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BALKAN TURKISH DIALECT CLASSIFICATIONS

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Abstract

In South-eastern Europe, endogenous communities of Turkish speakers are found in Eastern and Western Thrace, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, North Macedonia, Kosovo and the Dodecanese. These varieties are usually referred to as Rumelian Turkish, which is subdivided into West and East Rumelian Turkish. This West-East isogloss goes back to Németh's classification (1956), and has been slightly revised. Gagauz, which is mostly an Eastern Rumelian variety, is spoken mostly in Moldova. Turkish dialect classification is traditionally focussed on Anatolia, whereas Balkan Turkish dialects have been less considered. Although there are many studies on single Balkan Turkish varieties, classification attempts are scarce. The most prominent classification has been made by Németh (1956), who laid the foundations for the description of West Rumelian Turkish.

Keywords: Balkan Turkish, Rumelian Turkish dialects, Gagauz, South-eastern Europe

Name: Türkçe ['turktʃɛ]

Language-code: ISO 639-1: tr, ISO 639-2: tur

CLASSIFICACIONS DIALECTALS DEL TURC DELS BALSANS

Resum

Al sud-est d'Europa, les comunitats endògenes de parlants turcs es troben a la Tràcia oriental i occidental, Bulgària, Romania, Moldàvia, Macedònia del Nord, Kosovo i el Dodecanès. Aquestes varietats solen anomenar-se turc rumeli, que es subdivideix en turc de Rumèlia occidental i oriental. Aquesta isoglossa oest-est es remunta a la classificació de Németh (1956) i ha estat lleugerament revisada. El gagaús, que és principalment una varietat del rumeli oriental, es parla principalment a Moldàvia. La

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classificació dels dialectes turcs se centra tradicionalment en Anatòlia, mentre que els dialectes turcs dels Balcans han estat menys considerats. Tot i que hi ha molts estudis sobre varietats turques dels Balcans, els intents de classificació són escassos. La classificació més destacada l'ha feta Németh (1956), que va establir les bases per a la descripció del turc rumeli occidental.

Paraules clau: turc dels Balcans, dialectes turcs rumels, gagaús, sud-est d'Europa

BALKAN TÜRKÇESİ AĞIZLARININ SINIFLANDIRILMASI

Özet

Güneydoğu Avrupa'da, Doğu ve Batı Trakya, Bulgaristan, Romanya, Moldova, Kuzey Makedonya, Kosova ve Onikiada'da Türkçe konuşan endojen topluluklar bulunmaktadır. Bu değişiklikler genellikle Batı ve Doğu Rumeli Türkçesi olarak alt bölümlere ayrılan Rumeli Türkçesi olarak adlandırılır. Batı-Doğu ağızlar sınır çizgisi (isogloss) Németh'in sınıflandırmasına (1956) kadar uzanır, sonra birkaç unsur eklenmiştir. Esasen Doğu Rumeli grubuna ait olan Gagavuzca, çoğunlukla Moldova'da konuşulmaktadır. Türk ağızlarının sınıflandırılması geleneksel olarak Anadolu'ya odaklanırken, Balkan Türk ağızları daha az dikkate alınmıştır. Balkan Türk ağızları üzerine tek olarak çok sayıda çalışma olmasına rağmen, sınıflandırma girişimleri azdır. En önemli sınıflandırma, Batı Rumeli Türkçesinin tanımının temellerini atan Németh (1956) tarafından yapılmıştır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Balkan Türkçesi, Rumeli Türk ağızları, Gagauzca, Güneydoğu Avrupa

1. Introduction: Turkish in Southeastern Europe¹

Turkish (*Türkiye Türkçesi* 'Turkey Turkish') is the official language of the Republic of Turkey and one of the official languages in Cyprus. Typologically, Turkish and its dialects belong to the Oghuz (or Southwestern) branch of the Turkic language family. Standard Modern Turkish is the descendant of Ottoman Turkish.

99% of the population of Turkey, i.e., ca. 73,8 million people, is officially Turkish-speaking (www.worlddata.info/languages/turkish.php), however many of them are probably bilingual, especially in the Kurdish-speaking Eastern provinces of the country.

¹ Abbreviations and symbols

Morphophonological symbols (used in Turkology):

A: palatal vowel harmony, stands for a or e

l: labial vowel harmony, stands for i, ı, u, ü

ERT: East Rumelian Turkish

SMT: Standard Modern Turkish

WRT: West Rumelian Turkish

Exact numbers are not available, since the last census with data about the mother tongue goes back to 1965 (Kurban 2007: 11).

Most of the speakers reside in the Asian part of the country (Anatolia), while 12% of the inhabitants live in the European part (Eastern Thrace). Outside the Republic of Turkey, Turkish is spoken in Southeastern Europe, Cyprus, North Syria, and, as an immigrant language, in several Central European countries, such as Germany, the Netherlands, or France. Worldwide, about 77,5 million people have Turkish as a mother tongue.

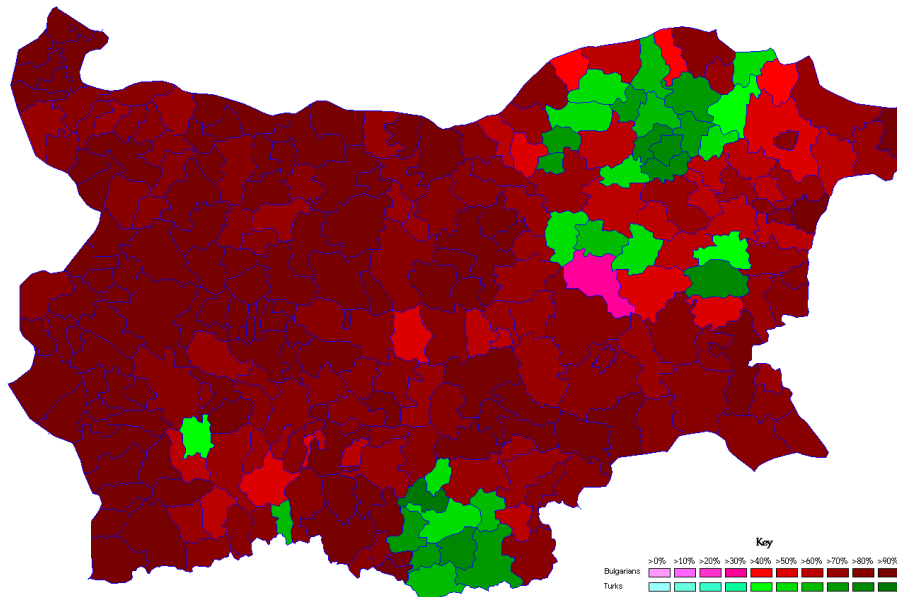
Balkan Turkish is the name for the various Turkish varieties spoken in Southeastern Europe, including Gagauz. The number of speakers of Balkan Turkish in the European part of Turkey (Eastern Thrace) is difficult to determine, since census figures include big cities, especially Istanbul, where the use of dialect is practically inexistent, and because of the massive immigration of Anatolian Turkish speakers in the last years. As a consequence, Balkan Turkish in Eastern Thrace has been almost completely supplanted by Standard Turkish, and seems to be highly endangered (Tosun 2019). However, there is an unknown number of speakers of Balkan Turkish also in other parts of Turkey due to immigration from Southeast European countries, first of all Bulgaria.

In Southeastern Europe outside Turkey native speakers of Balkan Turkish can be mainly found in Bulgaria (especially in the South, province of Kardzhali/Kirdžali, and in the North-East, provinces of Razgrad, Šumen, and Silistre) (600,000), in North Macedonia (78,000), in Greece (Western Thrace and Dodecanese; 48,000), and in Kosovo (20,000). Gagauz, which is a standardized variety belonging to Eastern Rumelian Turkish, is spoken by about 250,000 people in Moldova, Romania, Bulgaria, and Greece.²

Bulgaria, which hosts the largest Turkish population in Southeastern Europe outside Turkey, counts 605,802 native Turkish speakers in the 2011 census. In the 1980s the so-called “Process of Revival” forced the Bulgarian Turks to assimilation and,

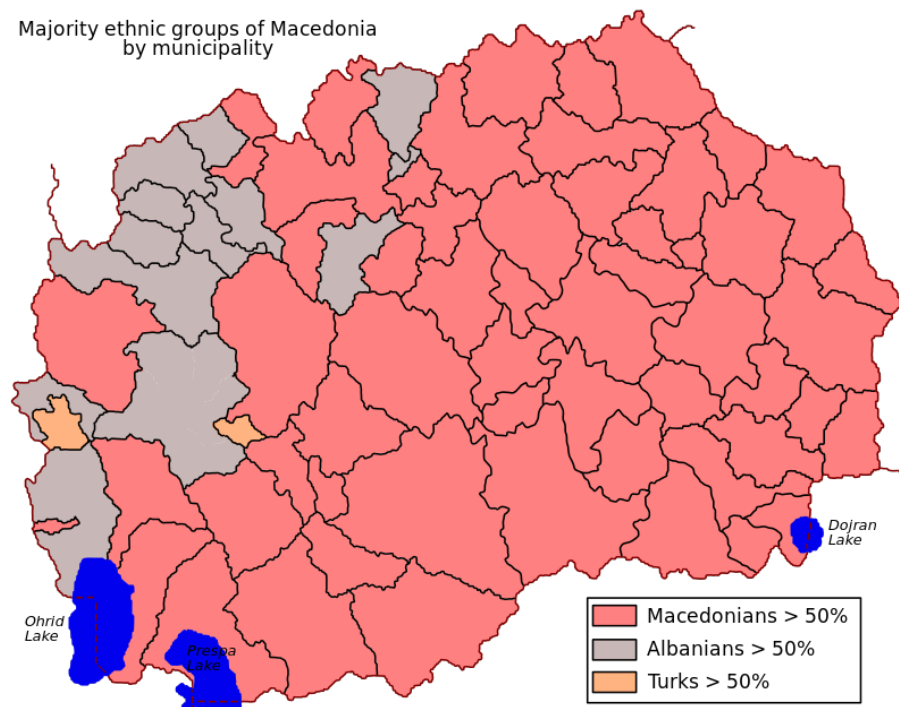
² About 20,000 Crimean Tatars live in Romania, mainly in the Dobruja region, however since their language is not a variety of Oghuz Turkic, it remains outside this overview.

eventually, led to an exodus of 360,000 ethnic Turks to Turkey. This policy was condemned by the Bulgarian government in 1998. The geographical distribution in 2011 can be seen in Map 1.



Map 1. Ethnic composition of Bulgaria, Bulgarian in red, Turkish in green. (Map based on the results of the 2011 census. Original source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ethnic_composition_of_Bulgaria,_2011.PNG)

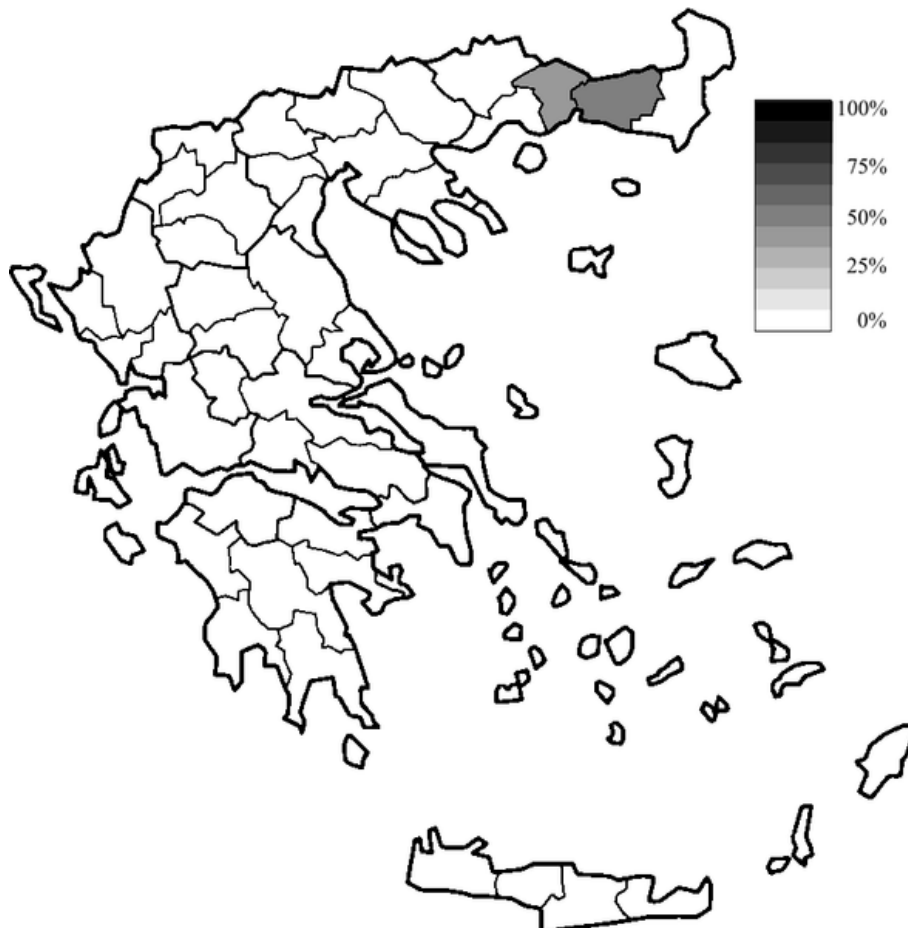
The Turkish population in the Republic of North Macedonia constitutes the third largest ethnic group in the country after Macedonians and Albanians, and counts, according to the 2002 census, 77,959 people. The community forms a majority in the Western municipalities of Centar Župa and Plasnica (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turks_in_North_Macedonia), as can be seen in Map 2.



Map 2. Municipalities of North Macedonia with majority ethnic group (based on the Macedonian census 2002. Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_the_majority_ethnic_groups_of_Macedonia_by_municipality.svg)

The presence of native speakers of Turkish in the Greek region of Western Thrace (Δυτική Θράκη) is the result of the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) between Turkey and Greece: in the aftermath of the Treaty, which dictated a coercive population exchange of Christians and Muslims between the two countries, about 400,000 Muslims emigrated from Greece to Turkey, whereas the Muslims of Western Thrace (as well as the Greeks of Istanbul and the Aegean islands of Imvros and Tenedos) were exempted from the exchange. It is not easy to determine the exact number of speakers with Turkish mother tongue in Western Thrace, since censuses were carried out on the base of religion, being the “Muslim minority” constituted by ethnic Turks, Bulgarian-speaking Pomaks and (partly Turkish-speaking) Roma (Petrou 2021: 4-7). The 1991 census counts 98,000 Muslims, and it can be assumed that about 50% of them are of Turkish origin. Most of the Turkish-speaking population lives in the prefectures of Komotini, and Xanthi (see Map 3). The bilingual in Greek and Turkish Muslim

community in the Dodecanese is estimated to count about 2,500-3,000 people, concentrated in the island of Rhodes (Georgalidou et al. 2010: 323).



Map 3. Greek prefectures according to the 1991 census with the Muslim minority highlighted (Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:GreekMuslimMinority1991.png>)

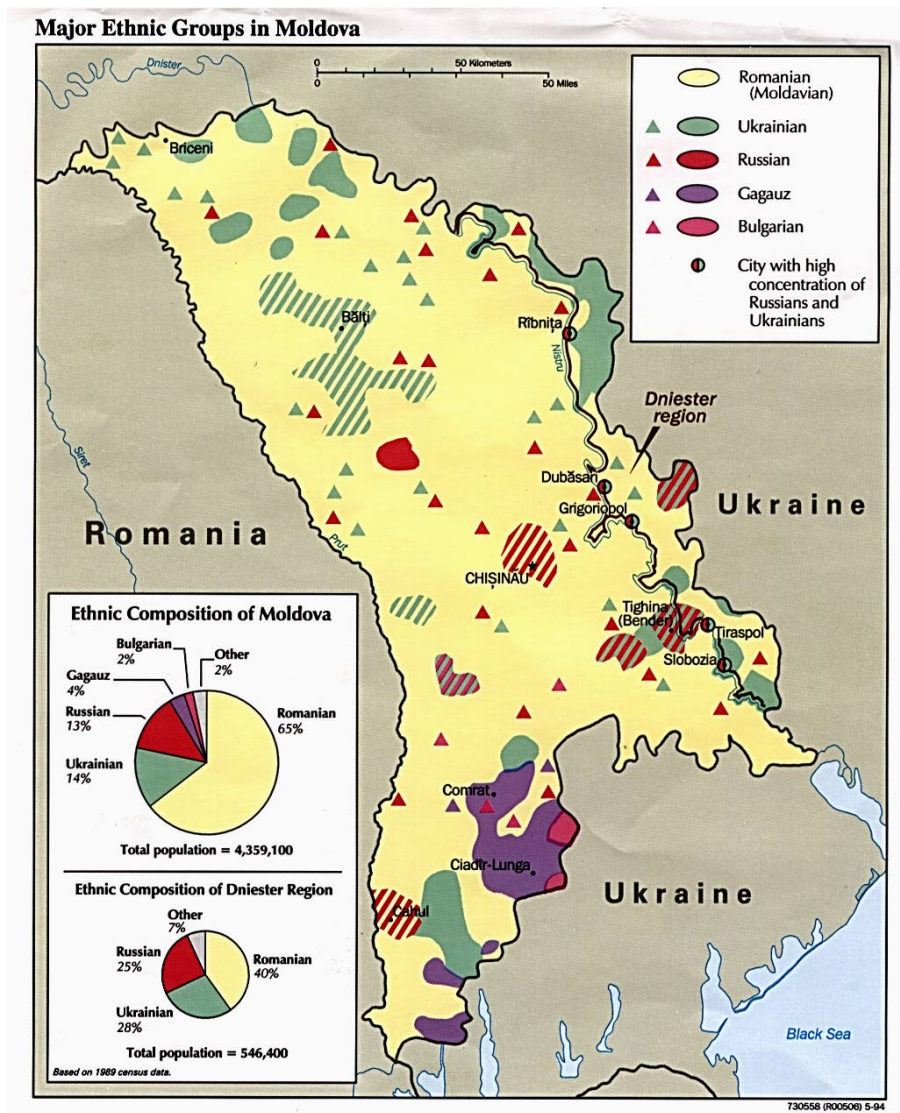
In the framework of the last census in Kosovo, which was carried out in 2011, 19,568 native speakers of Turkish were registered (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Kosovo), however that census was boycotted by North Kosovo, where the majority of the population are Serbs. A map from 2005 (Map 4) shows that Turks are concentrated especially in the Southern district of Prizren, as well as in the area of Mitrovica in the North.



Map 4. Ethnic composition of Kosovo according to the OSCE in 2005 (Map by J. Patrick Fischer, Version 2. Original source https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kosovo_ethnic_2005.png)

Gagauz is spoken mainly in Moldova, where it has the status of regional official language in the Autonomous Region of Gagauzia (*Gagauz Yeri*). Gagauz speakers, who generally are Orthodox Christians, can be found also in other areas of Southeastern and Eastern Europe, mainly in Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, and Greece. The controversial discussion of their ethnogenesis has led some scholars to ascribe Kipchak elements to their language, however Gagauz must be considered as an Oghuz Turkic language, just as the other Balkan Turkish varieties (Menz 1999: 2-3). Moldova Gagauz has been standardized already in the Soviet period, and is used in all official domains in the Gagauzia region in the South of the country (Map 5). The main contact languages

of Gagauz are Bulgarian and Russian. For the classification of Gagauz dialects see Section 2.7.



Map 5. The major ethnic groups in Moldova (Source: University of Texas, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/bb/Major_ethnics_groups_in_Moldova_1989.jpg)

2. Classifications

Turkish is traditionally classified, according to geographical criteria, into an Anatolian and a Rumelian group, the latter being the base for the various Balkan Turkish varieties spoken in Southeastern Europe. Since Rumelian Turkish, with its subgroups, has been classified mostly in opposition and relation to Anatolian Turkish,

this article, though being dedicated to Turkish spoken in Southeastern Europe, will have to consider the classification history of Turkish as a whole.

The most comprehensive classification of Anatolian Turkish has been made by Leyla Karahan (1995), who divided Turkish dialects in three main groups (West and Central Anatolia, Eastern Black Sea, and East Anatolia). However, she does not consider at all Turkish spoken in Europe, since traditional Turkish dialectology focusses on Anatolia because the only dialect dictionary of Turkish, the *Derleme Sözlüğü*, contains predominantly material from Anatolia.

Subclassification of Balkan Turkish has been made, but to a much lesser extent, the most influential attempt in this direction being Németh (1956, see Section 2.2). The present survey comprises the following classifications: Kúnos (1896, Section 2.1), Németh (1956, Section 2.2), Caferoğlu (1960, Section 2.3), Kral (1980) in Boeschoten (1991, Section 2.4), Mollova (1999, Section 2.5), and Dryga (2009, Section 2.6). Gagauz as an East Rumelian dialect, but with an own internal classification, will be treated in Section 2.7. Although Kúnos does not consider Rumelian Turkish, focussing on Anatolia only, it must be included in the present survey because of its fundamental importance for the history of Turkish dialectology, and because it is the very first classification of Turkish dialects at all. On the other hand, there have been several other attempts, such as Dmitriev (1939), Boev (1968), or Banguoğlu (1986), but these proposals are either rather speculative and without naming the features, or they rely on previous classifications. For this reason, these “secondary” classifications are subsumed in the present survey under the respective main classification proposals. At this point, an article by Tadeusz Kowalski must be mentioned: even though it does not offer a classification, it still is the first attempt to provide feature-based dialectological material for a classification of Turkish dialects, including Rumelian, and thus was used as a point of reference for several classifications afterwards (Kowalski 1929-30). Other important contributions to Balkan Turkish are the studies undertaken by György Hazai (1932-2016), who provided significant parameters considering also diachronic aspects, however without proposing an overall classification himself. An overview of the classification history of Balkan Turkish can be found in Günşen (2012); a brief

description of Turkish in Southeastern Europe, including classification and sociolinguistic profile, is available in Kappler (2002).

2.1 *Ignác Kúnos (1896)*

2.1.1 Framework: Ethnological classification

In the framework of the publication of dialect texts from Asia Minor, the Hungarian turcologist Ignác Kúnos (1860-1945) made a first attempt to classify Anatolian dialects. Although Kúnos collected elsewhere extensive dialect material from Southeastern Europe, his classification does not refer to Balkan Turkish. However, Kúnos's classification has influenced terminology in Turkish dialectology until the 1950s, and is therefore relevant for the classification history of Turkish dialects in general, though not for Balkan Turkish.

2.1.2 Classification of dialects

Kúnos (1896: 7-8) proposes an extralinguistic classification into seven dialects on the base of historical and geographical terms:

1. "Zeybek" dialect (*zeybek nyelvjárás*), between Bursa and Izmir
2. "Kastamonu" dialect (*kasztamuni nyelvjárás*), spoken at the Western part of the Black Sea coast
3. "Laz" (*láz*), at the Eastern Black Sea coast between Samsun and Trabzon
4. "Kharput" dialect (*khárputi nyelvjárás*), in East Anatolia
5. "Karaman" dialect (*karamán nyelvjárás*), in South Anatolia between Konya and Mersin
6. "Angora" dialect (*angorai nyelvjárás*), in Central Anatolia
7. "Turkmen" dialects of the Yürük tribes (*jürük törzsek türkmen nyelvjárása*), varieties of nomadic tribes throughout Anatolia

In order to be incisive in his terminology, Kúnos uses ethno-historical and geographical criteria for his classification. He generally relates to historical names of

the regions and cities (e.g. “Karaman”, “Angora / Ankara”, or the Armenian city of “Kharput”), but also applies ethnographical nomenclature (e.g. the term “Zeybek”, the denomination of a guerilla militia operating in West Anatolia until the nineteenth century), or non-Turkic ethnonyms present in the respective area (e.g. “Laz”, a Caucasian people still present in Turkey). Kúnos parallels his classification with a historical mapping, claiming that the “Yürüks” were the descendants of pre-Seljuk Turkmens, “Zeybek” would be the dialects stemming from the Seljuk period, “Angora” those of direct Ottoman origin, and the other ones developed through language contact with Greek, Armenian, Kurdish, and other languages. In all his considerations, he does not apply comparative linguistic features, but relies entirely on geo-cultural assumptions. For these reasons, Kúnos’s classification was harshly criticized by Kowalski (1934: 996) as “intuition and phantasy, rather than asserted facts”, and he concludes: “Dieser Einteilungsversuch der kleinasiatischen Dialekte enbehrt jeder wissenschaftlichen Stütze” (‘This classification attempt of the Anatolian dialects lacks any scientific foundation’).

2.2 Gyula Németh (1956)

Still originating from the Hungarian turcological school, Gyula (in his German publications: Julius) Németh (1890-1976) delivered the first and most detailed classification of Rumelian, i.e. Balkan Turkish dialects, and constitutes thus the most relevant classification attempt in the European context.

2.2.1 Framework: Isoglottic dialectology

Németh is the first scholar to classify Balkan Turkish dialects into two larger dialect zones: East and West Rumelian. He establishes the following nine features, both phonetic and (morpho-)phonological (Table 1):

East Rumelian (and Standard Turkish)	West Rumelian	Examples (ERT ≠ WRT)
1. -ı, -u, -ü (= -i; see “Abbreviations”)	-i	oğ <u>l</u> u ≠ og <u>l</u> i
2. Suffix mış	miş	olmu <u>ş</u> ≠ olmi <u>ş</u>
3. Non-first closed syllable i	ı	benim ≠ benim
4. Palatal ö, ü	> velarized ə/o, ʉ/u	gün ≠ gʉn
5. palatal harmony A	e (in some suffixes)	tutarlar ≠ tutarler
6. In some words: ö	> ü	ördek ≠ ürdek
7. ğ / ø (with compensatory lengthening or > y)	old g is conserved	ağ <u>ğ</u> a [a:a] ≠ aga, dağ [da:] ≠ dag
8. Progressive present tense (I)yor	(I)y / (A)y	seviyor ≠ sevey, geliyor ≠ geliy
9. Palatal k', g'	> tʃ, dʒ	köprü ≠ tʃüpri, göz ≠ dʒüz

Table 1. Features of West Rumelian Turkish according to Németh (1956)

Németh (1956: 21) identifies also a tenth feature of WRT in the loss of initial h- (e.g. ERT and SMT hazır ≠ WRT azır), although he does not include the phenomenon into his nine distinctive features.

2.2.2 Classification of dialects and subdialects

Németh traces the isogloss between West and East Rumelian roughly across the line Lom-Samokov in Bulgaria, counting the Turkish dialects of Macedonia and Kosovo as Western, and the East Bulgarian dialects as Eastern.

However, he considers some of the areas as transition zones detecting Western features East of Lom, e.g. in Orjahovo on the Danube, between Lom (WRT) and Nikopol (ERT), or in Blagoevgrad in Southwestern Bulgaria. He considers the “Istanbul dialect”, which is the base for SMT, as an East Rumelian variety. He also mentions that the isogloss between WRT and ERT roughly coincides with the so-called “jat-border”, which divides the Slavic Bulgarian dialects in East and West.

Since, according to this classification, ERT is essentially identical to Standard Turkish, Németh was mainly interested in WRT. For this reason, Hazai (1965) proposed a subdivision of ERT into “East Rhodope Turkish dialects” and “Deliorman dialects”. This approach was taken up by later scholars, such as Boev (1986) or Caferoğlu (1960); see below Sections 2.2.3 and 2.3.

Németh (1956: 23) also mentions a previous attempt of classification by Dmitriev (1939: 6) who subdivides Balkan Turkish into 1) a Danubian dialect, 2) the dialect of Edirne, 3) a Macedonian dialect, 4) the dialect of Adakale, and 5) a Bosnian dialect. Németh concludes that dialects 1)-2) belong to ERT, while 3)-5) have to be considered as West Rumelian dialects.

2.2.3 Other classification based on Németh

In a short article, the Bulgarian turcologist Emil Boev proposes a more close-meshed classification for Turkish dialects spoken in Bulgaria. His system comprises three main groups (West Bulgarian Turkish, Northeast Bulgarian Turkish, and East Rhodopes / Gerlovo), and various subgroups and transition zones, namely dialects between the Pirin and the Rhodope mountains, Central Rhodopes, as well as the dialect of the nomadic Yörük tribes in Macedonia (Boev 1968: 176). Although he states that both phonological and morphological features have to be considered, he does not specify which kind of parameters are set. Moreover, he does not consider varieties outside Bulgaria. For these reasons, his proposal is not included in the present survey as a fully-fledged classification.

2.3 Ahmet Caferoğlu (1960)

The Turkish dialectologist Ahmet Caferoğlu (1899-1975) published a well-known overview on Turkish dialects in the handbook *Philologiae Turcicae Fundamenta*, where he lists Balkan Turkish under the label “Rumelian dialects” as one of seven Turkish dialect groups (Caferoğlu 1959: 239), without giving a description of these dialects or corroborating his classification. However, in another contribution, presented in 1957 but published in 1960, he makes a subclassification of Turkish spoken in Europe.

2.3.1 Framework: Ethnological classification

Caferoğlu is the first Turkish scholar to make an attempt to classify Balkan Turkish dialects. However, he does not apply any phonetic or other linguistic features and uses only extralinguistic criteria on a geographical ground.

2.3.2 Classification of dialects

Caferoğlu's classification comprises the following four dialect groups (1960: 66):

1. Macedonia
2. Southeastern Bulgaria
3. Deliorman, Tuzluk, Northeastern Bulgaria
4. Dobrudja and Romanian Bessarabia

Since Caferoğlu does not specify linguistic varieties, we can only assume that group 1 can be related to Németh's WRT, whereas groups 2 and 3 must be ascribed to ERT. His fourth group ("Bessarabia") can be identified with Gagauz in today's Moldova.

2.3.3 Other classification based on Caferoğlu (and Kúnos)

There has been another classification attempt based on Caferoğlu's approach, namely by Tahsin Banguoğlu (1904-1989) who, in his *Turkish grammar* (1986: 17), established a general classification of Turkish dialects following Kúnos's ethno-geographical criteria of Anatolia, adding "Macedonia" and "Deliorman" (beyond "Istanbul") as the two subgroups of Balkan Turkish, according to Caferoğlu's groups 1 and 3. Apparently, the term "Macedonia" would then correspond to Németh's WRT, and "Deliorman" to ERT (Günşen 2012: 115).

Caferoğlu and Banguoğlu are the only two Turkish scholars to have dealt with Balkan Turkish dialect classification, albeit in a very superficial way, as Turkish dialectology is heavily focussed on Anatolia (cf. above Section 2.1 and Karahan 1995).

2.4 Piet Kral (1980) in Boeschoten (1991)

In 1980 Piet Kral delivered a master thesis at the University of Leiden, using features previously published in several articles and monographs (Kowalski 1929-30, for the list of monographs see Boeschoten 1991: 153), and in the Turkish dialect dictionary *Derleme Sözlüğü*, trying, for the first time, to set dialect isoglosses for Anatolian Turkish. The results of this monumental contribution have been published by Boeschoten (1991). Kral's maps focus, as usually in Turkish dialectology, on the dialects of Asia Minor, where he discerns 13 dialect groups; however, he includes the dialect of Edirne as a variety of a "Rumelian" group, given that he only considers data within the borders of the Republic of Turkey. In the terms of Németh's classification (1956) this variety can be associated with East Rumelian Turkish. Another group named "Marmara" remains "hypothetical" because of lack of data.

2.4.1 Framework: Isoglottic dialectology

Kral establishes 18 different, mostly phonological features, and correlates them to 14 dialect groups, one being Balkan Turkish (Rumelian), i.e. the dialect of Edirne. For two of the parameters (nr. 5 and 10) he apparently did not find data for Edirne (see Table 2).

#	Parameter	Correlation to Rumelian (Edirne)
1	SMT k- before back vowels: (a) k-; (b) g-	k-
2	SMT -k- and -k (velar): (a) k; (b) x	k-
3	SMT k- before front vowels: (a) k-; (b) tʃ-	k-
4	SMT g- before front vowels: (a) g-; (b) dʒ-	g-
5	k- in <i>küçük</i> 'small'	--
6	SMT ğ	ğ (ɣ) is lost
7	SMT ɪ in second syllable following a: (a) ɪ; (b) u	ɪ
8	velarization of ö and ü	not velarized
9	SMT aCu (C= b, m, v)	aCɪ
10	SMT <i>yukarı</i>	--
11	/ŋ/ (< SMT /n/)	/n/

12	copula 1S (SMT (y)Im)	(y)Im
13	copula 2S after Iyor (SMT sIn)	sIn
14	copula 2S after (y)AcAk (SMT sIn)	(l)n
15	copula 1P (SMT (y)Iz)	(y)Iz
16	voluntative 1P (SMT (y)AlIm)	(y)AlIm
17	progressive present tense marker (SMT Iyor)	iy(i)
18	converb SMT (y)ken	(y)kene/(y)kana

Table 2. Kral's (1980) parameters in relation to Balkan Turkish, based on Boeschoten (1991: 154-156)

Being the variety of Edirne an ERT variety, most of the features are identical to SMT, the only divergences can be observed in nr. 9, 14, 17, and 18. Moreover, some of the parameters are similar to those established by Németh (1956; see above Section 2.2.1) in order to divide Rumelian Turkish into WRT and ERT; these parameters are (in Table 2): nr. 3 (corresponding to Németh's parameter nr. 9 in Table 1), 6 (Németh nr. 7), 8 (Németh nr. 4), and 17 (Németh nr. 8). As can be expected, none of the data shown for Edirne correspond to Németh's classification of WRT, except nr. 17 (progressive present tense marker), which can be found also in ERT (cf. also Petrou 2021: 233-243).

2.4.2 Classification of dialects and subdialects

Although all parameters were cross-checked with Kowalski (1929-30), Kowalski's criteria to distinguish Rumelian subdialects were not included in Kral's study. What is more, he excludes variables which are relevant for the distinction between Rumelian and Anatolian, but not for the distinction of Anatolian dialects (Boeschoten 1991: 157). Therefore, the study, which remains one of the most important classification attempts of Turkish dialects in Turkey, is of limited relevance for Balkan Turkish.

2.5 *Mefkûre Mollova (1999)*

In 1999, the Bulgarian turcologist Mefkûre Mollova (1927-2007) proposed a revision of Németh's classification (1956, see above Section 2.2.1) with two dialect

zones (ERT and WRT) resulting in a division into three areas: 1) Western zone, 2) East Rhodope zone, and 3) Central zone.

2.5.1 Framework: Isoglottic dialectology

Mollova's proposal includes a slight variation in the East-West isoglosses of Rumelian, as well as some additional features.

The features can be summarized in the following Table 3. Mollova adopts Németh's first six WRT features for her Western zone; these features are therefore not included in Table 3.

Feature	Western zone	East Rhodope zone	Central zone
Vowel system	a-e-i-i-o-u	a-e-ä-i-i-o-u-ö-ü	a-e-ä-i-i-o-u-ö-ü
-k-/-k and -l-/-l	always velar	according to environment	according to environment
ı in initial and final position	– (<i>ılık, altı</i>)	+ (<i>ılık, altı</i>)	+ (<i>ılık, altı</i>)
Consonant geminates	– (<i>nali, tusus, onar</i>)	+ (<i>nallı, tussus, onnar</i>)	+ (<i>nallı, tussus, onnar</i>)
Consonant cluster	+ (<i>plan, skele</i>)	– (<i>pılan, iskele</i>)	– (<i>pılan, iskele</i>)
k- > g- in many words	– (<i>kara, kurt</i>)	+ (<i>gara, gurt</i>)	– (<i>kara, kurt</i>)
p- ~ b- fluctuation	– (<i>piş-, baklava</i>)	+ (<i>biş-, paklava</i>)	– (<i>piş-, baklava</i>)
t- ~ d- fluctuation	– (<i>taş, dök-</i>)	+ (<i>daş, tök-</i>)	– (<i>taş, dök-</i>)
-k/-k- > -ğ/-ğ-	– (<i>yok, vakıt</i>)	+ (<i>yoğ, vağıt</i>)	– (<i>yok, vakıt</i>)
Morphophonological consonant assimilation	– (<i>taşta, attı</i>)	+ (<i>daşda, atdı</i>)	– (<i>taşta, attı</i>)

Table 3. Features of Balkan Turkish according to Mollova (1999)

2.5.2 Classification of dialects and subdialects

On the ground of the features, summarized in Table 3, Mollova classifies Balkan Turkish dialects as follows:

1) Western zone: The area roughly coincides with Németh's WRT group, but the isogloss proposed by Mollova runs slightly more to the East, in respect of Németh's

dividing line of WRT. It thus coincides with WRT in the areas of former Yugoslavia and Northern Macedonia, but includes the Southwest Bulgarian areas of Nevrokop, Blagoevgrad and Devin. In regard to the parameters, Mollova adopts Németh's first six features of WRT (see Section 2.2.1) for her "Western zone", adding others (see Table 3).

2) East Rhodope zone: This area lies principally in Bulgaria covering also the villages on the Greek side of the Rhodope mountains. The Bulgarian part, which had been extensively studied by Mollova herself and by György Hazai, comprises the municipalities of Kirdžali, Ardino and Momčilgrad in the Eastern Rhodopes. Main characteristics of this group are the use of initial voiced plosives (g-, b-) instead of unvoiced (k-, p-) in the Western zone and in SMT, and a variable distribution of initial d- ~ t-. The group is therefore termed by Mollova as "ga-group" (as opposed to the "ka-group" of WRT and the Central zone).

3) Central zone: This is the area situated East of group 1) and except group 2), i.e. the remaining Bulgarian areas not covered by 1) and 2), Romanian Dobruja, Western Thrace in Greece (provinces of Komotini, Xanthi, and Alexandroupolis), and Eastern Thrace in Turkey. She also includes Moldovian Gagauz in this group. The group is characterized by a close similarity to SMT with some regional variants.

Mollova (1999: 172) establishes two subzones for her "Western zone", splitting the area into a Southeastern and a Northwestern part. The isogloss between the two subgroups is set in Bulgaria and North Macedonia (the North-South line goes from Dolni Tsibar through Vratsa and Samokov in Bulgaria to Kočani and Ohrid in North Macedonia). The main distinctive feature of the two subgroups lies in Németh's parameter nr. 7, namely the preservation of ancient g (graphical representation in SMT ģ) in the Northwest subgroup vs loss of g in the Southeast (like in SMT).

2.6 Iryna Dryga (2009)

The Ukrainian scholar Iryna Dryga presented a classification correlating selected features to six geographical areas (Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Romania, Albania, and Greece), comparing them also to Moldovian Gagauz (and Urumca, which

is (or was) spoken in the area of Mariupol/Ukraine, and lies outside the present overview). However, she states that she did not have any data from Greece (Dryga 2009: 194). As presumably no Turkish was spoken anymore in Albania, that area had also to be excluded.

2.6.1 Framework: Isoglottic dialectology

Drygas selects 20 features including phonology, morphology, and syntax. She also considers archaisms as one of the criteria. Her parameters are summarized in Table 4.

#	Parameter
1	Morphological progressive vowel and consonant assimilation
2	Secondary vowel compensation
3	The phoneme /ts/
4	Consonant assimilation
5	The phoneme /ǰ/
6	The phoneme /ö/
7	Stress/pitch movement
8	Syntactic scrambling
9	Verbal government
10	Durative
11	Instrumental case
12	Conjunctions
13	Syntactic movement in noun compounds
14	Coordination with da/ta
15	Use/non-use of the interrogative ml
16	Infinite structures (verbal nouns, participles, converbs)
17	Functions of diminutive
18	Conservation of archaisms
19	Liaison
20	The conjunction ki

Table 4. Parameters set by Dryga (2009)

A sizeable number of these parameters (such as numbers 3, 8, 13, 15) are partly or fully contact-induced, for a discussion see Section 3.

2.6.2 Classification of dialects

Dryga confronts the features, summarized in Table 4, with the findings of previous classifications and studies, first of all Hazai, Németh, and Mollova, resulting in the following areal division of Balkan Turkish (Dryga 2009: 196):

1. West Rumelian dialects (“ka-group”, according to Mollova)
2. East Rumelian dialects (Deliorman, East Rhodopes, Gerlovo, Tuzluk, Varna, and Dobruja; thus including Mollova’s “ga-group”)
3. Mysian and Thracian dialects (the latter without data)
4. Central Rhodopes and the so-called “Yörük” dialects (varieties spoken by nomadic tribes).

2.7 Gagauz dialects

This overview includes Gagauz, because it is generally considered as Balkan Turkish, and specifically as an East Rumelian variety. However, there has been a controversy about presumed Kipchak (Northwestern), i.e. non Oghuz Turkic elements in the past, (for an overview of the classification of Gagauz in the framework of general Turkic see Özkan 1996: 36-38). Being part of East Rumelian Turkish (according to Németh’s classification, see Section 2.3), it can be identified with Mollova’s “Central zone” (Section 2.6), or to a group called “Bessarabian” (see Caferoğlu’s classification, Section 2.4). Internally, Gagauz is subdivided into two main dialects: 1) a central dialect, and 2) a southern dialect (Özkan 1996: 36). The central dialect, spoken in the areas of the capital of the Autonomous Region of Gagauzia, Komrat, and of the municipality of Çadır-Lunga, is the basis for the standardized variety, while the southern dialect, spoken in the area of Valkaneş, differs from the central dialect in some phonological and morphological features, first of all the loss of initial h-, and the progressive present tense form in (l)y. Both of them are essentially West Rumelian Turkish features, according to Németh (see above Section 2.2), thus the southern Gagauz dialect seems to belong to a transition zone between ERT and WRT. However, a detailed classification has not yet been undertaken.

3. Discussion

The classification of Turkish dialects in Europe faces several critical points. First of all, thanks to Gyula Németh's fundamental contribution (Németh 1956), as well as its revision by Mollova (1999), the dialects spoken in Bulgaria have been more included into a classification scheme than Balkan varieties in other areas.

Although the data gap on the Turkish dialects of Western Thrace in Greece lamented by Günşen (2012: 124) has been partly filled by the thorough description by Maria Petrou (2021), these varieties, which generally are assigned to ERT, have not been analysed in terms of classification. Thus, for example, Petrou finds features which according to Mollova are typical for the East Rhodopes. The same goes for Gagauz, whose Southern dialects share some features with WRT. The dialects spoken in North Macedonia and Kosovo are also less considered in traditional classification attempts.

On the other hand, surprisingly enough, the East Rumelian dialects of Eastern Thrace in Turkey are not included in most of the aforementioned classifications. This is due to another shortcoming, namely that dialectology in Turkey is traditionally focused on Anatolia, while Turkish spoken in the European part of Turkey is seldomly considered, and widely equated with Standard Turkish. A further complication is given by the fact that a dialect atlas of Turkish dialects in Turkey is still lacking.

The six main classification attempts use mainly a features-based methodology in the framework of isoglottic dialectology. Two of them have extralinguistic parameters, as can be seen in Table 5.

Author	Methodology	Dialects
Kúnos 1896	Ethnological classification	Anatolian
Németh 1956	Isoglottic dialectology	Rumelian
Caferoğlu 1960	Ethnological / geographical classification	Rumelian
Kral in Boeschoten 1991	Isoglottic dialectology	Dialects of Turkey (mainly Anatolian)
Mollova 1999	Isoglottic dialectology	Rumelian
Dryga 2009	Isoglottic dialectology	Rumelian

Table 5. Classification overview

An important characteristic of Balkan Turkish are phenomena that, mainly at the syntactic level, are the result of code copy patterns caused by intense language contact with non-Turkic languages, such as Slavic languages, Greek, Albanian, and to a lesser degree Romanian (see Kappler 2002: 829-831; cf. Petrou 2015 for Western Thrace Turkish, Menz 1999 for Gagauz). Only Dryga (2009) tries to include these features as parameters for her classification; however, the insertion of contact-induced phenomena in a classification scheme is questionable, since the factors and circumstances of contact vary not only from area to area, but are also subject to other social aspects.

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