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### **The rise and the evolution of DOM in the South Slavic periphery**

It is a well-known fact that South Slavic languages share a number of Balkan Sprachbund features that typologically set them apart from other Slavic languages. A number of these features radiated from southern and south-western Macedonian dialects spoken in smaller multilingual convergence areas. One such atypical feature is the use of an adpositional DOM, a phenomenon that refers to the overt marking of a subset of direct objects in a language. DOM in these dialects employs the analytic dative marker *na* with definite, predominantly animate direct objects. Traditionally, DOM has been considered a contact-induced innovation from Aromanian and Greek dialects. However, the neighbouring dialects only offered an appropriate pattern for replication at a time when the analytic case marking of the southernmost Slavic dialects suffered losses in categorical distinctions due to a strong cross-linguistic influence. The analysis of the examples with DOM in two 19<sup>th</sup> century texts written in colloquial dialects shows that in a heavily affected nominal system DOM started as a differentiating strategy aiming to restore the distinguishability between the human subject and object but in a more preserved nominal system it evolved into a discourse-pragmatic device and suspending the animacy parameter spread onto topical participants. In contact situations, changes involving extensive grammatical simplification increase the necessity to disambiguate the roles of sentence participants and mark the second human participant as prominent and topical.