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**ABOUT VOICED CONSONANTS AT THE END OF THE  
WORD IN BILINGUAL SPEECH**

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The article analyzes the implementation of voiced consonants in the absolute end of the word in the Wallachian dialect in the outermost Northwestern Region of Bulgaria. Results that are part of a larger study of speech of bilinguals from the town of Bregovo (Vidin area) are presented. The results outline that there is no interference in this area of phonetics from the Bulgarian language where in the absolute end of the word this opposition is neutralized. In this special feature the phonetics of the Wallachian dialect is closer to the Romance languages.

**Keywords:** bilingualism, phonetics, voiced consonants, Wallachian dialect

**ЕЩЁ РАЗ О ЗВОНКИХ СОГЛАСНЫХ В КОНЦЕ СЛОВА В  
БИЛИНГВАЛЬНОЙ РЕЧИ**

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В статье рассматривается реализация звонких согласных в абсолютном конце слов на влашском диалекте северо-западной Болгарии. Представлены некоторые результаты более широкого изучения речи двуязычных из города Брегово (Видин). Результаты показали, что в этой области фонетики нет никакого вмешательства от болгарского языка. Влашский диалект здесь ближе к румынскому языку.

**Ключевые слова:** билингвизм, фонетика, звонкие согласные, влашский диалект

### ***Introduction***

The town of Bregovo is located about 30 kilometers northwest from the town of Vidin and it is known as the ultimate Bulgarian Northwest according to the geographically surveyed points. The language situation in Bregovo is complicated. There are various types of language situation according to the classification of A. Shveizer and it may be *monolingual*, *bilingual* or *multilingual*; *exoglossal*, being the sum total of different languages or *endoglossal* – the sum total of territorial and social dialects of the same language; *balanced*, if its components (languages, dialects) are functionally equipollent, or *unbalanced*, when its components are distributed by various spheres of communication and social groups [5].

Most of the Bregovo inhabitants are in a situation of bilingualism or polylingualism (Bulgarian-Romanian; Bulgarian-Romani; Bulgarian-Romani-Romanian). The Romanian dialect known as *Wallachian language* is spoken in the ultimate Bulgarian Northwest, and it is a variant of the Oltenian dialect but has variety of Bulgarian characteristics as it has been developed and exists surrounded by Bulgarian dialects. Therefore, it has been influenced for more than a century by the Bulgarian literary language that bilinguals have been learning at school [2].

The analysis of colloquial speech of the Bregovo residents indicates that a Language transfer (also known as L1 interference, linguistic interference or crosslinguistic influence) is available among bilinguals:

- 1) People over the age of 70 – between L1 (Wallachian dialect) and L2 (Bulgarian language)
- 2) People under the age of 70 – between L1 (Bulgarian language) and L2 (Wallachian dialect).

Language transfer may occur across both languages [11, 12] in the acquisition of a simultaneous bilingual, from a mature speaker's first language (L1) to a second (L2) or third (L3) language they are acquiring [6, 9], or from an L2 back to the L1 [8].

The linguistic interference between the Bulgarian language and the Wallachian dialect in the speech of the Bregovo residents is observed at all linguistic levels as the strongest interference occurs at a lexical level. The linguistic situation in the studied geographic area is *exoglossal* and *unbalanced* (A. Shveizer), or *bilingualism with diglossia* (J. Fishman) [7], since there is a scaling in bilingual attitudes and the Bulgarian language has a higher status than the Wallachian dialect [1, 2]. Therefore, the bilinguals from the town of Bregovo in oral communication with an unknown collocutor use some of the Bulgarian language formations - literary and even dialectal formations (from the older generation). Bilinguals use different formations which also lead to unequal interference in their spoken language influenced by the second language as well as by extralinguistic factors such as age, gender, education, etc.

### ***Methodology***

The purpose of current study is to determine whether there is a phonetic interference from the Wallachian dialect to the Bulgarian speech of the bilinguals in the field of consonantism. The general hypothesis assigns that audible oral stops are available in the Wallachian dialect (plosives *b, d, g*, fricatives *v, z, ʒ* and affricates *ʤʒ*) at the absolute end of the word similar to the Romanian language<sup>1</sup>. The registration of voiced consonants in Bulgarian words in the Wallachian or the Bulgarian speech of bilinguals means that there is interference in the field of consonantism. The hypothesis verification was performed by conducting an intervention which results are intended to show if the consonant at the end of the word in Wallachian speech is voiced or voiceless. A questionnaire has been conducted containing Romanian lexemes and constructions that finish with voiced consonant and are also used in the Wallachian dialect. The bilinguals were tasked to hear and write down the word in Bulgarian letters. If bilinguals write at the end of a word the letter for the voiced consonant *z*, e.g. *vez* ‘you see’, this means that they hear voiced consonant and pronounce voiced consonant. If they write the letter with (s), it means that their articulation is Bulgarian, since

<sup>1</sup> IPA symbols have been used in current paper

in the Bulgarian language in this position the voiced consonants become voiceless.

Initially, it has been formed a network of informants by defining 15 participants – 9 men and 6 women between the ages of 25 and 60, ie. representatives of the young and middle-aged generation, since the *education* and *gender* generatives are not relevant to them. In a following stage a list of Romanian lexems has been created ending in voiced consonant that match sonically and semantically with Wallachian lexems by using a Romanian-Bulgarian dictionary.

The intervention has been carried out after complying the questionnaires, whereby bilinguals were tasked to write down the Wallachian equivalent of the respective Bulgarian word. The questionnaire is most suitable for the current study purposes since bilingualism in the ultimate Bulgarian Northwest is natural (in way of appearance) and asymmetrical (in the way that the two codes are perceived – Bulgarian is perceived auditory and visually, whereas Wallachian is only auditory perceived). Therefore, the operational hypothesis was that if bilinguals were to reproduce a Wallachian speech in writing, they would write what they hear and pronounce.

### **Results**

The analysis of the fieldwork results outline that the interference from the Bulgarian to the Wallachian language is the smallest in terms of quantity, but in qualitative aspect is comparable with the morphological and lexical level of interference. Two consonant oppositions appear in both Bulgarian language and Wallachian dialect in the field of consonantism: 1) *palatalized (with second articulation) - non-palatalised consonants* or *soft-hard consonants* and 2) *voiced- voiceless*. On the diachronic plane the influence of old Bulgarian language is the reason for the appearance of a new group consonants in the Romanian language, respectively in the Wallachian dialect that is an object of analysis – palatalized (with second articulation), that in combination with non-palatalised form pairs of palatalized and unpalatalized consonant phonemes [3]. In addition, one of the main markers in Wallachian colloquial speech

disappears in Bulgarian speech of the bilinguals – voiced alveolar lateral approximant *l*, which becomes the allophone of the phoneme *л* (*l*), as in the oral speech of young bilinguals it has been registered even manifestations of *ǎ* influenced by their Bulgarian speech, where the process is of higher frequency [4, 10]. There are other changes (for example elision of sound *h*, monophthongization of diphthongs etc.) that are not considered in current study, but the tendency is towards unification between the Wallachian phonetic system with the Bulgarian one. A regressive assimilation has been observed when different voiced noise consonants are in a neighborhood in both Bulgarian language and Wallachian dialect, for example: *врабче* ‘sparrow’ /врапчѐ/, *сграда* ‘building’ /згра̀да/ etc. This assimilation is even codified in the Romanian literary language, in comparison: *ispit* < bg. *uznum* ‘test’, *zbor* < bg. *cбор* ‘assembly’ etc. Voiceless at the end of the word that appear in Bulgarian language has been also registered in some of the lexeme, for example *groápă* ‘grave’ < bg. *зроб* /грон/ ‘grave’ with a voiceless consonant at the end of the word that remains voiceless even before the flexion for feminine –*ă*, while in other words the voiced consonant is preserved, for example *obráz* ‘cheek, face, image’, *slab* ‘weak’, *prag* ‘threshold’ etc. The Romanian literary norm obliges that the voiced consonants does not become voiceless in absolute end of the word, in order to preserve the semantic differentiation between lexemes *drac* ‘devil’ – *drag* ‘kind’, *corb* ‘raven’ – *corp* ‘body’ etc.

### **Discussion**

The analysis of the questionnaire results outline following :

1. From a sociolinguistic point of view, it has been registered that the realization of voiced consonants at the end of the word does not depend on the socio-demographic generatives of respondents, such as age, gender, education. In the researched idiolects voiced consonants does not appear in Bulgarian speech; i.e. an interference does not apply in the Bulgarian language direction.
2. Analysis of the questionnaire results assigns that the general hypothesis has been proven.

3. Two consonant oppositions *voiced* - *voiceless* at the absolute end of the word is preserved in the Wallachian dialect that applied in the town of Bregovo and its neighboring villages, ie. there is no influence from the Bulgarian language in this position. The main reason is because the consonants at the end of the word in the Wallachian dialect, as well as in the Romanian language, have significance both at the phonetic and morphological level as well as at the lexical level. The Wallachian dialect is closer to the Roman type of languages in this phonetic context and the voiced consonants at the absolute end of words are one of the specific features that still exist in the Wallachian dialect used by bilinguals in the town of Bregovo (Vidin area).

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