# BULGARIAN EXPERIENCE IN LINGUISTIC GEOGRAPHY IN VIEW OF THE STUDY OF SOME FEATURES SPECIFIC TO BALKAN LANGUAGES

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The work on *Bulgarian Dialect Atlas* (BDA) started in the period 1948–1950. The first volume of BDA, South-eastern Bulgaria, was a collective work of the Institute for Bulgarian Language at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS), Sofia, and the Institute of Slavic Studies at the Soviet Academy of Sciences, Moscow (БДА1964). On the Russian part, the work was directed by Prof. S. B. Bernshteyn, and on the Bulgarian part – by Prof. St. Stoykov. Initially, a network of settlements with old local population within the borders of the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as a programme for research on the dialect of the settlements, published by Prof. Stoyko Stoykov, were prepared. As he states, the programme comprises phenomena selected in view of the main purpose of BDA – to reflect the territorial distribution of phonetic, morphological, accentual, syntactic and lexical phenomena that shape the dialectal division of the Bulgarian language (Стойков/a, Стойков/b 1969). More significant dialectal features that are found in larger parts of the Bulgarian linguistic territory and that enable outlining main isoglosses were covered. More attention was paid to the phonetic and lexical features that are more characteristic of the dialects. The system of phonetic notation that was performed in Cyrillic script was clarified in the programme (Стойков/a 1969: 6–8). St. Stoykov noted that the Bulgarian literary language served as a starting basis. As a matter of fact, when presenting a number of dialectal phenomena from the field of phonetics, they were also orientated toward the Old-Bulgarian state. This is obvious already from the first question in the programme: *"What vowel is pronounced instead of* ъ *(from Old-Bulgarian* **ъ***)...*" (Стойков/a 1969: 9); see also: "quest. 4. *Is the vowel* ъ *retained or is it dropped in an open syllable (instead of Old-Bulgarian* **ъ** *or* **ь***)...*" (Стойков/a 1969: 9); "quest. 5. *What vowel is pronounced instead of accented* ***е*** *(from Old-Bulgarian* ѣ)..." (Стойков/a 1969: 10). In single cases, references are also made to Proto–Slavic – cf. "quest. 40. *What vowels are pronounced instead of the group* ***шт*** *(fom *tj)*" (Стойкова 1969: 17); "quest. 41. *What vowels are pronounced instead of the group* ***жд*** *(from *dj)...*" (Стойкова 1969: 18). BDA, Vol. 1. South-eastern Bulgaria, was published in 1964. Three types of phonetic and grammatical maps are included in the atlas:

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**1.** A map of a phonetic or grammatical phenomena that is not related to certain lexis;

**2.** A map that characterises a given phonetic or grammatical phenomenon in several words;

**3.** A map that characterises a given phonetic or grammatical phenomenon in one word only (БДА 1964: 10).

The material collected also enabled preparing 2 syntactic maps. The accentual maps were developed within the part dedicated to morphology. A large part of the atlas is taken by the lexical maps. Two maps are dedicated to semantic differences. This proportion in mapping the dialectal phenomena is also observed in the following volumes of the atlas. It was established that, in the field of phonetics and morphology, the old dialectal differences turned out to be quite stable.

Fundamentally, each map only reflected one feature of the mapped word or form. But on the morphological maps, presentation of the phonetic variants of the mapped morpheme, and on the lexical ones – of the formative variants, was allowed.

Comments that give additional information about the mapped phenomena were also published with the maps, and the dialectal material that was not shown when mapping – e.g. data about double forms, data about phenomena that have no relation to the main question shown on the map and the like, was given.

A main sign for opposition when mapping is the coloured circle. In case of lack of the main colours, circles with figures inscribed in them were added. On the lexical maps, the formative variants were mapped with the same colour, but with different shapes.

Later, other three volumes of BDA, respectively for the dialects in *North-eastern Bulgaria, South-western Bulgaria, North-western Bulgaria*, all under the direction of Prof. St. Stoykov, were published. In 1972, Yordan N. Ivanov published *Bulgarian Dialect Atlas. Bulgarian dialects from Greek Macedonia. 1. Drama region, Serres region, Sidirokastro region and Nea Zichni region* (Иванов 1972). This is the first atlas published in Bulgaria about the Bulgarian dialects outside the modern state borders. As the author states, he himself is from a refugee family. He collected the material for the atlas among the immigrants from Eastern Greek Macedonia in Gotse Delchev region, Petrich region, Sandanski region, Plovdiv region, but also from citizens of Northern Greece, native speakers of the Bulgarian dialects, who came to visit their relatives in Bulgaria during national or family meetings and other events.

In 1986, Rangel Bozhkov published *Bulgarian Dialect Atlas. North-western Bulgarian dialects in Tsaribrod and Bosilegrad regions* (Божков 1986). Under the direction of Blagoy Shklifov, *Bulgarian Dialect Atlas. Bulgarian dialects from Greek Macedonia. 2. Western Greek Macedonia* was prepared for publishing, but it remained unpublished. Under the direction of Prof. Ivan Kochev, *Thracian Dialect Atlas* was prepared, which has also remained in the *Archive of BDA* only.

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These atlases show the continuation of the dialectal areas irrespective of the modern state borders. When working on the atlases by geographical parts, however, there is a discrepancy in the colour rendering of the maps, which has an effect in the published volumes even between the individual parts within the state borders. For this reason, the idea of creating a summarising – generalizing volume (GV) of BDA, which is to enable the unified presentation of the dialectal phenomena, emerged. The work on BDA, GV volume, started under the direction of Prof. Ivan Kochev.

In 1988, *Bulgarian Dialect Atlas. Generalising volume. Introductory part.* was published (БДА. ОТ. 1988).

In 2001, *Bulgarian Dialect Atlas. Generalising volume. Parts I–III. Phonetics. Accentology. Lexicology*, Sofia, Trud Publishing House, was published (БДА. ОТ. 2001). The maps in it were prepared on the basis of the material from more than 2300 settlements – from the published volumes and from the additionally created regional archival volumes after Bulgarian and foreign printed sources, as well as from field material. This enables creating an overall notion of the distribution of the phenomena in the whole territory of the Bulgarian linguistic continuum. In their initial form, the phenomena in *BDA. GV.* are plotted on a blank map with points for the settlements on the network of points. For this, however, not the circular signs are used, but only unified colouring of the area with the colour or colour shade determined by the key. This methodological approach is adopted after the example of the German publication "Atlas zur deutschen Sprache" (ADS 1978). Because of the availability of already published atlases, *BDA. GV.* does not contain a list of the mapped points, although, in the process of work, the presentation of the phenomena exactly follows the network of points. Only the marking of the phenomena with circles has been replaced with the outlining of common areas at the points of the settlements. In *BDA. GV*, only one map is published, on which the towns of main regional centres are shown (БДА. ОТ. 2001: 55). The publication also contains a transparent stencil on which the number of these points is higher. On the map, the settlements that are centres of main dialects on the basis of the experience from the regional volumes and main dialectological works are shown. The arrangement of colours and their shades is subjected to the historical interpretation of the development of the dialectal phenomena – the phenomena closest to the Old-Bulgarian state are marked in dark red. Later and remote dialectal variants in terms of development are marked in shades of red or in other colours. In the part dedicated to lexis, the lexemes of internal origin are marked in shades of warm colours, and in shades of blue – the borrowings.

The study of a great number of specific phenomena in the field of phonetics, morphology and lexicology shows the unity of the dialects in all regions covered by the network of distribution of the Bulgarian language.

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Here, the following examples may be given: Reflex of the Old-Bulgarian back nasal vowel ѫ: cf. the distribution of the representative ъ – pronunciation *зъп* [zəp] 'tooth', like in the literary Bulgarian language, the predominating part of the dialects in South-eastern Bulgaria (БДА 1964: m. No. 12), Nord-eastern Bulgarian (БДА 1966: m. No 9); North-western Bulgaria (БДА 1981: m. No 14); South-western Bulgaria (БДА 1975: m. No. 19), Drama and Serres regions (Иванов 1972: m. No. 7) and also in the other parts of the dialect continuum (БДА. ОТ. 2001: m. No 21).

The shown sound ъ is often considered as one of the Balkanisms in the field of phonetics. I. Sawicka questions the Balkan essence of the presence of the phoneme ъ *(ə)* (Sawicka 2014: 19–23). In her opinion, in the history of the "classical" Balkan languages – Bulgarian, "Macedonian" (according to Sawicka 2014, see there), Romanian and Albanian, a common nasal schwa sound is reconstructed. As a matter of fact, in her opinion, all those languages had conditions to develop the sound ъ, but the development is not only a sequence of processes of convergence and did not take place simultaneously. On account of this, eventually, the phenomenon may not be defined as a common feature. The author refers to data about the dialects of the geographic region of Macedonia where the ъ reflex of the nasal schwa fused with the reflex of the back nasal vowel and not with the reflex of the back ъ.

The reflex ѫ > ъ in the extrem (outlying) sout-western dialects in the territory of the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Albania – Gostivar region, Prespa region, Ohrid region, is explained by some linguists as an influence of the Albanian language (see "the phoneme *ă*" in Видоески 1998: 112). Taking into consideration the undisputed presence of a Slavic substratum in the territory of Albania, the explanation of this phonetic phenomenon could be sought at least with equal, if not with greater, reason in the parallels with the distribution of the reflex of ѫ > ъ in the Bulgarian language and the Bulgarian dialectal continuum. A similar opinion is also defended by Vl. Georgiev, who notes that the lack of clarity about the evolution of Albanian and Romanian before 16 c. is an obstacle to the clarification of the problem (Georgiev 1977: 5–16). The dialects of the Bulgarian language, as well as the Bulgarian written records, not only show the territorially predominating retention of the sound closest to the archaic one *ə* > ъ, but also vowel innovations – e.g. labialization and transition *ə* > *o* > *y* or extension and transition *ə* > *a, ä* in individual dialectal regions in the presence of a number of other linguistic features.

About this matter, a number of important data may be found in the volumes of BDA.

Here, for example, we may show the presence of wide areas for clarification of the back jer vowel ъ > *o* in suffixes in North-eastern Bulgaria. (БДА 1966: m. № 2). The phenomenon shows the unity in the developmental tendencies in the Bulgarian dialects, as well as the unity in the Preslav Literary School located in North-eastern Bulgaria with the Ohrid Literary School. J. Shalert is one of the

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linguists who studies thoroughly this fact by relying on data from BDA. He points out to lexical phenomena that confirm this unity (Shalert 2013).

A big region of such clarification of ъ > *о* in suffixes is also found in the south-eastern part of the Bulgarian linguistic territory – Sliven region, Stara Zagora region, Yambol region, Elhovo region, Svilengrad region, Topolovgrad region, Malko Tarnovo region, etc. (БДА. ОТ 2001: m. № Ф 3).

We can see the same phonetic phenomenon (ъ > *о* reflex simultaneously with the presence of ѫ > ъ reflex) also in the morpheme of postpositional definite article which incidentally is one of the main typical Balkan feature in morphology.

In this case in the majority of Bulgarian linguistic territory we observe the prevailing appearance of morpheme *-ъ, -ът* [*-ə, -ət*] as in literary Bulgarian: BDA, Vol. 1, SEB, maps Nos. 152, 153; Vol. 2, NEB, m. No. 169–172; Vol. 3, SWB, m. No. 167; Drama and Serres regions, maps No. 81, 82 (Иванов 1972); NWB, m. No 223, 224 (БДА 1981).

However, in some areas in SEB and NEB we can also see the presence of postpositional definite article *-о: брего, воло, ден'о [brego 'the coast', volo 'the ox', den'o 'the day']* etc. – the regions of Elhovo, Grudovo, Karnobat in SEB (BDA 1964: m. No 152, 153), as well as in NEB – the regions of Aytos, Provadiya, Shumen, Pavlikeni, Ruse, Silistra (BDA 1966: m. No 169–172).

The differences in the phonetic appearance of the postposed definite article in the Bulgarian language affect substantially only the form for masculine singular, which is a reflex of the Old Bulgarian ъ. From the point of view of the grammatical semantics, more important are the dialectal differences related to the distinctions by type of definiteness in the Bulgarian dialects. From the dialect descriptions, as well as from the last overall study dedicated to this matter, it appears that, in the Bulgarian dialects, besides the literary one-article system with the demonstrative morpheme *-т- (мъж-ът* [məzhət] 'the man', *жена-та* [zhenata] 'the woman', *дете-то* [deteto] 'the child', *хора-та* [horata] 'the people'), another two types of three-article systems with demonstrative morphemes respectively *-т-, -н-, -с-* [-t-, -n-, -s-] *(мъж-от, жена-та, дете-то, люде-те* [l'udete 'the people']*; мъж-ос, жена-са, дете-со, люде-се; мъж-он, жена-на, дете-но, люде-не)*, as well as with demonstrative morphemes *-т-, -в-, -н-* [-t-, -v-, -n-] *(мъж-от, жена-та, дет-ето, люде-те//човеци-те* [chovetsite]; *мъж-ов, жена-ва, дете-во, люде-ве//човеци-ве; мъж-он, жена-на, дете-но, люде-не//човеци-не)*, and, furthermore, other types of intermediate systems are found (Гаравалова 2014). As the "Bulgarian Dialect Atlas. Generalising volume. P. IV. Morphology" is in press, we can obtain information about the distribution of the triple and the double systems of attaching the article from some regional volumes of the atlas (БДА 1981: m. № 223, 224), as well as from the *Introductory part* of the *Generalising volume* (БДА. ОТ. 1988: m. № 16). From the maps it can be seen that the dialects which keep the triple system of attaching the article cover the region of the Rhodopes, the western portion of the geographic region of

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Macedonia, reaching the dialects in the territory of the Republic of Albania and the outlying north-western dialects located in the border areas of Bulgaria and Eastern Serbia. A number of works are dedicated to the grammatical semantics of these systems of attaching the article, but it still remains not completely clarified (Каневска 2006; Mladenova 2007). Sawicka relates the development of the postposed definite article in the Balkan languages to the development of changes in the endings of the nouns and attachment (agglutination) of demonstrative pronouns.

The dialectal diversity in the systems of attaching the article in Bulgarian completely confirms her thesis. According to O. Mladenova, too, the Rhodope dialects show the stage of attachment of the demonstrative pronoun to the noun (Mladenova 2007: 365). The dialects of the North-West region (in Tran region and in the Moravian region) and in the South-West region (Skopje, Veles, Prilep, Bitola, Tetovo, Debar, etc. regions), in which a triple, and somewhere also double demonstrative system has been recorded, may, of course, be also added to this stage in the development of the postposed definite article.

In the search for explanation of the genesis of the phenomenon in the Balkan languages at literary level, Sawicka shows the grammatical changes of the nouns in the Albanian language where two paradigms – for definite and indefinite nouns, exist. This corresponds to a certain degree to the double and triple systems of attaching the article in some Bulgarian dialects (article morpheme with the demonstrative formant *-т-* [-t-] (somewhere also *-в- [-v-], -с- [-s-]*) – for general qualification or for intimacy (*този тук, този известният* [tozi tuk] 'this renowned'); unlike the article morpheme *-н-* [-n-] – for remoteness or indefiniteness (*онзи там, някакъв* [onzi tam] ‘some, any’), in the absence of an indefinite article as a grammatical form in the Bulgarian language (the constructions with the numeral *един: един мъж// някакъв мъж* [edin məzh] ‘one man’//‘a man’ are excluded here from the scheme of expressing definiteness.

The hypotheses of Loria-Rivel (Loria-Rivel 2015), which rely on the analysis of the preceding connecting article in Albanian in adjectives: *vajza e mirë* (*добро-то момиче ‘the good girl’*), *sistemi i edukimit* (*система-та на образованието//образователна-та система, the education system*) (Fjalor 1951: 476), also deserve attention. He shows correspondences in the Romanian language – cf. *un capitol **al** cărții lui* (*една глава на книгата му* ‘a chapter of his book’)*, prietenul meu **cel** vechi* (*мой-ат стар приятел//стар-и-ят ми приятел ‘my old friend’*). At dialectal level in the Bulgarian language, we find here again greater diversity and respectively more parallels between the examined forms to the Balkan ones. Here, the extended forms of the adjectives in the north-eastern (Moesian) dialects of the type of *бел-ù рùт [beli rid] ‘white hill’, стар-ù дòм [stari dom] ‘old house’*, which played the role of definite ones already in Old Bulgarian, and in the modern Bulgarian literary language serve as a stem of the forms of the adjectives for masculine, used with the article: *бел-и-ят [beliyat] ‘teh white’, бяла-та, бяло-то, бели-те*; *стар-и-ят [stariyat] ‘the old’*, *стара-та,*

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*старо-то, стари-те*, etc., become prominent. Traces of the archaic type of extended definite forms in the adjectives that develop original connecting morpheme before the new article form are found in the archaic accent appearances in some dialects in the north-west, in the Balkan dialects (БДА. ОТ 2001: т. № 64, 65), as well as in a number of Moesian, Rup and south-western dialects (Антонова, Витанова 1999; Mladenova 2007: 344–347).

Loria-Rivel reaches the conclusion that the definite article is a phenomenon characteristic not only of the Balkan languages, but also of the languages of the basin of the Black Sea (Circumpontic languages), as well as of the Proto-Indo-European Mediterranean substratum. Besides the connecting article in the adjectives, he shows the postposed definite article (as well as phenomena from the field of the verb system, common for Albanian, Romanian, Bulgarian-Macedonian (according to the author's terminology), Armenian, Old Georgian and partially Persian) as a common feature. Examining the different possibilities for the origin and the development of the postposed definite article, O. Mladenova also notes the hypothesis of the relation with similar phenomena in Chuvash, that is considered related to the Proto-Bulgarian language. She pays attention to the linguistic geography significance of the Moesian dialects and their common features with the Rup dialects (Mladenova 2007: 358-364). At the same time, with respect to the presence of a triple system of attaching the article, the Rup dialects also show unity with the dialects in the west, in regions where the decline of a number of other archaic dialectal peculiarities is also characteristic and which, eventually, with respect to purely linguistic features and social-geographic status, as seen from the maps, may obtain the common characteristic of archaic ones.

In fact, the little linguistic information about Proto-Bulgarian and about bilingualism between the Proto-Bulgarians and the peoples of the Balkan Peninsula does not change the fact that the presence of these tribes in the period 4-10 c. was quite substantial. It is the Proto-Bulgarian tribes that migrated from the Northern Black Sea region (Old Great Bulgaria) to the Western Carpathians and Pannonia, in the south all over the whole Balkan Peninsula to the Aegean Sea, and in the east – along the lower course of the Danube and the middle course of the Dnieper to the Black Sea. They concluded permanent alliances with the Slavic tribes, with the Byzantine Empire and with a number of tribes from the Western Europe. After 6 c., they played a leading role in the establishment and the organization of the Bulgarian state with the capitals in Pliska, and later – Preslav, as well as for the distribution of the culture and statehood from the eastern capitals to the western lands – Ohrid and Bitola regions (Бешевлиев 1981; Гранберг 2008). From the scanty information about their language that, according to some people, is related to the group of the Oghuric Turkic languages, and according to others – to Iranian, it is known that it is distinguished for rhoticism the like of which, although maybe entirely accidentally, is also characteristic of the dialects in Southern Albania.

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The review of two of the most popular phenomena defined as Balkanisms – the presence of the phoneme ъ *(ə)*, and the presence of the postposed definite article in the system of nouns, shows that they are widely presented on the maps of BDA. From these maps, it can be seen that they cover entirely the Bulgarian dialectal continuum, forming both large united areas of distribution and scattered regions of manifestations of innovations. The linguistic geography data confirm the thesis of Bernshteyn that most completely the common features between the Balkan languages are kept in the Bulgarian language (Симеонов 1977). Vl. Georgiev shows us the following definition of Balkan sprachbund: Adjacent languages in which there are a number of common features from different levels of their structure, which (common features) were not inherited in all of them from older times, but emerged as a result of their relations, form a sprachbund (Георгиев 1977: 14). It follows from this that, when studying the common features between the Bulgarian language and the remaining Balkan languages, special attention must be paid to the question of their presence in the Bulgarian language history. In the study of the matter about the vowel ъ *(ə)* and the postposed definite article, it is seen that the sources for their development may be found not only in the language contacts, but also in the intralingual development.

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ABSTRACT

The paper studies the development and the experience in the work on the Bulgarian Dialect Atlas (BDA). Special attention is paid to the linguistic geography data that the maps of the Bulgarian Dialect Atlas present for two of the main linguistic phenomena specific to the languages of the Balkan sprachbund (Balkan linguistic area) – the phoneme *ə* and the postposed definite article.

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