

Morphological Cross-Linguistic Parallelisms among the Nominal Systems of Balkan Languages (I)

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Abstract

Having been spoken for centuries within a limited geographical region – the Balkan Peninsula – the Romanian, Albanian, Bulgarian, Macedonian and Serbian languages have necessarily been in permanent contact. Whether prolonged or relatively short, direct or indirect, such contact between typologically but not genealogically related languages has eventually led to the emergence, in two or several Balkan languages, of certain linguistic similarities which linguists acknowledge today as (phonetic, morphological, syntactic or lexical) Balkanisms. This paper addresses some of these parallelisms apparent in the nominal systems of the Balkan languages, namely the definite article and the genitive possessive article, as well as noun cases and genders. While not aiming at exhaustiveness, this study reviews theories of outstanding Romanian and foreign linguists on these issues, and illustrates such views with manifold cross-linguistic examples.