
The Macedonian-Bulgarian language border problem

Irena Sawicka*¹

¹Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences – Pologne

Résumé

The Macedonian-Bulgarian language border problem
Abstract:

As it is known, in the Slavic south there are no borders between languages. One language idiom gradually turns into another. Usually, it is even impossible to say (within the fuzzy set theory) that some area belongs to a greater or lesser extent to a given language. Nationality in the Slavic Balkans is determined most often on the basis of confession. But what if the confession is the same? This pertains to the Macedonian-Bulgarian case. The transition from Macedonian to Bulgarian is particularly blurred.

According to my phonetic assessment (although it should be noted that it is not only phonetics that determines this), about half of Bulgaria and at least a quarter of Northern Macedonia constitute a transitional area. The difference between the extreme phonetic types - on which the standard norms are based - is colossal, the Bulgarian standard phonetics is mostly based on the phonetics of eastern dialects, while the Macedonian - on Western dialects. In practice, the border constitutes an extensive transitional zone, it is a Bulgarian-Macedonian (and Bulgarian-Serbian) transitional area, through which a number of isoglosses run.

In the paper, I will try to look at the selected Macedonian dialect from Pirin Macedonia and compare its phonetics with the neighbouring Bulgarian dialects, in order to address the problem of the Bulgarian-Macedonian border.

Mots-Clés: Macedonian, Bulgarian, border problem

*Intervenant