

Language Contact Continues: Bulgarian-Turkish Code Switching in the 21st Century¹

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0. Introduction

The Balkans, including Bulgaria, are famous as a language contact hot spot. Even after a century of population exchanges and assimilation campaigns, Bulgaria remains linguistically diverse, and language contact continues, albeit in different ways than during the centuries of intimate contact leading to the formation of the Balkan *Sprachbund* – for instance through social media. Approximately 9% of the inhabitants of Bulgaria today are ethnic Turks, descendants of settlers from Anatolia during the early days of the Ottoman Empire. The linguistic repertoire of this population, their contact with Bulgarian, and their divergence from the standard Turkish of Istanbul and Ankara have fluctuated following the changing political and social currents in the country. A great deal has been written about the abundant Turkish loan words in Bulgarian and other Balkan languages, including the conditions under which borrowing took place, the special “flavor” of Turkisms in colloquial language, and efforts to scrub Turkisms from the standard languages during periods of nationalist fervor. See, for instance, Kramer 1992, Krăsteva 2000, Grannes *et al.* 2002. Far less attention has been paid to the language of the Turkish ethnic minority itself. In this article, I first briefly sketch the linguistic history of this population, with illustrations from several generations of one family of Bulgarian Turks, then survey the current state of language use in this family, with special focus on the linguistic behavior of younger family members and their Facebook friends.

1. Some History

As background for the rest of the article a little history will be useful. This section presents only the barest outlines of a history of the Turks in Bulgaria, with emphasis on their language(s). For much greater depth and detail on the Turkish

minority in Bulgaria, see Eminov 1997 and Yalamov 2002, among other works on Balkan history.

During Ottoman times (14th through 19th centuries), Turkish was the language of empire, the prestige language used by the ruling elites in the urban centers. It was also the native and perhaps only language of the ancestors of most of today's Bulgarian Turks – Anatolian peasants who were settled in strategic regions of the Balkans, including the mountainous southern part of Bulgaria. These Turkish colonists were brought in to help secure conquered Ottoman territory in the late 14th-early 15th century, but many remained in place as the empire weakened and eventually fell. Ethnic Turks are still the majority of the population in several parts of Bulgaria, particularly in the eastern Rhodope mountains and in some districts of northeastern and east-central Bulgaria near the Black Sea coast.

In the immediate post-Ottoman period, the early 20th century, Turkish lost its status and prestige in Bulgaria and became a minority language. However, within the regions of concentrated ethnic Turkish population, this change in the wider society did not make a great deal of difference to daily language use. The Turkish minority was generally quite isolated, living in remote mountain or rural areas and cut off from most contact both with the Slavic-speaking majority in Bulgaria and with Turkey. The language of the Turkish communities in Bulgaria was a non-standard dialect of Turkish (or actually several dialects, in different parts of the country).

Later in the 20th century, the communist era brought rapid changes in linguistic repertoire as in other areas of life. Official policy toward minority languages veered from periods of encouraging literacy, publishing and education in standard Turkish to other periods when Turkish language use was discouraged and even outlawed. Compulsory education including the teaching of Bulgarian language in schools led to increased bilingualism, though many, especially women, remained monolingual. Collectivization in the early 1960s led many Turkish communities to abandon their mountain villages, moving *en masse* to join existing collectives in the plains and leaving the Rhodopes largely depopulated. This brought them into closer contact with ethnic Bulgarians. Children attended Bulgarian language schools and some people worked with Bulgarians. During the mid-1980s, Todor Živkov's government declared that "there are no Turks in Bulgaria," forced Turks to take Bulgarian names, and forbid Turkish cultural practices including the speaking of Turkish. One result of this anti-Turkish

campaign was that over 300,000 ethnic Turks left Bulgaria for Turkey, most of them in the summer of 1989. Many of these emigrants later returned to Bulgaria, after the fall of the communist government later that year. But increased ties to Turkey and to standard Turkish through visits and media remained. In short, the communist era overall was a time of expanded exposure both to Bulgarian and to standard Turkish.

After 1989, the expansion of language horizons continued. After the collapse of the Živkov regime the right to be Turkish and speak Turkish was restored. Most Turks reclaimed their Turkish names and speak Turkish freely, in public as well as at home. A right to mother-tongue education was instituted, at least in theory.² Television and other media from Turkey are popular, and visitors from Turkey are not uncommon. On the other hand, contact with Bulgarians in school, workplaces, streets and businesses has increased. Young people are fluent in Bulgarian. In addition, other languages have entered the mix. Travel abroad (often for work), the ubiquity of American and western European products, ads, music and movies, not to mention the internet, have increasingly led to interest in and sometimes proficiency in European languages such as English, German and French.

2. Four Generations

This bare-bones history can be illustrated by comparing the lives and linguistic repertoires of several generations. In this section, I describe the language repertoire of four generations of one family – the parents, siblings and younger relatives of my husband, Ali Eminov. My in-laws' cultural and linguistic landscape has undergone enormous changes in just these few generations.

2.1. Generation 2

Ali's parents were born in the 1910s, in the last days of the Ottoman Empire, and grew up before the beginning of the communist era. They lived most of their lives in an isolated village in the eastern Rhodopes, accessible only on foot, and a long day's walk from the nearest town. The surrounding villages were uniformly Turkish. With no ethnic diversity came lack of linguistic diversity: the only language in daily use was the local dialect of Turkish. Men, who were more likely to have been to school and who made occasional trips to town, might know a few

words of Bulgarian and might be literate. My father-in-law, the local imam, could read Arabic script – Ottoman Turkish and the Koran – and spoke enough Bulgarian to buy supplies. My mother-in-law, like other women her age, was monolingual and illiterate. Even after the villagers abandoned their home in the Rhodopes and moved near Burgas in the 1960s to join a collective farm, they lived in a heavily Turkish environment. Since the village moved *en masse*, they still lived with most of the same neighbors who spoke the same Turkish dialect. My mother-in-law never did learn Bulgarian beyond a few memorized words. I remember her saying *Лека нощ деца* ('Good night children'), not to actually tell the children goodnight, but to alert them that the television show of that name was starting. During the period when speaking Turkish in public was illegal, she was not able to shop or communicate with anyone outside the house.

2.2. Generation 2

Ali and his five siblings, the next generation, were born in the 1940s and 1950s, during and soon after the second world war and the communist takeover. Their childhood was spent in the mountain village, but all of them except Ali, who had left Bulgaria by that time, finished growing-up in the cooperative farm village in the plains, and several of them moved to the larger town of Ajtos as young adults. Unlike the previous generation, they all had some education, even the girls. Primary school in the mountain village was taught in Turkish, with Bulgarian as a school subject, so they learned to read and write both Turkish and Bulgarian. The Bulgarian teacher was the only ethnic Bulgarian in the village. Some of the siblings also attended high school, which was taught in Bulgarian, either in a nearby town or after moving to the plains. In addition to exposure to Bulgarian through schooling, members of this generation ended up as adults using Bulgarian in public situations like stores and restaurants, and in some cases having Bulgarian co-workers. Their Bulgarian is fluent but clearly non-native, with typical grammatical errors like lack of gender agreement (1) and personalizing of impersonal constructions (2).³ In (1), Ali's brother uses both feminine and masculine as well as neuter modifiers with a neuter noun; the ungrammatical parts are underlined.

- (1) Миалато лято и ТОЗИ
 minala-to ljato i tozi
 last_{FEM}the_{NEUT} summer_{NEUT} and this_{MASC}
 лято работим краставици.
 ljato rabotim krastavici
 summer_{NEUT} work_{1PL} cucumbers
 ‘Last summer and this summer we’re growing cucumbers.’

In (2a), Ali’s sister conjugates a verb which would normally be impersonal (default third person); compare the normal Bulgarian sentence in (2b). Again the grammatical error is underlined.

- (2) a. Аз нямах в къщи.
 Az njamah v kăšti.
 I lacked_{1SG} in house
 ‘I wasn’t at home.’
- b. Мене ме нямаше в къщи.
 Mene me njamaše v kăšti.
 me me lacked_{3SG} in house
 ‘I wasn’t at home.’

On the other hand, their Turkish is filled with Bulgarian loan words, sometimes making it all but incomprehensible to Turks from Turkey. In (3), the loans are terms related to the collective farm on which the speaker works: TKZS is the Bulgarian acronym for a collective farm (*trudovo kooperativno zemedelstvo stopanstvo*); ‘head agronomist’ is a title.

- (3) О tekezesede glaven agronom oldu.
 he TKZS.in head agronomist became
 ‘He became the chief agronomist in the collective.’

Other loans relate to modern technology (anything invented since the 14th century, basically), government, education, commercial products, names of countries and other geographical terms, names of the months and even some foods. Rudin and

Eminov (1990, 1993) and Rudin (1995) discuss the language usage of this generation in more detail.

2.3. *Generation 3*

The third generation, consisting of Ali's nephews and nieces, is more educated and more fluent in Bulgarian than the preceding generation. This cohort was born in the 1970s. They were raised entirely in the family's adopted village in the plains or in the nearby town of Ajtos. Their home language was Turkish, their monolingual grandparents were alive and involved in their care, and their neighborhoods were completely Turkish. However, their education, both primary school and high school, was entirely in Bulgarian. This means that, although they are fully fluent native Turkish speakers, they may or may not be able to write well in Turkish. This generation were children or teenagers during the anti-Turkish campaign of the 1980s, and their language attitudes were inevitably shaped by that traumatic time. For them as young people speaking Turkish was a political act; listening to Turkish radio or cassettes was a potentially dangerous rebellion. The official repression of Turkish identity backfired: it actually strengthened their sense of Turkishness, encouraged some to become literate in Turkish, and probably slowed the linguistic assimilation to Bulgarian that had been in progress before the 1980s. This generation is also the first to be significantly impacted by the post-communist opening of borders. As young adults they were suddenly able to travel to Turkey or to Western Europe: one niece lives in Germany and others have worked in France, Italy, Belgium and other European Union countries. Even those who stay home in Bulgaria have access to media from the outside world, and by the time they were in their thirties and forties they were on *Facebook*. We see examples of their online language in *Section 3*.

2.4. *Generation 4*

The generation of Ali's great-nieces and great-nephews are the current teens and twenty-somethings. They were born in the 1990s and 2000s, so the communist era, and the anti-Turkish name-changing times, and the upheaval of the change of government are all ancient history to them. They have been bilingual from earliest childhood, and their parents and grandparents are bilingual, as is almost everyone

in their (still heavily ethnic Turkish) neighborhoods. They have gone to school with Bulgarian children, from the *detska gradina* ‘kindergarten’ on. They have Bulgarian friends. Some of them are also learning western languages in school and/or through travel or periods of living abroad. This generation continues their parents’ trajectory toward greater Bulgarian fluency and a broader range of other languages besides Turkish, but apparently without much of the ethno-political baggage; they speak Turkish, but they aren’t militant about it. Another trend they continue is that of diminishing literacy in Turkish. Some do read and write Turkish, but they tend to be more comfortable reading and writing in Bulgarian, and their Turkish spelling may be idiosyncratic. Yusufoff (2013) describes Turkish teenagers in urban centers in Bulgaria as losing fluency in spoken Turkish and preferring to speak Bulgarian. This is not true of teens in our family, whose families and neighbors maintain their Turkish, but could easily become the case in another generation or as they move to other towns. For more detail on this generation, see also Željazkova *et al.* (2012).

3. 21st-Century Language: The View from Facebook

An interesting window into the language use of generations 3 and especially 4 can be found by reading their *Facebook* posts. Most members of these two generations are on line and frequently respond to each other’s posts, using a mix of languages depending on a variety of factors. We collected examples of *Facebook* posts and comment threads from Ali’s younger relatives during 2016; some of these are presented below, with discussion of who uses which language when, how and why. The approach is anecdotal, not a quantitative analysis, and makes no claims to comprehensiveness or predictive power. Nonetheless, it is possible to draw some conclusions.

The vast majority of posts by family members and the comments on them are in Turkish.⁴ However, many posts are in Bulgarian, some are at least partially in English, German or other western languages, and many comment threads are mixed, with different people commenting in different languages. Memes are posted in both Bulgarian and Turkish, and the comments may or may not be in the same language as the meme. Individual posts and comments often contain code switches or borrowings: Bulgarianisms pop up in Turkish posts, as do Turkisms in

Bulgarian ones, and some posts are self-translating, with the same or similar message repeated in more than one language.

Alphabet choice and spelling are also variable in these social media posts. To some extent this probably results from technological factors (typing in Cyrillic vs. Latin letters may be easier depending on one's keyboard or how one's phone is set up; diacritics needed for proper Turkish spelling or for standard transcription of Bulgarian in Latin letters may be difficult to access). Simple sloppiness can be a factor. People type fast and social media is not a context in which proofreading accuracy is highly valued. On the other hand, nonstandard spellings may be used on purpose, to represent pronunciation or tone of voice. But in many cases spelling also reflects greater or lesser degrees of literacy in the given language; in particular those whose schooling has all been in Bulgarian may simply not know how to spell in Turkish, and their invented spellings can be quite interesting.

In addition to simply documenting which language is used and how it is spelled, it would obviously be desirable to account for why that language (and spelling) was chosen. I will not pretend to offer definitive explanations, but it is clear that a large number of factors influence language choice in our family's posts. Among these are:

- Fluency/comfort level in the given language. All members of the family speak both Bulgarian and Turkish, but they vary in which language is easiest for them to write, partly depending on their age and gender, as discussed above.
- Intended audience. Audience on *Facebook* is a complex issue, since theoretically the audience can be the entire online world. However, some posts seem to be addressed mostly to family members, while others garner responses from a wide range of friends.
- Ethnicity. All of the posts examined below are by ethnic Turks, but comments are sometimes added by Bulgarian or other non-Turkish friends, most often in their own languages.
- Variety/originality. In a string of very similar comments (for instance 'congratulations' or 'happy birthday'), putting yours in a different language can be a way to make it stand out.
- Looking cool. Showing off your knowledge of a foreign language can be a motivation for posting in German or French.

- Language of meme. Posting a meme in a particular language may favor comments in the same language.
- Location. Most of the family members we followed live in Ajtos and the surrounding rural area. But a few live in Sofia or abroad, and many post when traveling. Being in a different language environment affects the language chosen for posts.
- Situation. Greetings and congratulations for Muslim holidays are mostly Turkish, while those for western holidays are more likely to be in other languages.

These factors overlap and interact; it is not easy to tease apart the reasons for language choice in particular instances. Let us turn now to looking at some specific examples.

3.1. A (Mostly) Bulgarian Thread

The thread shown in (5) is a typical example of congratulations and good wishes, common in both Turkish and Bulgarian, but all in Bulgarian in this case with the exception of one suffix, the Turkish possessive *-im* of *Nerminim*. Nermin (generation 4) posts a picture of her family's new car, with a wish. Sinan (age unknown) and Selime (generation 3) add their congratulations.

- (4) *Nermin*⁵ Със здраве и във хубави дни да си я караме
 ‘May we drive it in health and in nice days.’
Sinan Cestito Nerminim
 ‘Congratulations my Nermin’
Selime Честито Нермин много е хубава, пожелавам ви без
 аварийно шофиране.
 ‘Congratulations Nermin it's very pretty, I wish you guys
 accident-free driving.’

In this example both Nermin and Selime write absolutely standard Bulgarian (with a quibble or two about punctuation). Sinan, in addition to using the Turkish *-im* suffix, frequently attached to names as a sign of affection, spells her message with Latin instead of Cyrillic alphabet. As mentioned above, this may be simply due to

features of the device she is typing on. Clearly these three young women are all comfortable using Bulgarian.

3.2. *A Mixed Thread; One Language per Person*

In thread (5), Melekber (generation 3) posts a picture of herself with work friends on her birthday, with an explanatory comment in Bulgarian.

- (5) *Melekber* С мойте колежки.
 ‘With my colleagues.’
- Meliha* Dogum gunun kutlu olsun. Allahim her seyî
 gonlunce versin.
 ‘Happy birthday. May God give you everything
 You desire.’
- Semra* Прекрасни сте какичко
 ‘You guys are awesome, Sis.’

Two friends comment on the post, Meliha (a rare generation 2 on *Facebook*) in Turkish and Semra (generation 3) in Bulgarian. Meliha’s comment is more formal and written in standard Turkish, with the exception of missing diacritics: umlauts, a hooked *s*, and a dot-less *i*. The correct spelling would be *Doğum günün kutlu olsun. Allahım her şeyi gönlünce versin*. It is likely Meliha does not know how to type diacritics on her device, or finds it too much trouble; she definitely knows how to write Turkish. She is old enough to have had some schooling in Turkish and is more fluent in Turkish. Semra’s comment, in Bulgarian, is breezier, with the vocative diminutive *kakičko* from *kaka* ‘older sister’ (though Melekber is not her biological sister) showing closeness and affection. Though the participants in the thread choose different languages, they all understand and can enjoy each other’s comments.

3.3. *Showing off with German*

Thread (6) is the first example we have seen of language mixing within a single comment, and also the first example of a language other than Bulgarian and

Turkish. Selime (generation 3) posts a video of herself in a car driving, with a greeting in German.

- (6) *Selime* Guten Morgen
 ‘Good morning’
 Semiha Hallo da ne pítuvaş za hamburg
 ‘Hello might you be traveling to Hamburg?’
 Selime Nay skoro vreme sam tam canim
 ‘I’ll be there very soon, dear’
 Semiha Bekliyorum gozlerim yolda kaldi kanka
 ‘I’m waiting my eyes are on the road, sister.’

Both women involved in this conversation are living in Germany at the time, and though neither has much German proficiency, they like throwing in a few words. The exchange is playful both in its content and in its language choice. Semiha responds to the German *Guten Morgen* with another German greeting – *Hallo* – but then switches into Bulgarian, spelled in Latin letters. Interestingly, she employs Turkish phonetic conventions *ş* instead of *š* or *sh* for the /ʃ/ sound and dotless *ı* for the high back vowel (Bulgarian *ъ*) in the word *pítuvaş* (*пътуваши*) ‘you travel.’ Selime replies also in Latin-orthography Bulgarian, but with a Turkish⁵ endearment, *canim* ‘dear,’ literally ‘my soul’ and then Semiha switches into Turkish, but with a Bulgarian address term: *kanka* is presumably meant to be *kaka* ‘older sister.’

3.4. Self-Translating Threads

A special subset of mixed-language posts are those which “self-translate.” In (7), Sevinç (generation 3) repeats identical messages in Bulgarian and Turkish:

- (7) *Sevinc* Добро утро, усмихни се [smile emoji]
 Günaydın gülümse [smile emoji]
 ‘Good morning, smile. Good morning smile.’

Her reason for translating is unclear, since most of her *Facebook* friends would understand this simple message in Bulgarian; perhaps she intended the second

version for friends in Turkey, or perhaps she just felt like emphasizing the message by elaborating on it. The motivation is clear in (8), however. Necmi (generation 4) lives in Belgium and has diverse friends who do not necessarily have a common language. Following an incident in Brussels he wants to get the word out to everyone that he and his family are alright. As his English indicates, he is more educated than any of the previous generations. The three versions of the message – English, Bulgarian and Turkish – are not exact translations, but all convey the same information, in fluent, idiomatic language.

- (8) *Necmi* Dear friends, we are OK. Thank you so much for your concern and messages!
 Здравейте скъпи приятели, много от вас ми писаха да питат как сме след атентатите в Брюксел. Ние сме добре.
 ‘Hello dear friends, many of you have written me to ask how we are after the attacks in Brussels. We are well.’
 Sevgili arkadaşlar, herşey yolunda. Msjlar için tşkler.
 ‘Dear friends, everything is in order. Thanks for messages’

Some posts contain partial self-translations, without repeating whole messages. In (9) Selime (whose German post we saw earlier) again starts posting in German, then translates her greeting into Turkish before eventually segueing into Bulgarian. Her purpose in this post is to wish everyone a happy March 1; Baba Marta ‘Granny March’ is the personification of the month and symbol of spring.

- (9) *Selime* Guten Morgen / Günaydın dünya hayırlı hafta sonu diliyorum herkese Готви за посрещане на Баба Марта.
 ‘Good morning. Good morning world I wish everyone a good weekend. Ready to welcome Baba Marta.’

3.5. Formulaic Expressions

Much of what gets posted on *Facebook* is quite repetitive and formulaic. One of the most common posts for our relatives is a photo of food or drink, or a group of people sitting around a laden table, which almost automatically elicits comments along the lines of ‘cheers’ or ‘bon appetit’ – normally either *наздраве/nazdrave* ‘to your health’ in Bulgarian or *afiyet olsun* ‘enjoy’ in Turkish. Some people try to make their comments more interesting by varying the formula, jokingly threatening to show up and share in the feast, adding signals of enthusiasm (exclamation marks, repetitions of the final letter) and occasionally by use of other languages. Thread (10) is a typical example, involving several members of generations 3 and 4. Durdugül (generation 4) posts a picture of herself at a festive table and starts off the comments. The first few comments are in variously-spelled Bulgarian (and one German) but after a while the language shifts to Turkish.

- | | | |
|------|-----------------|--|
| (10) | <i>Durdugul</i> | Nazdrave
‘Cheers’ |
| | <i>Sevinc</i> | Наздраве след малко идвам
‘Cheers I’ll be there shortly’ |
| | <i>Dursun</i> | Proost!!!
‘Cheers’ |
| | <i>Ayshe</i> | Nazdraveeee!!
‘Cheers’ |
| | <i>Selime</i> | Nazdrave Ayşemmm
‘Cheers, my Ayşe’ |
| | <i>Doan</i> | Ooh afiyet seker olsun
‘Ooh enjoy may it be sweet’ |
| | <i>Meliha</i> | Afiyet olsun
‘Enjoy’ |
| | <i>Gulshen</i> | Ohaaaa ben de geliorum valla afiet oldun
‘Wow I’m coming too for sure enjoy.’ |

Another common situation eliciting formulaic responses is holiday greetings. Like food/drink responses, these receive almost automatic ‘happy holiday’ responses, with the form to some extent dependent on which holiday is being celebrated.

Some tend to get comments in Bulgarian. For instance, on International Women’s Day, March 8, Selime (generation 3) posts a picture of several sexy guys, with a joking comment in Bulgarian. The reply comments are all in Bulgarian, too, and all include the set phrase *честит празник/čestit praznik* ‘happy holiday,’ albeit with a range of spellings (including an unusual *sh* for /ʃ/ by Ayşe).

- (11) *Selime* Честит празник ,дами!
 ‘Happy holiday, ladies!’
 Adile Mersi mila [smile emoji] cestit praznik i na teb
 ‘Thanks dear, happy holiday to you too.’
 Ayshe Shestit praznik mila [smile emoji][kiss emoji]
 ‘Happy holiday dear’

On the other hand, on the Turkish/Muslim holiday of kurban bayram, the feast of sacrifice, everyone posts greetings in Turkish, as in (12), almost all including the phrase *bayramınız kutlu (or mubarek) olsun*, literally ‘may your holiday be happy.’ These are so common that I haven’t listed specific names for the posters; each could be found many times.

- (12) Bayramınız mubarek olsun
 ‘Happy bayram’
 Kurban bayramınız kutlu olsun canlarım
 ‘Happy kurban bayram, my dears’
 Bayramınız mubarek olsun hepinizi
 ‘Happy bayram to all of you.’

The one kurban bayram thread we noticed that used Bulgarian is, significantly, one that involves an ethnic Bulgarian friend. Someone named Genka, a Bulgarian name, presumably a Bulgarian friend of some of the people who respond, posts the standard holiday greeting formula. Her post elicits a string of comments from generation 3 and 4 ethnic Turks, but instead of wishing her a happy Bayram, they all thank her, in Bulgarian.

- (13) *Genka* KURBAN BAYRAMINIZ KUTLU
OLSUN
'Happy bayram'
- Айше* Много тii blagodarq!
'Thank you very much!'
- Фатмегюл* Blagodarqq mnogoo!!
'Thanks a lot!!'
- Azize* Благодаря ти много
'Thank you very much.'
- Selime* БЛАГОДАРЯ ТИ МИЛА [wink emoji]
'Thank you dear'
- Kerime* Blagodarq kako
'Thanks sister'

It is likely she is not Muslim, so it would make no sense to wish her a good holiday. And it is very possible that she does not speak Turkish, but has just learned or copied this one phrase. Notice, by the way, the common use of *q* as a transcription of Cyrillic *я*, presumably because they share the same position on the standard keyboard.

3.6. Literacy in Bulgarian and in Turkish

The youngest members of generation 4 are most likely to make long posts in Bulgarian and have the highest degree of literacy in Bulgarian. For instance, (14) shows a few of the messages our great-niece Firdes received on her birthday. She is a young teen who has both Bulgarian and Turkish friends. The three messages in (14) are all from Turkish teenagers.⁶ The first two – (14a) and (14b) – are in fluent correctly written standard Bulgarian, in an over-the-top, flowery, cliché-filled style that seems to be typical of congratulatory messages from girls this age. A liberal sprinkling of heart, flower and smile emoji is represented here by '[...].'

- (14) a. Любовчеее [...] Честит рожден ден! [...] Пожелавам ти много здраве [...], щастие [...], успех [...], любов [...] и всичко останало, за което мечтаеш, да се сбъдне! Искам те

така винаги с усмивка [...] Не забравяй, че винаги съм до теб ... Обичам те [...]

‘Little love [...] Happy birthday! [...] I wish you much health [...], happiness [...], success [...], love [...] and everything else that you dream of, may it come true! I want you always to be smiling [...] Don’t forget that I am always with you. I love you [...]

- b. Честит рожден ден, прекрасницо [...] пожелавам ти много здраве, щастие, късмет и най-вече любов [...] бъди все така лъчезарна и усмихната, също така искам да знаеш, че винаги съм до теб и мноого те обичкам [...] Цункам те принцесо моя [...]

‘Happy birthday, wonderful one [...] I wish you much health, happiness, luck and most of all love [...] always be as bright and smiling (as now), I also want you to know that I am always with you and I loove you lotsss [...] I kiss you my princess.’

- c. Doum gunun kutlu olsunnn guzel burchetkamm iyiki doudun iyiki varsinnn tatlum [...]

‘Happy birthday my beautiful cousin it’s good you were born may it stay good my sweet.’

The third message, (14c), is similar in some ways – it is formulaic, gushing, and uses some of the same conventions (emoji, doubling or tripling final letters for emphasis). However, it differs in being in Turkish, and interestingly, is much less correctly written. These are girls who write Bulgarian every day at school. They write Turkish, if at all, only on social media, where correct spelling and grammar are not required. Unlike (14a-b), (14c) has numerous small spelling errors (missing ğ, missing umlauts, *u* for *ı*; standard spelling would be *Doğum günün kutlu olsun güzel (?) iyiki doğudun iyiki varsin tatlim*) and one non-Turkish word, indicated by ‘(?)’ The final *-m* of *burchetkam* is clearly the first-person possessive suffix, and I believe *burchetka* is meant to be the Bulgarian word for ‘cousin,’ *bratovčedka*. In casual speech this often loses the unstressed second syllable and the *d* is of course devoiced: informal pronunciation *bratčetka* or *bračetka*. *Burchetka* is just a metathesis away.

A higher degree of literacy in Bulgarian than in Turkish is typical not only of generation 4, but also of many in generation 3, who also had all their schooling in Bulgarian. The post in (15) is written by our niece Gülşen, now in her forties, answering a question from a Turkish speaker about news of the family. Gülşen writes (more or less) correctly in Bulgarian, and she speaks Turkish fluently, but her Turkish writing is distinctly non-standard. A more standard version is given below for comparison.

(15) *Gulshen* Ben italiadaylm anem bitaz ratslz uzeir getmanfa
callshma bashladl tir sureri codcukla evde ablam
bashlarlna ama bende donush yapcam ayln
sonunda
'I am in Italy. Mom is a little unwell. Uzeir has
started working in Germany. He's driving big rigs.
The children are at home. My sister is taking care
of them. But I'll also return at the end of the
month.'

standard: Ben Italyadayım. Annem biraz rahatsız.
Uzeyir Almanyada çalışmaya başladı. TIR
sürüyor. Çocuklar evde. Ablam başlarında.
Ama bende dönüş yapacağım ayın sonunda.

Some of the differences between Gülşen's post and the standard version are simply typos: *bitaz* for *biraz* and *getmanfa* for *Germany* are just typing errors, and the lack of punctuation or capitalization makes it look less standard than it is. But some other errors show that she is not used to writing Turkish. She shortens words, spelling them as they are pronounced in casual speech: *ratsIz* for *rahatsız*; *yapcam* for *yapacağım* (underlined letters missing). She uses a Bulgarianism: *Germany* for *Almanya*. She uses a local dialect grammatical form: *sürer(i)* for *sürüyor*. And she uses idiosyncratic spelling conventions. Upper case *I* for *ı* in *ratsIz* and *callshma* shows awareness of the undotted *i* of Turkish, but *c* for *ç* (/tʃ/) and *sh* for *ş* (/ʃ/) in *callshma* are nonstandard, while *dc* for Turkish *c* (/dʒ/) in *codcukla(r)* is presumably based on the Bulgarian spelling *дж* for the same sound.

3.7. Comments from Bulgarians

In some Facebook threads, the language of comments seems to depend primarily on the ethnicity of the posters. For those who have both Bulgarian and Turkish friends, this can result in a mix of Bulgarian and Turkish comments. To give just one example, here are the comments on photos of a new baby, posted by Leman (generation 4, in her 20s). Leman is university educated, works in Sofia, and has a multi-ethnic circle of friends. She starts the thread with a comment on the baby photo in English. The ensuing comments are predictable: nearly everyone admires the baby and gives more or less formulaic wishes for her health and well-being.

- (16) *Leman* Our Precious Inaya
Anelia Çok tatli Mashallah
 ‘Very sweet Congratulations’⁷
- Ljubomira* Лем, чудесна е! Да е здрава и много щастлива!
 ‘Lem, she is wonderful. May she be healthy and very happy’
- Yuksel* Lemi, prilicha na teb ... da vi e jiva i zdrava i da raste
 s mayka i bashta ... i da mia bezgrijno detstvo ... cenabi allahim belqdan kazadan, kotu gozden korusun ... amin.
 ‘Lemi, she looks like you ... may she be well and healthy and grow up with mother and father ... and have a carefree childhood ... May God protect her from misfortune, accidents and the evil eye ... amen.’
- Madlen* Krasavica! Da vi e jiva i zdrava!
 ‘Beautiful!’ May she be well and healthy!’
- Sunay* Mashala Allah nazardan saklasin anali babali bütsün
 ‘Congratulations God protect her from evil eye may she grow up with mother and father.’
- Cem* Maşallah :))
 ‘Congratulations’

<i>Selime</i>	Maşallah maşallah maşallah 'Congratulations congratulations congratulations'
<i>Martin</i>	Леми, да ви е жива и здрава ! Прекрасна е 'Lemi, may she be well and healthy! She's wonderful'
<i>Hafize</i>	Lemancim anali babali buyusun. Allah saglikli mutlu uzun omurler masip etsin. Срк tatli massallah. 'My dear Leman may she grow up with mother and father. May God give her a healthy, happy and long life. Very sweet, congratulations'
<i>Ceylan</i>	Küçücük bir melek o ... maşallah allah nazardan saklasın 'What a little angel ... congratulations God protect her from evil.'
<i>Сабрие</i>	Голяма красавица е малката Иная ,да ви е жива и здрава да расте умна и щастлива! 'What a great beauty is little Inaya, may she be well and healthy to grow up smart and happy!'
<i>Роза</i>	да и изям бузките 'I could eat up her cheeks'
<i>Emel</i>	чаровна като майка си, да тие жива и здрава Леми 'Enchanting like her mother, may she be well and healthy Lemi'

Of the thirteen commenters, four are clearly Bulgarian: Ljubomira, Madlen, Martin and Роза. All four of them write in Bulgarian. The remaining nine have Turkish names:⁸ six of them write in Turkish, two in Bulgarian and one (Yuksel) starts in Bulgarian but switches to Turkish halfway through.

3.8. *The Effect of Memes*

Finally, let us consider the effect of memes on language choice. Like other people, Turks often post memes – usually humorous images and/or text that are copied and

spread. Members of generation 3 and 4 frequently post memes in both Bulgarian and Turkish, and more often than not comment on them in the same language. For example, Selime (generation 3) posted a meme consisting of a cartoon rabbit and the Bulgarian message in (17a). Her response (17b) is also in Bulgarian, and uses the same word for ‘crazy’ as the original meme. The tendency to stay in the same language does not last long, though. Two friends make follow-up comments agreeing with her, one in Turkish and one in Bulgarian.

- (17)
- | | | |
|----|-----------------|--|
| a. | <i>meme:</i> | За да си постоянно щастлив, е необходимо да си постоянно луд
‘To be permanently happy, it’s necessary to be permanently crazy.’ |
| b. | <i>Selime</i> | Луда си оставам
‘I’m staying crazy.’ |
| c. | <i>Ali</i> | Doğru
‘That’s right |
| d. | <i>Durdugul</i> | Tosno kazano hihi
‘Correctly stated heehee.’ |

Another Bulgarian meme was a list of postal codes (*Пощенски кодове*) with the code for the village of Poljanovo missing. Members of the family grew up in this village or have relatives there, so found the omission amusing. Sevinç (generation 3) posts the meme with a comment in Bulgarian.

- (18)
- | | | |
|----|---------------|---|
| a. | <i>meme</i> | Пощенски кодове на община Айтос
‘Postal codes for the Ajtos municipality’ |
| b. | <i>Sevinc</i> | Къде изгубиха пощенският код на |
| c. | | Поляново? Има ли знаещи ,аз го помня
на изуст няма как да го забравя :)
‘Where did they lose the postal code for Poljanovo village? Is there anyone who knows? I know it by heart, there’s no way I’d forget it.’ |

Replies were all just emojis or numbers (“8544”), but from Turks who clearly understood and enjoyed the Bulgarian post.

4. Conclusions

This anecdotal survey of *Facebook* posts is obviously not a scientifically valid study; it is small and unrepresentative (we picked out posts that we found interesting, ignoring the majority which are in Turkish and very repetitive), and focuses on one mostly rural family rather than sampling Turks from all parts of Bulgaria. Nonetheless, some conclusions can be drawn about the use of Bulgarian by younger members of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria. It is clear from the *Facebook* data that Turks of what we have called generations 3 and 4 are fully bilingual and in some cases multilingual. Use of world languages (English, German, etc.) is sporadic but increasing as travel and education become more available. They use Bulgarian and Turkish easily and expect most if not all of their friends to understand and use both as well. They manipulate their languages for a variety of effects and purposes, choosing the language appropriate to a given topic, meme or addressee, for variety or humorous effect, but language choice also appears random at times. In stark contrast to just thirty years ago, in the 1980s, there is no hesitation to use Turkish in a public forum; indeed, most posts are in Turkish. On the other hand, members of the younger generations, again in contrast to their elders in very recent times, do not feel constrained to express Turkish identity via Turkish language. They appear to use Bulgarian freely, voluntarily and without feeling that it makes them less Turkish. Bulgarian is gaining ground as the language of literacy: many members of generation 3 and especially 4 write better in Bulgarian and may not know how to spell in Turkish. Few members of generation 2 are on *Facebook*, but those few who are on line do know how to spell Turkish.

All of these trends are visible in non-internet contexts as well. In face-to-face conversation our young relatives switch easily between Turkish and Bulgarian, with full fluency in both. However, especially for the youngest members of generation 4, Bulgarian may be gaining ground as the language used most outside the home (*e.g.*, at school). Yusufoff (2013) claims that this move toward increased use of Bulgarian has gone further among members of the Turkish minority in urban areas, especially Sofia, where the youngest generations in some

cases are losing fluency in spoken as well as written Turkish. The spoken Turkish of all generations of the Turkish minority contains many Bulgarian loan words, and both their Turkish and Bulgarian are increasingly dotted with Anglicisms. Predicting the future would be foolish; things can change quickly and unexpectedly, as recent history amply demonstrates. But if current trends continue, the next generation of Bulgarian Turks will be more international in outlook and more linguistically assimilated to the Bulgarian majority.

Notes

0. This paper would not exist without my husband, Ali Eminov. Profuse thanks to him for help in spotting interesting *Facebook* posts, for assistance with Turkish translation, and for introducing me to his wonderful family. An earlier version of much of this material was presented at a Slavic Linguistics Society workshop on Language and Identity (Rudin and Eminov 2016).

1. Eminov 2016 details the lack of significant Turkish-language education in practice, in spite of its enshrinement in the Bulgarian constitution, for a variety of reasons.

2. Examples (1) through (3), from Rudin and Eminov (1993), were recorded some 25 years ago, but speakers of this generation still produce similar constructions.

3. Actually, at least half of all posts and comments consist primarily or wholly of emojis, photos or other non-linguistic elements. I deal here only with posts that contain words, in some recognizable language.

4. In the examples, the posters' names are spelled as on *Facebook*, even if this is not a standard spelling; however, I give only the first name even if the person uses both first and last name on *Facebook*. When referred to in the text, names are given in their standard Turkish spelling.

5. *Canım* is a common and long-standing Turkism in Bulgarian, and for that matter in other Balkan languages; one could certainly argue that it is not a switch to Turkish to use it. However, if Selime had been thinking in Bulgarian I suspect she would have written *dzhanam* or something similar instead of using the Turkish spelling with *c*.

6. Firdes also received some messages in Bulgarian from Bulgarian girls, indistinguishable in style and content from (14a-b). She answers each message in the appropriate language.

7. 'Congratulations' is not a very good translation for *maşallah*, but I use it here because this would be a normal English expression in the circumstances. *Maşallah* literally means 'may Allah protect.' It is often used admiringly (Redhouse Turkish-English dictionary gives its first meaning as 'Wonderful! Magnificent! Just look at that! May wonders never cease!'); the connection is that admiring something might attract the evil eye, so calling for protection is appropriate.

8. Anelia could be either Turkish or Bulgarian, but given that she writes in Turkish, I assume she is Turkish. Few Bulgarians know or use Turkish these days.

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