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Kipchak Turkic as a part of the Balkans and Eastern Europe history-geography¹

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1. Introduction

The existence of Turkic in the Balkans and Eastern Europe, the Danube Bulghard (the 7th century A.D.), the Khazars (the 9th century A.D.), the Pechenegs, and the Oghuzs (the 11th century), the Cuman-Kipchaks etc. can be considered in two main periods: the Pre-Ottoman period and the Post-Ottoman period. It can be supposed that there are Turkic-speaking ethnical groups among the Huns and Avars (the 5th and 6th centuries) who emigrated from Asia to Eastern Europe. However, the tracks of Turkic in the pre-Ottoman period pose obscure, complex, and difficult linguistic problems (See for Turkic penetration in Europe in Golden 2002: 219, 234; MENGES 1995: 11, 12, 20; KURAT 1992: 45-46, 72-75 et al.).

1.1. The Balkans

Similar to Kipchak *dialect-continuum*, once spoken in Donetsk near the Sea of Azov and in Kamenets-Podolsk region in Western Ukraine, and in Dobruja through Moldova, the varieties of Oghuz, spoken in an area ranging from Anatolia and Thrace to Greece, Kosovo, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Romania and Moldova also comprise a *dialect-continuum*. Kipchak and

¹ This study is limited to Kipchak varieties in the Balkans and Eastern Europe (old Armeno-Kipchak and modern Karay, Krimchak, Urum, Crimean Tatar, and Kazan Tatar varieties), and it does not include Kipchak written languages, used in the Russian Federation, (Bashkir, Karachay-Balkar, Kumyk, Noghay and Kazan Tatar) and spoken varieties.



Oghuz varieties in the Balkans can be observed in Bulgaria, Romania, and Moldova, in which the old Crimean Tatar is widely spoken.

The Balkans has been the contact area of different languages, religions, and cultures since the ancient eras. The Romans, Byzantines and Ottomans had been the sovereigns of this region in the last millennium. In parallel with the attenuation of the Ottoman Empire, the nationalist and separatist political-military developments, triggered by the French Revolution, caused significant changes in ethno-linguistic structure of the Balkans since the 19th century during the Austro-Hungarian Empire expansion. The nation states were established mostly complying with the language boundaries after the numerous struggles had continued so far.

While the region has had continuous ethnical disputes and separation risks as the term 'the Balkanization' refers to, it has also witnessed linguistic contacts among different varieties and languages that are in relation with each other. Therefore, like the Caucasus, the Balkans, also a mosaic of languages and religions, is a well-known linguistic area which has been extensively studied since the 19th century (See TOMIĆ 2006). It is obvious that the linguistic areas are the result of the extensive contact among different languages and cultures. Within the Balkan linguistic area, Turkish is the only language which is not a member of the Indo-European language family. In the historical process, Turkish has been influential by functioning as a superstratum language at different linguistic levels, especially in lexical copies over the regional languages (See the influence of Turkish upon Balkan languages at lexical level in ROLLET 1996). Nevertheless, the effects of other languages on the Ottoman Turkish are limited. Therefore, some researchers consider that the Ottoman Turkish and standard Turkish are not members of the Balkan linguistic area, but they are participant of this linguistic area. (See FRIEDMAN 1982: 1-77).

Balkan Turkic consists of the Rumelian varieties of Turkish, namely Oghuz and Kipchak varieties (see KOWALSKI 1933: 1-28, NÉMETH 1983: 160-172). The prestigious written languages the Ottoman Turkish and then Turkish restrain these two vernaculars.

Even though Turkish has a significant part within the ethno-linguistic composition of the region, it has not developed a consistent existence in the Balkan region. Oghuz varieties ranging from Anatolia to Central Europe through the Ottoman conquests started to retreat from South Hungary to the east in the 17th century, and from Mora to the north in 1821. The invasion of Crimea by the Russians in 1783 and the Turkish-Russian War between 1877-1878 caused Kipchak varieties to retreat from the north towards the south. The speakers of Turkic were exposed to the largest massive



population movements in the Balkans, and Turkic-speaking communities and even the non-Turkish Muslim communities were forced to immigrate massively to Anatolia because of the Balkan Wars, the First and the Second World War.

1.2. Eastern Europe

Kipchak varieties spoken by small communities in Eastern Europe; in Poland, Lithuania, Estonia and Ukraine consist of small islets isolated from the Turkic languages in the east of Europe. The aforementioned countries are the new homeland in which Turkic communities, the Karays and Tatars who have different religions, but speak the same language, have been living for six centuries.

2. Kipchaks and Old Kipchak

The geography of the Turkic languages range from the Dolgan-Nenets Autonomous Region (Taymyria), dependant on the Russian Federation, at the north-south line to the Shiraz Region of Iran; from Manchuria in which isolated Fu-Yü Kirghiz is spoken to the North-eastern part of Europe at the east-west line; to the Baltic Sea, and even the Scandinavian Peninsula.² Apart from the marginal varieties like Chuvash, Yakut, and other Siberian languages, Turkic languages in this geography can be classified geographically and genetically into three main groups: *The East (Chaghatay)*, *the North-west (Cuman-Kipchak)* and *the South-west (Oghuz)*. Kipchak varieties in the Balkans and Eastern Europe are in the west of the Turkic languages map.

It is not possible to find ethnonyms of *Cuman* and *Kipchak* in pre-Islamic period (See the previous usage of the ethnical names of *Kipchak* and *Sir* before that period in KLYASHTORNY/SULTANOV 2003: 134). However, that the Kipchaks are often told with the Oghuz in the *Divanü Lügâti't-Türk*, the encyclopaedic dictionary, compiled by Kâşgarlı Mahmud in 1077, approximately two centuries after Turks conversion into Islam, displays that the Kipchaks had a significant ethno-linguistic unity in the Turkic world in the 11th century (KURAT 1992: 69-75).

Turkic communities that are named as *the Kipchaks* in the Islamic sources are generally known with the ethnonyms of *the Cumans* in the Western sources and *the Polovets* in the Russian sources. In the beginning, Cumans and Kipchak, who are two different communities living close

² 'At present the Turkic languages stretch along a latitudinal strip lying roughly between 35° latitude N. and the 55° latitude N., from the Baltic to Southern Siberia.' (MENGENS 1995: 10).



to each other, have become a single ethnic group after Cuman-Kipchak federation was established in the 13th century (See GUMILÖV 2000: 104).

It is known that the Cuman-Kipchaks made political and military contact with the Byzantine Empire, and that Turkic-speaking Cuman-Byzantines lived in the lands of the Byzantine Empire towards the end of the 11th century (See BRAND 1989: 1-25). The Cuman-Tatars, who got involved in the Balkans in the 12th and 14th centuries, had come to this area not from the East, but from the neighbouring steppes, the Down Tuna and the Black Sea (VASÁRY 2005: 146).

The Kipchaks have spread over a wide area in Eurasia and Africa throughout history. The area from Volga to Dnieper, even to the Balkans is called as *Dasht-i Kipchak* (*the Cuman Steppe*) in the Islamic world, and *Cumania/Comania* (TOGAN 1981: 160; KURAT 1992: 69-99; GOLDEN 2002: 225) or *Tartaria* in the Western world. Today, it is still possible to find the toponyms of *Cumania/Comania* etc. in countries where Cuman communities settled down such as Hungary, Romania, Macedonia, Bulgaria and so forth. The area consisting of Western Siberia, the Middle East, Southern Russia, Eastern Europe, Hungary, the north part of the Balkans, Georgia, Egypt and Syria still bears the traces of the ethnic and linguistic inheritance of the Kuman-Kipchaks (See GOLDEN 2006: 16-29; RÁSONYI 1971: 146-147, 150-151).

Even though the Cuman-Kipchaks spread over such an extensive area, they could not establish a permanent political unity. Therefore, there is no common, standard, and sustainable written language tradition. Apart from *Divanu Lugâti't-Türk*, which is the common heritage of all Turks except Chuvash, *Codex Cumanicus*, copied by the Christian missionaries in Crimea at the beginning of the 14th century (1303) is one of the written documents that represent Kipchak best with its text compiled from the spoken language.³ Writs remained from the Kipchak Khanates in Eurasia,

³ Two encyclopaedic dictionaries on the history of Turkic languages, *Divanü Lügâti't-Türk* (1077), and *Codex Cumanicus* (1303), the first study on Turkish language in Latin letters and in Latin (and German) language, enlighten the history of Turkish language and culture, and they play crucial roles in comprehending linguistic problems as well as solving them. The fact that one of these works is in Arabic, and the other one is in Latin emphasizes their attachment to Islamic and Christian cultural circles. The mission of *Codex Cumanicus*, which was written by German and Italian ecclesiastics, was to spread Christianity; thus, this work also constitutes an important part of European religious and cultural history (See *Divanü Lügâti't-Türk* in ATALAY 1985-1986, DANKOFF & KELLY 1982-1984; *Codex Cumanicus* in DRİMBA 2000; GRÖNBECH 1936).

UNESCO emphasized the importance and mission of *Divanü Lügâti't-Türk* by declaring the year of 2008 as the thousandth anniversary of the birth of the author of the

Turkic grammar and dictionaries written in Arabic in Egypt, a few religious and secular texts compiled in Khwarezmia and Golden Horde, are the other Kipchak documents belonging to the Islamic period. However, these documents are generally in a mixed language, Oghuz/Kipchak. In these works, it is often disputable whether the elements given in Kipchak are really in Kipchak.⁴ The chronicles, religious and juridical documents of the Armenian-Kipchaks who are from the Gregorian communion of Christianity, are the texts representing the real Kipchak written language.

As it was in the past, the speakers of Kipchak varieties, the autochthon inhabitants of East and South-eastern Europe, still constitute an interesting composition in terms of their faith today. Even though the Turkic languages-speaking communities, who are united under the name of Kipchak, have different religions such as Islam, Judaism, or Christianity, they are quite close to each other apart from small differences in their languages, religious terminology, and syntax.

3. The Armenian-Kipchaks and Armeno-Kipchak

With the collapse of the Armenian Bagrationi Empire in the 11th century, the Armenian people started to immigrate to Crimea and they had already established a large colony there by the 13th century. The Kipchak-Armenian theme, starting in that century at the latest, developed through the neighbourhood relationships and commercial affairs. While some Armenians became the speakers of Turkic, some Kipchak speakers committed themselves to the Armenian Church. Therefore, a complex ethnic-religious group occurred (See PRITSAK 1979: 131-140; CLAUSON 1971: 8-9; LEWICKI; KOHNOWA 1957: 153-165). The Armenian-Kipchaks and Armeno-Kipchak are interesting examples of the partnership of languages and religions.

The Armenian-Kipchaks settled down in the Kamenets-Podolsk and Lviv region of today's Ukraine with the Ottoman conquest of Caffa at the last quarter of the 15th century. Armeno-Kipchak, which had been used as the spoken and religious language until the 16th century, reached such a level that it could inherit an important written heritage between the 16th and 17th centuries. Scientists such as GRUNIN (1967), DENY (1957), TRYJARSKI (1968-1972), SCHÜTZ (1998), GARKAVETS (2002) and so forth published Armeno-Kipchak texts, and Tryjarski prepared

work. Similarly, it is necessary to focus on books that combine languages and civilizations such as *Codex Cumanicus* in institutional and international levels.

⁴ Among the dictionaries and grammar books, written in Egypt-Mamluk zone, *Et-tuhfetü 'z-zekiyye fi 'l-lügati 't-Türkiyye* is the work that reflects Kipchak features most (See ATALAY 1945).



Kipchak-Polish/French dictionary for these texts. Armeno-Kipchak, losing its function in the following periods, faded into oblivion like Egyptian and Syrian Kipchak, and its speakers disappeared in history after they had been mixed up in communities such as Polish or Ukrainian etc.

4. Kipchak Written Languages in the Balkans and Eastern Europe

The westernmost point of the marginal area in which Kipchak is spoken is Finland, and the easternmost point is Manchuria. Modern Kipchak varieties are spoken by many autochthon communities in a large area ranging from the west part of Siberia to Poland, and from Tatarstan to the north part of Afghanistan. Apart from the marginal varieties such as Fu-Yü Kirghiz; Kirghiz, Karakalpak, a part of Kazakh and, all modern Kipchak written languages are the autochthon languages of Europe.

A majority of Kipchak spoken varieties was made different written languages at the end of the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century through Russian and Soviet language policies. Kipchak, the branch of Turkic languages family that expanded the most extensively, is the official written languages in two independent countries, Kirghizstan and Kazakhstan, and the autonomous regions in the Russian Federation and Uzbekistan. *Kazakh* (Kazakhstan), *Kirghiz* (Kirghizstan), *Karakalpak* (Uzbekistan), *Tatar*, *Bashkir*, *Kumyk*, *Karachay-Balkar*, *Noghay* (The Russian Federation) are the mother tongues of almost twenty million people. Kipchak written languages are directly in contact with primarily Slavic language; Indo-European, Ural and Paleo-Siberia languages.

Kipchak varieties in the Balkans and Eastern Europe without any functional and consistent written languages cause the numbers of the speakers of *Dobruja Tatar* (Bulgaria, Romania), *Lithuanian Karay*, *Polish Karay*, *Krimcak*, *Urum* (Ukraine), *Estonian Tatar*, *Finnish Tatar*, *Lithuanian Tatar* and *Polish Tatar* to decrease gradually. Therefore, these languages are in danger of becoming extinct. Crimean Tatar, with its crowded population and its strong diaspora, is not in danger of becoming extinct in short term.

Today's western Kipchak written languages and varieties are the successors of the spoken language that is represented by *Codex Cumanicus* together with Kipchak written language in Armenian letters in terms of language features such as $-\gamma/-g-$, $-\gamma/-g > -v/-v-$; $-\gamma/-g-$, $-\gamma/-g > -y/-y$ (Tatar, Bashkir, Kumyk, Karachay-Balkar, Karay); $u > o$, $o > u$; $\ddot{o} > \ddot{u}$, $\ddot{u} > \ddot{o}$ (Tatar, Bashkir); $q- > x-$ (Kumyk, Urum) interrogative partide – *mA* (corresponds to – *mA* in Kazakh).

5. The Karays and Karay Variety

Following the Ottoman's first conquest in Rumelia (1352), the Lithuanian Grand Duke Vytautas brought a few hundred Karay families to Eastern Europe, the ancient Lithuania and Western Ukraine, namely the ancient *Galicia* over the Black Sea coast in 1397 and 1398. The Karaites (Karaim Turks/Turkic Karaim), followers of a small religious group, who rejected Judaism and adopted the Talmud faith in the 8th century A.D., constitute small communities in the countries in which they are living today.

Unlike the old Armeno-Kipchak, the language of the Karay was used at home and particularly for religious services, not for commercial and cultural communication with other ethnic groups. In Karay, which has three dialects, namely the *Halych*, *Trakai* and *Crimean*, there are intensively available Slavic and Hebraic lexical copies along with the Arabic and Persian origin copies (See the Trakai variety in KOWALSKI 1929). *Crimean* variety is the closest variety to Oghuz. TEKIN classified Trakai variety in the *qoş*-group together with the Caucasian languages of Kumyk, Karachay-Balkar, and Halych in the *qos*- group variety together with Kazakh, Karakalpak and Noghay (1991: 5-18).

One of the characteristic linguistic features of Turkic is that the morph-syntactical order of bound and free morphemes is identical in all Turkic languages. Armeno-Kipchak and Karay partially diverged from this syntactical common property of Turkic because of their long-lasting, intensive contacts with Slavic languages, particularly with Russian, Polish, Ukrainian and Hebraic religious texts.

There are limited numbers of written documents from Jewish-Karays, and they mainly belong to the recent periods.

The linguistic and cultural importance of Karay can be listed as follows:

- It is one of the native languages in Eastern Europe.
- The Karays are the only Turkic-speaking Jewish community.
- Karay offers significant insights about Turkic-Persian language interactions and the history of Arabian and Persian elements in Turkic.
- Karay has been greatly influenced by Krimchak and Karaite ethnolects of Crimean Tatar as well as Slavic and Hebraic languages.

Therefore, although it is not widely spoken, Karay is an important Turkic language, which has brought together Turkic, Slavic, and Hebraic languages and cultures in the east of Europe for centuries (KIZILOV 2008: 156-157).



The Karays of Poland and Lithuania have preserved their languages and identities although they have been isolated from other Kipchak languages for ages. It is not only because the Jewish-Karays have displayed a resistant social structure towards cultural assimilation, but also it is because Lithuania has been tolerant towards religious and ethnic differences. Slavic vocabulary has not been influential in Karay Turkic since the Karays do not share the Christian faith. The Karay communities have always regarded their languages and cultures as their identity marker, and they have used them as a means to preserve their identity for centuries.

By 1989, the number of the speakers of Karay, living in the old USSR countries, Lithuania (Trakay, Vilnius/Vilnius, Panevejis), Ukraine (Evpatoriya, Feodosiya, Simferopol, Haliç, etc.), and in Poland is totally 2,600 (Musayev 1997: 254-264). According to Arzoz, out of 280 Karays in Lithuania, 150 of them live in Vilna; 50 of them live in Panevezys; and 80 of them live in Troki by 1991. Also, out of 150 Karays in Poland, 50 of them live in Warsaw, Gdańsk, and Varcelova; and 4 of them live in Pele (2008: 56).⁵

In 1997, when the 600th anniversary of the existence of the Karays in Lithuania was celebrated, the number of the Karays decreased to 257 according to the statistics of the same year. In 2002 census, only 45 people informed themselves as *Karay*. With the organizations, founded in 1988, such as *the Lithuanian Karay Society* and *the Karay Religious Society*, Karay is taught in Sunday schools. Lithuania cooperates with Turkish linguists in order to teach Karay children their mother tongue (See *Euromosaic* III 2004: 222, 274). Lithuania has appointed the diplomat Halina KOBECKAITE, whose native language is Karay Turkic, as the ambassador of Turkey so as to display the value they attached to their relationships with Turkey and to the Karay people.

6. Krimchaks and Krimchak Variety

The Krimchaks, a small ethnic and religious group, are the Jews, living in the Crimean peninsula, engaged in farming, and speaking Turkic. Since the Krimchaks are deeply attached to their faith; they use Hebrew as their written language, and they practice endogamy, they had the opportunity

⁵ There are various numbers given in different sources concerning the number of Karay-speaking people. For example, according to Kocaoğlu, the term, *Karaim*, which does not emphasize language or ethnic origin, includes other ethnic groups, speaking different languages. Thus, there are 20,000 Karaims in Israel while there are 5,000 Karaims in Egypt. Karay, a Turkic language, is spoken by 230 people in Lithuania, by 50 in Poland, by 1,200 in Ukraine-Crimea, by 680 in Russia, and by 50 in Turkey (İstanbul) (2006: 2). According to *Euromosaic* III, the number of Karays in Poland is 150 (2004: 276).



to preserve their identity until the Second World War. However, the Krimchak people were exposed to ethnic cleansing when German troops invaded Crimea in 1941 and 1942. Survivors of the genocide immigrated to the U.S. and Israel, and some of the rest were assimilated among the Crimean Tatars (OLSON et al. 1994: 402-403). Today, Krimchaks, who are Orthodox Jews, live in the cities of Akmesçit and Karasubazar in Crimea. Their number was 1.448 according to the 1989 census. In the same year, two schools were opened with the training language of Krimchak.

The Krimchaks used an alphabet of Arami origin in their training and education by the beginning of the twentieth century; then, they were forced to use Latin alphabet through Stalin's policies, and Cyrillic alphabet after 1936 just as other Turkic-speaking societies were. The Krimchak, one of the least documented and studied Kipchak variety, is very similar to Crimean Tatar and Karay (See REBI et al. 1997: 309).

7. The Urums⁶ and Urum Variety

Known as *Mariupol'skie greki*, *Greko-Tatar* in Russian sources, and as *Greek Tatar* in Western sources, the Orthodox Urums, settled down in Donetsk near the Sea of Azov by being separated from Crimea in 1778-1779. The second-wave migration was between the years of 1821 and 1825, and some Urums coming from Trabzon to Georgia immigrated to the same area later (GARKAVETS 1999: 1-5).

The name of Urum (Urumnar, Urum alx) and Turkic language that is spoken by the Urums differentiate this community from Orthodox, but Greek-speaking *Rumeys*. The Greco-Tatars, consisting of two ethnic groups, Turkic-speaking *Urums* and Greek-speaking *Rumeys*, live in 29 villages today (MURATOV 1997: 450; GARKAVETS 1999: 1-2). One branch of the Urums settled in Tselka, Georgia.

According to the 1989 census in the U.S.S.R., the population of Greco-Tatars in Ukraine was 98.570. Almost 45.000 of this population were Urum (GARKAVETS 1999: 5).

Urum, a typical Kipchak language, which is very similar to Crimean Tatar, has more Oghuz elements in the areas near the coast, and it has more Kipchak elements when used in the interior areas as it is with Crimean Tatar before the exile in 1944 (see MURATOV 1997: 450) After the field

⁶ The etnonym of *Rum* in Turkish is used to refer to Greek-speaking Orthodox communities, who are the remnants of the Byzantium and who used to coexist with the Muslims. It is typical of Turkish to insert a sound in front of any word, the first letter of which is -r, and this is called epenthesis. *Rum* is thus changed into *Urum* according to the rule. Therefore, the etnonym of *Urum*, combining the Turkish sound system with Orthodox faith, is an interesting synthesis.



studies in Donetsk area extending to the 1970s, texts including Oghuz and Kipchak varieties and a large volume of Urum-Ukrainian dictionary were published (See GARKAVETS 1999, 2000).

8. Crimean Tatars and Crimean Tatar Variety

Tatar is the common name given to the Kipchak people whose native country is Crimea, and who have various ethnic groups and faiths and the Kazan Tatars of the Kipchak people, who are the continuation of Volga Bulgarians. There is no direct connection between Crimean Tatar and Kazan Tatar except that they are in the Kipchak branch of Turkic languages. Crimean Tatar is very similar to Kipchak varieties in the Caucasus rather than Kazan Tatar. However, in TEKIN's classification, Kazan Tatar is in *quş-* group while Crimean Tatar is in the *qoş-* group with the dialects of Karachay-Balkar, Kumyk and (1991: 5-18). Crimean Tatar, defined as Esperanto of Turkic languages, is the most similar Kipchak variety to Turkish due to the political unity for 308 years in the Ottoman period.

Crimea is the homeland of millions of Crimean Tatars scattering around many countries, especially Turkey, after the policy of *deporting the Tatars*, beginning with the annex in 1783, and ending with the exile in 1944. Tatar-Noghay Kipchak population in earlier *Cumania* was totally deported after 160-years-of migration.

Studies on Crimean Tatars and Crimean Tatar are so extensive that they can even comprise a separate discipline.

8.1. Ukraine-Crimea

In today's Ukraine, besides the Ukrainians, there are a lot of different communities having various languages and religions such as Russians, Belarusians, Moldavians, Bulgarians, Hungarians, Romanians, Polish-Jewish, etc. According to the official records, there are autochthon Crimean Tatars and Tatars, speaking Kipchak varieties as well as allochthon Azerbaijanis in the country. According to the results of the 2001 census, the population of Crimean Tatars is 248,200; that of Tatars is 73,300; and that of Azerbaijanis is 45,200. Crimean Tatars are at the fifth rank among the ethnic groups with its population rate of 0,4% across the country. Crimean Tatars are the third largest ethnic group with their population of 2,024,000 in Crimean Autonomous Republic and with their population rate of 12% after the Russians and Ukrainians. The process of Tatars' migration to their homeland, which started in the U.S.S.R. period, has been still going on under Ukraine's strict control and harsh conditions with the migrations to the homeland, beginning in the U.S.S.R. period and after the completion of the project of deporting the Tatars from Crimea.

Crimean Tatar, which was used as the official language of Crimean Autonomous Republic by 1944, is recognized by Ukraine, but it does not have its status before the exile.

Crimean Tatars use Latin alphabet with the additions of the letters of *ñ/Ñ* and *q/Q* to the Turkish alphabet.

8.2. Romania

Dobruja, extending across the Black Sea coast, is a contact area in which Latin-speaking Romanians, Slav-speaking Bulgarians, Altai-speaking Turkic (Turkish/Tatar), Muslims and Christians have lived together in the Balkan Sprachbund for centuries. After the population exchanges associated with the political conflicts in the first half of the twentieth century, the demographic structure of the area has been changed, and a great majority of Crimean Tatars remained in Romania when two-thirds of Dobruja were annexed to Romania.

In the sub-stratum of Romanian Tatar, a variety of Crimean Tatar, there are Noghay varieties, in which Kipchak elements are dominant, and also Tat, very close to Anatolian Turkish. Reflecting the linguistic and cultural variation, the differences among *Noghay*, *Tat*, and *Tatar* who define themselves under the upper identity of *Tatar*, or who do not, have been transferred to the area from Crimea.

Since Dobruja was under the Ottoman government for a long time, Rumelian Turkish and Romanian Tatar coexist in Dobruja. Except Constanza, there are Tatar, or Rumelian Turkish-speaking colonies in the capital Bucharest, Babadag, Tulcea, and other areas. The total number of the speakers of Rumelian and Tatar Turkic is between fifty thousand and eighty thousand according to various sources. According to the results of the official census in 2002, the Turkish population is 32,596 out of 21,698,181 Romanian population, and the population rate of the Turkish is 2% in the general population. The population of Tatars is 24,137, and their population rate is 0,01%.

Tatars (Romence *Tatari*), officially recognized by Romania, and Ottoman Turks (Romence *Turci*) have not been exposed to the official assimilation policy of the country. In Romania, there is a quota for one person in the parliament for each Turkic community, but social and economic conditions, and sporadic settlement pose risks to preserve Kipchak varieties in Romania, and Turkic varieties in Romania are among the extinct languages.

Today, although it is limited, some broadcast is done in Turkish and Crimean Tatar in Romania. In Tatar broadcasts, a mixed language of Turkish and Crimean Tatar is used (See EKER 2006).



8.3. Bulgaria

Bulgaria is a Balkan country which is the most densely populated country with Turkic communities from different religions and sects such as Christian, Muslim, Sunni, Kizilbash, etc. speaking different varieties despite the massive immigrations to Turkey after the Turkish-Russian War of 1877-1878. Only a few thousands of Turkic speakers in South Dobruja are Tatar. In the 2001 census, it was not recorded exactly how many people out of 69,204, who were documented as "Other" nationality, were Tatars.

South Dobruja Tatar is about to become extinct because of some of its speakers' immigration to Turkey; marriages with Oghuz Turks; Turkish being broadcasted in Tatars' houses through satellite televisions; and strong influences of Bulgarian. However, it is still regarded as an opportunity for Bulgarian Tatars to hold increasing relationships with Crimea, the spiritual centre of Tatar nationalism, and with their neighbours Romanian Tatars; and to keep faith in preserving the Tatar identity although they are not as fortunate as their neighbours North Dobruja Tatars (WILLIAM 2001: 299).

9. Kazan Tatars and Tatar Variety

Tatars, who had migrated to Poland, Lithuania, and Estonia for military service, trade, or as refugees, but who live as very small communities today, are relatives of Volga/Kazan and Siberian Tatars, who are inheritors of The Golden Horde Empire and Kipchak khanates. In Finland, there is also a small Tatar community that is officially recognized and classified as autochthon society.⁷

9.1. Poland

Polish Tatars are the remnants of Muslim Tatars, who had settled down in Poland and Lithuania since the 14th century. Since these Tatars had lost their languages in three centuries ago, they have been trying to survive by preserving their religious identities to some extent.

Today, 2,000 Tatars live in Poland with the status of ethnic minority and comprising 0.01% of the whole population. Yet, according to the 2002 census, 495 people, mostly in Białystok and Trójmiasto, informed their nationality as *Tatar* (See *Euromosaic* III 2004: 276).

⁷ Some Tatar merchants, coming from Russia to Finland, which was still a part of Russia at that time, towards the end of the 19th century for trade, settled down in the country and established the *Finno-Tatar Islamic Society* although their number was quite limited. Finnish Tatars can be considered as natives. The Tatar community, which is officially recognized by Finland, and the people of which do not have any adaptation problems in Finnish society, is very enthusiastic about preserving their existence and culture in Finland.



9.2. Lithuania

Muslim Lithuanian Tatars (in Lithuanian, *Litov Tatar*), immigrating to Lithuania between the 14th and 16th centuries during the period of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, settled down in Hrodno, Minsk, Trakai, and Vilna (Vilnius). Their population reached 200,000 towards the end of the 16th century, but it is claimed that since the tolerant environment during the Grand Duchy of Lithuania could not be achieved after the *Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth* was established in 1569, the number of their population decreased due to the consequent immigrations.

After the First World War, Lithuania's lands in Belarus were given to Poland and Russia. Also, following the World War II, most of those lands were annexed by the U.S.S.R. This annex means that Tatars, particularly their intellectuals, have been exposed to Stalin's practices (See AKINER 1983: 85; OLSON et al.: 1994: 450).

9.3. Estonia

Estonia is one of the settlement places of the Finno-Ugric peoples. Muslim Tatars came to Estonia either as merchants or soldiers in the Russian army in the 1870s. Estonian Tatars did not have any problems under the Swedish government; on the contrary, they were even given lands.

In Estonia, governed by parliamentary democracy since 1991, the population of the Tatars was 4,058 in 1989, and it was 3,315 in 1997. According to the 2003 census, there are 2,582 ethnic Tatars, comprising 02% of the whole population of the country, which is 1,356,045. Out of this population, 1,229 people, that is 47.6% of them, stated that they use Tatar as their native language. The number of people who informed that their native language is Russian is 1,295, and there are 51 people who stated that their native language is Estonian (See ARZOZ 2008: 55).⁸

Estonian Tatars, regarding themselves as the inheritors of Misher and Kazan Tatars, have had religious and social organizations since the 1920s. *The Tatar Cultural Society* was established in the capital city, Tallinn in 1988; *İdël*, a cultural organization, was founded in 1995; and *The Estonian Tatar Society* was founded in 1990. Also, courses are offered at Sunday schools to teach Tatar and Estonian to Tatar children and adults (*Euromosaic* III 2004: 105).

10. Influences of Turkish and Results

With their population less than one hundred thousand, the varieties of

⁸ During the massive immigrations from Estonia in 1944, a small number of Misher Tatars migrating from Russia and other Muslim and Turkish Russian citizens settled down in Sweden.



Romanian and Bulgarian Tatar, Urum, Karay, and Krimchak, which are Kipchak varieties in the Balkans and East Europe, are among the 'extra small languages' (XS). The Karay varieties in Poland and Lithuania are the 'extra extra small languages' (XXS)⁹ (See linguistic features of Turkic varieties in Bulgaria in KOWALSKI 1933: 1-28; KÖPRÜLÜ 1934: 294).

The role and function of Kipchak varieties, which are spoken by a limited population and which are generally comprised of spoken varieties, over other languages in the region is ambiguous, yet Kipchak's limited influences over Oghuz varieties can still be discussed as it is seen in the example of Gagauz (KOWALSKI 1933: 15-26; KÖPRÜLÜ 1934: 306-307).

Today, Kipchak varieties in the Balkans are under the strong influence of the standard languages spoken in the countries including their syntax (See Bulgarian's influences over Turkish syntax in NÉMETH 1965: 108-115). Turkish still continues to influence spoken and written Kipchak varieties, spoken especially in Crimea, Romania, and Bulgaria and to make them more similar to Oghuz through the recent developments in communication technologies and the Crimean Tatar diasporas in Turkey.

Nowadays, there are several risks at different levels ranging from the loss of function to the extinction of the language concerning the Balkan Turkic since they are under the pressure of Turkish and other official and autochthon languages in the region. The risk is lower in a country such as Bulgaria, in which the speakers of Oghuz varieties are comparatively dense, but this risk is higher for the XS and XXS Kipchak varieties, the speakers of which are less than a thousand.

Modern Turkish affects not only Oghuz varieties in the Balkans, but also Kipchak varieties by means of satellite and internet technologies. In these regions, while some speakers of Turkic varieties, who do not want to break their ties with their relative country Turkey, lose their languages, some others strongly feel the increasing influence of Turkish over their languages. The speakers of Kipchak varieties, reflecting the characteristics of their minority languages, struggle with the dichotomy between preserving and using their original languages and cultures and challenging the feeling of linguistic and cultural isolation in society. This dichotomy is quantitatively reflected through visual and written media.

⁹ Extra small languages are generally specified as such (See JOHANSON 2003):

- They are observed in the peripheries.
- They are isolated compared to their relative languages.
- They are vulnerable to strong foreign influences.
- They are less studied, and they are not standardized.

All the Tatar varieties in the mentioned areas reflect these specifications. (See these specifications for Romanian Tatar in Eker 2006).



Including Kipchak and Turkish, and specified as 'Turkic Esperanto,' mixed written languages have been emerging as it is observed in the publications in Dobruja Tatar. With the strong support of diasporas, Crimean Tatars, who similarly try to return to their homeland, have put almost a completely Oghuz written language into practice, including only a limited number of Kipchak lexical data, in which the typical dative case marker *-GA* and the accusative case marker *-nl* are kept to comply with Oghuz.

The influences of Turkish over East European Karay and Tatar are unknown, but some television programmes or similar publicity activities are held by official or civil organizations or institutions in order to make these communities known in Turkey.

11. Results

Just as Oghuz varieties, Kipchak varieties in the Balkans are also a significant part of the linguistic heritage of South-eastern Europe, and the Turkic speakers are the natives of the area sharing the historical and geographical heritage of the region for centuries. However, local Turkic varieties, the number of the speakers of which has been decreasing after the Ottoman Turkish's retreat from the Balkans, are on the verge of extinction.

The case is not different in the east of Europe. Eastern-European Karays and Tatars have succeeded in preserving their cultures and languages until today, but these varieties are about to lose their last speakers. According to the classification of UNESCO's *Intangible Cultural Heritage Endangered Languages Programme*, Karay is at the most critical group in terms of extinction, since it is hardly or never transmitted through generations, the number of its speakers has been decreasing, and since it is claimed that there will be no speakers of this language in an estimated course of time. The next stage for Karay is the status of 'extinct language.'

Kipchak varieties in the Balkans and Eastern Europe are a part of the cultural wealth of the area as it is emphasized by the motto, 'unity in diversity' of the European Union's cultural policies that focus on linguistic, religious, and ethnic diversities.

Therefore, it is necessary that Turkic varieties in the Balkans and Eastern Europe should be evaluated in terms of the policies of international organizations such as UNESCO or the EU and non-governmental organizations concerning the protection of the intangible cultural heritage in the world; and it is also required that projects on Turkic varieties be made, including documentation activities in order to preserve their cultural heritage.



Kipchak varieties in the east of Europe, surviving throughout centuries and reaching today, still continue their struggle to survive at the thin line between existence and extinction as a symbol of the mentioned countries' tolerance, and as a historical reflection of their ideals of multilingualism and multiculturalism with the supports of voluntary and international organizations.

Turkic-speaking Muslims, Christians, Jews, or Jewish-Karays, living together in the east and southern-east of Europe, combine their religions, languages, and cultures with the richness of their diversity, and they unite them in the same single pot.

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