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GAGAUZ

GAGAUZCA

ABSTRACT

The subject of this article is the Gagauz language, spoken by about 200,000 speakers, mainly in the Republic of Moldova and the Ukraine. Linguistically, it is very close to Turkish but shows several special features that have developed under the influence of Slavic languages. The linguistic features of the Gagauz language will be examined and are compared with their Turkish equivalents. The final section of the article will focus on the status of endangerment of the language.

ÖZET

Bu makalenin konusu, çoğunluğu Moldova Cumhuriyeti'nde ve Ukrayna'da 200 bin konuşuru bulunan Gagauzcadır. Gagauzca; dil bilimsel bakımdan Türkçeye çok yakın bir dildir; ancak, Slav dillerinin etkisi altında gelişen kimi farklı özellikler de gösterir. Gagauzcanın karakteristik dil özellikleri, dil ile ilgili bölümde Türkçe muadilleriyle karşılaştırılmalı olarak ele alınacaktır. Gagauzca tehlikedeki dillerden biridir; makalenin son bölümünde Gagauzcanın tehlike durumu ele alınacaktır.

Introduction

This article gives some general information about the Gagauz as a people but focuses in particular on their language. As Gagauz is most closely related to Turkish of Turkey (see Dmitrijev 1932: 209), being linguistically classified by most Turcologists as a dialect of it (see e.g. Doerfer 1959), in my description of the language I will focus on those features that are distinctive for Gagauz and those peculiarities where it differs from Turkish. I will then go on to discuss the degree of endangerment that the Gagauz language is facing and write about developments taking place since the establishment of the independent state of Moldova that have an influence on the maintenance on the one hand and the endangerment of the language on the other.

Who are the Gagauz?

The Gagauz are Orthodox Christians[1] and speak a Turkish variety. The language is spoken nowadays mainly in the southern region of the Republic of Moldova. According to the 2004 census, about 147,500 Gagauz live in the Republic of Moldova; that is 4.4% of the population of the country.[2] According to the 2001 census in the Ukraine,[3] 31,923 Gagauz lived there. Most Ukrainian Gagauz live in the Odessa oblast.

12,210 Gagauz live in the Russian Federation according to the 2002 census.[4] It is almost certain, that Gagauz people living in Russia use the language only when they talk with their families in Moldova on the phone or on vacation in their native villages.

Besides, an unknown number of Gagauz live in territories of the former Soviet Union like Kazakhstan and in the Caucasus region.[5]

The Gagauz of the former Soviet Union first migrated in the late 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries from Bulgaria to Bessarabia where the major group of Gagauz live today. In Bulgaria itself the number of Gagauz nowadays is quite low; according to the figures of the census from 2001 only 504 persons claimed to be what is officially called 'a linguistic minority by the name of Gagauz-Bulgars'.[6] Smaller groups of Gagauz live in Rumania and Greece, but in these countries the number of ethnic Gagauz is uncertain and it is very doubtful if the language is still in regular use at all.

Questions regarding the ethnogenesis of the Gagauz people remain basically unsolved. Various theories have been brought forward, but unfortunately there are very little data in any historical records that would help to substantiate one or the other of these theories with a sufficient degree of certainty. Instead, most theories have more to do with the nationality and/or political ideas of those who brought them forward than with anything else. Thus some think that the Gagauz ethnos came forward through a mixture of Kipchak (Kuman and Petcheneg) and Oghuz elements coming from the north into Bulgaria, some claim them to be descendants of Seljuk (= Oghuz) Turks coming from

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[1] Some Gagauz belong to protestant churches like the Baptist church.
[2] Recensămîntul populaţiei 2004. The 2004 census comprises the inhabitants of the Republic of Moldova without those of the so called Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic.
[3] http://2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua/
[4] http://www.perepis2002.ru
[5] They are not included in the presentation of the results of the 2009 census, see http://www.eng.stat.kz/publishing/DocLib/2011/АО%20на%20английском.pdf
[6] http://www.nccedi.government.bg/page.php?category=83&id=247

Anatolia and settling in Bulgaria in the 13th century, some think they are linguistically Turkified Greeks, others opt for Bulgarian ancestry. For an overview on the various theories, see Özkan (1996: 10 ff) and Chinn & Roper (1998: 88–89) and most recently Kapaló (2011: 53–62).

The ethnonym Gagauz

Together with the ethnogenesis, the etymology of the ethnonym Gagauz is also very much debated. Various etymologies have been brought forward; most of them contain as the second element the tribal names *Guz/Uz* or *Oğuz*. The first element then is either *hak*, or *ga*, *gag*, *ganga*, *gök* etc., for an overview over the various propositions see Özkan (1996: 7–10). According to a different line of etymology the ethnonym Gagauz developed from a Seljuk sultan by the name of ʿIzz-ad-dīn Kaykāʾus (كيكاوس). In the 13th century Sultan Kaykāʾus had submitted to the Byzantine emperor and converted to Christianity. His troops and followers are said to have been settled to the Balkans as border troops for Byzantium. Their descendants, according to this theory, are later to become the Gagauz, see Wittek (1951-52).

All the aforementioned tentative derivations are not without severe difficulties from the point of historical linguistics. Nevertheless the alleged etymology of the ethnonym Gagauz from *kök/hak/gag + uz/oğuz* even let so far as to rename the Gagauz into Gagoğuz[7] and Gagavuz, see also Özkan (1996: 10).

A third line of thinking was brought forward by 19th century ethnographers, namely Jireček (1876) and Pees (1894). These authors observed that the Gagauz themselves would not use this name and indeed would feel offended by it. They therefor claimed that the name cannot be of a Turkic etymology. These observations have by and large been ignored by Turcologists who brought forward one or the other etymological explanation for the ethnonym Gagauz.

The language

Of the total Gagauz population of the Republic of Moldova, 136,155 persons claimed Gagauz to be their mother tongue, i.e. 92.31% of the ethnic group. 5.8% of Gagauz in the Republic of Moldova have Russian as their mother tongue and only about 1% Rumanian. In urban regions the percentage of ethnic Gagauz that claim it to be their mother tongue is 85.15%, in the rural areas the figure raises to 96.39%. In the census it was also asked for the language usually spoken, 69.42% of the ethnic Gagauz (40.1% in urban, 86.12% in rural regions) claimed to speak usually in their mother tongue. Alongside the ethnic Gagauz, also 1,619 persons of a different ethnic background said that they have Gagauz as their mother tongue.

22,822 of the Gagauz living in the Ukraine had Gagauz as their native language. How far the language is used as the usual means of communication in all other Gagauz communities is not known. In some of these communities, e.g. in Bulgaria, the language is clearly on the verge of dying out.

The status of the language in the Republic of Moldova

In 1957, Gagauz was established as a written language in the Moldovan S.S.R. and was taught at school from 1959 to 1962. After 1962 Gagauz was not taught at school up until the breakdown of the

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7 Despite the fact that Gagauz language lacks the letter <ğ> as well as a phoneme /ğ/ and that a sequence *oğuz* would result in /u:z/ <uuz> in accordance with Gagauz regular sound changes, see Dmitrijev (1932: 216).

Soviet Union. Today it is one of the official languages in the *Gagauz Yeri* or *Gagauziya*, the autonomous region in southern Moldova and as such part of the curriculum in all schools of the region.[8] Since 1957 several books and newspaper inserts have been published in Gagauz, but it has never become a widespread tool for writing for the majority of the Gagauz population. In everyday life, next to no one—besides some professional writers—actually used it for any kind of writing. A notable exception seems to be the use of Gagauz as the favored language for lay-religious purposes. Kapaló (2011) in his monograph shows that a widespread translation activity of Rumanian and Russian apocryphal texts has taken place especially in Soviet times to fill the religious needs of the Gagauz population. For other purposes however, even despite Gagauz being nowadays a compulsory subject at schools, Russia is the language for writing for most inhabitants of *Gagauz Yeri*.

Orthography

Before the establishment of a fixed orthography with Cyrillic script in the late 1950s Gagauz had been written either with Latin characters according to the orthographic rules of the Rumanian language or with Cyrillic script, but without the special letters that were later to be employed for the official orthography. The first person known to have written something in Gagauz was the Russian general V. Moškov. He used a scientific transcription system based on the Cyrillic alphabet for the publication of his collection of oral literature etc. Mihail Ciahir (Çakır), a Gagauz clergyman was the first person to produce texts in his native language, mainly translations of religious texts or of his own works in Rumanian or Russian. He used both Cyrillic and Latin script to write Gagauz.

Here is an example how Ciahir (1934: 6) used Latin characters and Rumanian orthographic rules to write Gagauz:

> *Macarchi iractan ei ghioriuneer hem ghiosterilier, hangâ adam gagauzdur, amma oficial gagauzlar eazăea ghirdilear, chi onlar bulgardâr, hani lafedeerlar tiurccea.*

> 'Although it is from afar quite recognizable and can be shown who is a Gagauz, they entered the official documents as Bulgarians who speak Turkish.'

In the official Cyrillic-based orthography the same text would be written as follows:

> *Макар ки ырактан ии гӧрӱнеер хем гӧстерилиер, ангы адам гагауздур, ама официал гагаузлар йазыйа гирдилӓр ки онлар булгардыр, ани лафедеерлӓр тӱркчӓ.*

In 1996 after a long debate a new Latin-based alphabet for Gagauz was officially agreed upon in the Republic of Moldova. It is close to the Turkish alphabet. The distinctions to the Turkish alphabet are the following:

- The absence of the so-called soft g <ğ>.

- Two additional vowel characters, one is <ê> for /e/ in the suffix for present tense with back-vocalic stems, the other one is <ä> for /æ/.

- Furthermore, <ţ> is used for the affricate /ts/ in Russian and Rumanian loanwords.

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[8] On 23 December 1994 the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova adopted a law on the special juridical status of this region. The International Foundation for Electoral Systems published an abridged English translation of it in 1995.

In modern orthography the paragraph from Mihail Ciahir's book would be written as follows:

> *Makar ki ıraktan ii görüneer hem gösteriler, angı adam gagauzdur, ama ofiţial gagauzlar yazıya girdilär, ki onnar bulgardır, ani lafedeerlär türkçä.*

Phonetics and (morpho)phonology

Gagauz phonetics and phonology do not deviate much from what is common in Turkish and especially Balkan Turkish dialects.[9] A lot of those features that might look at first sight to be different from those of Turkish are actually common in various Turkish dialects. The drop of initial /h/ especially before /a/ and /e/ as well as the prothetic /h/ in the same environment e.g. are also common in Rumelian and Balkan Turkish dialects, see Menz (2000). The contraction of syllables containing intervocalic velar stops and fricatives as well as the approximant /j/, not uncommon in several Turkish dialects, is a rule in Gagauz. These contractions are also reflected in writing, we thus have <aaç> [aːʧ] 'tree', compare Turkish <ağaç> and <büük> [bʼyːcʼ], compare Turkish <büyük>. Due to these regular contractions Gagauz lost the phoneme /ğ/ written in Turkish with the letter <ğ>.

Phonetic features that distinguish Gagauz from Turkish are:

1. Primary long vowels in some words like *aaç* [aːʧ] 'hungry', or *koor* [koːr] 'ember'. Not all the words, however, that have retained their etymological long vowel in Turkmen have retained it also in Gagauz.

2. Gagauz regularly employs a prothetic /y/ in words that etymologically start with a front low vowel /e/, *yekerlar* 'they sow', compare Turkish *ek-* 'to sow'.[10]

3. Consonant clusters – which are normally avoided in initial position in Turkic languages – are kept in loanwords (whereas in Turkish clusters are broken up by a prothetic vowel), thus *skemlä* 'stool' vs. Turkish *iskemle* etc.

4. The strong palatalization of consonants in the neighborhood of front vowels is one of the most distinctive features of Gagauz phonology, compare e.g. Gagauz [bʼèʃ] '5' with Turkish [beʃ] '5'.

Apart from the preservation of some etymological long vowels, all other above mentioned features can be explained with the long lasting and intensive contact to Slavic languages.

Morphology

Gagauz morphology has more or less the same suffix inventory as Turkish. Morphophonological rules differ in certain respects especially from the modern standard Turkish. Those differences are mainly due to syllable contractions and drop of vowels.

Otherwise differences between Gagauz and Turkish morphology can mainly be observed with regard to frequency and also partly functionally. The use of non-finite participle and verbal noun suffixes for example shows a significantly lower frequency compared to Turkish due to changes on the syntactic level, see in the next chapter. An increase in frequency can be observed with the diminutive suffixes

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[9]   For details on Gagauz phonetics tend phonology see Dmitrijev (1932).

[10]   To a lesser extent and much less systematically prothetic /y/ can also be found in words with initial front vowels /i/, /ü/, and /ö/ and even high back vowel /ı/.

–not only in Gagauz but also in Balkan Turkish dialects– which are used much more frequent as is common in Anatolian Turkish.

The verbal nouns in–*mAk* and–*mA* are only used to derive proper nouns, e.g. *aaraştır-mak* 'scientific research' as compared to Turkish *araştırmak* 'to research'; *akıtma* 'blini' ← *akıt-* 'to let flow'. As an infinitive form Gagauz uses–*mAA*, a suffix diachronically build with the verbal noun in-*mAk* and the dative (< *-mAk + a*). This construction was most probably primordially used in purpose clauses from where the form grammaticalized into a regular infinitive, see Haspelmath (1989).

One interesting feature that distinguishes Gagauz sharply from Turkish is the use of the globally copied feminine suffix *-(y)ka*. One of the basic structural features of Turkic languages is that they don't have grammatical gender. To express explicitly that a person is female various lexical strategies are employed. In Turkish, either special words to denote female persons like *kız, yenge, hanım* etc. are utilized or words expressing female gender precede the denotation e.g. *kadın futbolcu* [woman football player] 'female football player'. Some feminine forms of words do exist in Turkish due to global copying from Slavic or Arabic, e.g. *kraliçe* or *müdire*. The use of these globally copied words, however, did not lead to a transfer of the pattern or suffixes onto Turkic words in Turkish. In Gagauz, besides the common Turkic lexical means to denote female persons, a feminine suffix *-(y)ka* is used to build new words that denote females. In all likelihood it came into the language through globally copied words from Bulgarian and Russian. The suffix is not stressable and does not undergo vowel-harmonic changes. The fact that it starts with a consonant after stems ending in a consonant but with a glide after stems that end in a vowel needs further explanations see Menz (in preparation). It builds female forms of nouns that denote nationality or geographic origin, occupation and – more rarely – inherent qualities and kinship terms. It is the only globally copied bound morpheme in Gagauz. Some examples are:

- Occupation: *resimci-yka* 'female painter' ← *resim-ci* 'painter', *padişah-ka* 'wife of a Padishah, queen'

- Nationality/ geographic origin: *rumın-ka* 'Romanian woman' ← *rumın* 'Rumanian', *Beşalmalı-yka* 'Woman from the village Beşalma' ← *Beşalmalı* 'man, person from Beşalma'

- Physical attributes: *genç-ka* 'young girl' ← *genç* 'young'

- Kinship terms: *yelti-ka* 'sister in law' < Turkish *elti* 'dto.'

Syntax

The most obvious deviations from Turkish and the Turkic structure can be found in Gagauz syntax. On the phrase level most structural features that are common to Turkic languages are maintained. We thus have the same head final structure in noun phrases as e.g. in Turkish, adjectives, indefinite article, and demonstrative precede the head noun. Attributive elements do not agree with their head noun, compare the following examples:

1. *öle   bir   astalık[11]*
   such   indef.art   disease

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[11] In what follows all unmarked examples are taken from my fieldwork data partly published in Menz (1999). For examples taken from other sources references are given.

'such a disease'

2. *akıllı   insan-nar*
   intelligent   person-PL

   'intelligent persons'

Variation in word order on the phrase level can be observed in genitive constructions and in verb phrases.

Genitive constructions in Turkic languages are built of a possessor in the genitive case and a possessed carrying a possessive suffix, N-GEN + N-POSS3SG, e.g. *çorbacı-nın maaza-sı* [landlord-GEN cellar-POSS3SG] 'the landlord's cellar'. The order of the elements can only be reversed if the whole construction or the possessor is in post-predicative position, for a discussion of these possibilities and their pragmatic values in Turkish see (Erdal 1999).

In Gagauz, however, an inverted order is possible in pre-predicative position, see the following example taken from Pokrovskaja (1964: 115):

3. *Buba-sı   kız-ın   de-er: …*
   ther-POSS3SG   girl-GEN   say-PRES3SG

   'The father of the girl says: …'

This is not possible in Turkish, not even in spoken everyday language.

Note however, that genitive constructions with the non-inverted order where the noun with genitive precedes the head are by far more frequent than those with inverted order.

Within verb phrases we also find variation with regard to word order. Thus adverbs can follow the verb as in the following examples:

4. *ödä-r-di-lär   pek   islaa*
   pay-AOR-PAST.COP-3PL very   good

   'They used to pay very good'

5. *bit-ti   uže*
   finish-PST3SG   already

   'It is already finished'

6. *ana-sı   duudurt-muş-tu   onu   kız-kana*
   mother-POSS3SG   give.birth-PERF-PAST.COP3SG (s)he-ACC girl-COP.GER

   'His mother had given birth to him when she was a girl (i.e. not married).' (Bulgar 1990: 3)

Word order in clauses is relatively free, like it is in Turkish. Changes in word order serve pragmatic purposes. However, in Gagauz statistically speaking sentences with the predicate in final position are scarce in comparison to Turkish and Turkic languages in general.

In a master thesis (Kirli 2001) about word order in written language material of Gagauz the author found that of 665 simple sentences only 191 had the predicate in final position as against to 454 that is 2/3 elsewhere in the sentence. Instead we find that the basic word order in Gagauz is Subject Verb Object, i.e. the same as the basic word order in Russian.

7. | *büük* | *batü-müz* | | *ol-an* | *al-mış* | | *yakmış* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| big | elder brother-POSS1PL | | be-PART | take.PERF3SG | | burn:PERF3SG |

kibrid-i	*da*	*dayer*	*öbür*	*batünün*	*dayer*
match-ACC	and	place-PRES3SG	other	elder brother-GEN	place-PRES3SG

buduna	*gänä*
thigh-POSS3SG-DAT	again

'The one who is our big bigger brother (i.e. the eldest brother) took a match and struck it and places it on the thigh of the other bigger brother, again.'

With this word order change the position for the focus which is the immediately preverbal position in Turkish has changed to the postverbal position in Gagauz, as was shown with examples from written languages material by Boeschoten (1999). The following example which exemplifies the focus position in Gagauz in an almost exemplary way is from spoken language:

8. | I: | *kim-i* | *çaır-dı-lar?* | X: *çar-ar-dı-lar* | | *yakın* | *sensele-ler-i* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | who-ACC | invite-PAST.3PL | invite-AOR-PASTCOP-3PL | | near | relative-PL-ACC |

'Who did they invite?' 'One normally invited close relatives.'

Like in verbal sentences, nominal sentences in Gagauz have a clear tendency to have the predicator in a non-final position:

In sentences that contain a linking copula element we can observe the following patterns:

In positive sentences with present time reference there is only a personal marker and in this type of sentence we find most often the copula element in sentence final position or, in the case of the 3. person singular of course no element at all.

9. | *ii* | *insan-sın* |
|---|---|
| good | person-2SG |

'You are a good person.'

10. | *lay etmää* | *pek* | *kolay* | *a* | *yapmaa* | *zor* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| talk-INF | very | easy | but | do-INF | hard |

'Talking is very easy, but doing [it] is hard.'

In negated linking sentences the negative copula *diil* is used and in these cases we see a clear tendency to have the copula in non-finite position like in the following example:

11. | *deil-iz* | *musulman* |
|---|---|
| not-1PL | Muslim |

'=' We are not Muslims.   Russian: *my ne musul'mane*

In almost all cases *diil* precedes the subject complement; only in very few examples in my spoken language material is the negative copula clause final. The negative copula thus takes the same position as the negative particle *ne* in Russian negated linking sentences. In sentences with past time reference or indirective modality the copula elements *idi* and *imiş* appear in Gagauz exclusively as bound morphemes. The free forms *idi* and *imiş* do not appear; see Pokrovskaja (1964: 155–156). Besides examples where the copula is attached to the predicate as in the first part of example 12 we also find the copula attached to the subject as in the second part of this example and in 13.

12. | ordada | bir | dä | karı | yok-tu | hizmet | edecidi | adamnar |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| there | one | ptcl | woman | not:PST.COP | service | doer:PST.COP | man:PL |

'Not a single woman was there / the service staff were (all) men.'

13. | bir-i-nin | adı-ymış | Priyan-buva (Moškov 1904: 6) |
|---|---|---|
| one-POSS3SG-GEN | name-IND.COP3SG | P-bull |

'The name of the one was Priyan-bull ...'

In case of negated linking sentences with past time reference the copula is attached to the negative copula and therefore the tendency to be in non-final position is here again clearer, see example 14:

14. | bän | dä | deil-di-m | bal | kuşu |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I | ptcl | not-PST.COP-1SG | honey | bird-POSS3SG |

'I, too, was not a honey bird.'

Another strategy to have a free element expressing 'be' is the employment of the existential copula *var* in linking clauses.

15. | biz | var-dık /.../ | dokuz | uşak |
|---|---|---|---|
| we | exist-PST.COP-1SG | 9 | child |

'We were 9 children ….'

16. | Ama | biz | şindi | var-ız | üç | kardaş ... (Kirli 2001: 61) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| but | we | now | exist-1PL | 3 | brother |

'But we are now 3 brothers...'

Due to the fact that *var* and *yok* are free morphemes in existential sentences again there is a clear tendency to have the predicate in another then clause-final position.

17. | var | orda | halka | metrosu |
|---|---|---|---|
| exist | there | circle | underground |

'There is a ring-shaped underground there.'

18. | yašamak-ta | var | iki | soy |
|---|---|---|---|
| life-LOC | exist | two | kind |

'In life, there are two kinds.'

In possessive existential sentences that consist basically of a genitive construction and *var* or *yok* to express x has y we often find the head of the genitive construction after *var* or *yok* and thus in focus position:

19. | var-dı | tüfä-ä | var-dı | takım | patron-nar-ı |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| exist-PST.COP3SG | rifle-poss3sg | exist-PST.COP3SG | such | bullet-PL-POSS3SG |

'He had a gun, he had such bullets.'

20. | onnar-ın | var | aftonomiya-ları | var | cumhuriyet-leri |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| they-GEN | exist | autonomy-POSS3PL | exist | republic-POSS3PL |

'They have autonomy, they have republics.'

As for complex sentences Gagauz exhibits a whole set of right-branching embedded clauses resembling the Indo-European dependent clause type. They contain a clause initial conjunction or and a finite verb and follow their matrix clause or head. Note that in this embedded clauses contrary to the word order in main clauses the predicate is in most cases in clause final position. As I have discussed these sentence types extensively elsewhere (Menz 2001 and Menz 2006) I will content myself with some illustrative examples together with their Turkish counterparts for:

a) relative clauses

21. *da   o   kız,   ani   demiş:*   *'bitirecäm'* … (Moškov 1904: 18)
    and   that   girl   ani   say-PERF3SG   finish-FUT-1SG

    'And the girl who said: 'I will finish it' …' = Bitireceğim diyen kız da

22. *vardı*   *komunistlär*   *angıları çalışardı*   *komunist*
    exist-PST.COP   communist-PLconj-3PL   work-AOR-PST.COP3SG   communist

    partisinä   *karşı*
    party-POSS3SG-DAT   PP:against

    'There were communists who worked against the communist party'
    = komünist partisine karşı çalışan komünist vardı

b) complement clauses

23. *bän   söle-r-im   ani   ne   oldu*
    I   say-aor-1sg   ani   what   be:pst3sg

    'I tell (you) what happened.' = Ne olduğunu anlatırım.

24. *Olä   pek   sevindi,   ani   üüredici   danışêr   ona.*
    Olja   very   feel glad-PST3SG   ani   teacher   consult-PRES3SG   (s)he-DAT

    'Olja is very glad that the teacher consults her.' = Olga öğretmenin ona danışmasına çok sevindi.
    (Kara Čoban 1986: 53)

c) clauses of reason

25. *bir   zoor   soruşun   neçin ani   şindi   kendini   metetmää   ii   iş   diil*
    one   hard   question-POSS2SG   because   now   self-ACC   praise-INF   good   thing   not

    'Your question is a hard one, because now to praise yourself is not a good thing.' = Zor bir soru seninki çünkü kendini övmek iyi bir şey değil yani.

d) clauses of purpose

26. *patron-un   baş-ı-na   ani   bilirsin   ki ani*
    bullet-GEN   head-POSS3SG-DAT   ani   know-AOR-2SG   ki ani

    patla-sın   deyni   koy-ar-lar   kapsül
    explode-OPT3SG   deyni   put-AOR-3PL   capsule

    'a capsule, you know, that they put on the head of the bullet to make it explode.' = Patlasın diye merminin başına koydukları kapsül bilirsin ki ...

c) temporal clauses

27. *ama   sora   açan   bän   başladïm   gelmää   buluşurduk …*

    but   later   when   I   start-PST1SG   come-INF   meet-AOR-PSTCOP-1PL

'But later, when I started to come (to the village) we used to meet…' = Sonra (köye) gelmeye başladığım zaman buluşurduk…

While right-branching embedded clauses are quite frequent in written as well as spoken Gagauz, the 'Turkic type' of embedded clauses built with non-finite verb forms that precede their matrix clause or noun is less frequent. Especially relative and complement clauses are mainly right-branching. As a consequence the participle and verbal noun forms that serve as their predicators became quite infrequent in Gagauz. Converbial forms however, used to build adverbial clauses are not uncommon both in written and spoken Gagauz, see Menz (1999: 121–123).

Lexicon and word formation

The lexicon of Gagauz naturally contains a high percentage of loan words from the Slavic languages Bulgarian and Russian as well as from Rumanian and Greek. At the same time it also shares a significant number of Arabic-Persian loans with Turkish. Russian loans are mostly connected to science, technology and politics, as well as modern economy e.g. *informaţiya* 'information' and *peçat* 'seal' or *anarhiya* 'anarchy',[12] Rumanian loans to husbandry and housekeeping *ardey* 'hot pepper' *boldur* 'safety pin'. Greek loanwords like *ayos* 'saint' and *aydimu* 'altar' mostly belong to the field of religion; nonetheless a substantial part of the religious core terminology is of Arabic-Persian origin e.g. *Allaa* 'God', *oruç* 'Lenten fast', *dua* 'prayer', *din* 'religion', *kurban* 'sacrifice' etc.

In the following two paragraphs I present two Gagauz texts. The first one is an example from the modern written language, taken from an introduction to a scientific book (Soroçanu 2006: 7 and 10). The second text is from the spoken language recorded during my fieldwork trip in 1995. In both text loanwords appear, in the scientific texts the amount of Russian or international loans taken via Russian (given in italics) is quite high, one word, *ilişki* 'relationship', is copied from Turkish. The word *adet* 'custom' is an old global copy taken from Persian. In the second text the only loan word taken from Russian is *brigader* 'leader of a workers brigade'. Besides this there are only two old Arabic-Persian global copies, *başçe* 'garden' and *hamaz* 'informer'. These old Arabic-Persian words are also part of the lexicon of modern Turkish.

> *Avtor folklor-etnografiya faktlarına* danışêr eniycä, kullanêr eni *analiz metodlarını*, angıları verer kolaylık açmaa *terminin* hem adetin arasında *ilişkilerinin harakterini*, neredä adetlär *leksikası* tamannêêr yazdıran, *interpretat* edän, kimi kera adet *reallıına model* kuran *funkţiyasını*.

> 'The author demonstrates a new approach to the study of the facts of folklore and ethnography, uses new methods of analysis, which allow revealing the character of the relationship between the term and the custom, where ritual lexis is describing, interpreting and in some cases modeling the reality of the customs.'

> da günün biri bän geçerim yolça ey uşak mı uşak / boba çalışer başçedä alma başçesindä / a bän geldim da kopardım te orda bir mi osam da iki harmut mu kopardım ne / bu da gidir dä beni hamazler *brigaderä* ki bän aykırıdan gezerim zarar yaperım / boba dayadı orda *brigaderä* da bu bekçiyä dä / bän te iç yandan kızgın çocuk / deim ha bän seni domaldacam /

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12   Note that a lot of these are international words coming to Gagauz through Russian.

'And one day I stroll around, well a child is a child / My father works in the garden, the apple garden / but I came and picked there one or two or how much pears I picked / and that one goes and informs on me to the leader of the workers brigade, that I roam around and do harm / My father took side in this with the leader and with that watchman / I was an angry child from within / I say ha, I will get even with you/'

Endangerment of Gagauz

Gagauz as a language with less than 300,000 speakers, surrounded by socially dominant languages that have a higher prestige and a much larger number of speakers is no doubt to be regarded as endangered. In the various regions where it is spoken, however, the degree of endangerment varies considerably.

Thus, in Bulgaria the language is almost extinct with only the oldest generation being able to speak Gagauz. Sometimes even speakers of the oldest generation are not fluent in the language anymore because it is no longer their language of everyday communication. The language is for quite a period of time no longer transmitted to the children inside the family in Bulgaria; a fact that will lead to a complete disappearance of the language in only a few years' time.

I have written elsewhere (Menz 2003: 149–153) on factors that affect the situation of the Gagauz language in Moldova. Here, the situation is very different from the situation in Bulgaria. Quite a number of speakers live in a relatively compact area in the south of the country, most of them on the territory of the autonomous region *Gagauz Yeri*. Since 1957, when the Soviet government first declared Gagauz as one of the written languages of the Union, the language has an official status in the region. Ever since then books and newspapers in Gagauz – even though small in numbers and not very well distributed – have appeared. A dictionary (Gajdarži et al. 1973) had been compiled and several linguistic publications (e.g. Pokrovskaja 1978, Gajdarži 1973, Gajdarži 1981), including a grammar of Gagauz (Pokrovskaja 1964) appeared from the 1960s onward. Even textbooks were produced. Nevertheless the language faced a long period of decay in Soviet times, starting with a severe drop in the number of speakers caused by the great famine in the years 1946 and 1947 that left hundreds of thousands of people dead in the Republic of Moldova. The Soviet education system had been strictly in favor of Russian. Consequently, Gagauz was not taught in school apart from a short period of 2-3 years in the early 1960s. Russian was also the sole language for administrative purposes in the region. This left the domestic and agricultural domain for Gagauz. Some parents with ambitions for a higher education for their children stopped the transmission of the language inside the family. Nevertheless the language stayed alive in the rural areas of southern Moldova as a language of everyday communication.

With the dissolution of Moldova from the Soviet Union and the establishment of the autonomous region in 1994 the situation for the language improved. The teaching of Gagauz was made compulsory at school for all children in Gagauziya. Since the separation from the Soviet Union and the establishment of economic relations with Turkey knowledge of Gagauz is more valuable than it was in the period before. There is thus a good reason to keep the language alive and transmit it to the children. The local administration developed quite a lot of activities to promote the language. Thus the preparation of schoolbooks and training programs for teachers is organized by the local administration, often with the financial help of Turkish individuals or state organizations. The triennially organized World Gagauz' Convention (*Dünnää Gagauzlarin Kongresi*) is also a tool to

provide the language with symbolic value. At the 2012 convention all participants from Gagauz Yeri and also from the Ukraine made their speeches and presentations in Gagauz. Only participants from abroad, Russia, Bulgaria, Greece etc., were using the official language of their countries. The greatest challenge nowadays for the maintenance of the Gagauz–apart from the fact that the chances to survive for languages with lesser than a million speakers are in general not very good – is probably the fact that the economic situation of the Republic of Moldova forces many of her citizens into migration. For the Gagauz there are principally two choices: Their generally excellent command of Russian enables them to migrate to Russia where they are more than welcome. The knowledge of Gagauz allows especially females to opt for Turkey where they work as nannies and care for old people in the informal sector. Both choices have different effects on the language: Since the migration to Russia is often long-ranging and families tend to migrate as a whole the transmission of Gagauz to the children can be expected to be given up. Migration to Turkey has a different effect: Workers often have no residence permit and work illegally. They work in families until the children are old enough to manage without their care or with old people until they pass away. Women or men often migrate alone leaving their children and often also their spouses behind. The migration thus has no direct effect on the transmission of the language inside the family or sometimes even a positive one if the children stay with their Gagauz speaking grandparents. Since the mid-1990s however the influence of Turkish of Turkey on Gagauz is growing due to several factors, starting with media consumption, Turkish courses for Gagauz intellectuals provided by the Turkish government, and not least by the migrants coming back from Turkey.

Arnaut (2007) has given a report on Gagauz as a native language in the Ukraine. According to her, in the parts of the Ukraine where the Gagauz live the language is taught at least in some schools. Nonetheless the language was to a greater extent endangered than in the neighboring parts of Moldova. One reason for this was that the language does not enjoy sufficient official support. Another reason for its greater endangerment was that families tend to give up transmission to the children according to Arnaut (2007). It is thus not surprising that only 71.5% of Gagauz in Ukraine claim the langue as their mother tongue as compared to over 90% of ethnic Gagauz of the Republic of Moldova.

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