Poststressing complementizers in Erkec (Kozicino)

Matthew Baerman
University of Surrey (UK)
m.baerman@surrey.ac.uk
Poststressing complementizers in Erkec (Kozicino)

From the Introduction

This volume summarizes the results of a joint North American - Bulgarian research project in dialectology, which culminated in a joint field expedition in the summer of 1996. The project was co-directed by Professor Ronelle Alexander of the University of California, Berkeley, Professor Todor Bojadzhiev, and then Assistant Professor Vladimir Zhobov, both of Sofia University.

The expedition and the research resulting from it was supported in part by a grant from the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) with funds provided by the United States Department of State through the Title VIII program. None of these organizations is responsible for the views expressed.

Links to two maps of Bulgaria can be found on the UCIAS website for the volume: http://repositories.cdlib.org/uciaspubs/editedvolumes/2/. One shows the sites visited by the 1996 expedition, and the other summarizes fieldwork by the expedition leaders, which was carried out between 1990 and 1993 and which lay the groundwork for the 1996 expedition.

Except in the volume’s title page and table of contents, the transliteration of Bulgarian Cyrillic follows the normal “academic” system, with the addition that it renders the Bulgarian vowel “er goliyan” by the Bulgarian Cyrillic character.

KEYWORDS: Central and Eastern Europe
Poststressing Complementizers in Erkeč (Kozičino)

Matthew Baerman

The data from Erkeč provide evidence which may help to shed light on one of the more puzzling issues in Bulgarian prosody, namely the behavior of the negative particle ne. Though itself unstressed, it has the property within verb phrases of inducing stress on an immediately following pronominal (1) or verbal (2) clitic. If the following syllable is instead part of a stressed verb form, ne has no prosodic effect (3).

(1) ne sí me vidjál
    NEG AUX.2SG me.ACC seen
    'you haven’t seen me’

(2) ne mé e vidjál
    NEG me.ACC AUX.3SG seen
    '(he) hasn’t seen me’

(3) ne vidjál
    NEG seen
    '(he) hasn’t seen (apparently)’

Two analyses of this have been proposed. The majority view appears to be that ne is inherently stressed, but is lexically specified as post-stressing, i.e. its stress is manifested on a following element (cf. Hauge 1976, Penčev 1984, Avgustinova 1997). A precondition for this is that the following element has no lexical stress of its own, so only clitics are affected. An alternative view was proposed by Halpern (1995), whereby ne is likewise inherently unstressed. However, whereas the pronominal and verbal clitics are specified as enclitics, ne is specified as a proclitic. When the two come together, the proclitic and enclitic fuse to form a viable prosodic word, which by default phonological rules is assigned stress (though its position must still be specified).

The issue remains unresolved, because the arguments for or against either approach must be based on principle, or on theory-internal considerations. Ne
is the only word in Standard Bulgarian to behave this way, so there is nothing
to compare it to. Nor is anything known of its prosodic history. The data
from Erkeč redress some of these empirical lacunae. There, *ne* behaves just as
in Standard Bulgarian. The surprise comes in the behavior of the
complementizers *kat* ‘when’ and *ku* ‘if’, corresponding to Standard Bulgarian
*katò* and *ako*, respectively. In Erkeč they exhibit the same prosodic behavior
as *ne*, i.e. they are unstressed, but induce stress on immediately following
pronominal and verbal clitics. Examples with *kat* are shown in (4-8), with *ku*
in (9-13).

(4) Sëtne *kat* gù swërshém, zberém gu
later when it.ACC finish.1PL gather.1PL it.ACC
‘Later, when we finish it, we'll gather it.’

(5) na viš *kat* já pusrëšniš këkwó stáwë
just look when her.ACC meet.2SG what happens
‘Just look what happens when you meet her.’

(6) Pëjët igrájët dodë se opekët, *kat* sé opekët…
sing.3PL dance.3PL until REFL bake when REFL bake.3PL
‘They sing and dance while they’re baking; when they’ve baked…’

(7) i *kat* sî sidím …
and when REFL sit.1PL
‘And while we're sitting around…’

(8) pëk *kat* é málku tó stuví
and when is small then stands
‘And when he's small, he stands.’

(9) ku gù xarëswat ilî *ku jë* ot pò- xubawu simëjstvo…
if him.ACC like.3PL or if is from more good family
‘If they like him or if he's from a better family…’

(10) âs *ku mî* … *ku mî* b’âšë edîn sîn žüf…
I if me.DAT if me.DAT was.3SG one son alive
‘If I… if I had one son left alive…’
(11) **ku mí** dadět dráj to se oblečé
if him.DAT give.3PL clothes then REFV dresses
‘If they give him any clothes, he'll get dressed.

(12) tí **ku sí** tšdášen…
you if are.2SG from-here
‘If you're from here…’

(13) dugudína pák še dódete **ku stí** žiwu-zdráwu
next-year again AUX-FUT come.2PL if are.2PL alive-healthy
‘You'll come back next year if you're in good health.’

It seems reasonable to suppose that the forms **kat** and **ku** are reduced versions of forms which were similar to, if not identical with, the **kató** and **áko** of Standard Bulgarian. That is, they are descended from words which were lexically stressed. The most economical way to account for the loss of stress on **kat** and **ku**, and the concomitant appearance of stress on following clitics, is to assume that a shift of stress occurred diachronically. This may help to fill in the missing link in the history of **ne**: since it displays the same prosodic behavior, perhaps it too is descended from an originally stressed ancestor (cf. Baerman 2001 for further evidence for this from western dialects of Balkan Slavic). Translated into synchronic terms, this favors the first of the interpretations outlined above, namely that **ne** is underlyingly stressed, but stress is realized on a following element. An interpretation along the lines of Halpern (1995) would entail a more extreme restructuring of the system, for which there is no positive evidence.

There is one further phenomenon that warrants being noted in this context. The system in Erkeč makes it possible for multiple post-stressing clitics to occur in sequence, something which of course cannot occur in Standard Bulgarian. How do they interact? Unfortunately, the data are limited to two examples:

(14) **kat ne béha…**
when NEG were.3PL
‘When they weren’t…’

(15) **kat ni túriš kráj…**
when NEG put.2SG end
‘When you don't put a stop to it…’
Since a stressed verb form is not an appropriate host, _ne_ does not assign stress. _Ne_ in turn does not receive stress from _kat_ (_kst_), though it is not clear exactly why. Perhaps it simply falls out of the range of possible hosts (by being underlyingly stressed?). A perhaps more pleasing solution is to suppose that where _ne_ precedes a stressed verb form – not an appropriate host for its stress – it procliticizes to it, become part of a single prosodic word. The same process would then apply to _kat_: since _ne_ is construed as part of the stressed word, it finds no host for its stress, and likewise becomes proclitic.

Matthew Baerman is a Research Fellow at the University of Surrey (Ph.D. from UC Berkeley).
REFERENCES


