

*Contributions to the Sociology of Language*

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# The Earliest Stage of Language Planning

The "First Congress" Phenomenon

*Edited by*

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**The first philological conference for  
the establishment of the Macedonian alphabet and  
the Macedonian literary language:  
Its precedents and consequences**

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The first conference for the standardization of Literary Macedonian was held in Skopje from 27 November to 4 December 1944. I have chosen to focus on this event for three reasons:

- (1) Unlike most earlier potential candidates for the honor of "First Congress", this conference was concerned solely with the promotion of the Macedonian language as opposed to gatherings whose principal goal was Macedonian ethnic and/or national autonomy.
- (2) Its composition and structure distinguished it as a conference as opposed to a working group or local meeting.
- (3) It was the first such event directly and unambiguously connected with the establishment of modern Literary Macedonian.<sup>1</sup>

Although a complete history of the rise of Macedonian national and linguistic consciousness is outside the scope of this article, it will be necessary to give some background and discuss some of the earlier events alluded to above in order to place the codification conference of 1944 in its appropriate context. To do so, we must start at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when most of the Balkan peninsula was still part of Turkey in Europe.<sup>2</sup>

At that time, the European peoples living in the Ottoman Empire were classified by it according to *millet*, which can be glossed 'religiously defined community'.<sup>3</sup> The majority of Slavs in Macedonia and Bulgaria were Greek Orthodox Christians, and were therefore defined as "Greeks". During the first half of the nineteenth century, in the context of the rise of nationalism in the Balkans, the Orthodox Slavs in Bulgaria and Macedonia faced two struggles in the creation of any type of modern literary language. One was against the Hellenizers, who wished to impose Greek language and culture on the so-called Slavophone Greeks (i. e.

Slavic-speaking Greek Orthodox Christians); the other was against archaizers who wanted to see some form of Church Slavonic established as the contemporary literary language.<sup>4</sup> Until about 1840 the focus of literary efforts that would ultimately lead to the creation of Literary Macedonian was on raising the consciousness of Slavs as different from Greeks and on establishing the legitimacy of a vernacular-based Slavic literary language. By about 1840 archaization was no longer a serious threat, although the struggle against Hellenism continued. A conflict emerged, however, over the dialect that would serve as the base of the literary language. It is here that a brief digression on South Slavic dialects is necessary.

From the point of view of language as a means of communication, the vast majority of South Slavic dialects form a single continuum from northern Yugoslavia and adjacent parts of neighboring countries all the way into northern Greece and to the Black Sea coast of Bulgaria in the south and east, respectively. At any given point along this continuum speakers can understand speakers from contiguous points. As the distance between points increases, however, so do dialectal differences, albeit not at a steady rate. Isoglosses tend to cluster in some regions and fan out in others. Nonetheless, there does not exist a single location where one can draw a line between mutually unintelligible dialects. The definition of "language" under such circumstances is made on the basis of other criteria, e. g. ethnic or religious self-identification, geographical or political boundaries selected for extra-linguistic reasons as definitive, etc. The geographic entity *Macedonia* can be defined in modern political terms as the Republic of Macedonia, formerly in Yugoslavia (Vardar Macedonia), the Blagoevgrad (Gorna Džumaja) district in Bulgaria (Pirin Macedonia), the province of Macedonia in Greece (Aegean Macedonia), and the territory of about 50 villages in eastern Albania. A series of mountains and rivers generally gives geographic definition to these political boundaries. The Slavic dialects spoken on this territory are then called *Macedonian* dialects.<sup>5</sup>

During the next period (about 1840–1870), two centers of Slavic literacy arose among the Orthodox Slavs of Macedonia and Bulgaria: one in southwestern Macedonia, the other in northeastern Bulgaria. The Slavs of Macedonia during this period continued to call their language *Bulgarian*, and at first they envisioned a literary language using their dialects or compromising among the various dialects of Bulgaria and Macedonia. The Bulgarian intelligentsia, however, insisted on imposing their Eastern Bulgarian based standard without compromise. As the

struggle against Hellenism succeeded, the acerbity of Bulgarian attacks on Macedonian-based works, primarily textbooks, increased (Koneski 1967 a: 188–190, 215; Sazdov 1975: 22).

In 1870, the Ottoman government established the Bulgarian Exarchate, which in essence meant the recognition of the Bulgarians as a *millet* independent from the Greeks. By the middle of 1878 Bulgaria was established as an autonomous principedom with boundaries corresponding roughly to the northern half of the modern state. Now Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria each had an autocephalous church, a literary language, political independence, and claims to additional territory in what was still European Turkey. These territorial claims overlapped precisely in Macedonia, which had been included within the boundaries of Greek (Byzantine), Serbian and Bulgarian empires at different times during the middle ages (see Fine 1983, 1987). Each of the three countries was therefore actively engaged in propaganda on Macedonian territory, ranging from schools and publications to murder and arson, attempting to convince the Slavic-speaking Christian population, which constituted the majority of this complex, polyethnic, multicultural region, to accept its church, language, and — ultimately — sovereignty.<sup>6</sup>

The earliest known documentation of organized Macedonian separatism also dates from this period.<sup>7</sup> Publications appeared and organizations formed that included among their goals the promotion of the Macedonian language (Ristovski 1966 a: 46–54), and thus we find several potential candidates for consideration as the First Congress for Macedonian. Due to the persecution of Macedonian separatists as well as the fact that even today Greek and Bulgarian (and most recently also some Serbian) political interests would want to suppress the information if it existed, it is not impossible that some sort of linguistic congress was held for which we have no documentary evidence (cf. Ristovski 1973), but none of the events for which we do possess documentation fulfills all three of the criteria adduced at the beginning of this article. By way of illustration, an account of some of the more salient of these events follows here.

In 1886 four members of the Secret Macedonian Committee (founded that year in Sofia) — Temko Popov, Naum Evro, Kosta Grupče and Vasil Karajovov — conducted talks with the Serbian government in Belgrade during which they proposed that the Serbian government fund the printing of materials in Macedonian and the sending of teachers to Macedonia.<sup>8</sup> In 1887 Grupče and Evro attempted to print a Macedonian newspaper in Constantinople, and in 1888 they prepared the text of a primer and sent it to Belgrade, but these projects were stopped before

publication. A similar fate had befallen an attempt at a Macedonian primer by Despot Badžović in 1879, although the periodicals *Vardar Kalendar* (Vienna, 1879) and *Golub Kalendar* (Constantinople, 1889) were published in a type of Macedonian in order to spread Serbian propaganda (Ristovski 1966 a: 12; Ristovski 1973; Stamatovski 1986: 94–96).

During the second half of 1891 in Sofia the Young Macedonian Literary Society was founded by a group of intellectuals that included the future leaders of later Macedonian revolutionary movements, e. g. Konstantin (Kosta) Shahov (president), Petar Pop-Arsov, Naum Tjufekčiev, Andrej Ljapčev, Toma Karajovov, and at least a dozen others (Ristovski 1973: 143). The Society published its journal *Loza* [Grapevine] in 1892, was broken up by the Bulgarian minister president Stambolov himself, and formed again in 1894 after Stambolov's fall but without significant results (cf. Perry 1988: 35–36). Although Misirkov (1903: 71) writes that the purpose of the organization was “to separate the interests of the Macedonians from the Bulgarian [interests] by raising one of the Macedonian dialects to the level of a literary language for all Macedonians,” only the first of *Loza's* total of six numbers was linguistically distinct from Bulgarian,<sup>9</sup> and the viewpoint espoused in it was one of Macedo-Bulgarian dialectal compromise (Koneski 1967 b: 38–39, Ristovski 1966 a: 12). The journal was severely attacked in the Bulgarian press as “separatist”, and indeed it appears that political rather than linguistic considerations were the group's primary focus (cf. Ristovski 1973; Perry 1988: 35–36).

On August 22, 1892, the Kostur (Greek Kastoria) parish school council adopted the proposal of a group of six teachers that had met previously in secret, and agreed to eliminate both Bulgarian and Greek and introduce Macedonian as the language of instruction in the town school for the 1892–1893 school year. Three teachers were charged with putting together a grammar and dictionary, tasks that were apparently already under way. It was decided to expand the lexicon by borrowing from Church Slavonic. By September 18, however, the Greek bishop had succeeded in convincing the Turkish governor of Kostur to close both the school and the one church in town that was using the Slavonic liturgy. A Bulgarian representative from Plovdiv (Atanas Šopov) convinced the parish council to adopt literary Bulgarian lest they lose both their church and their school to the Greeks, and that was the end. The only documentation we have of the incident is contained in the telegrams to the Serbian Ministry of External Affairs in Belgrade sent by Dimitrie Bodi, the Serbian Consul in Bitola (Monastir), who had attempted to turn

Macedonian resistance to both Greek and Bulgarian propaganda to Serbian advantage without success (Dimevski 1968, Andonovski 1985 a).

The First Macedonian Congress, held in Sofia in late March of 1895 and attended by about sixty delegates representing twenty-three associations, was concerned entirely with the question of how to gain political autonomy for Macedonia (Perry 1988: 44–47).

On October 28, 1902 Dimitrija Pavle-Čupovski, Krste Misirkov, and 17 other students and intellectuals signed a document founding the Slavo-Macedonian Scientific-Literary Society in St. Petersburg. Article 12 of the Society's Constitution, which was written in Russian, states: “Conversation in the Society will be conducted in the Macedonian language (Slavo-Macedonian); reports and protocols will also be written in the same language” (Lape 1965: 200). Misirkov (1903) published a book of five lectures, three of which were actually delivered to the Society. The fact that the three lectures presented to the Society were all concerned with Macedonian national and ethnic separatism, whereas his cogent chapter discussing the foundations of the Macedonian literary language was not delivered as a lecture demonstrates that despite the fact that Misirkov did publish concrete proposals for the standardization of that language, advancing Literary Macedonian cannot be construed as the primary goal of the Society's actual meetings.

Following the partition of Macedonia after the Second Balkan War in 1913 and again after World War One in 1919, such a linguistic congress was out of the question inside Macedonia. Each country that received a piece of Macedonia followed a policy of assimilation to the official language: Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian, or Albanian. Thus in the decade preceding the first codification conference, Macedonian had the status of a proscribed language in Kloss' (1968) classification. Officially it was a dialect of Serbian in Yugoslavia and a dialect of Bulgarian in Bulgaria. It was forbidden in Greece, and in Albania, too, Macedonian had no official status and efforts were directed at assimilating the population.

While no Macedonian literary activity was permitted in Greece or Albania, such activity did occur in Yugoslavia and to a more limited degree in Bulgaria, but only as dialect literature and folklore of Serbian and Bulgarian, respectively.<sup>10</sup> Thus, for example, Vasil Iljoski's play *Lenče Kumanovče* [Lenče from Kumanovo] was first performed in Skopje in 1928.<sup>11</sup> Other plays from this period include Anton Panov's *Pečalbari* [Migrant workers] (1935), and Risto Krle's *Parite se otepuvačka* [Money is a murderer] (1938). On the eve of World War II, several slim volumes of folk-style lyric poetry were published in Sofia and Zagreb, e. g. *Narodni*

*bigori* [Folk Laments] and *Oginot* [The Fire] (1938) by Venko Markovski; *Beli Mugri* [White Dawns] by Kočo Racin; *Maskavici* (Literary Macedonian *Molskavici*) [Lightning bolts] (1940) and *Peš po svetot* [Around the world on foot] (1941) by Kole Nedelkovski, although individual poems appeared in the Yugoslav and Bulgarian periodical press before these volumes (Spasov 1953; Koneski 1967 b: 47; Lunt 1959: 22; Risteski 1988 a: 75–112).<sup>12</sup> Even such limited literary activities were in constant danger of running afoul of official scrutiny. On the everyday level, children were beaten by their teachers for speaking Macedonian at school, but Macedonian students wrote in private and to one another in Macedonian.

In the political arena, the Comintern ruled in April 1934 that the Macedonians had a right to exist as a separate people with a separate language – thus aligning the Communist Party with Macedonian separatists (Apostolski 1969: 85, 101, 116; Hristov 1970: 395–400; Koneski 1967 b: 46–48). The Communist Party was thereby in a position to attract young Macedonian intellectuals, who were in any case “playing with left-wing social ideas, under both Serbian and Bulgarian radical guidance” (Lunt 1959: 22). In academic circles beyond the Balkans, the linguistic separateness of Macedonian was also gaining more widespread recognition (Malecki 1938; Vaillant 1938). During World War II, Vardar Macedonia was partitioned between German-dominated Bulgaria and Italian-occupied Albania while Aegean Macedonia was partitioned among Italian, German, and Bulgarian occupiers (see Jelavich 1983: 262–277). Macedonian remained proscribed, and whereas during the interwar period Macedonian publications were produced in the guise of folklore and dialect literature, during most of the War Macedonian publications were predominantly illegal newspapers and fliers produced by Partisans. Although by no means all Macedonians concerned with the improvement of their linguistic situation were Communists, the political realities in Macedonia were such that the establishment of a Macedonian literary language was Communist Party policy and also in opposition to all those governments that had ruled in Macedonia.<sup>13</sup> The establishment of Literary Macedonian was also still intimately connected with the idea of establishing Macedonian autonomy either within a Yugoslav or within a pan-Balkan federation.

The proclamation of the Macedonian Republic with Macedonian as its official language was made at the first plenary session of ASNOM (*Antifašistkoto Sobranie za Narodno Osloboduvanje na Makedonija* [The Anti-Fascist Assembly for the National Liberation of Macedonia]), which was held on 2 August 1944 at the monastery Prohor Pčinški in what was

then northern Macedonia.<sup>14</sup> The president of ASNOM was Metodi Andonov-Čento, and on 6 August the Commission (*poverenstvo*) of Education was organized, headed by Epaminonda Pop-Andonov, a high school teacher whose specialty was philosophy of education. Temporary measures for the unification of literary Macedonian in connection with education and the spread of literacy began shortly thereafter. Pop-Andonov appointed a commission including himself, the president of ASNOM, and 11 other members, one of whom, a vice-president of ASNOM, Emanuel Čučkov, composed temporary guidelines for the literary language. For strategic reasons the first administrative center of Macedonia was the village of Ramno (Kumanovo region).

Subsequent work relevant for the future of the literary language was done in the village of Gorno Vranovci (Veles region), a well-to-do Macedonian Moslem village that served as the center of linguistic activities until the move to Skopje.<sup>15</sup> The village was chosen because it was in secure territory, well located, large enough and developed enough for billeting, and also because Macedonian Moslem peasants were especially sympathetic to the Partisans. During the Bulgarian occupation, these Macedonians were discriminated against as “Turks” (the old religion-as-nationality equation), receiving fewer ration coupons, etc. The temporary alphabet proposed at Ramno is recorded in directives sent by the Commission of Education from Gorno Vranovci dated 30 September. It was also in Gorno Vranovci on 29 October 1944 that the first issue of *Nova Makedonija*, still Macedonia’s leading newspaper, was published. A memorandum dated simply October 1944 was sent by the Commission of Education to regional councils calling for writers and professors of language, especially those who had graduated in Slavic philology, as well as any other professionals who might have something to contribute, to work on resolving the questions of the alphabet and orthography and to prepare for a conference which would be held shortly after the liberation of the towns (Apostolski 1969: 467; Risteovski 1988 a: 220–221, 226–227).<sup>16</sup>

Skopje, the capital of the new Republic of Macedonia, was liberated from the Germans on 13 November 1944, and the presidium of ASNOM met shortly thereafter to appoint the linguistic commission (Vidoeski 1986: 14). Typed invitations from the Commission of Education were sent to the participants.<sup>17</sup> The conference took place in Skopje from Monday, November 27 to Monday, December 4, 1944.<sup>18</sup> The opening session was held in the Macedonian National Theater, after which the remaining sessions were held in the Town Hall, which was also the meeting place of ASNOM.<sup>19</sup> Strahil Gigov, who became Minister of Industry and

Mining, determined which unit was to be housed and fed where. According to Koneski (pc), meals and lodgings were the responsibilities of the individuals. Those in the army ate and slept with their unit, those who were civilians at their lodgings. Thus, for example, Koneski ate with the other enlisted men in his unit and slept on the floor of the Goce Delčev printing house. Venko Markovski, who was a member of ASNOM and of the General Staff (without rank), ate at the officer's mess. Civilians ate at home or where they were quartered. The place and timing of the conference were apparently dictated by the prestige and logistics of the capital combined with progress of the War. If there were differences of opinion concerning these matters, we have no record of them, but it is clear from the documents that we do have that those concerned with the establishment of Literary Macedonian wanted to see the conference take place as soon as possible. According to Koneski (1950 a: 104), opponents of Literary Macedonian attempted to negate the influence of codification efforts by accusing them of being "Serbianizing". Except during 1946–1948, this accusation has been a standard Bulgarian tactic regardless of the political party in power or in opposition (cf. Koneski 1948: 27; Žerev 1990; also see the end of this paper).

The conference was attended by a total of fourteen individuals. They are listed below along with their years and places or regions of birth (when available) and the indication *m* for 'military' and *c* for 'civilian'.<sup>20</sup> All those in the army were members of the Communist Party except Šoptrajanov. None of the civilians were. As Commissioner of Education, Pop-Andonov delivered a short opening speech to the conference but did not stay for the sessions. Kostovski, a journalist, took notes but did not otherwise participate. The remaining individuals constituted the actual voting commission, although Koneski did not participate in the voting session and both he and Balvanlieva did not attend the conference after the second day, for reasons that will be discussed below.

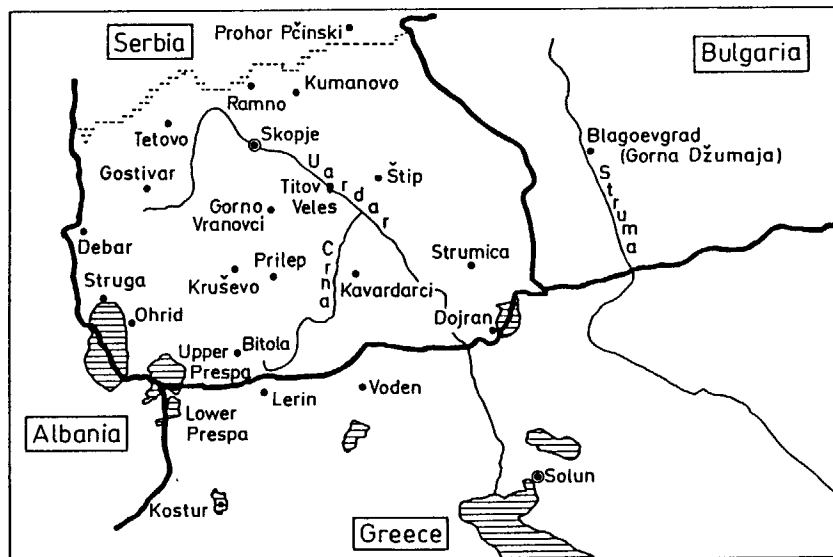
The participants were Epaminonda Pop-Andonov (1898; Strumica: m), Jovan Kostovski (1907; Bitola: c), Milka Balvanlieva (circa 1904; Štip: m), Dare Džambaz (circa 1910–1915; Prilep: m), Vasil Iljoski (1902; Kruševo: c), Ćorgi Kiselinov (1882; Ohrid: c), Blaže Koneski (1921; Prilep: m), Venko Markovski (1915; Skopje: m), Mirko Pavlovski (1916; Tetovo: c), Mihail Petruševski (1911; Bitola: c), Risto Prodanov (circa 1895; Dojran: m), Ćorgi Šoptrajanov (1907; Veles: m), Krum Tošev (1912; Prilep: m), Hristo Zografov (circa 1895; Skopje: c).

According to Koneski (pc), no specific agenda was announced in advance. From Kostovski's notes, however, it is clear that the organizers

had made some preparation, since Pop-Andonov closed his opening speech by proposing Prodanov as president of the conference (the proposal was accepted) and Prodanov announced that the day's agenda had three points: papers on the Macedonian alphabet, papers on the Macedonian language, and finally a resolution. He proposed reversing points one and two, however, so that first the choice of a dialectal base would be settled, and then the alphabet would be made according to the dialect. Of the twelve participants in the discussion, three read prepared papers, all on the first day: Kiselinov at the beginning of the morning session and Balvanlieva and Pavlovski at the beginning of the afternoon. It appears from the notes that Kiselinov's paper was expected or commissioned (perhaps because he was the oldest), whereas the other two papers were not since Prodanov opened the afternoon session by asking anyone with a paper to present it. The discussion appears to have been orderly except while Koneski was speaking in the afternoon of the first day, when he was interrupted by Markovski and possibly by Kiselinov (the notes make it clear that Markovski was interrupting but are not clear in the case of Kiselinov's interjection).<sup>21</sup>

The stenographic notes kept by Kostovski were not approved as official minutes, nor was there any press coverage or other publication of the events at that time. Kostovski kept his notes in his own personal archive and published excerpts from them in *Nova Makedonija* (8-VI-75: 13) on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the alphabet and orthography that were accepted by the government. After his death (1980), Kostovski's archive — including those notes — went to the Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences (Document # 167, Jovan Kostovski File). A version of the notes was also published in Risteski (1988 a: 228–317), although this published version contains errors, omissions, and inexact renderings.<sup>22</sup>

From Kostovski's notes it is clear that there was unanimity in the general choice of dialect region — the towns Veles, Prilep, and Bitola (see Map 1) were cited most often as exemplary — but difference of opinion on terminology. Most used the term *central dialects*, but Koneski, citing Slavic linguists (Oblak, Miletić and Belić), proposed the term *western a-dialects* (*a* referring to the reflex of the Common Slavic back nasal \*ǫ) as the appropriate term, and Prodanov supported him. Koneski also raised the question of making precise the geographic definition and producing a paper defining the chief characteristics of the dialect. In the end, however, the term *central dialects* won;<sup>23</sup> they were defined by Markovski as those dialects with /a/ for \*ǫ (Cyrillic ꙗ, called *back jus* or



— international border  
 - - - - - republic border within Yugoslavia

Map 1 S. R. Macedonia and adjacent territory.

*big jus*) and /o/ for \**ü* (Cyrillic ъ, called *back jer* or *big jer*), albeit his concrete examples all involved reflexes of vocalic \**j* rather than back jer. Iljoski went on record as pointing out with amazement that it had taken them three hours and fifteen minutes to establish what was already clear to everyone, viz. that the central dialects served in practice as the basis of the literary language,<sup>24</sup> while no one had discussed the concrete features of that dialect, which he considered the basic point of their discussion. He tried to get the discussion moving to the second point, the orthography, but discussion continued for another 45 minutes until the end of the morning session, which closed with Prodanov's proposal that Markovski prepare a resolution.

At the beginning of the afternoon session, Prodanov announced that the resolution would be postponed until the end (of the conference) and then called for papers on the alphabet. The afternoon's discussion centered on the graphic representation of the phonemes /j, l, ŋ, k, ĝ, ʒ, ʒ/, and the question of whether or not to include schwa (Bulgarian Cyrillic <ъ>) in the graphic inventory, particularly in the representation of vocalic

/r/. It was generally taken for granted that the alphabet would be Cyrillic; the question was whether its details would follow Serbian Cyrillic, Bulgarian Cyrillic, a compromise between the two, or a new and independent development. The question revolved around political, pedagogical, and linguistic considerations. On purely linguistic and pedagogical grounds, Koneski advocated the adoption of Serbian Cyrillic, since the phonemic system of Macedonian, while different from that of Serbian, can be adequately represented by the same set of symbols, e. g. <h, ħ> represent mellow palatal affricates in Serbian that correspond etymologically to Macedonian dorso-palatal stops (or even di-phonemic palatal clusters in the southern dialects), Serbian <л, љ> contrast clear and palatal liquids while in Macedonian the liquid opposition is velarized: clear, etc. Others advocated the use of an acute accent (Petruševski) or haček (Prodanov, Petruševski). The First Commission's final resolution proposed Serbian <ј, њ> for /j, ʒ/, Church Slavonic <с> for /ʒ/, Bulgarian (and also Church Slavonic) <ъ> for schwa, and Markovski's new letters for /l, ŋ, k, ĝ/, viz. Cyrillic <л, и, κ, ρ> with the addition of a small circle (about half the size of the second half of the digraphic solution in the Serbian <љ, њ> which come from <л> and <и> plus <ъ>) at the lower right of each letter (upper right of <ρ>).

Although no one who was invited refused to come, Koneski only participated in the first day of the conference and Balvanlieva left after the second day. Although she read a paper and participated in voting, Balvanlieva was apparently not centrally involved with the Commission, and did not command a dialect that was part of the Literary base. Koneski's reasons for leaving the conference are discussed in note 21. Basically, he felt that the conference was not going to produce sound results and that it would be necessary to have a commission with more young people on it. All the members of the commission were college-educated teachers, except Markovski, who was a poet and still working on his B. A. (From his remarks recorded in the notes, it is clear that while he may have been able to use his native language artistically, Markovski had a poor grasp of linguistics.) Šoptrajanov and Petruševski had doctorates, but in French literature and classical philology, respectively, while Džambaz had an M. A. in pharmacy. Koneski was the youngest but also had the best and most recent training in Slavic linguistics. Most of the older members of the Commission had taught Serbian or Bulgarian under the occupying authorities while Koneski had been engaged in translating and editing Macedonian for the Partisans. When Koneski saw that he would not be heeded, he simply did not

bother to come to the sessions. There were members of the Commission for Education, however, who appreciated Koneski's experience and value, and although in the end his ideas were not adopted entirely (e. g., Iljoski convinced him that he was being too politically naïve in endorsing the use of Serbian Cyrillic for the dorso-palatal stops on purely linguistic grounds, hence the adoption of ⟨*k̑*, *f̑*⟩), he justifiably emerged as the leading codifying authority.

The first commission's proposals were not accepted by ASNOM, which did not establish it as a continuing body but rather changed its composition. On 3 May 1945 a new commission submitted an alphabet proposal that was accepted the same day and published in the next issue of *Nova Makedonija* (5. V. 45).<sup>25</sup> This proposal was signed by ten people, five from the First Commission (Iljoski, Koneski, Markovski, Pavlovski, Tošev) and five new people all of whom were directly involved with the new official communications media: Kiro Hadži-Vasilev (1921, Kavadarci), Vlado Maleski (1919, Struga), Ilija Topalovski (circa 1919–1920, Bitola), Gustav Vlahov (1912, Istanbul), Ivan Mazov (1923, Kavadarci). This same group, less Mazov, submitted a brief handbook of orthographic and morphological rules on 2 June 1945, accepted by the Ministry of Education on 7 June 1945 and published shortly thereafter.<sup>26</sup> Although Macedonian linguists continued to work on the codification of the literary language, there was no equivalent of another Congress or official Commission. On 15 April 1948 a list of six official modifications to the 1945 rules was published in *Nova Makedonija*. On 11 November 1950, the orthographic handbook by Blaže Koneski and Krum Tošev was approved and printed in March 1951. Whereas the 1945 document was a 20-page booklet outlining the basic principles of spelling, punctuation, and morphology, this second one contained a 75-page rule section followed by a 6000 word orthographic dictionary.<sup>27</sup>

There are conflicting opinions concerning the evaluation of the first conference both at the time and subsequently (cf. Koneski 1950a vs Risteski 1988a: 148, 153). It is clear from the documents that at least some of the members of the commission that submitted the resolution were satisfied with their work, but it is equally clear that their support in the Ministry of Education and Presidium of ASNOM was not sufficient for it to be accepted. There were two conflicting reasons for the rejection of the first commission's work. One was the desire of some political authorities, e. g. Strahil Gigov, to bring in Russian linguists (either to give the proclamation of the new standard more authority or to alter the standard more in the direction of Russian), the other was the evaluation

of that work as inconsistent and insufficiently independent (cf. Koneski 1950a, Risteski 1988a: 332, and note 26). This latter viewpoint was that advocated by Koneski and supported by at least some of the political authorities. Although the two factors were in conflict with one another, they combined to effect the setting aside of the recommendations of the First Conference.

It is only in the most recent past that attempts have been made to attach more significance to the First Conference. This is directly connected with political events taking place in Macedonia at present (1990). Because, for the reasons given above, the establishment of Literary Macedonian was part of Yugoslav Communist Party policy, the end of Communist hegemony and the establishment of multi-party politics has led to the use of the literary language as a political issue.

A concrete example of this is the representation and treatment of schwa. Although many Macedonian dialects have phonemic schwa, it is absent or marginal in the principal west-central dialects (cf. Vidoeski 1981). Some of these schwa-less dialects do have a phonetic (but not phonemic) schwa on-glide before vocalic /r/ in initial or all positions. One of the features of the First Commission's proposal was the presence of a distinct letter for schwa (Cyrillic ⟨*ъ*⟩, as in Bulgarian) and the prescription that it be written before vocalic /r/ and (by example) in Turkisms. This was one of the features to which Koneski objected, and in the final resolution there was no letter for schwa, but rather the proviso that an apostrophe be used before initial vocalic /r/ (and for schwa in dialectal forms used for literary purposes). Koneski's (pc) motivation in eliminating schwa from the alphabet was two-fold. First of all, since it was not phonemic in the dialects on which the literary language was based, there was no need for a letter to represent it in the alphabet. Secondly, excluding the letter would lead to a more rapid adaptation to literary pronunciation among speakers of dialects that did have phonemic schwa. Moreover, since schwa is the reflex of different sounds in different dialects (e. g., from \**i* and \**ü* in the north, from \**ɨ* in the east-central, from \**ɔ* in the peripheral) the presence of a letter to represent it would have strengthened disunity and confusion.

The new multi-party system in Yugoslavia has been accompanied by a resurfacing of nationalist tensions, including some attacks on the legitimacy of Macedonian ethnic and linguistic independence. This in turn has exacerbated Macedonian fears. During the months preceding the Macedonian elections, anti-communist nationalists accused the academic and political establishments of Serbianizing Literary Macedonian.<sup>28</sup>



Those establishments responded by pointing out that this had been the official Bulgarian line all along and by accusing the nationalists of Bulgarophilism and Serbophobia (cf. *Nova Makedonija* 1. IX. 90: 17). As the most important figure in the codification of Literary Macedonian, Koneski was subject to particularly strident, *ad hominem* attacks which became so wild that even some of the nationalists were ashamed and left their party (cf. *Start* 18. VIII. 90: 69, *Večer* 23. VIII. 90: 14 and *Nova Makedonija* 24. VIII. 90: 8). It so happens that Standard Serbo-Croatian and the dialects on which it is based have no schwa while Standard Bulgarian and its dialects do. Thus the decision to exclude schwa from the Literary Macedonian inventory is seen by the nationalists as an example of Serbianization, while their opponents see the attempt to reintroduce the grapheme (ъ) as an example of Bulgarophilism. In connection with this conflict, which at base is one for political power, the First codification conference has been assigned increased significance by some nationalists and their allies (cf. *Nova Makedonija* 6. VI. 90: 11).<sup>29</sup>

The current controversy surrounding the First Conference is not a simple matter of pro-Macedonian vs anti-Macedonian. Among the nationalists are pro-Macedonian forces that nonetheless wish to influence the development of the literary language in a different direction, or at least acquire more prestige and power than they currently have, and some of these forces have attempted to "rehabilitate" the First Conference as a significant event. On the other hand, among the socialists and reformed communists are pro-Macedonian forces that view these activities as a serious threat to the stability of Literary Macedonian, which has been and remains under unceasing assault from the Greek and Bulgarian political and academic establishments and has even been attacked occasionally by non-Macedonian politicians within Yugoslavia itself.<sup>30</sup> It is clearly true that there are legitimate complaints about the excessive influence of Serbian (cf. Minova-Gurkova 1987), but there are also legitimate fears about the negating and assimilationist interests of Bulgarian.

The First Conference confirmed certain facts that were already in practice, but cannot be said to have had any direct effect on the status or function of Macedonian, since its results were not made public. Until recently it has been treated as a minor event in the history of literary Macedonian. In the context of the rise of the multi-party system, however, significance is now being attached to the First Conference by the nationalist political parties in an attempt to discredit the communists and their allies.

## Notes

1. In his opening address to the conference, E. Pop-Andonov referred to it as the first conference in the history of the Macedonian nation to consider the question of the Macedonian alphabet and the Macedonian literary language (Kostovski 1975).
2. For details on the specifically linguistic aspects of the rise of a separate Macedonian identity, see Friedman (1975, 1985) and Lunt (1959, 1984, 1986). Dogo (1985) can also be recommended. Sources such as Koneski (1967 a, 1986 a), Stamatovski (1986), Korubin (1970), Ristovski (1966 b) and Dimitrovski et al. (1978) should be consulted by those who can read Macedonian. Dimitrovski et al. (1978) as well as parts of Koneski (1967 a) have also been translated into English, French, and other languages. Risteski (1988 a) must be used with caution. Although rich in data, it is also full of typographical errors and contains significant distortions and omissions. While giving the impression of being a detailed study with an extensive appendix of archival documents, the author has actually been quite selective in the presentation of facts and sources. The result is a skewed account that is intended as a polemic against those scholars who contributed the most to the codification of Literary Macedonian in an attempt to "rehabilitate" those whose contributions were less significant. The reader unfamiliar with the facts and sources that Risteski obscured and excluded would miss this. Reviews such as Koneski (1950 b), Stamatovski (1956), and Dimitrovski (1956) point out the limited abilities of some of these lesser scholars (cf. also the evidence in Risteski 1988 a: 232–235, 245, 275–276). An interesting item is an anonymous, undated, highly Bulgarized proposal for Literary Macedonian norms (Risteski 1988 a: 409–427), which Risteski (1988 a: 176) evaluates as being by a "good philologist" despite the fact that the author confused letters with sounds and made numerous erroneous and half-true formulations of historical linguistic facts. Nonetheless, because it is the only published source of many documents and a convenient place where documents published elsewhere are collected, I have made extensive references to this book. In view of its unreliability, however, I checked all those documents in archives in Skopje myself. I wish to thank Acad. Zuzana Topolińska and the Librarian of the Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences, Ms. Radmila Bakić, who generously helped me track down information and see the necessary documents in the Academy's and other Skopje archives. Acad. Blaže Koneski kindly met with me on August 23 and 24, 1990 at the Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences to answer questions concerning the first codification conference. Information based on those conversations is marked "pc" (personal communication). Acad. Božidar Vidoeski and Dr. Trajko Stamatovski also provided helpful information. I also wish to thank the following institutions for their help with my research: the Seminar for Macedonian Language, the University of Skopje, the Institute for Macedonian Language, and the Macedonian Republic Ministry of Information.
3. Braude (1982) provides important information regarding the origins of this system. Its relative lack of antiquity, however, does not change the fact that it was serving as an organizing principle by the time we are considering here.
4. For the purposes of this article Church Slavonic can be identified as an ecclesiastical language that bears a relationship to the Slavic vernaculars similar to that existing between Medieval Latin and the Romance vernaculars.
5. Greek scholars and government officials continue to insist that the term *Macedonian* can only be used to refer to the Greek dialects of Macedonia and/or the language of

- ancient Macedonia. Ancient Macedonian — the native language of Philip and Alexander — was an Indo-European language whose known attestations are so few that it is uncertain whether it belonged to the Hellenic group or some other Indo-European branch (cf. Neroznak 1978). Using the term *Ancient Macedonian* to designate this language removes any ambiguity. The Slavs overran Macedonia (and the rest of the Balkans) in the sixth and seventh centuries A. D., and in the nineteenth century, and for a millenium before that, the majority of the population of Macedonia was Slavic-speaking (cf. Fine 1983, 1987). It was among this Slavic-speaking population that the self-identification *makedonski* [Macedonian] arose, and even recent Modern Greek public notices prohibiting the use of Slavic in public and private refer to the forbidden language as *Makedhoniká*. It does not occur to anyone to object to the use of *Bulgarian* to refer to a modern Slavic language on the grounds that Ancient Bulgarian was Turkic. The Greek objection to the use of *Macedonian* to refer to the Slavic of Macedonia is part of an official campaign of Hellenization which continues unabated as of this writing (December, 1990).
6. Romania was also promoting its interests in Macedonia on the basis of the Aromanian population, and the Albanians, who unlike the Macedonians emerged from the Balkan Wars with their own state, likewise had territorial claims extending into Macedonia. Despite his ignorance and bigotry, Miller (1898: 385–389) gives some useful facts. Neither of these two sets of claims, however, attempted to define the nationality of the Slavic-speaking population.
  7. In 1875 Ćorgi Pulevski published a trilingual ("Slavo-Macedonian"—Albanian—Turkish) dictionary in which he printed the first known public statement that the Macedonians were a separate people different from Bulgars, Serbs, and other Slavs (Pulevski 1875: 48–49). In 1880 he published the first attempt at a Macedonian grammar (Polenakovik 1953), and in 1888 he founded the Slavo-Macedonian Literary Society in Sofia, which was quickly dissolved by the Bulgarian authorities (Ristovski 1973).
  8. One Serbian strategy for countering Bulgarian propaganda was the support of Macedonian separatism. When Serbia realized that it could not control this movement, however, Serbian propaganda reverted to claiming the Macedonians as Southern Serbs just as the Bulgarians claimed them as Western Bulgarians and the Greeks (on the basis of religion and territory) claimed them as Greeks.
  9. Among the distinctive traits were the use of a phonemic Cyrillic orthography, the Macedonian definite article /-ot/ (vs Bulgarian /-ət/), and many Macedonian lexical items. Of the six numbers, two were double issues.
  10. In accordance with article 9 of the Treaty of Sèvres (10 August 1920) concerning minority population language rights in Greece, a commission of three men (probably from Bitola and of Aromanian origin; cf. Andonovski 1985b: XIII) composed a Macedonian primer, entitled *Abeedar*, printed in Athens in 1925 using a Latin orthography and based on dialects spoken between Bitola and Lerin (Greek Florina), but the book was never used and most copies were destroyed (cf. Apostolski 1969: 250–253).
  11. The name was changed after World War Two to *Begalka* [The run-away bride].
  12. Racin and Nedelkovski died during the War. Iljoski and Markovski participated in the conference that is the subject of this article.
  13. It has been (and it sometimes still is) argued that the encouragement of Macedonian has been a Serbian (or Titoist, or Yugoslav, or Yugoslav Communist) plot whose purpose is the separation of Macedonian from Bulgarian and/or the territorial absorp-
- tion of Pirin and Aegean Macedonia (e. g., King 1973: 218; Andriotes 1957; Mirčev 1952; cf. note 8). The publication of the *Abeedar* in Greece was likewise seen by Bulgaria and Yugoslavia as an attempt by the Greek government to threaten their territorial integrity (cf. note 10). It is certainly true that there were policy makers in both Greek and Serbian government circles who saw the encouragement of Macedonian separatism as a means to eventual assimilation, but their ultimate goal was not the improvement of the status of Macedonian.
14. The territory on which Prohor Pčinski is located has been disputed between Serbia and Macedonia. When ASNOM met there it was under Macedonian administration, but was later ceded to Serbia (Džikov 1990). Early in the morning of August 2, 1990, Serbian nationalists removed the marble plaques on the monastery commemorating the first meeting of ASNOM, and when Macedonians arrived to hold commemorative ceremonies they were beaten by Serbian special security forces. On December 2, 1990, *Nova Makedonija* (page 3) reported that the Serbian Orthodox Church, claiming that the first session of ASNOM was not held at the monastery but somewhere nearby, was attempting to have the ASNOM museum removed from the monastery.
  15. Thus, for example, in September 1944 Koneski was summoned to Gorno Vranovci, where he helped edit the newspaper *Mlad Borec* [Young Fighter] and joined the translation section. In Gorno Vranovci Koneski prepared three papers on the codification and unification of Literary Macedonian two of which he read at general meetings (Koneski 1984).
  16. During this same period two versions of a Macedonian alphabet and one of a Macedonian primer were composed in Aegean Macedonia: one by a member of the Voden (Greek Edhessa) Macedonian Battalion, the other by a four-man commission in the Kostur region. The Voden alphabet was destroyed by a Greek Communist functionary shortly after its composition; the Kostur alphabet and primer, whose composers had access to material from Vardar Macedonia, were published and distributed. This linguistic freedom, however, was short-lived (Risteski 1988a: 158–167).
  17. The invitation to Šoptrajanov cited by Risteski (1988a: 227) states the opening date as "*ponedelnik* ('Monday') 26. XI. 1944", but in fact that Monday, which was the opening date of the conference, was the 27th.
  18. The first two days of the conference were spent debating the alphabet. The group did not meet on the 29th. The morning of the 30th and the 1st (there was no afternoon session on the 30th) were spent on orthography. The afternoon of the 1st and both sessions on the 2nd were spent on morphology. The morning of the 3rd covered a variety of miscellaneous topics including specific orthographic, morphological and syntactic issues. At the end of that session it was agreed that Venko Markovski would write up the resolution. On the 4th Markovski's resolution was read and approved and those attending the conference divided into two committees: one for elaborating the guidelines for literary Macedonian and the other for terminology. Morning sessions were from 8:00 to 12:30. Afternoon sessions began at 2:30 and finished between 6 and 6:30.
  19. According to Kostovski's notes, all meetings took place in the Town Hall. Koneski (pc) states that the opening was held at the National Theater and then moved to the Town Hall due to the lack of suitable meetings rooms in the Theater.
  20. The forms given in the list are those that are now standard. During the period preceding standardization, many of these individuals' names occurred in variant forms, including the following: Georgi, Ćorge, Ćorgi, Krume, Risto (for Hristo), Mihajlo, Iliev, Ilioski,

- Kiselinović, Konevski, Pavlov-Neproštenski, Popandonov, Šoptrajan, Tošeski, Zografski. Some of these people were born in villages, others in towns, but for the sake of simplicity I have given only the name of the town that would determine the speaker's dialect. For those whose birthdates are not available in any published sources, Blaže Koneski (pc) supplied me with approximations to the best of his recollection.
21. Risteski (1988 a: 46) cites the record of Markovski's interruption as evidence that Koneski boycotted that later part of the conference due to Markovski rather than due to Kiselinov, who is mentioned as the cause in a second-hand report quoted by Risteski. Koneski (pc) is unambiguous that it was the overall lack of preparedness (also commented on by Iljoski; cf. Risteski 1988 a: 253) and amateurish level of many of the participants, including Kiselinov's presence, to which he objected. Koneski (pc) cited Kiselinov's desire to make concessions to "our northern neighbors", i. e. Serbian, and "our eastern neighbors", i. e. Bulgarian (cf. Risteski 1988 a: 275). Koneski also objected to the desire of some members of the First Commission to bring in Russian influence (cf. Risteski 1988 a: 277, 331).
  22. For example, Risteski (1988 a) has ⟨n⟩ for ⟨ñ⟩ and omits diacritics and an entire line from Kostovski's original table of alternative letters for the palatals (page 241), he has *dijalektički* 'dialectal' where the original has *dijakritički* 'diacritical' (page 144), *vakva* 'thus' for *hukva* 'letter' (page 266), etc. Given the fact that the language of the original is uncoded and Kostovski's own typing contains various errors — some of which Risteski corrected and others of which he let stand while introducing still others of his own — the published version of the minutes cannot be relied on by the researcher concerned with specific details of the original, although it is adequate for the reader concerned only with the general content of the discussion.
  23. In modern Macedonian dialectology these are now known as the West-Central dialects, since it has become clear that they are to the west of the major isogloss bundle — which runs roughly north-south along the course of the Vardar and Crna rivers — but form a relatively large and homogeneous central area with respect to the smaller dialect regions to their north, west, and south (e. g., Tetovo, Gostivar, Debar, Ohrid-Struga) as well as to the areas east of the major bundle.
  24. This was the practice in most literary works produced between the World Wars, including Iljoski's and Markovski's. It was also the practice in Partisan publications. In 1943, Koneski (1986 b) had written a grammar based narrowly on the Prilep dialect, but he abandoned its specificities in favor of the more generalized koine that he found in practice at Gorno Vranovci.
  25. Risteski (1988 a: 167–176, 347–350; 1988 b) has published documentation concerning the working groups that met between the first and second linguistic commissions. He refers to these groups as the second commission and calls the second commission the third. However, there were only two commissions that actually submitted proposals to the Ministry of Education: that which submitted the proposal of 4 December 1944, which was not accepted, and that which submitted the proposal of 3 May 1945, which was accepted. Between these two dates there were meetings, conferences and discussions of varying size and membership. Some of these are documented, and the term *komisija* [commission] occurs in some of these documents, but no proposals were submitted to the Ministry of Education during this intervening period. It is on the basis of results that Koneski (1950 a) refers to only the first and second language commissions.
  26. The elaboration (*elaborat*) of the resolution submitted by the First Commission is characterized by less detail, clarity, and unity and more non-western forms than the

- pravopis* [orthographic handbook] submitted by the Second Commission. Thus for example the *elaborat* confuses reflexes of \*j with those of \*ü, whereas the *pravopis* does not. The *elaborat* mentions the plural suffix *-inja* with a few examples while the *pravopis* specifies it as neuter and also addresses the issue of monosyllabic masculine plurals (where, however, it permitted both *-oj* and *-ovi* until 1950, when *-ovi* was chosen). The *elaborat* and *pravopis* both permitted *toj* and *on* for the 3rd singular pronoun, but the *elaborat* also permitted *taj*. The *elaborat* has (northern and Serbian) *sve* as well as *se* for 'all' where the *pravopis* has only *se*. In verbs the *elaborat* has both eastern *sa* and western *se* for the 3rd plural present of 'be', the *pravopis* has only *se*. The *elaborat* had three 3rd plural aorist-imperfect suffixes: *-a*, *-ja*, and (Skopje) *-va* where the *pravopis* codifies a consistent *-a*. The *elaborat* spells the 3rd plural present of *a*-conjugation verbs *-at*, with no graphic indication of two syllable peaks, while the *pravopis* is consistently phonemic by spelling it *-aat*. The *elaborat* gives no aorist paradigms under the section labeled *Imperfekt i aorist* [imperfect and aorist]. The *elaborat* permits two forms of the productive imperfectizing suffix: *-uva* and *-uje*. The *pravopis* specified Skopje *-ue* (probably due to Markovski), although in 1948 this was changed to *-uva*. The indefinite past (perfect) was only given for the verb 'be' in the *elaborat*, and was given with the auxiliary in the third person (an easternism). The *pravopis* specified the western form without the third person auxiliary. The *elaborat* used diachronic grammatical terminology such as *particip prezens* [present participle] where the *pravopis* used synchronically descriptive terminology reflecting the state of Macedonian grammar: *glagolski prilog* [verbal adverb]. (The form in question comes from the Common Slavic present active participle but cannot function as a participle in Macedonian.) The *elaborat* also contained the following statement: *Ne samo vo leksikata no i vo svojata celost noviot makedonski literaturni jazik ke se razviva pod vozdejstvieto na ruskiot jazik ...* [Not only in its lexicon but in its entirety the new Macedonian literary language will develop under the influence of the Russian language ...]. There was no such statement or sentiment in the *pravopis*.
27. For details see Friedman (1985).
  28. While the political establishment was by definition Communist under the old system, this was not the case with the linguistic establishment. Some of the most academically powerful and highly respected linguists never joined the Party.
  29. It is interesting to note that Kiselinov is cited in these polemics but not Markovski. Kiselinov never ceased his efforts to claim more credit for the codification of Macedonian, whereas Markovski continued to work for the Russians (Informburo) after the Tito-Stalin split and ended up defecting to Bulgaria and changing his nationality, which to Macedonians was nothing less than a major betrayal.
  30. Despite these assaults, the Macedonian authorities have never convened a Conference for the purpose of countering Bulgarian and Greek attacks on Macedonian linguistic autonomy. On the publication of some particularly vicious or misleading Bulgarian or Greek denial of Macedonian linguistic legitimacy, Macedonian linguists have defended the existence of Macedonian as an independent language in print (see Dimitrovski et al. 1978).

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## The First Congress for Malay

### Asmah Haji Omar

#### 1. Status of Malay prior to the Congress

The First Congress on Malay was held on the 12th and 13th of April 1952, at the Seaview Hotel, Singapore. This was five years prior to the independence of Malaya (now part of Malaysia and known as Peninsular Malaysia) from the British. Prior to independence the term "Malaya" at times also included Singapore.

This was the time when the Malay language was still a low (L) status language in terms of its use in official functions, administration and education. As Malaya was then under the British rule, the high (H) status language was English. This was the language that could assist in one's effort to reach the higher rungs of the socioeconomic ladder of Malayan society. The section of the population that succeeded in this consisted of those who went to the English schools, viz. those schools using English as medium of instruction. Attending such schools not only meant that one's future income in the government service and in private firms was guaranteed, but it also implied that one had become urbanized because such schools were only built in big towns.

Malay was not only an indigenous language of the area (see Map 1); it was also a lingua franca of the islands of Southeast Asia. In Malaya itself Malay was the common language of communication when people of various linguistic groups interacted with one another, particularly if both parties did not know English. As access to English was a privilege to only a small fraction of the population, it meant that there was more interaction in Malay among the various linguistic groups than it was in English. The existence of various forms of pidgin Malay in Malaysia today is an attestation to the volume of intergroup communication carried out in that language.

The status of Malay as an L-language came about with colonization. Its low status was accorded by the colonial program of the use of English in important spheres of the life of the Malays through education and government institutions.