

RESTORATION OF LANGUAGE IDEAL AS A FORM OF PURISM IN BULGARIANS' LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION DURING 18-19 CENTURIES

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ABSTRACT: BULGARIAN SCHOLARS, WHO WERE THE CREATORS OF THE MODERN STANDARD BULGARIAN LANGUAGE, HAD TWO OPTIONS. THE ONE WAS TO UNDERTAKE LANGUAGE CONSTRUCTION, BASED ON THE THEN EXISTING SPOKEN LANGUAGE, WHICH THOUGH, WAS CHARACTERIZED WITH RICH VARIABILITY AND LACK OF SOLID TRADITION, SOURCE OF AUTHORITY. THE OTHER OPTION WAS TO TURN TO THE PAST, BRUSHING THE DUST OF OBLIVION OFF THE ALREADY EXISTING ARCHAIC LANGUAGE VERSION, WHICH WAS A SELF-CONFIDENCE DRIVER. IN THE PRESENT STUDY I AM TRYING – BE REPLACED BY "SEEN" TO REGARD THE SITUATION FROM ANOTHER ANGLE. AS FAR AS THIS TENDENCY WAS MARKED IN THE PERIOD OF PRE-STANDARDIZATION OF BULGARIAN LANGUAGE (BULGARIAN NATIONAL REVIVAL) AND AS FAR AS IT WAS IN THE CONDITIONS OF LANGUAGE CONTACT (WITH GREEK AND TURKISH LANGUAGES), IT NATURALLY RESULTED IN THE GENESIS OF THE LANGUAGE PURISM. PURISM, AS A DOCTRINE CONCOMITANT OF THE STANDARDIZATION OF A LANGUAGE, IS A THOROUGHLY NATURAL THING, BECAUSE ITS INITIAL STAGE (THE SO-CALLED PRE-STANDARDIZATION), CHARACTERIZED WITH SYNCRETISM OF BASIC STANDARD LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS – DIFFERENTIATING AND SYMBOLIC – IS CONNECTED TO THEIR MEANING AS A FOUNDING FACTOR FOR NATIONAL IDENTITY.

KEY WORDS: LINGUISTIC IDEAL, PURISM, LANGUAGE PURISM, RESTORATION, BULGARIAN LANGUAGE, CHURCH-SLAVONIC LANGUAGE, NATIONAL REVIVAL, LANGUAGE CONSTRUCTION, LANGUAGE SITUATION

THE restoration of linguistic ideal is intrinsic to those Slavonic peoples, who turn to tradition in their effort to create a modern standard language, which serves communication of a new kind in state formation. The latter ignores the languages in the communicative space in a cultural and therefore linguistic aspect. Bulgarian people are one of them and their relying on tradition marked their effort for cultural and political emancipation in the period between 18th and 19th centuries: the time of the foundation of the Bulgarian nation and the time when Bulgarian language territory was part of the Ottoman Empire. Bulgarian scholars, who were the creators of the modern standard Bulgarian language, had two options. The one was to undertake language construction, based on the then existing spoken language, which though, was characterized with rich variability and lack of solid tradition, source of authority. The other option was to turn to the past, brushing the dust of oblivion off the already existing archaic language version, which was a self-confidence driver, added to Paisii Hilendarski's suggestion of Bulgarians' leading role among the whole Slavonic family. Practically, that was the reason for the beginning of the so-called fights for the basis of the standard language, which led to the clarification of the idea of its structural substance in the middle of 19th century.

A great amount of research has been dedicated to the tendency of the usage of Church-Slavonic language in that period, and different theses about the reasons and the results of the debate and the scholars' practical tests have been stated. In the present study I am trying to regard the situation from another angle. As far as this tendency was marked in the period of pre-standardization of Bulgarian language (Bulgarian National Revival) and as far as it was in the conditions of language contact (with Greek and Turkish languages), it naturally resulted in the genesis of the **language purism**. Purism, as a doctrine concomitant of the standardization of a language, is a thoroughly natural thing, because its initial stage (the so-called pre-standardization), characterized with syncretism of basic standard language functions – differentiating and symbolic – is connected to their meaning as a founding factor for national identity.

THE attempt to interpret the idea of restoration of Church-Slavonic language in linguistic practice leads to the realization of one of the kinds of purism – the archaistic one. In the Bulgarian case it represents the tendency not only to substitute the newer grammatical, word-forming and lexical elements with archaic ones, but also to replace the whole language system with the archaic one.

IN order to remove the doubts about the adoption of Church-Slavonic language as a home language formation, it would be important to define its status in the Bulgarian language situation from inter-lingual point of view in the period of 18th-19th centuries. In many works on particular scholars' contribution to the standard language construction and on the language situation in the Bulgarian National Revival it is pointed that Church-Slavonic was perceived by the Bulgarian user as their own language, but at any rate, the question about its presence remains unclear – should its usage be valued as bilingualism, or as diglossia. Systematic research on the presence of Church-Slavonic language in the Bulgarian language situation during the period of 18th-19th centuries in the light of bilingual behavior and its evaluation as a foreign or indigenous formation has not been done. The attitude towards Church-Slavonic language is not only a linguistic problem – it's even rather a sociolinguistic one, and it is directly connected to the scholars' ideology and cultural-political orientation. That is why the task here is not to comment on its substantial presence (proximity/remoteness from new Bulgarian, old Bulgarian and middle Bulgarian, which has relative share in the texts of the period – a monumental task for collective research), but its perception and the evaluation of its place in the language situation by the users of Bulgarian language according to the cultural ideology and linguistic notions during the Bulgarian National Revival.

AT the existing variety in the connotations which Bulgarian and foreign scholars studying Slav and Bulgarian languages attach to the term Church-Slavonic language, it is right to specify its meaning, so to avoid any misunderstanding. In Bulgarian linguistics this term is used to name the Russian edition of old Bulgarian and middle Bulgarian language, which is one of the forms of the archaic written language in Bulgaria as it was brought back to the country in 17th century through the liturgical literature printed in Russia [see Dogramdjieva 1983: 61; Ivanova-Mircheva, Haralampiev 1999: 248 – 255 and the references given]. The language was a solid language system with faint structurally-developmental possibilities, which in the course of centuries had no contact with live language systems, and it was used mainly for the needs of the church, hence its name. Therefore, the term is a late version of Old Bulgarian language. In Bulgarian linguists' research Church-Slavonic language is treated as above-ethnic formation as for some time it served the ethnically-related, but yet different Slavonic and non Slavonic orthodox peoples' cultural needs (mainly Bulgarians,

Serbs, Russians, Ukrainian, Belarusians, Romanians). Its influence was “from above downwards”, but before that its initial basis was a particular ethnic language, which, becoming the language of Slavonic orthodox liturgy, underwent later correction, i.e. it was preceded by from down upward” movement. In the 80s of 20th century Bulgarian linguistics faced the problem of a collective study of the Russian edition of old Bulgarian language, which was made in 16th century and codified with Meletii Smoltritski’s grammar in 1619, as the recommendations repeatedly were on starting chronologically with the codified in 17th century texts backwards, so as to establish the parameters of russification and the particular basis, on which the edition was produced [Ivanova-Mircheva 1987: 327 – 351]. This problem still awaits its solution.

DEFINING of Church-Slavonic language by most foreign linguists – since the National Revival time until present days – is also based on the concept that it is above-ethnic formation¹. However, what has not been accounted for is the fact that substantially it was ethnic for some of the Slavonic languages, i.e. it had only the “from above downwards” influence. Thus, in the contemporary publications, dedicated to the Bulgarian language situation after Bulgaria fell under Ottoman rule, a lot of foreign linguists have commented on the existence of this formation ambivalently – either as indigenous, or as strange to the Bulgarian user (or so strange as to any other Slav) [see Ivanova-Mircheva, Haralampiev for more details 1999: 239; see also Del’Agata 1999; Gladkova, Likomanova 2002: 189 – 195].

DURING the National Revival the Church-Slavonic language, most often called Old Bulgarian or Slavonic, was identified with Old Bulgarian for a long time. The Bulgarian writer of Bulgarian National Revival period used printed text coming from Russia, for the needs of their church practice, the language of which was accessible for them to a great extent and as *sacral* as the text itself. It had highly prestigious and unchangeable normalization, it was codified in respectable grammar books, among which is mainly M. Smotrtritski’s “Грамматика Славенския правилное Синтагма” (1618, 1619, 1648, 1721, 1755) and its revision made by the Serb A. Mrazovich “Руководство к славенстей грамматике” (1793). They were widely used and even rewritten by hand for educational needs [see Ganey for more details 1905; Dilevski 1955]. Additionally, the Bulgarian user was a witness of a great variety of versions in spoken language. The fact that written language, which in their view was the standard language, happened to have one more version did not bother the user and they considered it something normal. It was so because since 12th century, when the structural analytical problems began, the spoken and written version of Bulgarian language became different and there appeared a gap between them due to the lack of official and universal codifying act of standard language modernization.

THE usage of old language formations was not unfamiliar to Bulgarian Revival scholars. We find the information given by the English traveller Joseph Carlyle in 1801 very interesting. From the view of an impartial observer he documented the awareness of the monks at Zograf Monastery about the connection between the Old and New Bulgarian language. “The service”, he wrote, “is still held in Bulgarian and this language still prevails in this monastery... The library in Zograf didn’t take us much time, as there were no other manuscripts, but the ones in Bulgarian. We took a look at 300 at least, most of which were beautifully written. We were told that the majority contained liturgies and service books. The

¹ I will leave aside the fact that some foreign Slav linguists used the term *Church-Slavonic* to designate all editions in Old Bulgarian, adding to them also the formation “middle Bulgarian edition in Old Slavonic”, the connotation of which remains unclarified.

hand-written liturgies are not used any longer. They have been changed conveniently for printed copies, issued in Russia. Printed liturgies, however, are by no means as comprehensible, because they are mingled with plenty of Slavonic terms, totally unfamiliar to the Bulgarian speech, which even today is the same as it was 700 years ago, when these books were written. If the thing, in which different people from the monastery repeatedly convinced me, is true, it is very interesting. And, in my view, it is almost a single case in philology, when a barbaric people, going through all vicissitudes of its history, as an independent country and under the rule of different powers, have managed to preserve their language pure and unchanged through the centuries" [English Travelogues 1987: 440 – 441]. The remark, which was apparently suggested by the monks, that the poor comprehension of the printed texts (i.e. the Church-Slavonic ones) was due to the terms, i.e. it is on lexical level, but not to the graphic, phonetics or grammar, is significant. Apart from this, it was natural for terminology to be renewed with the course of time and to be incomprehensible because it was characteristic of a sphere of language, which was not typical for the verbal unregulated communication.

THE attestation we get from D. Dushanov's memories makes us think that during the National Revival in some educated circles there existed a clear idea of the difference in the pronunciation of the specific Russian reflexes of the nasal sounds and Ъ and Ь. He wrote about his father, who was a priest and owned a rich library², where there were also manuscripts, that "when he was reading he didn't pronounce like the priests nowadays, but he would read everything in the old way, for example да бъдат воля твоя ... Хлеб наш насъщний дажд нам днес и остави нам дълги наша, яко же и ми оставяем дължником нашим ...".

THE similarities between Church-Slavonic and Bulgarian languages have been commented on by a large number of National Revival scholars. Actually, in the number of letters, which are the same as in old Bulgarian manuscripts, the difference is only one and, what's more, unrealized: the letter **Ж** is missing and it is replaced by **У**. We should not forget though, that some of Western Bulgarian dialects suggest the same continuant of the big nasal sound, and also that such reflex of the nasal sound suggests the so called non nasal spelling. The differences are more in phonetic aspect: the letters **Ъ** and **Ь** in a word are replaced with **О** и **Е**; **А** is pronounced as [ia]/[ʼa], **Ѣ** is only [e] – as in the dialects on almost half the territory of Bulgaria – and the Bulgarian user probably took **Ы** as a letter meaning [i] because the phoneme [θi] didn't exist in a great number of Bulgarian dialects. On the other hand, the specific Bulgarian combinations of ra, la, the continuants of *tj, *dj, which are **Щ** and **ЖД**, as well as some other phonetic peculiarities in the majority of words remained unchanged. Church-Slavonic "had the same Old Bulgarian palatalizations and assimilation processes; it preserved the epenthesis as the Evtimii's reform preserved it" [Ivanova-Mircheva 1987: 341]. As far as morphology, the language has strict synthetic nature – like the language of the Turnovo literary school. The rearrangement of declension categories and the generalization of some case endings, as well as the participle reversals in Church-Slavonic are also typical for the middle Bulgarian records and the records of Turnovo literary school. "The slow transition from old Bulgarian to middle Bulgarian" can be steadily observed in the morphology of Church-Slavonic language [*Ibid.*, p. 340]. The complex syntactic structures in church-

² Dushanov describes several very rich libraries in the town of Kazanlak (then a village), and it is significant not only for the level of literacy, but also for the conscious attitude towards the books and the literary activity among Bulgarians.

Slavonic, and mainly the specific ones, are analogical to the archaic Bulgarian ones and the ideas of elevated style. On a word-formation and lexical level, the material is genetically the same and after a brief semantic adapting stage the usage becomes habitual.

THAT is why the differences between Bulgarian and Church-Slavonic languages during the specified period are not considered to be foreign by the Bulgarian user; or if they are, they are qualified as insignificant and do not evoke a feeling of a foreign language. It might be difficult to comprehend due to the user's low education and the poor knowledge of other communicative spheres apart from the everyday speech, or because of the chronological distance of the language norm. However, Church-Slavonic cannot be ethnically foreign, the way Turkish, Greek, or any other language are. This was the reason for which the Bulgarian scholars identified Church-Slavonic with Old Bulgarian language for many years, and accepted it as their native language, which is evident from their statements.

* * *

WHILE examining the more explicitly expressed reviews of most Bulgarian scholars about the nature and place of Church-Slavonic language in the language situation during the Revival, regardless of the divergence between language ideology and practice, we cannot miss the fact that *only the Bulgarians among the rest of the Slavonic people formulated verbally their sense of proximity and affiliation of Church-Slavonic to their ethnical language*³. One of the explanations of this fact is that no other Slavonic language led the analytic processes to such extreme results, which caused the deliberate search for a sample for language cultivation and building a standard, as well as for codification and intellectualization of the linguistic means, correspondent to the lost ones. The mere duration of the Church-Slavonic language presence in Bulgarian language situation [see Nikolova for further details 2011: 29 – 36] is indicative for the degree of its sense of "indigenous" language form.

SINCE the status of Church-Slavonic was the one of a sacral language, it was associated to Latin, and Latin acquisition of during the Middle Ages was considered a kind of bilingualism. However, in the Bulgarian language situation the sacral language and the national language were originally identical. If later the Old Bulgarian language became above ethnic, i.e. it was used by other peoples, for the Bulgarians it remained national, even after its functions extension and its edited versions. One more thing: provided that bilingualism suggests not only competence (knowledge of the language), but also performance (i.e. active use and reproduction of language units) in communicative acts, principally viewed *the Church-Slavonic presence of Church-Slavonic language in written communication is not bilingualism, because it is not used actively, but passively – it is only used for reading*⁴. The passive acquisition of Church-Slavonic suggests the reading of unchangeable texts: the Psalms, the Gospel, etc. Only word-forming and lexical units were used actively, and the language of the produced texts turned out to be mixed – usually with the predomination or inaccessibility of structurally new Bulgarian language elements. There is not a single text from the period, which was *created* in Church-Slavonic.

DUE to the fact that the Bulgarian user recognized Church-Slavonic as an older and stylistically elevated version of their own language, some of the scholars from the second quarter of 19th century identified it with the Bulgarian language in terms of ethnicity. It was

³ Compared to the different status of Church-Slavonic as a foreign language in Serb and Russian [see for example Gutschmidt 1969: 71; Popov 1975: 10; Ivanova 1998: 65].

⁴ Let us remember the comic presentation of letter writing in Pseudo-Church-Slavonic by Vazov's characters Ivancho Yotata and Hadji Smion to father Amvrissii in "Uncles" [Vazov 1976: 260].

mainly the supporters of Church-Slavonic school who tried to enhance its functions covering with it the entire regulated communicative space. The supporters of the other two schools – New Bulgarian and Slavonic-Bulgarian – also considered the languages two ethnically identical versions and differentiated them only functionally: the supporters of Slavonic-Bulgarian school were convinced that there should be elite formation, of which Church-Slavonic would be a comprising part, and the supporters of New Bulgarian school that there should be one universal standard language, completed and enriched with missing elements in Church-Slavonic language in a natural way. Practically, these two trends differed in the degree of Church-Slavonic role. The representatives of Church-Slavonic school had a concept of a standard language, which in one of its aspects corresponds to our contemporary idea of a norm: stable, with little variation, weighty. Church-Slavonic is the only language formation that meets these criteria. And in an intervening situation as the codification is in its essence, Hr. Pavlovich and the other supporters of Church-Slavonic idea applied the authoritative approach, as they could not give any pragmatic arguments, nor could they take advantage of the usage: “Темже, о предрага и премила юности – he wrote in the preface to the second edition of his grammar from 1845, – всегда ненависти предавай, и отвращавай се от таковых списаний, кои то са полни със **ж** и **ѣ**...”.

THUS, after continuous Church-Slavonic integration into the new Bulgarian standard language, its separation started in the 40s and 50s at the expense of the old Bulgarian, which (not only through language means that were used and transferred/passed on through the years) became known on the basis of comparison with Church-Slavonic texts. Along with the new Bulgarian and the traditional/conventional language the forming new Bulgarian standard language built a characteristic/peculiar triglossy: *new Bulgarian spoken language ~ new Bulgarian standard language ~ conventional standard language*. The conventional standard version, represented by the indigenous archaic standard tradition and its Church-Slavonic edited version, being opposed as different kinds, formed a generic opposition with new Bulgarian spoken language. The latter was represented by a number of dialectic subversions [see Bossilkov 1982: 26]. In fact, each of the three versions – the speech, new Bulgarian standard language and the traditional language – are not internally homogeneous. In the new standard language, through the filter of usage, there occurs a clustering of coinciding language means or a selection of different language means from the other two systems [see Bossilkov for further details 1979: 47]. The forming new Bulgarian standard language included also the versions, dated after the “translation” of the homilies into new Bulgarian in 17th century. The versions were attempts to introduce new Bulgarian written standard on a more extent or more limited territorial foundation.

In this triglossy the three versions are opposed according to different characteristics:

Characteristic	New Bulgarian spoken language	New Bulgarian standard language	Conventional standard language
Chronology	New evolved non-standard version	New forming standard version	Archaic standard version
Structure	Analytical new non-standard version	Analytical forming standard version	Synthetical archaic standard version
Style Attribution	Simple new non-standard version	Elevated forming standard version	Elevated archaic standard version
Prestige	Non-standard new Bulgarian version with low prestige	New Bulgarian standard version with high prestige	Archaic standard version with high prestige

Forms of Existence	Spoken for the new non-standard version	Written for the new Bulgarian standard version	Written for the archaic standard version
Communicativeness	New non-standard version with high level of communicativeness	Forming standard version with requirements for high level of communicativeness	Archaic standard version with one-way (only from a text to a user) and low level of communicativeness
Communicative space Function	New non-standard version with in a limited circle of spheres	Forming standard version in a progressively growing circle of spheres	Archaic standard version in progressively limiting spheres
Social Range	A fundamental problem the Revival scholars faced was the identification of the new-forming standard version users – and, if those were to be only the educated ones, or the whole ethnical population with no exceptions, i.e. whether to include the “cabbage sellers” as well (as R. Popowich called the uneducated people).		

IN this triglossy the actions are oriented towards the forming new Bulgarian standard language, in the paradigm system of which, some elements and patterns are allowed through the filter of usage and in philological judgment. These elements and patterns correspond to the concept of a standard language by different criteria and characteristics. During the following two or three decades the process of infusion of everything that could be used from Church-Slavonic language into the standard new Bulgarian version slowed its pace since the resources of this archaic formation were exhausted at the expense of the unifying processes in the standard language. The latter became dominant in the last two decades of 19th century. It lost its potential first in grammar and graphics, then in phonetics, and as for the lexis, it gave out all its productive elements – morphemic material, word-forming patterns and models, complete units, including terminology and stylistic stratification. *It can even be mentioned that the unifying process the way they took place - without favouring any of the dialects⁵ⁱ, which had not happened in any other Balkan standard languages – [see Georgieva 1996: 18; Aleksandrova 1999/2000: 101], – was due, to a large extent, exactly to the consideration of the language standard as a form of archaizing type of purism.* Of course, the arbiter role of Church-Slavonic language was determined by the equal position of Bulgarian dialects: none of them was favored in either linguistic or geographical aspect, or the inability to function as a foundation of the standard language.

THE Bulgarian linguists' conviction in the original Bulgarian nature of Church-Slavonic language, their sense of solidity and their own tradition, of cultivation of their own though archaic language, became a solid foundation for the basic doctrine in the formation of standard Bulgarian language in the second half of 18th century and the first half of 19th century – **purism**. Purism, represented in different forms and varied intensity, is the language

⁵ In Bulgarian linguistics from the beginning of 20th century until about 90s the question about the standard language basis was approached from the view of the presumption that it is a type of language which possesses a mono-dialectic basis and more precisely the basis is East Bulgarian. Prof. Andreichin raised the question about the balance of dialectic peculiarities of East and West Bulgarian dialects [Andreichin 1977: 44 – 46]. This matter was further developed in the works of the next generation of standard language historians [see the complex of the problem in History 1989: 307 – 318]. Recently in Bulgarian linguistics an idea emerged that, if we accept the existence of folk-spoken foundation, the thesis of continuousness of standard Bulgarian language should be rejected. The mere premise of dialectic foundation of a language suggests that it must have originated anew, with no connection to tradition. Quite the opposite, in the new Bulgarian standard language construction, *there was not an act of foundation* as there is with some new standard languages, which used foreign or dead languages for written communication. That is why the relation to definite dialects and their consideration is regarded as an old argument, which cannot be substantiated in the particular research.

nationalism of modern time, and was shared by all Bulgarian Revival intellectuals. One of its hypostases was the resurrection of archaic language – church-Slavonic. Their positions were supported by the good awareness of the Greek language situation. After the foundation of Greek kingdom in the late 20s of 19th century and *katarevusa* – in Greek “pure language” – occupied the communicative space, the Greek language situation became a model for the Bulgarian one as well. The rejection of Greek language in Bulgarian church and Bulgarian school happened with the same means, which Greek linguists used to obtain the original purity of the New Greek language during the above mentioned decades: the turn to archaic. The pure expression of this turn is the notion of national emancipation in Pavlovich’s books, which drove him to codify the analogous to Greek language church-Slavonic. The idea of standard language’s elite nature (as in Greece) did not bother him to take the dissimilarities between the Church-Slavonic and spoken Bulgarian in phonetics and structural difference in grammar for something natural. The example with Hr. Pavlovich is the most characteristic, but the three schools from the second quarter of 19th century didn’t reject the role of church-Slavonic, and it is proved by the numerous statements and the further development of the standard language. Actually, in comparison to the Slav linguists of 19th century the problem of the language, which had to possess the attributes of communicativeness and purity at the same time, interested primarily the standard Bulgarian language constructors, because of the radical nature of the structural changes in the language system. These changes caused Bulgarian language to become analytical. The solution to this problem has put a peculiar mark on the visual aspect of modern Bulgarian standard language. In that sense, there is not a “break-up” with the Church-Slavonic idea in the language standardization process; on the contrary, the Church-Slavonic was used up completely, to the full exhaustion of its potential with regard to the new standard language.

EVEN after the WW1 the Church-Slavonic continued enriching the standard language lexically. So, for instance, Ivan Vazov wrote: “Can we borrow words from Church-Slavonic – the Old Bulgarian language? We not only can, but we have to. Russian people scoop fully out of this language treasure. It is ours. We can freely use its riches. It’s reasonable to use it within limits and with taste” [Popov 1975: 6].

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