loss of oral tradition and the absence of any standardization practices. Systemic factors, such as the specialization of the expression within this register and its absence from other discursive contexts, contribute to its loss. We should also stress the fact that the fictional narrative frame is expressed in Pomak by other means, such as the use of specific temporal subordinators (which have other discursive uses as well), thus minimizing the role of a specialized verbal form for expressing mediate information (see section 4.2).

## 1. Evidentiality

### 1.1. Terminology

The term *evidentiality* has various definitions; a strict definition refers to the source of information (Willett 1988; Aikhenvald 2004), while a broader approach also considers the truth-value of an utterance and its mirative meaning as part of the evidential (Chafe and Nichols 1986). According to Guentchéva (2002), the two fundamental meanings are inferential and reportive.

*Evidentiality* can be expressed by various means cross-linguistically, that is, by grammatical, syntactic, or lexical devices, or even prosody. However, most researchers make a distinction between a specialized marker whose primary meaning is evidentiality and optional markers in which evidentiality is a secondary meaning arising in the discourse. Thus, Aikhenvald (2004) employs *evidentiality* strictly for grammatical categories and *evidentiality strategies* for optional expressions in which the evidential is one meaning among others. This is an important distinction for understanding the change that is taking place in Pomak, moving from evidentiality to an evidentiality strategy.

*Mediate information* is one of the members of the larger category of evidentials. First used by Gilbert Lazard, the term *médiatif* has been used by Zlatka Guentchéva to describe a way for a speaker to report events in a mediate way, without specifying the source or the truth of the statement (Guentchéva 1996; Guentchéva and Landaburu 2007). A substantial literature exists on this topic in Slavic studies, using the term *renarrative* (see Guentchéva 1996 and Friedman 2002a for an epistemological review of this literature).

### 1.2. Evidentials in contact settings

Evidentiality appears to be a category affected by language contact, but more studies are needed in order to generalize this assertion. Empirical data show that evidentiality is acquired

through language contact: this is the case among others for Megleno-Romanian and Arumanian in contact with Albanian (Atanasov 1990; Friedman 1994b), some Romani dialects in contact with Bulgarian (Kostov 1973), Judeo-Spanish in contact with Turkish (Varol 2002), and Spanish in contact with Quechua (Klee and Ocampo 1995), while the Turkish influence on Bulgarian, traditionally considered to be a trigger, is now mostly considered to be a catalyst (see among others, Friedman 1978; Fielder 2000).

Loss of an overt expression of mediate information might also prove to be a frequent phenomenon in language contact settings; another recently documented case is Ixcatec (Costaouec and Swanton 2008), an Otomanguean language, where a shift to Spanish is observed.

### 1.3. Mediate information in the South Slavic languages

In South Slavic, the grammatical form that in some cases has developed mediate information as a primary or secondary meaning is the perfect [“be”+resultative participle in -l].

More precisely, in Literary Macedonian, the perfect [“be”+resultative participle in -l] has an evidential meaning (Friedman 2004). The auxiliary is never used in the third person singular in Literary Macedonian and in the dialects of Occidental Macedonian, west of the Vardar-Crna isogloss (Vidoeski [1996] 2005). Friedman, following Aronson (1967), uses the term *status* (expression of the speaker’s subjective evaluation of the event) and analyzes Literary Macedonian in terms of the speaker’s *engagement* relative to the *truth* and not the *source* of information, as illustrated by the following examples:

(3) Zuza: Blaže bil vo Moskva  
MKD Blaže was.PI in Moscow

Zuza: “Blaže was in Moscow.”

Kosta: Da, beše  
yes he.was.PD

Kosta: “Yes, [I know] he was.”

(Friedman 2004: 105 pace Lunt 1952)

In the first statement, the speaker who was not present himself uses the “mediative” form, while in the second, even though the speaker was not present either, the information is considered to be certain.

In the Bitola-Resen region, the *-l* forms are never employed for evidentiality, but according to Friedman (1988) they are employed for meanings of *taxis*; their use is weakened and the aorist seems to become dominant. In some Slavic varieties in northwestern Greece, the *-l* verbal forms have disappeared, and no other grammatical category seems to be specialized for the expression of mediate information: Vaillant and Mazon (1938) documented the gradual loss of those forms for Sohos (Grk)/Suho; Friedman (1977) and Topolińska (1995) noted the rare uses of those forms in Kastoria (Grk)/Kostur folktales; more recently, Adamou (2006) reports their absence in Liti (Grk)/Aivati and the use of the aorist and imperfect for the tales.

Literary Bulgarian is traditionally analyzed as a language that opposes mediate information to direct information, as shown in the following examples:

- (4) *Toj kaza, če Ivan spi*  
BUL he said(AOR) that Ivan sleep (PRES)  
“He said that Ivan is sleeping.”

(Guentchéva 1996: 54)

- (5) *Toj kaza, če Ivan spjal*  
BUL he said(AOR) that Ivan sleep.L (IMPF)  
“He said that Ivan is supposed to be sleeping.”

(Guentchéva 1996: 54)

According to Guentchéva, in both examples the speaker indicates that he has been given the information by someone else (expressed explicitly by *he said*) but only in (5) does he indicate a distance toward this information, analyzed by Guentchéva as *mediate speech*.

Fielder (2002) and Friedman (2002a, 2004) distinguish between the Occidental Bulgarian dialects, which use a grammaticalized form to express mediate information, and the Oriental Bulgarian dialects, which oppose the absence and the presence of the auxiliary in the third person on a pragmatic basis: absence of the auxiliary indicates *foregrounded information*, whereas presence of the auxiliary indicates *backgrounded information* (close to the unmarked past). The following example, taken from a fictional narrative, illustrates this use:

(6) *imalo e edin pop, i go oženil*  
BUL had.PI AUX.3SG one priest and him married.PI

“There was a priest, and he married him (to her).”

(Friedman 2004)

The analysis proposed by Fielder and Friedman, however controversial it might be to some authors, is extremely interesting for our study because it points out another case of variation between +AUX/-AUX forms, even though the *foregrounded/backgrounded* analysis does not seem to apply to the Pomak variety described in this paper.

## 2. Pomak (Xanthi prefecture, Greece)

The Balkan Sprachbund has long been at the center of studies on language contact, and its interest continues to be confirmed by new data on contact-induced changes. The Balkans had a long multilingual tradition during the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, with results that were still attested in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century when the first works on the Balkan Sprachbund started to appear. Since then, the modern Balkan states have developed a general education system based on a monolingual, standardized model, and therefore many oral tradition languages (usually named *dialects*) have disappeared or are disappearing in favor of the standardized languages, whether they belong to the same family or not.

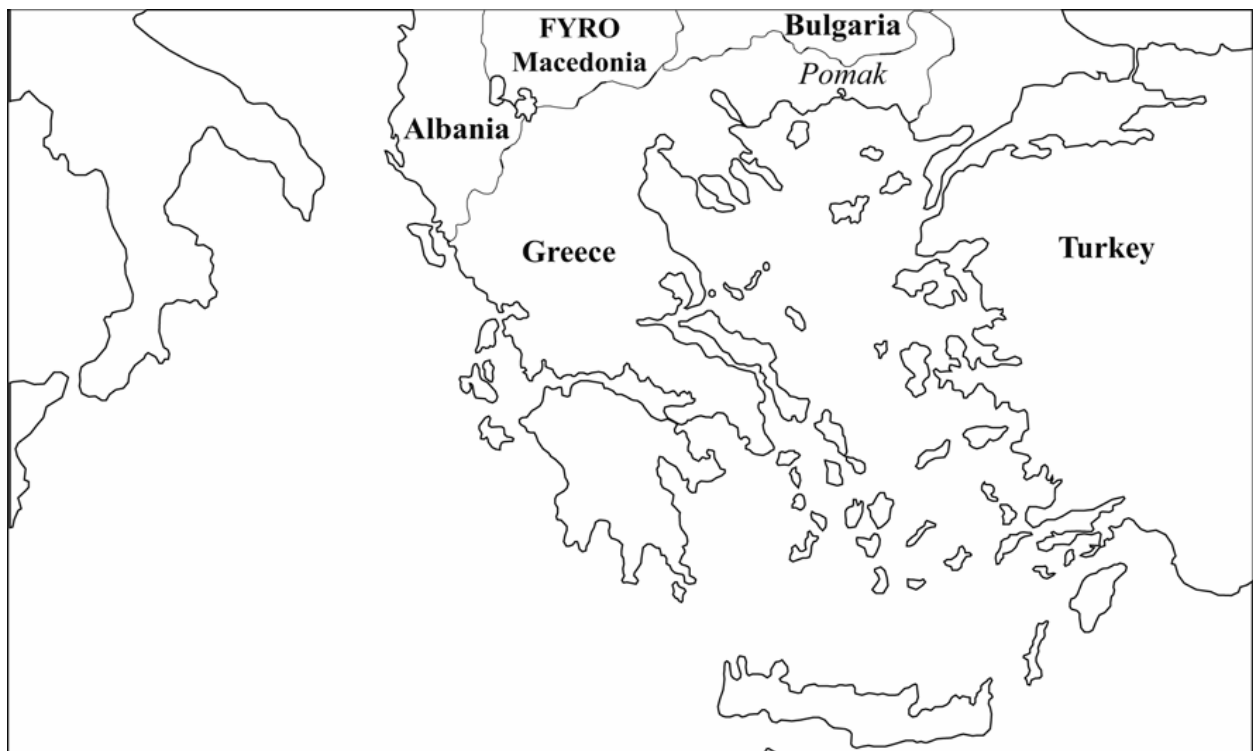
For the Slavic Pomak vernaculars spoken in Greece, language transmission remained uninterrupted until very recently, and then only in some of the villages. The vernaculars under study in this paper are still transmitted but, especially in the second part of the twentieth century, have had increasing contact with the state’s official language, Greek, while also pursuing their traditional contact with the Muslim minority’s language, Turkish, thus producing a particularly interesting trilingual setting (Adamou 2010). The Pomak vernaculars as spoken in Greece are practically undescribed in terms of modern linguistics, mainly because they have been the subject of a complex political debate about their speakers’ identity. However, dictionaries, grammars, and learning methods of the Xanthi prefecture Pomak language varieties have been published in the last few years, by or in collaboration with Pomak speakers.

*Pom’atsko* or “Pomak” is the name used for the South Slavic vernacular spoken by Muslim inhabitants of the Rhodope Mountains in Greece (many of whom have recently migrated to

other cities or countries). Pomak is generally described as the most conservative language within the South Slavic group: like other peripheral Balkan Slavic languages it has preserved a case system, contrary to most Bulgarian and Macedonian dialects, which have developed an analytical system for those functions. .

This special development has to do with the Pomaks' traditional mountainous homeland, their semi-sedentary pastoralism (transhumant migration between summer pasture settlements and wintering in the villages), as well as their Muslim religion, which restricted contact with Christian Slavs. In the twentieth century, Pomak has had a development distinct from the closely related varieties spoken by Muslims in the Rhodope Mountains in Bulgaria. Greek Pomaks have had no contact with Literary Bulgarian during the twentieth century (except for the few years of the Bulgarian Occupation during the Second World War when Bulgarian was taught in local schools) and no influence from standardization practices, unlike the speakers of the Bulgarian varieties (for the Rhodopean dialects' development under the influence of Standard Bulgarian see Kanevska-Nikolova 2001). The situation of the latter speakers is quite different, since Bulgaria has joined the European Union and communication networks with Slavic speakers from Bulgaria have been reactivated (both with Muslims and Christians, this distinction being important because of the dialectal background and the contact languages).

Map: *The traditional Pomak-speaking area in Greece*





### 3. From an overt to a non-overt expression of mediate information through variation: evidence from Pomak

The analysis of all the available material shows the progressive loss of an overt expression of mediate information in the Pomak varieties in the Xanthi area. The stages observed go from a generalized use of a specialized verbal form (V-I with no auxiliary) to a less frequent use, and then through a short variation stage to end up with the exclusive use of the perfect paradigm.

#### 3.1. Generalized use of the V-I without auxiliary

The oldest folktales available for the varieties of Pomak of the Xanthi area were transcribed in the late 1960s, mainly by speakers between 15 and 30 years old, and published in 1995 by Theoharidis.<sup>2</sup> The speakers' direct involvement in the folktales' transcription should be taken to guarantee that no transcribers' errors have been introduced with respect to the presence or absence of the auxiliary, which is sometimes difficult to tell in rapid speech (see section 3.2). Theoharidis' corpus is highly heterogeneous. It includes some texts with practically no use of "be" auxiliaries, others where both forms coexist (with or without the auxiliary), and finally some that lack these forms completely (aorist, imperfect, or present are used in those cases). However, the folktales with a majority use of no-auxiliary verbs are extremely precious resources for studying the language from a historical perspective, since at the present time they are the only texts that indicate the use of a marked expression of mediate information. These expressions are attested in the tales, but unfortunately we have no data showing whether they were also used in other contexts, as is the case in Bulgarian and Macedonian.

(NB: Theoharidis' transcriptions use the Greek alphabet; for practical reasons we have used the Latin alphabet but kept the author's segmentation).

- (7) *Sléla vasiliátskono mómo vídela stárkono agá plákala popútovajo óti plátses.*  
*Niakofojo máika reklála keltsetúne májka mu. Oti slála momána reklála ubájkuji.*  
"The king's daughter came down (-AUX), saw (-AUX) the old woman crying (-AUX), asked her 'Why do you cry?' 'Nothing' said (-AUX) the mother, Keltse's mother. The daughter left (-AUX) and told (-AUX) her father."

(Theoharidis 1995: t. 6;

long tale about a kind but poor young man  
who is rewarded with a magic ring  
and marries the king's daughter)

- (8) *I xódi faj ennók tsúzda memlekéte pánova tiuxaréna óti xi so krátíl venzínion i ne imél parí da kúpi xódi faj ennók zijión prodáva mióso itám da ráboti. Agá da xáda nanóss vasiliáskana móma da zíma mióso iso zagólila.*

“[The king’s child] flies to a foreign country with this airplane. Because he was left out (-AUX) of gas and he didn’t have (-AUX) the money to buy some, he goes to a butcher shop in order to get some work. One day, when the king’s daughter came by to get some meat, he fell in love (-AUX) with her.”

(Theoharidis 1995: t. 3;

tale about the invention of the first airplane)

- (9) *Itám sédelo nákvi xaidúte. I mómana xódi zamísa i zímasi málko lepa. Isémlaxin xódiot xaidúteno da jiedót jioštávet ne zaméteno. Mómana pak xódi zamíta. Agá doslúle zaidúteno vídeli pak zaméteno i to reklíle sasó zakrepíme da vídime katró mi meté i tsísti.*

“ ... Over there lived (-AUX) some thieves. The girl went there, cleaned the house and took some bread. At night, the thieves came back to eat and left without cleaning. The girl went back once more and cleaned [the house]. When the thieves came back (-AUX), they saw (-AUX) once more that the house was clean. And they said (-AUX): why won’t we hide and see who cleans up?”

(Theoharidis 1995: t. 4;

variation on Grimm’s *Snow White and the seven dwarfs*)

We can imagine that the young speaker who produced those tales most probably had verified them with the elders before transcribing them for Theoharidis, who was the schoolteacher at the time. This takes us back to a generation for whom we have no data, and thus we can only form the hypothesis that a marked form expressing mediate information was still in use.

Moreover, the texts that show a variation between the two forms allow us to date the variation back to the 1960s and recognize its rapid progression in relation to the increasing language contact. As Matras (2007) and Léglise (2007) point out, language contact affects those grammatical structures that show instability, and in that sense language contact may be a factor related to the brief variation stage observed.

### 3.2. Important use of *V-l* without auxiliary

The tales and jokes collected by Adamou in 2005 among speakers then in their sixties exhibit a majority of no-auxiliary forms. The aorist and narrative present are also used to report events, and the perfect (verb in *-l* with auxiliary) and future are used in various characters' speech. As Friedman points out, variety in the use of verbal categories aims "to achieve stylistic and narrative effects such as shifts in perspective, the creation of tension, the signalling of a climax, etc." (Friedman 2002: 496; see also Mushin 2001 for the use of language in fictional narratives).

Given the homophony between various units and the auxiliary "be," as a methodological precaution the most unambiguous contexts were isolated. There is indeed homophony between the third singular of the auxiliary "be" [je] and the feminine direct object [je], both preceding the verb in the middle of an utterance and following it at the absolute beginning of an utterance. An example of a direct feminine object use is *da je izadu'ot*, "so that they'll eat her." In the local Pomak variety, homophony also exists between third plural auxiliary "be" [sa] and the reflexive marker, also pronounced [sa] in this village. An example of the use of the reflexive is *sa kanu'osvam*, "I'm doing (myself) henna."

Here are some clear uses of the no-auxiliary forms. They occur in the introductory formula with existential uses of "have," frequently with movement verbs and rarely with state verbs:

(10)	<i>dr'ugo</i>	<i>pak</i>	<i>im'a-l-u</i>			/
	other	PART	have-MED-3SG.N			
	<i>sir'ak /</i>	<i>in'o</i>	<i>biz</i>	<i>m'ajka/</i>	<i>in'o</i>	<i>im'a-l-u /</i>
	orphan	one	without	mother	one	have-MED-3SG.N
	<i>i</i>	<i>dr'ugo</i>	<i>im'a-l-u</i>	<i>pak /</i>	<i>sas</i>	<i>m'ajka</i>
	and	other	have-MED-3SG.N	PART	with	mother

"So, there was (-AUX) another orphan, without a mother, there was (-AUX) one, and then there was (-AUX) another one with a mother."

(Adamou 2008: F66/ Pmk, notions Ell and Tur;  
variation on the "wicked stepmother" theme)

- (11) *ud al'ah-a id'in v'atar izl'a-l-Ø*  
 From God-ACC one wind came.out-MED-3SG.M  
 “A wind (sent) from God blew (-AUX).”

(Adamou 2008: F66/ Pmk, notions Ell and Tur)

- (12) *ag'a utišl'a-l-a put jed'in dr'an /*  
 when go-MED-3SG.F under one dogwood.tree  
  
*puk'atši-l-a sa ta natr'osi-l-a dr'an ki*  
 get.up-MED-3SG.F REFL and shake-MED-3SG.F cherries  
  
*i šl'a-l-a da gi zb'ira-Ø f ust'a-na*  
 and get.down-MED-3SG.F to 3PL.ACC gather-3SG in mouth-DEF.DIST  
  
*ais'i / f ust'a-na da gi zb'ira-Ø /*  
 this.way in mouth-DEF.DIST to P3PL.ACC gather-3SG  
  
*da gi nu'ose-Ø d'et'i-ne-m da gi jadu'o-t*  
 to 3PL.ACC bring-3SG children-DEF.DIST- to 3PL.ACC eat-3PL  
 DAT/GEN

“When she went (-AUX) under the dogwood tree, she got up (-AUX) and shook (-AUX) the cherries and came down (-AUX) so as to gather them in her mouth, like that, so as to take them in the mouth, in order to bring them to her children so as to eat them.”

(Adamou 2008: F 66/ Pmk, notions Ell and Tur;  
 tale on the importance of moral values and religion)

- (13) *ag'a utišl'i-l-i po udvu'ode sr'ešta-l-e m'ajka mu /*  
 when go-MED- more out meet-MED-3PL mother POSS3SG.M  
 3PL  
  
*varv'i-Ø m'ajka mu / ne umrj'a-l-a m'ajka mu*  
 pass.by-AOR- mother POSS3SG.M NEG die-MED- mother POSS3SG.M  
 3SG 3SG.F

‘When they went (-AUX) a little further, they met (-AUX) his mother. His mother passed by! Wasn’t she dead his mother (-AUX)!’

(Adamou 2008: M70/ Pmk, Ell, Tur;  
from Nasreddin Hodja stories)

My research shows the absence of no-auxiliary verbal forms in other contexts, even when information is based on hearsay. Folktales and songs are indeed the last registers where marked ways of expressing mediate information can occur.

### 3.3. *Variation between V-I with and without auxiliary*

The corpus of folktales published by Kokkas was mainly collected among speakers in their thirties (personal communication), from several villages in the Xanthi prefecture (Glafki, Miki, Aimonio, Dimario). This corpus exhibits variation in the presence or absence of the “be” auxiliary. An analysis of this variation shows the relevance of syntactic, semantic, and discursive factors. Even though those contexts are easily understood individually, at this point in the study I have not been able to find a general explanation relating them to one another. (NB: We use Kokkas’s orthographic transcriptions).

#### 3.3.1. *Existential “have” in the introductory formula*

No-auxiliary forms are generally found with the existential “have” verb, as well as in the introductory tales’ formulas. This is a possible conservatism that often affects the stereotypical introductory formulas cross-linguistically.

- (14) *na stárite godínī iméla faf ennó séla ennó kópele yétse kámatna*  
“In the old times there was (-AUX) in one village a very pretty girl.”

(Kokkas 2004: t. 26)

#### 3.3.2. *Verb repetition with intensive/durative value*

Whenever there is a repetition of a verb with an intensive/durative value, the second verb appears without the auxiliary, as is quite often the case cross-linguistically, as in English and French.

- (15) *i Nasradín sa ye chûdil, chûdil, kak da stóri*  
“And Nasreddin was thinking (+AUX), thinking (-AUX) how to do.”

(Kokkas 2004: t. 32)

(16) *pak sa yétse balnéli insánas. Balnéli yétse.*

“Then people became really ill (+AUX), became really ill (-AUX).”

(Kokkas 2004: t. 32)

In some cases neither verb of the series will take an auxiliary.

(17) *ravál kólkuna ravál*

“He was digging (-AUX) while he was digging (-AUX) ...”

(Kokkas 2004: t. 28)

This stylistic effect is also common in the songs, where cases of no-auxiliary verbs occur:

(18) *varvéli kólku varvéli*

“They were walking, kept on walking...”

(Rogo 2002: songs 77, 81)

### 3.3.3. Modals/inchoatives + *da* + indicative *V*

This use is very common and occurs in the tales of all the villages presented in the volume.

Modals and inchoatives followed by *da+V indicative* take no auxiliary.

(19) *i zéli da sa rádat*

“...and they began (-AUX) to be born...”

(Kokkas 2004: t. 24)

(20) *zafáteli da kopót*

“...and they started (-AUX) to dig...”

(Kokkas 2004: t. 29)

(21) *ne dával insánamne da hódet*

“...he wouldn't let (-AUX) the people go...”

(Kokkas 2004: t. 24)

- (22) *ne mógal da gi pasé*  
“...he couldn't (-AUX) pasture them...”

(Kokkas 2004: t. 30)

### 3.3.4. Coordination

When two verbs are coordinated, the second verb sometimes appears without an auxiliary, as is possible in many languages. This use varies among the speakers and villages.

- (23) *zató go sa sélana dragóvali i rúkali* “*Alláhof chülák*’  
“This is why the village people liked (+AUX) him and called (-AUX) him ‘God’s man’.”

(Kokkas 2004, c. 28)

- (24) *vrítsi so go ablúbeli i apklúcheli sas gulâmo drágo*  
“Everybody kissed (+AUX) him and hugged (-AUX) him with a lot of love.”

(tale 2006)

### 3.3.5. Other cases

In some rare cases, we observe no-auxiliary verbs where none of the factors mentioned above are relevant. These are mainly movement or action verbs (go, come, come back, take, etc.), but this is not a universal factor.

- (25) *dashlóla tshörna pilentse*  
*na dzümajiófskone džéma*  
*dashlólo haskír da s písovo*  
“A black bird came (-AUX), at the mosque window; it came (-AUX) to engage (young men) to the army.”

(Rogo 2002: song 97)

### 3.4. V-I with auxiliary, no verbs without auxiliary

The oral corpus of the younger speakers (corpus Adamou 2005) shows exclusive use of auxiliary forms, including the contexts where no-auxiliary forms appeared in the intermediate generation’s tales, as for example in the *da* constructions:

- (26) *xi sa ne d'ava-l-e da izl'eža nav'on*  
 3SG.F. AUX(=be).3PL NEG give-APTCP-PL to go.out-3SG outside  
 ACC

| \_\_\_\_\_ PRF \_\_\_\_\_ |

“They didn’t let (+AUX) her get out.”

(Adamou 2008: F 8/ Pmk, Ell)

The auxiliary is also used in the most stereotypical parts, such as the introductory formulas, while no-auxiliary use is maintained in the intermediate generation:

- (27) *najamnu'oš je im'a-l-o en'o mahm'uče /*  
 once AUX(=be).3SG have-APTCP-N one Mahmut.DIM

| \_\_\_\_\_ PRF \_\_\_\_\_ |

- i ne je im'a-l-o n'ikakna da jad'e-Ø*  
 and NEG AUX(=be).3SG have-APTCP-N nothing to eat-3SG

| \_\_\_\_\_ PRF \_\_\_\_\_ |

- i to je utišl'o-l-o na j'abalka-na*  
 and 3SG.N AUX(=be).3SG go-APTCP-N to apple.tree- DEF.DIST

| \_\_\_\_\_ PRF \_\_\_\_\_ |

“Once upon a time there was (+AUX) a little Mahmut, he didn’t have (+AUX) anything to eat and he went (+AUX) to an apple-tree...”

(Adamou 2008: F 10/ Pmk, Ell)

The young speakers clearly reinterpret the verbal forms without the auxiliary used by the older speakers in the tales. Based on the formal proximity between the two verbal paradigms in *-l*, they generalize the ones that are used in other discursive contexts as well, namely the verbal forms with auxiliary.

Given that the speakers could have used the aorist (as is the case in other Pomak tales), we believe that the use of the perfect keeps a trace of the expression of *mediate information* that characterizes the fictional narrative register. Nevertheless, the use of the perfect form to express mediate information is better analyzed as a *pragmatically mediate marker*



(*énonciation médiatisée* in Guentchéva 1996) or an *evidentiality strategy* (Aikhenvald 2004). In fact, those forms are used to express other perfect meanings: anterior, resultative, and experiential.

Table 1: *The stages of mediate information change in Pomak*

1a. Texts with a constant use of marked mediate information (Corpus 1960)
1b. Texts with variation (Corpus 1960)
2. High frequency of no-auxiliary verbs: 70-year-old speakers (Corpus 2005)
3. Variation between auxiliary and non-auxiliary verb forms: introductive formula, repetition with intensive/durative value, inchoatives/modals+ <i>da+V indicative</i> , coordination (30-40-year-old speakers, Corpus 2000-2005)
4. Exclusive use of the perfect paradigm (unmarked) (7-14-year-old speakers, Corpus 2005)

#### 4. A multiple causation analysis

In order to understand the change in the methods used for the fictional narratives in Pomak, a multiple causation approach is more appropriate (Chamoreau and Goury 2010). Such an approach combines sociolinguistic factors (loss of oral tradition), systemic factors (various methods expressing similar values and their vitality), and of course language contact factors, through both the general sociolinguistic context and the systemic and pragmatic equivalences between the languages involved.

##### 4.1. Sociolinguistic factors: oral tradition loss

The oral tradition loss is an obvious factor related to the loss of the grammatical forms specialized in fictional narratives. The folktales were traditionally narrated in late afternoon reunions, often combined with collective work. Those “working sessions” were frequently organized and were named *mezje* or *poprjelka* depending on the villages. Pomaks recall singing and storytelling sessions during those reunions. In spite of the active social life in today’s villages, those reunions are not very common and the tales’ stylistic register is not

transmitted to the youngest inhabitants any longer. The grandparents are still in charge of storytelling, but as our study shows, the mediate information marked forms of the older people are reinterpreted as perfect forms by the children (in our study they were aged from 7 to 14). Pomak is not taught in schools and no other prescriptive sources exist that would preserve the tales' linguistic norms.

The speakers who recall and agree to transmit a folktale, or one of Nasreddin Hodja's famous stories, can be described as "storytellers": although it is not an explicit status in the community, people who have this "gift" are recognized. Those speakers are particularly attentive to stylistic effects and to linguistic specificities of the oral tradition, such as mediate information, which may also explain the preservation of the traditional forms by the 30-year-old generation.

We can propose the hypothesis that if the folktales were told more frequently then the younger speakers would have preserved their specific properties. Listening to the recordings of the tales, a 14-year-old and a 30-year-old speaker do not appear to notice the absence of the auxiliary. When I pointed out this use, after a first rejection of this form the 30-year-old speaker observed that "the older speakers sometimes use those verbal forms." The younger speaker did not seem aware of this use, but eventually noticed it when listening more carefully to the recordings.

#### *4.2. Internal factors: the temporal subordinators indicating the tale's sphere*

A specialized verbal form expressing mediated information in the tales has relatively little functional rendering, given that Pomak1 has other means to delimit the fictional narrative frame, namely the temporal subordinators formed with deictic suffixes (Adamou in press). This is a characteristic that is unknown in other Slavic languages, not found in Bulgarian or Macedonian (some uses probably exist in the Bulgarian Rhodopean dialects, but their organization has not yet been described).

The Pomak1 system is firmly organized around the "here and now" space and time, through the use of deictic suffixes for the nouns, adjectives, demonstratives, quantifiers, and relatives and also, in a slightly different way, the temporal subordinators.

For "here and now" situations, the entities considered as being part of the speaker's sphere receive the *-s-* suffix, while the *-t-* suffix is used for the addressee's sphere and the *-n-* suffix for the distal sphere.

When the entities are situated in a different space and time, but have a relation to the situation of the utterance (Sit0), the *-t-* suffix is used for the past, while the *-n-* suffix is used for entities

in all non-past situations. The *-n-* suffix is also used for entities in tales (see examples 12 and 27), where no relation exists between the situation of the utterance (Sit0) and the situation of the process (Sit2).

For temporal subordinators, the presence of a deictic suffix indicates that the utterance is anchored to the speech situation, while the choice of deictic suffix indicates the relation between the event-time and the speech situation (*ag'a-no* “when, whenever,” *ag'a-to* “when”).

It is interesting to note that for the temporal subordinators, the “elsewhere” space and time, indicating a break between the situation of the utterance (Sit0) and the situation of the process (Sit2), is expressed through the absence of the deictic suffix (*aga*) (see Adamou in press). The subordinator *aga*, with no anchoring to the utterance moment, is practically the exclusive form in folktales:

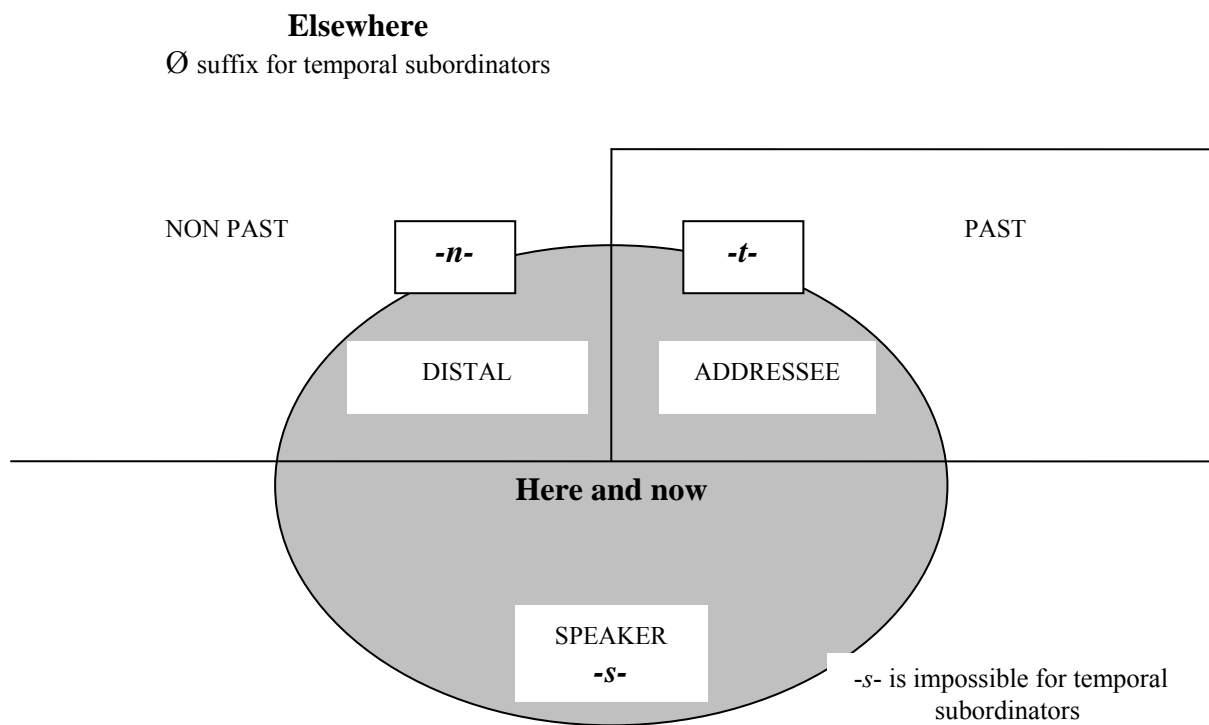
(28) *ag'a sa v'orna-l-i dve gud'ini s'etne ut alam'anie*  
when REFL return-MED-3PL two years after from Germany

*utišl'i-l-i da plat'ə-t jaits'a-na*  
go-MED-3PL to pay-3PL eggs-DEF.DIST

“When they returned two years later from Germany, they went to pay for the eggs.”

(Adamou 2008: M70/ Pmk, Ell, Tur)

Figure 1: *The Pomak1 deictic suffixes in nouns, adjectives, demonstratives, quantifiers, relatives, and temporal subordinators*



Unlike the specialized verbal forms for evidentiality, the temporal subordinator *aga* is still commonly used among younger speakers and its use is not under threat. *Aga* is not used exclusively in the tales but also in other discursive contexts, which probably contributes to its retention. For example, it occurs in the case of events that the speaker has not experienced, as in the following example, which the informant had not experienced but repeated in a questionnaire during my research:

- (29) *ag'a be dušl'a-l-a n'iki*  
 when AUX(be).AOR.3SG come-APTCP-F Niki  
 | \_\_\_\_\_ P.PRF \_\_\_\_\_ |  
*j'a-l-a b'e-še pa yot'o sas mer'enda*  
 eat-APTCP-F AUX(be)-IPFV.2/3SG ice-cream with Merenda  
 | \_ P.PRF.IPFV \_ |

“When Niki had come, she had been eating an ice-cream with merenda.”

(Adamou in press: F30/ Pmk, Ell, Tur)

*Aga* is also used for future events with a strong hypothetical value:

(30)      *ag'a*    *n'arasta-m*                      *'išta-m*                      *da*    *st'ana-m*                      *dokt'or*  
         when grow.up-1SG                      want-1SG                      to    become-1SG                      doctor  
         “When I will grow up, I want to be a doctor.”

(Adamou in press: F7/ Pmk, Ell)

### 4.3. Language contact factors

#### 4.3.1. The trilingual setting

In a macro-linguistic perspective one can note that the passage from a marked to an unmarked mediate information expression in Pomak is parallel to the generalization of trilingualism (Greek and Turkish), affecting not only the society and its institutions as a whole but also individual trilingualism. The question that then arises is whether and to what extent this change is also determined by language contact.

It was possible even during my research to meet old women who were monolingual, and most of the Pomak women over 50 only have basic communication skills in Greek and Turkish (see Adamou and Drettas 2008). Traditionally, few women attended school and until very recently they only received primary education. Moreover, women did not usually have working activities outside the village, nor did they have any sustained contacts outside the Pomak-speaking area (for instance, they would rarely go to the Xanthi market). For men, the situation has been different, because of military service (obligatory in Greece until recently for a period of two years) or for employment reasons, and of course given their better access to education, either public (in Turkish and Greek) or religious (Koranic school, involving Turkish and Koranic Arabic).

In this area of the Rhodope Mountains no shift is observed, unlike other areas where a shift to Turkish is generalized: young women aged 20 and below in those areas have Turkish as a first language and Greek as a second. Turkish and Greek are the languages of primary education, but many children attend a Greek-speaking primary school in the town of Xanthi or in other Greek cities.<sup>3</sup> Greek is not only the state institutional language but also the language of the

local high school that most of the young people of the area attend. In this area Greek television and Greek music are as common, if not more common, than the Turkish equivalents. Turkish is an important communication language for the traditional market, *bazaar*, in the town of Xanthi and on other occasions when contact with other Pomak or Turkish communities takes place (marriages, etc.). It is also the language of communication with relatives living in Turkey or in Germany when they visit their families in the village; most often those families have shifted to Turkish and thus the children are either monolingual or bilingual with German.

Contact with speakers of Bulgarian has recently been accentuated in the area, with the frequent visits of itinerant merchants or seasonal workers. In many cases those speakers come from the Bulgarian Rhodope Mountains and so share the same contact language (Turkish) as well as a common dialectal background,<sup>4</sup> making communication possible but at the same time accentuating the speakers' desire for individuation.

Here are the “typical” profiles of five female speakers<sup>5</sup> from local wealthy-elite families in the Xanthi area:

Table 2: *Transgenerational sociolinguistic profiles of female Pomak speakers in a village in the Xanthi prefecture*

Speaker	Languages	Education	Mobility
F, 80	Pomak		
F, 55	Pomak: First language Turkish, Greek: Basic communication skills	Koranic school (Turkish, Arabic)	
F, 33	Pomak: First language Turkish, Greek: Good communication skills	Primary school (Turkish, Greek) Koranic school (Turkish, Arabic)	Sometimes visits the nearest town's market (Xanthi) Rarely other Greek towns
F, 14	Pomak: First language Greek: Fluent	Primary school (Turkish, Greek) Ongoing high	Frequent visits to the nearest town, Xanthi Rarely other Greek

	(code-switching)	school (Greek)	towns
	Turkish: Fluent	Koranic school	Trilingual social
	English: Few hours in school	(Turkish, Arabic)	network
F, 7	Pomak: First language	Ongoing primary school (Greek)	Living in Xanthi; frequent visits to the
	Greek: Fluent	Koranic school	village
	Turkish: Koranic school	(Turkish, Arabic)	Bilingual social network
	English: Private courses		

A close look at the current sociolinguistic situation shows that the two contact languages' status is changing. Even though the Turkish influence was in the past very important for the Pomak variety under study<sup>6</sup> and even though its influence remains important, it is observable that nowadays both contact languages function as a source, and that Greek seems to be becoming the main contact language.

In seeking to determine the main contact language for the young Pomak speakers of the area under study, we observed the frequent code-switching to Greek. We also noticed an increasing number of lexical loans to Greek, as the various examples in this article show. A very interesting example of the importance gained in this area by Greek is that of the adversative marker, correctly claimed by Matras (1998) as one of the grammatical markers most susceptible to borrowing. In this dialect, the main adversative marker nowadays is the Greek *ala*, "but," which has replaced the Arabic and Turkish *ama*, acquired by most South Slavic languages. In contrast, in Pomak vernaculars with a shift to Turkish, *ama* is well preserved by the older speakers (Adamou fieldwork notes 2006). This case is similar to what Matras described for Romani dialects which in a first contact situation acquired one adversative marker and then, following migration, abandoned the "old" adversative marker for the new contact language marker (Matras 1998: 295). For Pomak, it was not migration that determined this change but a change in the hierarchy of the contact languages.

#### 4.3.2. Mediate information markers in contact

Mediate information expression is grammatically marked in Turkish and unmarked in Greek. In Turkish, speakers must specify for a past tense whether it is a direct experience (*-di*) or an indirect one (*-miş*). According to Aksu-Koç and Slobin (1986), *-miş* has the basic meanings of inference and hearsay. It is used in everyday discourse and also in myths, folktales, and jokes.

- (31)     *Ahmet gel- miş*  
TUR     Ahmet come *mİş*  
          “Ahmet came / must have come.”

(Aksu-Koç and Slobin 1986: 159)

In this sense, Turkish ought to have exerted conceptual pressure on Pomak speakers so as to reinforce, or at least be a stabilizing parameter for, the Pomak mediate information expression. Educated Pomak speakers possess this metalinguistic awareness and refer to the Pomak perfect as “a past tense for non-attested events, as in Turkish” (fieldwork Adamou 2007, M 30). A possible clue to the actual lack of Turkish influence is the systemic difference in the ways of expressing evidentiality in Turkish and Pomak.

At the same time, Greek is becoming the main contact language in the area and has no equivalent category in its verbal system. Greek has no obligatory or grammatical expression for evidentiality but can use, among others, prosody or optional expressions such as *taha*, “it seems,” related to the truth of the statement (Ifantidou 2002), or *lei* “it is said, supposedly”: *ine lei orea* “it is said to be nice” (also used for a mirative meaning, as in *orea lei!* “Very nice!”). Friedman considers that *lei* is “in the beginnings of a pathway to the grammaticalization of evidentiality” (Friedman 2004: 116).

Greek, having only a pragmatic expression of mediate information, might thus be a catalyst for this loss, parallel to the loss of oral tradition and facilitated by the systemic characteristics of Pomak.



Table 3: *A multiple causation analysis for mediate information loss in Pomak*

	Pomak	Greek	Turkish
overt mediate information marking	disappearing	no	yes
structural similarity between ways to express mediate information	No	-	no
use of mediate information in various discursive contexts	No	-	yes
other linguistic means characterizing the folktales register	yes (temporal subordinators)		
language contact intensity		1	2
folktales' transmission	Low		

Greek has had an important influence on the expressions used for folktales in other South Slavic vernaculars spoken by Christian communities (who have shifted to Greek). For example, the bilingual Greek-Nashta use the aorist for folktales and, more dramatically, have completely lost the old perfect verbal paradigm with auxiliary “be” and *l*-verbs and replaced it with a new, highly grammaticalized “have-perfect.” While the use of the have-perfect is a common feature shared with Literary Macedonian and Macedonian dialects, the loss of the *l*-verb paradigm attested in Nashta is a unique feature for all Slavic languages.

The current Nashta verbal system is remarkably parallel to the Greek one (Adamou 2006), both formally but also as concerns the meanings of the various forms. For example, Greek also has no “be” auxiliary paradigm, it has a have-perfect, and it uses the aorist for folktales. For Nashta, we have no proof of an overt expression of mediate information, but we do have traces of the old perfect form with the “be” auxiliary and *l*-verbs in a song that the elder speakers still recall:

- (32) *vl'as'e me sa d'ošle m'ale*  
*jud vl'askoto s'elo m'ale*  
*vl'asko me zbor'uvat le de*  
*ja ni znam šo v'eljet m'ale*

“Vlachs have come (‘BE’AUX.PERFECT +V-L), oh my! From their Vlach village, oh my! They talk to me in Vlach, oh boy! I don’t understand what they’re saying, oh my!”

(corpus Adamou 2002: F1926)

Here is a table for Nashta, for which mediate information loss is only postulated in a historical perspective. The parallel to the Pomak example allows us to speculate that in a previous stage perhaps no auxiliary V-*l* forms were used in Nashta either for the folktales and songs, but in the absence of any significant data this hypothesis cannot be confirmed:

Table 4: *A multiple causation analysis for mediate information loss in Nashta*

	Nashta	Greek
overt mediate information marking	*yes	No
other linguistic means of expression characterizing the folktales register	no	No
language contact intensity	shift to Greek	
folktales’ transmission	very low	

## 5. Change and variation in a multilingual setting

The change in the expression of mediate information in Pomak is attested over three generations, passing through a variation stage for the middle generation, depending on syntactic, semantic, and discursive parameters. The available data show that the variation probably started with the increased predominance of Greek and was facilitated by the loss of

the oral tradition and lack of standardization practices. The rapidity of the variation stage seems to be related to the intensity of language contact.

A corpus from the 1960s (Theoharidis 1995) allows us to draw this conclusion by providing two important items of information:

1. In some tales an exclusive use of V-*l* forms indicates that there was a previous stage, for which we have no other available data, in which those forms were grammaticalized to express mediate information. The comparison to the other South Slavic languages backs up this hypothesis, since V-*l* forms are grammaticalized for mediate information in Macedonian and Bulgarian.
2. In some of the tales a variation between the two forms already exists, even though the relevant factors are not the exact ones observed in the 2004 corpus. This indicates that by the 1960s variation had already begun to develop and that it became generalized over the years until it led to the exclusive use of the perfect paradigm.

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## Abbreviations

1 = first person; 2 = second person; 3 = third person; ACC = accusative; APTCP = active participle; AUX = auxiliary; AOR = aorist; BUL = Bulgarian; DAT = dative; DEF.A = definite addressee's sphere; DEF.DIST = definite not located in the speaker's and addressee's spheres; DEF.S - definite speaker's sphere; DAT = dative; ELL = Greek; F = feminine; GEN = genitive; MOD = modality; IMPF = imperfect; IPFV = imperfective; LOC.HAB.FUT = located in the habitual/future of the moment of utterance; LOC.PAS = located in the past of the moment of utterance; M = masculine; N = neuter; MED = mediate information; MKD =

Macedonian; NEG = negation, negative; PART particle; PD = Past definite; PI = Past indefinite; PMK = Pomak; PRF = perfect; P.PRF = past perfect; PL = plural; POSS = possessive; REFL = reflexive; SG = singular; TUR = Turkish.

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<sup>1</sup> Fieldwork was conducted in 2005, 2006, and 2007 by the author with the financial support of the Lacito laboratory, CNRS, France. Given the political pressure on the Pomak speakers, within a context of the shift to Turkish, I decided not to give the name of the village despite the obvious interest this would present from a dialectological perspective. I sincerely thank the speakers who agreed to participate in this study.

<sup>2</sup> Personal communication, as the variability in transcription and segmentation of the tales shows.

<sup>3</sup> These children still visit the village quite frequently and were thus taken into consideration in this study.

<sup>4</sup> During recent fieldwork I had the opportunity to observe how communication is taking place, mainly through a minimum verbal exchange. Turkish numerals used among Pomak speakers while discussing prices were strongly stigmatized by the Bulgarian speakers (fieldwork notes Adamou 2007). Moreover, relations between the female population (who form the majority in the village since men are usually working abroad) and the male seasonal workers are not very common. The workers are considered economically inferior and seen as having different customs (clothing, alcohol consumption, etc.).

<sup>5</sup> Female speakers are over-represented in this study because of the social type interactions I had with them. But in this case this was useful, since they are the most traditional speakers, so the change in language contact is even more significant.

<sup>6</sup> Loans from Turkish include: numerals over 5, time expressions, close kin (in some discursive contexts and mainly for the younger speakers), negative answer particle, salutations, and thanking expressions (both related to religion and described by the speakers as Pomak; the equivalent Bulgarian expressions when cited cause hilarity).