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HARVARD  
UKRAINIAN STUDIES

Volume 28 Number 1-4 2006

RUS' WRIT LARGE:  
LANGUAGES, HISTORIES, CULTURES  
Essays Presented in Honor of Michael S. Flier  
on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday

*Edited by*  
Harvey Goldblatt  
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Cambridge, Massachusetts

Wiesinger, Peter, ed. 1980. *Sprache und Name in Österreich: Festschrift für Walter Steinhauser zum 95. Geburtstag*. Vienna.

Zgólkowa, Halina, ed. 2002. *Praktyczny słownik współczesnej polszczyzny*. Poznań.

## Determination and Doubling in Balkan Borderlands

VICTOR A. FRIEDMAN

AMONG MICHAEL FLIER'S MANY contributions to the study of Slavic linguistics has been his demonstration of the importance of dialectology in the understanding of linguistic change and his establishment of the explanatory parameters of processes of variation in a number of historical Slavic phonological and morphophonological phenomena. Thus, for example, Flier 1988 explains the complex distribution of the reflexes of tense jers on East Slavic territory by means of the temporal and spatial intersection of six morphological and phonological environments with two general phonetic tendencies, one of which overtook the other temporally, to account for the current state of affairs. In dealing with East Slavic and its differentiation into modern Belarusian, Russian, and Ukrainian as seen in Flier 1988, Michael has of necessity confronted problems along the borderlands of the three languages (the very name of one of which is etymologically from *ukraina* "borderland"), and his insistence on maintaining the accuracy of the distinction between Early Russian and the three modern East Slavic languages that can all claim it as their literary ancestor has both been grounded in empirical data and reached audiences well beyond the Slavic linguistic community (Flier 1993). Another of Michael's numerous significant works is his classic study of nominal determination in Old Church Slavonic (Flier 1974), which remains an important reference work for Slavic morphosyntax.

In this paper honoring Michael's varied contributions to our field, I will examine two phenomena relating to determination along a different borderland, namely the interrelation of the occurrence of the postposed definite article and the use of so-called reduplicated (resumptive) clitic pronouns in the western borderlands of Balkan Slavic in modern day Kosovo. I shall argue that the presence of both features in the villages of Gora (the seventeen villages south and east of Dragaš in the southwesternmost corner Kosovo [as well as nine adjacent villages in Albania]) but only the latter feature in the villages of Sretečka Župa (just to the northeast of Gora in Kosovo), as well as Prizren and Đakovica, is both a useful diagnostic in larger questions of

dialect differentiation and evidence of the different positions of the two types of features in Balkan linguistic change. Moreover, the situation in the dialects of southeastern Serbia proper offer an instructive contrast. Before we can approach the phenomena themselves, however, we must discuss the speech communities in which they occur.

As with the terminological distinctions in East Slavic, so, too, in the South Slavic world there have been contestations, competing claims, and hegemonic erasures of differentiation. Unlike the situation in East Slavic, however, where, for example, "the romantic-nationalistic claims of the nineteenth-century Russian academic establishment" that Ukrainian was a dialect of Russian are not taken seriously in academic circles today—although they may still be repeated by the ill-informed (as pointed out in Flier 1993)—the contestation over naming in Balkan Slavic not only continues "the romantic-nationalistic claims" of the twentieth-century Bulgarian academic establishment (Kočev 2001, reviewed in Friedman 2004), but in fact has been further complicated by the breakup of former Yugoslavia and the devolution of the former Serbo-Croatian into ethnonational norms (see Greenberg 1996 on the dialectological roots of this process). As a result of the current ethnopolitical situation, Slavic dialects spoken in Kosovo (and elsewhere) are claimed as Serbian, Bosnian, or Croatian depending on the ethnicity (religion) of the speaker, with the result that the dialect of a given village is now claimed by any or all of the three standard languages emergent from the former Serbo-Croatian. To this can be added the complications that the dialects of Gora are also assigned to Macedonian, as will be discussed below, and that some of these speakers (more than half in the 1991 census) reject all of the nation-state-based designations of their speech and identity, choosing the local (Goran for identity and Goranski for speech) as the only applicable unit. (Today some speakers identify their language as Macedonian, some as Serbian, some as Bosnian, and some as Goranski.) A further complication is the fact that as of this writing (30 September 2005) Kosovo, while still de jure a part of Serbia, is a separate unit, administered under UNSCR 1244, whose political status continues to be problematic, and thus an appeal to *Serbian* as a geographic designator, which is the heritage of former Serbo-Croatian dialectology, is similarly problematic.

Despite the overlapping and conflicting claims, the Slavic dialects of most of southern Kosovo, together with those of southeastern Serbia [proper] are generally recognized as forming a relatively distinct classificatory unit. One term for this group is *Prizren-Timok*, which takes its name from the most historically significant town in the southwest and the most significant river at the northeast edge of the territory. Another widely used term is *Torlak*, which Skok (1973, 484) defines as *ime naroda* 'name of a people' *koji ne govori ni srpski ni bugarski* 'one who speaks neither Serbian nor Bulgarian', but which term also has pejorative meanings such as 'braggart, boor, callow youth', supposedly from

Turkish *torlak* 'unbroken colt, wild youth'. Regardless of the etymology and other usages, however, *Torlak* is now the term most frequently employed.

In his classic work, Ivić (1956) distinguishes within Torlak the Prizren–South Morava group in the west and south, the Timok–Lužnica group in the north and east, and the narrow strip of Svrljig–Zaplanje between them. Among the features characterizing Timok–Lužnica is the postposed definite article, whereas Svrljig–Zaplanje is characterized by its relative lack of innovations vis-à-vis the other two divisions (Ivić 1956, 116, 118; Mladenović [2001, 385] and Vukadinović [1996, 196–97] mention sporadic usage in part of Zaplanje). Ivić (1956, 116) argues for a more attenuated treatment of the Timok–Lužnica phenomenon as reduced deixis, owing to its tripartite deictic distinction and nominal declension, but the tripartite distinction is found throughout western Macedonia as well as in the Rhodopes and Thrace, while the intersection of that feature with declension also occurs in the extreme southwestern periphery of Macedonia and parts of the Rhodopes. In texts, Timok–Lužnica usage does not differ significantly from Macedonian and Bulgarian usage, which is well established as a matter of definite reference. A feature characteristic of Torlak as a whole is the use of reduplicated pronominal objects, e.g. *mene me boli* 'it hurts me' (Ivić 1956, 111), a feature that is also found in the dialects of southern Montenegro (Ivić 1958, 217). The Serbo-Croatian/Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (henceforth simply BCS) and Balkan Slavic dialectological surveys, however, do not note the replicative use of oblique clitic pronouns with substantival direct and indirect objects, as in Macedonian *Mu go davam molivot na močeto* 'I give the pencil to the boy'. It is this latter type of reduplication that we shall consider here.

Between Ivić 1956 and the second edition of 1985, a small but significant change occurred in the assignment of dialects to the Torlak group. This difference is not indicated in the texts themselves, which in this instance remain unchanged between the two editions, but rather in the revised map published with the book. In the first edition, the border between Serbo-Croatian dialects and Macedonian dialects followed the administrative/political border between Macedonia and Serbia (including Kosovo), but in the second edition, Gora was excluded from Serbo-Croatian, i.e. acknowledged as Macedonian. This is a graphic representation of Ivić's acceptance of Vidoeski's arguments (Vidoeski 1984–85; 1986) that the dialects of Gora belonged more with northwestern Macedonian than with southwestern Serbian.

Interestingly enough, Bulgarian dialectologists also followed these arguments, claiming all Macedonian dialects as Bulgarian but not claiming the Prizren–South Morava group of Torlak. Thus, the northernmost line of the westernmost border of Bulgarian in Kočev 1988 follows the northern border of the Republic of Macedonia to Skopska Crna Gora and excludes Gora, while Kočev 2001 includes Gora as part of Bulgarian linguistic territory. Curiously

enough, although Kočev 2001 justifies its claims on the basis of Mladenov 1929, Mladenov's boundary begins at the White Drin on the Albanian border and follows its course to the northeast above Prizren and does not turn southwest until Mount Zhar, thus including both of the regions under consideration here. In fact, Kočev 2001 actually follows Ivić 1985, thus including Gora but excluding Sretečka Župa (see Friedman 2002–2003 for further discussion). In post-Yugoslav Croatian dialectology as represented by Lisac (2003), Sretečka Župa (labeled *Sredska*, which is actually the chief village in a region of a dozen villages) is included, although the only Catholics mentioned in Pavlović (1939, 5) are Albanian Muslims who moved there from Mt. Preslopa and had already converted to Islam before their arrival. It is worth noting that while the relatively detailed map of Lisac (2003, 161) follows Brozović and Ivić 1988 and excludes Gora from Torlak, Lisac's more schematic map on p. 165 appears to follow older (or newer) versions and include Gora. Since the breakup of Yugoslavia, there has been some retreat from the position that the Goran dialects are to be classed as Macedonian; although Remetić (1996, 535[217]) treats the Gora dialects as Macedonian, Peco (1989–90 [1995], 420) labels them as a "special transition" (*svojevrsan prelaz*) between Macedonian and Serbian, and Mladenović (2001, 45, 60–69), after the most complete review of the literature and a thorough monograph on the Goran dialects of Kosovo, concludes that the dialect is of a mixed West South Slavic/East South Slavic type (Mladenović 2001, 542).

Turning now to the features that interest us here, we can distinguish four zones: Lower Gora, Upper Gora (see Mladenović 2001, 356), Sretečka Župa, and Prizren. The Opolje region, between the first three and Prizren, is now entirely Albanian-speaking. Upper Gora, which is closest to Macedonia and consists of those villages in Kosovo south of Mlike, is characterized by a three-way article distinction (*-v-* 'proximal', *-t-* 'neutral', *-n-* 'distal') while Lower Gora, which includes Mlike and all the Goran villages north of it and in Albania, has a two-way distinction (*-v-* 'proximal', *-t-* 'neutral'). According to Mladenović (2001, 356), the loss of distal deictics in Lower Gora is under the influence of Albanian, which has the same type of binary deictic opposition (*k-* 'proximal' / *a-* 'neutral/distal'). This same loss is characteristic of demonstratives in Eastern Macedonian, Bulgarian, and Kostur (Greek Kastoria), as well as Korça, which, however, preserves *s-* as the proximal (Mazon 1936, 66); all these systems have only *-t-* for the article. The situation in Lower Gora is in contrast to that in Prizren (including the foothill villages [Mladenović 2001, 356]) and Sretečka Župa, where the three-way deictic system typical of Torlak and Western Macedonian (as well as elsewhere in BCS) is maintained.

As can be seen from the examples below, reduplication is not conditioned by definiteness or specificity—although these factors can co-occur—but rather by *aboutness* in Leafgren's (2002) terms. With regard to object reduplication

in Bulgarian, Leafgren's (2002, 197) main thesis is that it usually marks what he calls contrastive *aboutness*, and he demonstrates that object reduplication in Bulgarian is almost always as an overt marker of topicality when the clause-level aboutness of the object is unexpected owing to its not being a theme (or stable theme) at the discourse level. Example (1) from Gora is about the selling of a garden. After the garden is introduced and deictically determined, its next occurrence is reduplicated, which marks it as the topic of the clause and also returns the listener's attention to it after a sentence about the narrator and Smajl'o. The definiteness of 'milk' is problematic and must be left for future exposition, but the reduplication of 'five thousand' introduces it as a new topic in the discourse. The remainder of the narrative recounts the bargaining and successful conclusion of the deal. Examples (2–4) illustrate reduplication with a proper name, which can be treated as inherently definite, as well as definite and double determined direct objects.

- (1) ...Bašča Čazimofska, njih<sup>a</sup> bila bašča, taja mi bila bratova. Pa ka došof Smajl'o, som došla grančice da zemem.  
 — Ja će ga prodavam bašča.  
 — Ako ga prodavaš, — reko — ja da ga zemem.  
 — Ne-možeš da ga platiš ti.  
 I zamina on.  
 Ja drva ze, mljekoto izmæti, omi sædoj. Vo nedra som ge turila pesto iljade.  
 — Kede si — reče — <sup>x</sup>Ajde!  
 — Evo som, Smajl'o!  
 — Šo-davaš, Pendo, ti?  
 — Ja davam pesto iljade. Pojci nemam. (Mladenović 2001, 577)  
 'Čazimovska garden, the garden was theirs, it was my brother's.  
 And when Smajl'o came, I came to gather larkspur.  
 — I will sell the garden.  
 — If you sell it, — I said — let me buy it.  
 — You can't afford it.  
 And he left.  
 I gathered wood, I churned milk, I washed dishes. I put five thousand in my bosom.  
 — Well, he said, what's up?  
 — Here I am.  
 — So what do you offer, Penda?  
 — Five thousand. I don't have more [than that].'
- (2) Nemoj da gi činiš Ramadanici rezilj (Mladenović 2001, 330)  
 'Don't disgrace Ramadan's wife'

- (3) ga donela sofrata ona (Mladenović 2001, 489)  
'She brought the *sofra* [low table for eating]'
- (4) i tuje gi ostanala tija golemite kameni (Mladenović 2001, 489)  
'And she left those big stones there'

Reduplication in Sretečka Župa, where the definite article is lacking, is much less frequent than in Gora. Adjusting for different sizes in the corpora, reduplication in Sretečka Župa occurs less than a fifth as often as in Gora. The examples all involve unique individuals (5–6), determined objects (7), or previously introduced topics (8):

- (5) Onaj muž gi rekov žene... (Pavlović 1939, 253)  
'That man said to his wife...'
- (6) Traživ nekoj koj može da mu odgovori ruskomu caru. (Pavlović 1939, 256–57)  
'He sought someone to answer the Russian king.'
- (7) Kd [*sic*] videle one kamilje, se mišljelje kako da gi skinet oni đerdani... (Pavlović 1939, 288)  
'When they saw those camels they thought about how to get the necklaces...'
- (8) pa će vidi dukat — zgazi, — dok gi zbrale sve dukati  
'and where he saw a ducat, there he stepped, until he had gathered up all the ducats'

The examples from Prizren show inconsistency as in (9, 10), which are the conclusions of two different speakers talking about their lives. On the whole, however, the frequency of reduplication in Prizren is similar to that found in Gora, with most examples being specific, determinate, definite, or in some way identifiable (11, 12).

- (9) I dənəs primam penziju! Tol'iko mi radija, a moju penziju drugi jede. E dete moje, ako imaš l'edž'a, sve si dobar. N'ema — a u p... [*sic*] materinu — tako l'i-je? (Remetić 1996, 543[225])  
'And today I get a pension. We worked so much, and others ate up my pension. Eh, my child, if you have a back [for labor], you're just fine. If not, you're f---ed — isn't that so?'

- (10) On ima pendziju, a ja mužnjevu, tol'icku. Moju pendziju, drugi gu izeja. (Remetić 1996, 544[226])  
'He has a pension, and I have my husband's, that's all. Others ate up my pension.'
- (11) Videla sam gu brata, a nju nesam jošte videla. (Remetić 1996, 485[167])  
'I saw my brother, but I still haven't seen her.'
- (12) L'epo mu sedif nove al'ine onomu njenomu detetu (Remetić 1996, 485[167])  
'The new clothes suited that child of theirs'

The examples from Đakovica are all datives, and, moreover, denote people who are in some way specific, definite, or identifiable, and such datives are typical topics:

- (13) Mu zbori jednome turćinu (Stevanović 1950, 113)  
'He said to a certain Turk'
- (14) Mu vikam mojemu stricu (Stevanović 1950, 152)  
'I say to my uncle'
- (15) Da mu kažem Dime (Stevanović 1950, 113)  
'Let me tell Dima'

In contradistinction to the dialects of Kosovo, the Torlak dialects of Serbia proper do not seem to make much use of reduplication other than of pronominal objects, and even that usage is apparently in decline. Reduplication of substantival objects is absent from Belić's (1905) material from southern Serbia proper and rare in Sobolev's (1984) material from Vratonica in the northeast corner of Torlak territory. Toma [Thomas] (1998, 315–16) reports that in Niš and the surrounding villages (in the northern part of the South Morava region of Torlakia) reduplicated pronouns have become rare, and speculates that this may be because the feature is perceived as a particularly salient dialectism. Vukadinović (1996, 151) observes a similar relative paucity in Crna Trava and Vlasina east of Vranje in the southern part of the Lužnica and Zaplanje regions, although it is more frequent in the Lužnica part of the region than the Zaplanje part. The definite article, however, is still fully functional in Timok-Lužnica and sporadic in parts of Zaplanje.

We can speak here of two morphosyntactic tendencies in the rendering of explicitness—both of which are characteristic of Balkan Slavic's contact

languages—but with differing trajectories of expansion and contraction. The tendency toward a postposed marker of definiteness is already manifest in Old Church Slavonic (OCS), and its rules and principles are admirably clarified in Flier 1974. The tendency to postposing deictics is also present in OCS, although the development into definite articles clearly took place at a later date. With regard to that timing, as with the establishment of a number of other Balkanisms in the relevant Balkan Slavic languages and dialects, it is arguable that the full grammaticalization of the definite article took place during the Ottoman period.

Object doubling is basically absent from OCS (but cf. Luke 19:27 in Zographensis), and its spread probably took place from approximately the same starting point and at approximately the same time as the definite article. Although the tendency to analytism (particularly the elimination of substantial inflection) is often connected with the rise of the article and of object reduplication, case marking on articles in peripheral and isolated Balkan Slavic (and all of Albanian, Greek, and Balkan Romance, which all have some nominal declension as well), combined with the geographical extension of object reduplication into zones where nominal inflection remains vital, all demonstrate that definiteness and analytism are not in a simple correlation. In fact, the postposed definite article, especially the masculine singular, is more synthetic than analytic.

The grammaticalization of postposed deictics as articles must have involved all the deictics, and as the grammaticalization of definiteness proceeded, the marked deictic articles were gradually lost in most of Balkan Slavic. In western Macedonia, however, although definiteness was completely grammaticalized, a kind of deixis was preserved, which, as Koneski (1967, 231–32) points out, is not necessarily literal deixis but can convey speaker attitude. Eastern Macedonian shared the complete loss of definite deixis with most of Bulgarian,<sup>1</sup> but in Timok-Lužnica,<sup>2</sup> as in the Macedonian dialects of the Korça region of southeastern Albania, both on the extreme peripheries of the spread of innovation, neither deixis nor case was completely eliminated.

In discussing the linguistic situation of Gora, it is important to take into account social factors, particularly religion. The villages of Gora are entirely Muslim, and although conversion was gradual, it began well before the seventeenth century. (Data indicate that only 20 percent of Gora had converted in 1571, and the last Goran Christian in Gora is known to have died in 1856 [Mladenović 2001, 54–55]; Christians from Gora also left and settled in neighboring regions, including the villages of Jelovjane and Urvič in Polog, due east of Restelica in Gora.) Sretečka Župa is mixed Orthodox and Muslim. In terms of religion, the Gorans have more in common with the Torbesh (Macedonian-speaking Muslims) of Polog and Reka than with the Orthodox Serbs of Kosovo. Gorans have looked more to the south than have the Slavic-

speakers of Sretečka Župa. To this can be added the fact that Luma to the east (in Albania) and Opolje to the north have exerted influence on Lower Gora as seen in the simplification of the deictic and article systems. In Luma and Opolje, however, Islam and the Albanian language became isomorphic, unlike the situation in Gora. Thus, Gora constitutes a particular kind of geographic and social periphery.

The current dialectal situation can be seen as the result of centuries of what we can characterize as *isolated contact*—that is, a population of relatively mobile men (shepherds and migrant workers [*pečalbari*]) and sedentary women whose movements were determined by ties of kinship and marriage. Under such conditions, the dialects of Gora and, to a lesser extent, Sretečka Župa, illustrate an epidemiological model of feature spread (Enfield 2003) or an ecological model of feature selection (Mufwene 2001). The differential spread of the postposed definite article and the reduplication of non-pronominal objects indicates that they mark different allegiances as well as different types of narrative strategy. It is well known among Balkanists that in Serbia, the definite article of Macedonian is perceived as one of its most distinctive features, and indeed the folk stereotype of Macedonian in Serbia is that it sounds like *ta-ta-ta, to-to-to*. This can be attributed in part, at least, to the fact that the majority of BCS dialects rely on case endings for decoding syntactic relations, and definite articles occur where most BCS speakers would expect those inflections. It is arguable, then, that the definite article has had emblematic status in Gora (see Enfield 2003, 267–68 on emblematic formal and structural features in a linguistic community). Reduplication, on the other hand, is a different type of referentiality. It is clear from our materials that while definiteness of one sort or another can be a factor, specificity or topicality is the more significant conditioning element. At the same time, it appears to have become negatively valued in the southeast Serbian periphery during the course of the twentieth century. This in turn accounts for differences in its spread.

In southwestern Kosovo, as in western Macedonia, Aromanian and Albanian have both been historically significant contact languages, whereas in western Bulgaria and adjacent parts of Serbia and Macedonia, Romance and autochthonous elements have been weak or absent for a long period of time. Central Geg and Western Macedonian represent a center from which the grammaticalization of reduplication has spread, and there is a parallel with tripartite definiteness.<sup>3</sup> Object reduplication becomes grammaticalized in the region that preserves tripartite definiteness and minimal traces of nominal case, it remains a pragmatic device in those regions with no deixis in the definite article (and/or no nominal case), with definite deixis plus case, or with case but no definiteness.

The Prizren dialects, with their clear preservation of the accusative/dative opposition in substantives, argue against the case function of reduplication and

in favor of its discourse function. At the same time, the spread of the definite article to Gora and no further suggests a more general cultural orientation to the south. The weakening of reduplication in Timok-Lužnica, in the face of maintenance of the definite article, suggests concession in one but not the other.

The distribution and treatment of definite articles and object reduplication in Torlakia, together with the southern and southeastern periphery of Bulgarian, suggest that these phenomena had multiple centers of innovation. Table 1, right, summarizes the feature distribution for the western borderlands of Balkan Slavic. In addition to using pluses and minuses for presence and absence, respectively, we have used both parentheses and square brackets: the former indicates that the feature is attenuated or in decline, while the latter indicates that the feature is extremely infrequent almost to the point of constituting fixed expressions. The plus/minus for Đakovica indicates the apparent restriction to, or at least preponderance of, dative expressions. The pattern revealed by the table puts Gora more with Western Macedonia and Timok-Lužnica, while the almost equally isolated, neighboring Sretečka Župa patterns between the south Morava dialects of Serbian to the east and Prizren to the northwest.

It is thus the case that while the phenomenon of definiteness marking, or even postposed definiteness marking, on the one hand, and resumptive clitic pronouns used to mark definite or specific or topical substantival objects (and explicit pronominal objects), on the other, are both features that, taken as generalities, characterize Balkan Slavic, the manifestations of these categories reveal a more complex picture. In addition to clarifying reference, morphological definiteness marking becomes emblematic—and, at the same time, subject to additional contact-induced influence (Lower Gora). Object reduplication, on the other hand, spreads further and more easily as a pragmatic device (which at one time must also have been the status of the definite article), but is slower to become grammaticalized and is also more vulnerable to subsequent loss.

#### NOTES

1. Deictic articles in the Rhodopian dialects must have developed independently, since the proximal deictic is the original *-s-* rather than later oppositional deictic *-v-* (see Flier 1974, 59). On the southeast periphery of Balkan Slavic, Thrace has a *-v-/-t-/-n-* system like that of Western Macedonia. It is also worth noting that most of Bulgarian simplified the inherited three-way deictic opposition to a binary one, but unlike Albanian and Lower Gora, where the marked member is proximal, in Bulgarian the marked member is distal.
2. The situation in the adjacent westernmost Bulgarian dialects is similar.
3. The Rhodopes and Thrace represent independent developments or other peripheral remnants in this instance.

Table 1. Definiteness, deixis, reduplication, and case in Western Balkan Slavic.

	DA	deictic DA	3 deictics	subst case	PRO redup	subst redup
Upper Gora	+	+	+	+	+	+
W. Macedonia	+	+	+	[+]	+	+
Timok-Lužnica	+	+	+	+	(+)	[+]
Lower Gora	+	+	-	+	+	+
Kostur	+	-	-	[+]	+	+
Korča	+	-	-	+	+	[+]
Prizren	-	-	+	+	+	+
Đakovica	-	-	+	+	+	[±]
Sretečka Župa	-	-	+	+	+	[+]
Niš	-	-	+	+	(+)	[+]
East Macedonian	+	-	-	-	+	(+)

Abbreviations: DA = definite article; PRO = pronominal; subst = substantival; redup = reduplication

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## Suržyk: A Glance from a Personal Perspective

BORIS GASPAROV

Разве может быть затрепанной да тише  
 слова поистасканного «Слышишь»?!  
 Я немало слов придумал вам,  
 взвешивая их,—одно хочу лишь,  
 чтобы стали всех моих стихов слова  
 полновесными, как слово «чуешь».  
 —Mayakovsky, "A Tribute to Ukraine"

SO-CALLED SURŽYK—a mixed Ukrainian-Russian (or Russian-Ukrainian) speech that is characteristic of certain social strata of the population in eastern and central Ukraine and southern Russia—has drawn to itself the intense, and not always benign, attention of scholars and the general public in the wake of the disintegration of the Soviet imperial space, a process that gave rise to new and rapidly developing sociolinguistic configurations. As a result, writings about Suržyk have proliferated in recent years. Unfortunately, a majority of the works on the subject treat it as a "lowly" phenomenon, an attitude that implies a monolithic hierarchical system of sociocultural values. Burdened with the low prestige and negative connotation that are habitually attached to it, Suržyk appears as a secondary linguistic product—a grotesque distortion of both Ukrainian and Russian committed by speakers of poor education and bad taste. One can understand and even sympathize with the reasons behind this sociopolitical attitude, particularly as it arises in a newly independent Ukraine, where it reflects concerns about the integrity and security of Ukrainian as a national language. At the same time, a linguist should never forget that as far as linguistic studies are concerned, there are not and should not be such things as "bad" or "illegitimate" languages. One can agree that an attempt to promote the use of Suržyk in the name of social fairness would be ill-advised; in this respect, the case of Suržyk resembles that of Ebonics. But to draw this parallel also means that as an object of study Suržyk, similarly to Ebonics,