# 109. Formation of the Standard Language: Macedonian

## Abstract

*In the 19<sup>th</sup> century a number of churchmen in Macedonia wrote sermons and primers in a form of Slavonic that was close to vernacular speech. These can be seen as the first texts of written Macedonian, although their authors did not intend to create a new literary language. The first document of explicit Macedonian linguistic and political separatism is* Rečnik od tri jezika *(1875). In his book* Za makedonckite raboti *Krste P. Misirkov (1874−1926) advocated a literary language based on the Prilep-Bitola dialect, but the book was never distributed. After the partition of Macedonia (1913) Macedonian literary activity was tolerated in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia as "dialect literature". There were thriving theatre groups in Skopje and Sofia and Kočo Racin from Veles wrote poetry that has retained its literary value. The communist partisans used the local dialects in their pamphlets in Vardar Macedonia during the Axis occupation and in 1944 they declared that Macedonian would be the official language of the new Macedonian republic. The decisive codificational steps were Koneski's grammar (1952−1954) and the 'academy dictionary' (1961−1966). Independence has terminated the Serbian/Macedonian diglossia that was characteristic of Vardar Macedonia in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There have been various attempts to codify Macedonian in the diaspora.*

## 1. The Beginnings of Local *Schreibsprachen*

In the 19<sup>th</sup> c. a number of churchmen in Macedonia wrote sermons and primers in a form of Slavonic that was close to vernacular speech. The traditional written language, Church Slavonic, which had evolved from Old Church Slavonic, a literary language based on dialects spoken around Salonika in the Middle Ages, was no longer intelligible to the populace in Macedonia. These sermons and moral tracts can be seen as the first texts of written Macedonian, although their authors did not intend to create a new literary language and often called the idiom that they used "Bulgarian". Joakim Kărčovski (c. 1780−c. 1820) and Kiril Pejčinovič (c. 1770−1845) together with Teodosija Sinaitski (c. 1770−c. 1840) may be considered to constitute the first generation of modern Macedonian literature. Collections of Macedonian folk songs played an important role in the Macedonian national awakening. The most famous was the Miladinovs'

*Bălgarski narodni pesni* 'Bulgarian Folksongs' (Zagreb 1861). Dimităr (1810−1862) and Konstantin Miladinov (1830−1862), like many educated Macedonians of their time, went to Greek schools and became Greek language teachers, but, at the suggestion of the Russian scholar Viktor Grigorovič, Dimităr turned more and more towards his native tongue and repudiated Panhellenism. He had a number of famous pupils: his younger brother Konstantin, Rajko Žinzifov, Grigor Părličev, Partenij Zografski and Kuzman Šapkarev. In his own original writings Dimităr Miladinov used a literary idiolect (*Schreibsprache* − Besch 1988) consisting of his native Struga dialect with elements of the developing Bulgarian standard language. Dimităr's younger brother Konstantin not only collected folkpoetry but also wrote fiction and non-fiction in a literary idiom based mainly on the dialects of Struga and Ohrid. He was also the "first real Macedonian poet" (Lunt 1953, 368): his nostalgic poem *Tăga za jug* 'Longing for the South', written far from home, in Moscow, is perhaps the most famous Macedonian poem. Marko Cepenkov (1829−1920) collected folk tales and retold them in his own style and embellished language. Cepenkov wrote drama, poetry and prose. His autobiography written in lively Prilep dialect in Sofia in 1896 was not published until 62 years later, though a number of Bulgarian folklorists utilized the manuscript.

The best known of the early textbook writers was Partenij Zografski (1818−1875). Partenij was the first to advocate a Macedo-Bulgarian compromise literary language based on West Macedonian, which he used in his textbooks and which he described in some detail in articles appearing in the Constantinople Bulgarian journals *Carigradski vestnik* (1857) and *Bălgarski knižici* (1858). Dimităr Makedonski (1847−1898) "contributed to Macedonian nationalism by publishing textbooks which attempted to synthesize Macedonian dialects into a literary language" (Friedman 1975, 87). Partenij's most active pupil, Kuzman Šapkarev (1834−1908), published eight textbooks between 1868 and 1874. He began as a unitarian and the language of his earliest textbooks contained more East-Bulgarian elements than Partenij's, but with each book his language became more West Macedonian and he eventually became a Macedonian nationalist. In 1870, Šapkarev convinced the citizens of Resen to return the Bulgarian textbooks ordered for their school and use his Macedonian ones instead (Friedman 1975, 87; 2000, 181). Grigor Părličev (1830−1893) worked for six years in his native Ohrid as a teacher of Greek. In 1859 he won the Greek poetry prize for his epic *O Armatolós* 'The Commander' but gave up literary activity in Greek and attempted to create a "common-Slavonic" literary language based on Church Slavonic and Russian. Părličev's significance lies in his speeches and sermons in Ohrid dialect, which was refined syntactically and lexically for the purpose and may reflect urban speech of the time. Although this was a purely oral genre, Părličev made notes and in some cases published his addresses, which were thus preserved.

## 2. Attempts at Codifying a Literary Language on a Dialectal Basis

The establishment of the Bulgarian church (Exarchate) in 1870 marked the definitive victory over Hellenism. An independent Bulgarian state was established in 1878 but Macedonia remained part of the Ottoman Empire until 1912. In the face of continuing attempts at Hellenization by the Patriarchate in Phanar (Constantinople), many Mace-

donians identified with the Bulgarian church and the Bulgarian state. "The last ten years of the anti-Phanariot struggle saw the crystallization of Macedonian national and linguistic identity in two forms: unitarian and separatist (Macedonist). The unitarians continued the tradition of Dimitar Miladinov, i.e., they advocated a single Macedo-Bulgarian literary language called *Bulgarian* but based to a greater or lesser extent on Macedonian dialects. The Macedonists felt that the Bulgarian literary language as it was emerging was already too different from Macedonian to be used by them, and they advocated a distinct Macedonian literary language" (Friedman 2000, 179 f.). The first document of explicit Macedonian linguistic and political separatism is *Rečnik od tri jezika* 'Dictionary of Three Languages' [Slav-Macedonian, Albanian and Turkish], Belgrade 1875). Its author, Georgi Pulev (G'orǵi Pulevski or Đorđe Puljevski, 1838−1894), states that the Macedonians constitute a separate nationality and he advocates an autonomous Macedonian literary language and a free Macedonia. Pulevski had read earlier works: his dictionary incorporates Šapkarev's primer *Pьrvonačjalny poznanija za malečki dětca* 'Elementary Knowledge for Little Children' (Constantinople 1868). The basis of Pulevski's literary language is his native dialect, that of Galičnik, Debăr District, but with certain − very unsystematic − concessions to the central dialects (e.g. *raka* 'hand, arm' from the central dialects beside the Galičnik form *roci[ve]*). Pulevski coins some lexical neologisms such as *zaduf* for the Church-Slavonic *vozdux* 'air', dialectal *veter*, or *umeenje* for the Church-Slavonic *xudožestvo* "art". In 1892, the Commune of Kostur (Kastoriá), which, like other communes in the Ottoman Empire, enjoyed cultural autonomy, commissioned three teachers to prepare vernacular teaching materials but including Church-Slavonic lexemes where necessary. The "Macedonian dialect" was to be used also in the municipal administration and for readings in church, but this provided a pretext for the Greek metropolitan to intervene and have the schools and the church closed (Friedman 1993, 162). Explicitly separatist but primarily political organizations were the Macedonian League, which published a draft "Constitution for the Organization of the Macedonian State" in 1880, and the Macedonian Secret Committee (TMK, founded in Sofia in 1886), one of whose members, Temko Popov, wrote a pamphlet entitled "Who is to blame?" in a west-Macedonian literary language with central Macedonian elements, which is, however, of only theoretical interest, since it was not published until 1964. The Macedonian Secret Committee sought a compromise with Serbian interests in Macedonia, and Temko Popov later abandoned the autonomist programme altogether. The *Mlada makedonska knižovna družina* 'Young Macedonian Literary Society' published a journal *Loza* 'The Vine' (Sofia 1892−1894), in what was ostensibly intended to be a Macedonian variant of standard Bulgarian, though their secret constitution, printed in Romania, suggests that they were really autonomists (separatists). There were Macedonian scholarly and literary associations in Belgrade, such as the Macedonian Club, 1901−1902, which gave rise to the Slav-Macedonian Scholarly and Literary Society in St. Petersburg. This fought for the recognition of Macedonian autonomy from 1902 until the death of its leading light, Dimitrija Čupovski, in 1940. At its meetings and in its publications, when they were not in Russian, this association made use of the language codified by Krste P. Misirkov (1874−1926) in his book *Za makedonckite raboti* 'On Macedonian Matters'. The book was printed in Sofia in 1903 but was confiscated by the Bulgarian police in the printing shop before it could be distributed. Misirkov advocated a literary language based "on the Prilep-Bitola dialect (...) which is equidistant from Serbian and

Bulgarian, and central to Macedonia". The orthography was to be phonemic with minor concessions to etymology and the lexicon would be elaborated by collecting material from all Macedonian dialects.

As a result of the Balkan Wars of 1912−1913 Macedonia was divided between Serbia (later Yugoslavia), Albania, Bulgaria and Greece. In the Treaty of Neuilly the Kingdom of Greece committed itself to defending the rights of national minorities within its borders, an obligation confirmed in the Treaty of Sèvres of 10 August 1920. In 1925 Greece submitted to the League of Nations a primer for Slavonic-language schools. This *Abecedar* is in a central Macedonian *Schreibsprache*. It is written in a form of Latin script "similar to that used by the Croats, Czechs, Slovenes", as explained by Greece's ambassador at the League of Nations. In fact, the use of the Latin script shows that the primer was intended to counteract Bulgarian traditions among the minority in Greece, while the adoption of forms characteristic of the Macedonian dialects in Serbia suggests that the primer was intended also to foster separatism among the population north of the border (Hill 1982, 56−58). The *Abecedar* was an interesting but essentially flawed codification and was never used in schools in Greece. Greece expelled Exarchist priests, destroyed all existing Slavonic books and cultural monuments, even pulling down churches and removing gravestones if they had inscriptions in Church Slavonic or Bulgarian, and made it a punishable offence to speak the Slavonic vernacular. In the other countries Macedonian literary activity was tolerated as "dialect literature". There was a drama group in Sofia led by Vojdan Černodrinski. Černodrinski's tragedy *Makedonska krvava svadba* 'Macedonian Blood Wedding', written in 1900, soon became a classic. In Skopje, too, under Serbian (later Yugoslavian) rule, there was an active theatre life in the local Macedonian dialects: Anton Panov's *Pečalbari* 'Migrant Workers' (1932), which premièred in Skopje in 1936, has also become a classic. Such classics were performed in Greece in the liberated territories during the Civil War (1943−1944) and later by Macedonian émigrés in Eastern Europe, the USA and Australia. Kočo Racin (1909−1943), a worker from Veles, hunted by the police in both Yugoslavia and Bulgaria because of his left-wing activities, wrote poetry that has retained its literary value, but more importantly shows a clear striving towards standardization: Racin adopted some features that were not characteristic of his own dialect − perhaps under the influence of the Miladinovs' collection (Lunt 1953, 374).

## 3. Formation of a Macedonian Standard Language as Part of "Nation-Building"

During World War II Bulgaria invaded Vardar Macedonia under the aegis of the Axis powers. The communist partisans set about organizing a resistance movement and in their pamphlets they attempted to use the local dialects. The result was a heterogeneous mixture of different dialects with standard Bulgarian and Serbian, as well as a great deal of creative language building (Szobries 1999). On 2 August 1944 ASNOM (Antifascist Assembly for Macedonian National Liberation), meeting at the monastery of Prohor Pčinjski, declared that there would be a Macedonian republic as part of the new Yugoslavian federation and that the official language of the republic would be Macedonian. A temporary alphabet was established and the first issue of the Commu-

nist party daily *Nova Makedonija* appeared. The first standardization conference was held in Skopje late in 1944. Veles, Prilep and Bitola were cited as the points of reference for the dialectal basis of the literary language. These west-central dialects had always been seen as the best basis for a Macedonian standard language, e.g. by Krste P. Misirkov. They have the largest number of speakers, speakers from other areas can adapt to this dialect group most easily, and this dialect group best fulfils the "separating" function (Garvin 1959). A version of the Cyrillic alphabet was agreed upon, including some digraphs, e.g. for /k'/, /g'/, and the Bulgarian letter <ъ> for schwa, and generally following the Russian/Bulgarian model. The first commission's proposals were not accepted by ASNOM. On 3 May 1945 a new commission, which included Blaže Koneski, later to become the key figure in the codification, standardization and elaboration of standard Macedonian, submitted an alphabet proposal following the Serbian model, which was accepted the same day and published in the next issue of *Nova Makedonija* (5 May 1945). The final version of the alphabet did not include a letter to designate schwa since the central dialects do not have such a phoneme. This same group submitted a brief handbook of orthographic and morphological rules on 2 June 1945, accepted by the Ministry of Education in June 1945. On 15 April 1948 six official modifications to the 1945 rules were published in *Nova Makedonija*. These included replacing the northern (Skopje) verbal suffix *-ue* with its west-central equivalent *-uva* (e.g. *zboruva* replaced *zborue*). The orthographic handbook by Blaže Koneski and Krum Tošev was published in March 1951. The language-planning bulletin *Makedonski jazik* also began to appear 10 times a year from 1950. Koneski's two-part "academy" grammar was published in 1952 and 1954 respectively and a slightly revised, one-volume edition appeared in 1965. The Macedonian Language Institute was established in 1954 and it assumed responsibility for the journal *Makedonski jazik* (an annual from 1958). Blagoja Korubin published his weekly feature *Jazično katče* 'language corner' in *Nova Makedonija* for many years. The codification and implementation of standard Macedonian was part of a nation-building programme designed to stabilize the Yugoslavian federation and legitimize the establishment of a Macedonian nation in only one part of Macedonia (Troebst 1992). The other parts of Macedonia were excluded both politically and linguistically (Voss 2008).

In the lexicon most Turkisms (Ottomanisms, Orientalisms) were relegated to the colloquial or substandard sphere, e.g. *sosedskite državi* 'neighbouring states' rather than *komšiskite državi* (*komšija* 'neighbour' < Tk), though many have resurfaced as a stylistic device in the post-1989 period. The lexicon was expanded by borrowing from other Slavonic languages (Serbian, Bulgarian, Russian, Church Slavonic, e.g. *narod* 'people, nation' for Tk *millet*, but also "internationalisms" such as *nacija*), and by tapping into the dialects, e.g. *nastan* 'event'. *No* 'but' was borrowed from Russian to replace Tk *ama* (Friedman 1989, 318). The morphology and syntax of standard Macedonian are predominantly central, but some features such as the shape of the definite article, certain clitic pronouns, etc., are eastern rather than central. The standard has conservative morphonological alternations in secondary imperfective verbs (*raǵa* from *rodi* 'to give birth', *pomaga* from *pomože* 'to help', as in standard Bulgarian (*ražda*, *pomaga*) and Serbian (*rađa*, *pomaže*), but unlike some west-central (Struga) and south-central (Lerin) dialects, which have the progressive formations *roduva*, *pomožuva* without the morphonological alternations. Standard Macedonian prefers the historically correct masculine gender of some nouns whose stem ends in a consonant, e.g.

*život*, rather than the newer feminine gender as in many dialects. Friedman notes (1975, 97) that "Misirkov's language has fewer traits in common with literary Serbian or Bulgarian than does the modern Macedonian literary language", and over the past 45 years standard Macedonian has moved closer to standard Bulgarian and Serbian. This appears to be a question of "dignity" and norm: despite the necessity of the "separating" function, a new literary language is still influenced by traditions from which the community in question may well be seeking to free itself. The relative pronoun *koj*, which is not typical of the vernacular, dominates in Macedonian written styles, as in Misirkov 1903 under the influence of the established South-Slavonic standard languages. Among the non-west-central features of the standard language are: preservation of intervocalic /v/, the presence of a phonemic velar fricative, final /t/ in the non-proximate/nondistal definite article and its absence > from the 3ʳᵈ singular present marker, oblique pronominal forms *ja, go, gi*, rather than *o, i, ja*, and eastern rather than western usage, quantitative plurals and imperfective aorists. Traditional (conservative) elements are: the distinction between m., fem. & pl. 3ʳᵈ p. dative pronouns (*mu, í, im* rather than *mu* for all three categories).

Poetry flowered early in contemporary Macedonian literature, both before and after World War II. The language and forms of the folksong were familiar to every Macedonian and less adaptation was necessary to create new poems than to write prose, but this soon followed and the amount of innovative original literature produced over the past half century is impressive. Blaže Koneski not only contributed to description and codification, he also wrote much of the artistic and scholarly literature that served to elaborate the standard (Lunt 1953, 385−387). "Intertranslatability" − combining codification, elaboration and cultivation (Fishman 1974, 25) − has been achieved by translating all major works of world literature. While the initial reaction among the old middle classes, who had been brought up with either Serbian or Bulgarian, was in some cases sceptical, there does not seem to have been any such reserve among young people. Contemporary standard Macedonian is an example of accelerated development (Fishman 1974, 85), having compressed into less than 50 years what the other South-Slavonic languages accomplished in about 100. The mass media (radio, television, newspapers) played a significant role in this. The decisive codificational steps were Koneski's grammar (1952−1954) and the *Rečnik na makedonskiot jazik* 'Dictionary of the Macedonian Language' (1961−1966). Voss (2008) argues that a consistent pro-Serbian bias informed the latter. The first volume of a new *Tolkoven rečnik na makedonskiot jazik* 'Explanatory Dictionary of the Macedonian Language' under the editorship of Kiril Koneski appeared in 2003.

## 4. Recent Developments since Independence in 1991

The Republic declared its independence on 19 December 1991. Since independence some Macedonian nationalists have accused Koneski and the communist establishment of Serbianizing the Macedonian standard language. The latter responded by accusing their critics of Bulgarophilia and Serbophobia. Introducing a letter for schwa, in particular, as in the Bulgarian alphabet, has always been a hot political issue, since its adherents are accused of Bulgarophilia. There are legitimate concerns about the influ-

ence of Serbian on the syntax and the lexicon of standard Macedonian but the disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and UN sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia considerably weakened Serbian cultural influence. Independence has terminated the Serbian/Macedonian diglossia that was characteristic of Vardar Macedonia in the 20th century. Macedonian now covers all domains, including those previously reserved for Serbian, such as those of the army and of civil aviation, e.g. Serbian *zastavnik* 'sergeant-major' has been replaced by *znamenosec* (Usikova 1997, 159).

## 5. Codification and Use of Macedonian in the Diaspora

There have been various attempts to codify Macedonian in Northern Greece, notably in the liberated zones during the Greek Civil War (Voss 2003). From 1946−1956 the Australian-Macedonian People's League published a newspaper *Makedonska iskra* 'Macedonian Spark' in Perth, later Melbourne. While showing few signs of standardization, reflecting rather the dialectal and educational backgrounds of the individual writers, the paper remains a remarkable document of Macedonian journalism in pre-standard vernacular. After 1948 the Nea Ellada publishing house in Bucharest published Macedonian primers and anthologies for schools in Eastern Europe where many children had been evacuated during the Greek Civil War as well as a *Gramatika po makedonski ezik*, which, however, presented Macedonian as a mere variant of Bulgarian (Hill 1982, 58−61). The linguistic influence of this alternative codification faded in most cases when the pupils later came into contact with Yugoslavian publications once again. This codification was too artificial to be successful. Language standardization, though it does contain artificial and even arbitrary elements, cannot work without widespread acceptance. A successful standard language must fulfil its separating function and it must generate language loyalty.

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# 110. Herausbildung der Standardsprache: Sorbisch

1. Anfänge der schriftlichen Verwendung des Obersorbischen und des Niedersorbischen
2. Erste Versuche der Kodifizierung des Sorbischen
3. Dialektale Grundlagen der sorbischen Schriftsprachen
4. Konfessionelle Varianten der obersorbischen Schriftsprache
5. Die sprachliche Situation und die Entwicklung der Normen und der Substanz der sorbischen Schriftsprachen seit der Mitte des 19. Jhs.
6. Literatur (in Auswahl)

## Abstract

*The first written records of Upper Sorbian and Lower Sorbian date from the 16th century. Almost all of them are religious texts created in the wake of Luther's Reformation. The oldest document is Luther's New Testament translated by M. Jakubica in 1548 into*