Workshop: First step towards an interactive map of Balkan linguistic features

Date: 26th – 27th November 2018
Venue: University of Zurich (Rämistrasse 71, 8006 Zurich, Switzerland)

In typology and beyond it is a well-known fact that the so-called Balkan languages, such as Albanian, Aromunian, Bulgarian, Greek, Macedonian, BCS, Romani and Romanian, share a set of structural features on the morpho-syntactical, phonological and lexical level. Many descriptions of Balkan languages are based on researches on the Standard varieties while neglecting peculiarities of certain dialects, especially those ones which are spoken in the periphery of the whole Sprachbund area or in the periphery of individual language areas.

An attempt to fill this lacuna has already been made in the scope of the project *A Small Dialectological Atlas of the Balkan Languages*. Furthermore, the amount of diverse linguistic material (dialect descriptions, corpora etc.) on Balkan dialects is rich and grows larger throughout ongoing data collection. Additionally, we witness the ever-growing importance of Digital Humanities, the development and implementation of cut-edge technologies for visualizing linguistic data and, most importantly, the trend to make linguistic resources available for a broader scientific or non-scientific community. Bearing in mind both the abundance of available language material as well as the possibilities new technologies involve, we consider the time suitable to start a first attempt to synthesis the data which has been collected so far.

Creating a single interactive map or linguistic atlas of Balkan linguistic features is a grand enterprise which requires a long-term collaboration of a wide range of experts of the respective languages and dialects and which cannot be achieved during a single workshop. With this workshop we try to lay the foundation stone of such a collaboration by pursuing two main goals during two main sessions.

Day 1: Section 1 *Data presentation and evaluation*

Participants will be given twenty minutes for a presentation on their data and research, followed by 10 minutes of discussion. At the end of the day the audience should understand how you can contribute for future collaboration.

Day 2: Section 2 *Hands-on*

The participants should witness the advantages of modern data visualization by applying some methods on their own data. Therefore, Dr Peter Ranacher, the head of the GIS Group at UZH, will give and overview and training on methods of geo-linguistic data. By this, the participants will gain a better idea of the technical possibilities and the requirements which have to be fulfilled by their corpus before it can serve as material for a common data base or use it for their own research.

The major part of this section will be dedicated to the hands-on session, where the participants will be guided step-by-step through the process of preparing and processing linguistic data and visualizing the results onto a map. For this purpose, R software will be used. Ideally, the participants will be using a small portion of their own material.

By the end of the workshop the following goals should have been reached:

- Bringing together researchers from different fields of Balkan/Southeast European linguistics who have conducted or are currently conducting linguistic research on the basis of linguistic data on Balkan languages/dialects
- A better overview of current corpus linguistic research on Balkan languages and the linguistic data available
- A better understanding of the technical possibilities of geo-linguistic data visualization
- A stronger desire to collaborate and network in the Balkan linguistic community
- In a nutshell: The beginning of a long-term collaboration and a first step towards an interactive map of Balkan linguistic features

Guidelines for the abstract and the data

The abstract should include the following information:

- Full name and affiliation
- CV or information about your academic career
- Statement of purpose
- Sample data for the GIS workshop with R

Statement of purpose (max. 500 words):
In general, the participants are free to choose the content and the format of their presentation. But to make the workshop as profitable as possible we would to like to point out some not compulsory, but strongly recommended guidelines for the content of the presentation, as follows:
Description of your research interests and experience related to areal linguistics. Propose a specific topic from your own research to be discussed in the workshop and used in the tutorial. Explain the relevance of your research and the topic proposed to the workshop ideas. Situate your research in a wider field of Balkan or South-Eastern European linguistics.

Sample of the data with description:
Each applicant should submit a sample of the data in .csv format (from their own research or other sources or just dummy data) to be used in the workshop, be it fieldwork data, corpus or web data, or data from other sources. Observations on linguistic variables should be associated with different locations on a map in form of point or polygon data. It can represent measured or discrete values, frequency counts, presence of particular linguistic features, etc. Geographic coordinates stored as longitude and latitude values for each observation.
Each sample should be followed by a description of the data proposed, including the following information: research outline, source of the data, types of linguistic variables and values stored in them, coordinate reference system used.
No prior knowledge in using R or other mapping or statistical software. However, please specify what your technical level and experience is. This will help us tailor the workshop to each participant's skills and needs.
An example of how the data should look like is provided in the link below.
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1GQ7r09YSXqJaKJ_2pOJjL0vJghRx3KR35VEi0sZusl0/edit?usp=sharing
For those lacking data, a sample will be provided for the purpose of the workshop.

Applications should be sent to teodora.vukovic2@uzh.com and veton.matoshi@lmu.de with 'Balkan GIS Workshop' as subject. **The deadline for submission is Wednesday 31 October 2018**.

The number of participants is limited to 10. We offer to cover costs of travel and accommodation (up to CHF 605 per person) for those without financial support.

The workshop will take place from 26th – 27th November 2018 in the main building of University of Zurich (Rämistrasse 71, 8006 Zurich, Switzerland). More detailed information about the venue will follow asap.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact us:

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