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## **EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

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**topic**

# **BULGARIAN LANGUAGE SOUTH OF THE EQUATOR**

**(A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY OF THE LANGUAGE  
OF THE BULGARIAN IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY IN  
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA)**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	4
1.1. Aim of the study .....	4
1.2. Preliminary tasks.....	5
1.3. Subject and object of the study.....	6
1.4. Main tasks.....	7
<b>2. Chapter one. The policy of Bulgaria towards our present-day emigrants and the policy of emigrants towards present-day Bulgaria.....</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1. The Bulgarian language, linguistic globalization, and Australia.....	7
2.2. Bulgarian studies' foreign policy in the context of Bulgaria's language policy .....	9
2.3. Care for Bulgarian schools around the world.....	10
2.3.1. Parameters of culturally oriented education at Bulgarian schools.....	10
2.3.2. The role of the Ministry of Education and Science. The textbooks.....	11
2.3.3. The role of Bulgarian linguistics. The Bulgarian language as a second native language...16	
2.4. The language attitudes of the immigrants. A questionnaire-based study.....	17
2.5. The functions of the language of the Bulgarian immigrants in Sydney.....	18
<b>3. Chapter two. The Bulgarian language in Sydney, Australia.....</b>	<b>18</b>
3.1. The modern Bulgarian urban language situation in the city of Sydney, Australia.....	19
3.2. The language of the Bulgarian families in Sydney.....	20
3.3. The Bulgarian Sunday school – institution and reality.....	22
3.4. The communication patterns of the three generations in Sydney and information technology in the New World.....	23
<b>4. Chapter three. Field research of the language of the Bulgarian community in the foreign language environment of Sydney.....</b>	<b>24</b>
4.1. Informants.....	25
4.2. A sociolinguistic description of representative probe excerpts.....	29
<b>5. Conclusion.....</b>	<b>30</b>
5.1. Interferences in the language of the examined persons.....	30
5.2. The transitional language of Bulgarian immigrants in Sydney.....	35
5.3. Deformation of Bulgarian speech. Language Forgetting Algorithm.....	36
5.4. Algorithm of delaying the forgetting of the Bulgarian language.....	38
<b>List of references.....</b>	<b>40</b>

## 1. Introduction

In recent decades, emigration from Bulgaria reached such a peak of growth that a large part of our modern history began to be written abroad. This led to immense changes and caused (and is causing) serious damage to our community life - economically, culturally, linguistically. They gave rise to many topical questions regarding the preservation or abandonment of the native Bulgarian language of the emigrants and justified anxiety in our entire linguistic community and in the author of the dissertation in particular. Thus was born the idea of studying the Bulgarian language - emigrant for those who left Bulgaria and inherited for their children - outside the territory of our country.

### 1.1. Aim of the study

*The purpose of the conducted research is to propose a methodology for tracking changes in the native language of Bulgarian emigrants around the world in a theoretical aspect. In a practical aspect, the implementation of this methodology is demonstrated through a study of the Bulgarian language situation in the city of Sydney, Australia. The deformations in the language of the Bulgarian emigrants there, caused by the official language in the surrounding English-speaking environment, the interferences in the direction from English to Bulgarian, the use of the native Bulgarian only as a family language, its placement in diglossic relations as a low language to the high English, its forgetting by the younger Bulgarians and its lack of knowledge by the Sydney-born children of Bulgarian families, have been established.*

The research was conducted in 2016 on the territory of the city of Sydney. Observing the state of the first language of persons forced in adulthood to find themselves in a foreign-language environment under the conditions of emigration or born abroad in Bulgarian families is an important task for Bulgarian linguists. The main question, ***what is the algorithm of the deformation on their language***, would receive an adequate answer only if the communicative processes are studied on the spot and the degree of "forgetting" of the native language is established. The algorithm of the deformation has been established and ascertained with the methods of sociolinguistics which is able to develop its own algorithm both for calculating the degree of forgetting the native Bulgarian language and for slowing down this process through

an appropriate methodology to be used by specialist linguists and methodologists for creating evaluation criteria and guidelines for teaching Bulgarian to Bulgarians living abroad.

## 1.2. Preliminary tasks

**The first specific task** I set before leaving for Sydney, namely, *to read everything written about the Bulgarian emigration*, will probably **never** be fully completed, because I continue to search and find new information, already six years after my return. Until 2015-2016, I did not find data on research on the different language situations in the countries where Bulgarians have emigrated in the last 30 years and where we are establishing schools. However, I found countless reporting documents of the institutions, but there was not a word in them about the danger of our language disappearing abroad. The available positive information on this matter could not dispel my (inherent in all Bulgarians) skepticism and I set myself a **second task**: getting to know the work of the Association of Bulgarian Schools Abroad (ABSA).

I knew in advance that I could not expect much in the direction I was interested in, because the activity of the organization is educational, not linguistic. Teachers, living abroad, realize themselves within the framework of established stereotypes, characteristic of the rhythm in the big foreign city. The movement of their students is from the family (in which they possibly speak Bulgarian) to the outside world (in which they speak another language), again in the family, and once a week in the Bulgarian school. The division of the communicative space inside and outside the home *relates to* the boundaries of formal and informal speech; in the Bulgarian Sunday school and in the foreign daily school, at least two languages are *related*, and here the functional-stylistic differentiations of the speech are intertwined with code switching, successful or not, depending on the degree of mastery of the Bulgarian language, which in turn *is related* to the official codified language of the host country as a low to high language variant due to the state of diglossia in which it is placed.

The teachers are looking for "a new concept for learning the Bulgarian language abroad, theoretically grounded, tailored to the socio-cultural conditions and goal-setting standards, criteria and methods" (Boteva-Vladikova 2014: 44). It turns out that the so-called adapted programs of the Ministry of Education and Science imply training that takes place in a special hybrid form - Bulgarian is taught as a first language, as a second language, and as a foreign language – depending on the capabilities and creativity of the respective teacher, in the same day and class.

In the process of preparation in July 2015, I conducted a small experiment in Bulgaria with the language of a family from Sydney. I call it the **third task**, although it is the third in the order of placement, but I began with its implementation. The family I researched is an “upside-down family” (Issa 2016) in a purely physical sense because they live where I had decided to go, where people walk upside down and fall asleep at the hours we wake up – in Australia.

Even before conducting the pilot study of the language of my first informants, it was known that I would continue the experiment in their home, in their city, in their country. I formulated the reasons for this choice as the **fourth task** corresponding to the goal: *choosing the time and place for conducting the research to match the opportunities for its achievement*. So, the reasons for choosing Australia:

1. *The official language in Australia is English - the global language* that has given rise to so many fears of a loss of national identity due to Europeanization and Americanization imposed on us.
2. *The time of stay* in the country had to be at least *one or two months*, necessarily *the winter months*, respectively - *the school months*, so that the children at school could be examined.
3. *Australia's remoteness* "on the other side of the globe" almost invariably ensures that immigrant visits to our country are rare.
4. The persons examined must be sufficient in number, and the *immigrant Bulgarian community in Australia is not small*. In Sydney, it is not large, but it is enough for a single researcher to study.

The **fifth task** was to choose a suitable work methodology. Despite the competition of modern methods and the wide selection of approaches and practices, despite the enormous innovative theoretical production that modernizes the global linguistic science, I chose the old and well-tested sociolinguistic method of the so-called *included observation*, used in the classic work "The Language of Veliko Tarnovo" (Videnov, Baychev 1999).

### 1.3. Subject and object of the study

The **subject** of the research is *the Bulgarian speech* of immigrants living in Sydney, and the **object** is *all Bulgarians* who participated in the scientific sociolinguistic experiments. These are our compatriots whom I visited, whom I taught, with whom I made formal appointments or "stalked" at random gatherings; those who emigrated from Bulgaria to settle there, who came to visit for a long period of time (or for a short time or forever), and especially

those (Australians) who were born in Sydney, live and study there, they grow up and socialize there, they form characters and develop there, they are at home there, but they are our children.

#### 1.4. Main tasks

The idea in their direction is to use all the methods known to me and to carry out the following specific actions: *survey*; *interviews* with persons institutionally involved or concerned as parents; "*secret recordings*" (as many as possible) of all Bulgarians that I managed to get hold of; *analysis of recordings*. Only after *a field study* of a certain language situation, of the casual speech of a given Bulgarian community abroad, can we talk about adapted programs and textbooks, as well as about adapting the educational process in the Bulgarian Sunday school to the educational process of the schools in the country in which it is, and to the linguistic environment of the city where we have gathered, through included observation, idiolects of Bulgarians.

Field research through covert observation is *the most important task*, the main reason I went south of the Equator. The study is an attempt to present the urban speech situation of the Bulgarians in Sydney in order to show in a sociolinguistic aspect the actually existing current speech norm of behavior that they observe when they speak Bulgarian. The characterization of the types of forms of existence of the Bulgarian language in the specific city was carried out subsequently. It showed deviations from the codified norm of the language and a **gradual regularity** in their movement.

This is the **last task**, whose implementation demonstrated the decline of the functions of native Bulgarian at the expense of official English on the territory of Australia. I call this process the **origin dissociation algorithm**.

## 2. Chapter one

### **The policy of Bulgaria towards our present-day emigrants and the policy of emigrants towards present-day Bulgaria**

#### **2.1. The Bulgarian language, linguistic globalization, and Australia**

The sentiments in our country regarding emigration from the transition period, as well as the globalization processes that are taking place at the time of the highest rate of emigration, often overlap. The concepts of *emigration* and *globalization* are equated and perceived as a danger. Even before the identification of the phenomenon of *linguistic globalization* by scholars

in Bulgaria, people intuitively discerned the consequences of the linguistic restructuring of the world and, without referring to research theses and statistics, began to feel fear of linguistic globalization for our small language, of the danger that it would be melted into the European language sea, completely replaced by English.

Similar sentiments are pan-European. Australia is not involved in the debates. It, from its position as a self-perceived resort, seems oblivious to the fact that the world has gone down the path it set out on at its inception, and shows boundless tolerance for everything. The population of welfare states such as France and Germany experience themselves as losers from globalization. This immediately puts them against the "winning" US (where there can be no denationalization shock). And while Europe strives to find a solution to the problems, following the United States steadfastly, no one pays attention to the global Australia, Canada, New Zealand, to the New World. A culmination of this discussion would be the creation of 'United States of Europe' (so called by Pinder: Pinder 2006: 45), but this is impossible at this stage. At the same time, since its inception, Australia has been transnational, multicultural, multi-ethnic, multilingual, and very/absolutely free from the prejudices of the past. No matter how the continent country lived in its early youth, today it is accessible not only for making a living, but also for development, limitless possibilities in areas such as the economy, information, ecology, technology, transcultural phenomena. The language policy of the multicultural society is far-sighted and well-thought-out. It brings together separate communities subtly and painlessly. It does not require 3-4 foreign languages to start work unless a specific occupation implies this. It supports in all possible ways the much-needed integration, and the immigrants' languages are influenced by Australian English which naturally deforms them and brings them closer to itself.

The attitude of the Bulgarian state to this process (as well as of linguistics) is not very well thought out. It tries to synchronize with other European policies, and sociolinguistics presents languages as part of human rights<sup>1</sup> in an outspoken Western universalism (Pachev 2006), but I think that a legal status will not preserve the Bulgarian language in the extremely gloomy perspective of economic globalization, which boldly brings to an end what has been intellectually forced by postmodernity. In Europe, as long as there is a struggle for rights, so will the struggle of immigrant communities for the recognition – not just the preservation – of national identity. In new societies, where such a struggle is absent, there is also a lack of

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<sup>1</sup> In fact, the idea of human rights is not new. It arose as a practical application in England, mainly as a personal protection and immunization of the individual against the arbitrariness of power.



motivation (there is no one to direct the struggle against) to preserve the language. In Bulgaria, we have to fight for only one thing: *attracting their interest* to the cause of preserving our language.

The question of what their attitude towards us is, the Bulgarians from Bulgaria, cannot receive an unequivocal answer. The ones I know are real Australians. They are devoted to the needs of all people. Without overdoing it with patriotic slogans, they do what they can to preserve the language and our national symbols and traditions in their families. They realize that they are facing the threshold of an era in which a cosmopolitan society, such as Beck proposes for the European Union, becomes possible.

## **2.2. Bulgarian studies' foreign policy in the context of Bulgaria's language policy**

In Bulgaria, there is less and less talk about the state's language policy, replaced by a European language policy, or - with "policies" in the plural. This is an expected reorientation, given the obligations that the EU member state assumes. Here the language policy is commented on in its manifestations abroad, in the field of teaching the Bulgarian language as a second language in Bulgarian Sunday schools abroad.

In Europe, each successive strategy increases the perimeter of multilingualism as a guarantor of shared heritage, wealth, challenge and advantage, and proposes programs to rethink education in which language competences are the first priority for achieving good economic results (Extra 2012). The cited author calls all the languages "European linguistic wealth", but from his study it is clear that English, German and French are actually studied (less Spanish, Russian and Italian), and the tests show a low level of language proficiency, that is, European documents are *wishful thinking*.

With regard to Bulgarian education abroad, our country actively intervenes in the creation of Bulgarian Sunday schools. They are the object of keen interest from governments. But it is not the fear of losing our national culture and traditions, our historical memory and language that is leading in this policy, but the so-called "invitations to tender". They are related to European funding of projects won by teams for creating and sending programs, materials and "adapted textbooks", and not a single specialist in Bulgarian was included in the first teams. That is why the quality of textbooks in Sydney was stunningly poor.

Fortunately, ABSA intervened, and the government decided to include it in decision-making on the selection and structuring of the curriculum. While I was in Sydney, official

normative documents appeared, State Educational Standards for the Acquisition of the Bulgarian Literary Language (State Gazette, No. 67 of 26.08.2016).

The declaration for the children of Bulgarians abroad is in the last paragraph (Article 4, Paragraph 4), which states that conditions were provided for learning the Bulgarian literary language through training in the Bulgarian language and literature with the aim of preserving and affirming the Bulgarian national identity. But there are no explanations of who, where and how creates these conditions, there is no mention of qualified personnel, of linguistic studies of language situations in place, of entry-level standards, etc. "Such formulations point to the acquisition of declarative rather than procedural knowledge about the language, which is necessary for its acquisition as a means of communication" (Koleva-Zlateva 2018: 62). I believe that the author's statement is politely euphemistic, and I endeavor to be more extreme: such formulations lead any linguist to the assumption that they were written by non-specialists and have long since stopped leading them to the question "why". But they lead them to the correct conclusion that public invitations to tender will not help Bulgarian studies, therefore, it must "call for help in distress".

### **2.3. Care for Bulgarian schools around the world**

Although the direction of the Bulgarian language policy can be called rather correct (the state should provide financial support, multiply the number, and monitor the development of Bulgarian schools abroad), the real care for most Bulgarian schools in the world is taken by ABSA<sup>2</sup>. All achievements of the Association are described and analyzed in the dissertation thesis, but *the work of ABSA is not oriented towards the necessary scientific aspect*. Its perspectives are useful for the people, but it lacks a scientific concept for teaching the language. Improving the level of our education abroad is the job of Bulgarian linguistics. Not the state, not the institutions, not the teachers, but the linguists should study the language in its numerous variations and, based on the results they obtain, define authoritatively and without appeal the parameters of Bulgarian education outside Bulgaria.

#### **2.3.1. Parameters of culturally oriented education at Bulgarian schools**

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<sup>2</sup> Even if it were only the "Petition for the recognition of the Bulgarian language in the EU as a matriculation language", which they prepared and moved to the highest levels of the European management structures, their activity shows foresight, European thinking and an attempt to preserve our language abroad.

The content of the concept of 'culturally oriented education' is also discussed in connection with the study of the Bulgarian language in the Bulgarian Sunday school.

„The cultural aspect in Teaching Bulgarian Language involves the consistent teaching and learning of the language not only as a sign system serving for communication and knowledge, but also as a cultural code, with whose help the information accumulated over the centuries is transmitted (the information about how the people perceived and perceives the world, how it creates, how it evaluates the surrounding reality, how it forms its specific "cultural mirror" and thus builds its national mentality and picture of the world)" (Dimchev 2011). Given the unsatisfactory situation and the thousands of unsolved problems in our educational system in Bulgaria and based on the declared real (and commendable) achievements of Bulgarian Sunday schools abroad, I made somewhat hastily a sad conclusion: about an "inverted crooked mirror" that reflects our Bulgarian traditions and cultural values that have preserved us as a nation so far, *more abroad* than in Bulgaria (Issa 2015). This finding turned out to be (at least for Sydney) an illusion. There, the Bulgarian language is either not known, or is known to an insignificant degree by most of the students in the Sunday school. This necessitated rethinking the cultural aspect because the preservation of Bulgarian culture can make sense only if the students know the Bulgarian language. Taught in the foreign language, our culture increases the awareness of the children, but does not bring them closer to us as a people.

The Australian state supports the Sunday schools of its immigrant communities unreservedly and generously. There is a Federation of Community Language Schools, which acts as a kind of trade union for each individual community. It carries out the schools' insurance, takes care of their amenities, buildings, consumables, and their interests. The University of Sydney offers a major that prepares teachers from and for different communities. There, teachers are trained by erudite specialists to teach each of their languages to compatriots in Australia. It is obviously about teaching the language as a foreign, as a second language, but in accordance with *the same* cultural attitudes of people in Australia.

### **2.3.2. The role of the Ministry of Education and Science. The textbooks**

The Ministry of Education supports organizationally and financially a total of 403 Bulgarian Sunday schools abroad (information from the academic year 2019/2020). Therefore, if it devotes time, effort, and resources, it should be most interested in the quality of the textbooks. Unfortunately, the Ministry allows textbooks created by a "business-oriented

university and school stratum" in whose texts "academic information is pushed further and further down the school curriculum" (Valchev 2012: 21). It is also uninteresting for children in Bulgaria.

Here I will comment on the quality of textbooks used in the city of Sydney in 2016. Based on their content, the educational policy of the state can rightly be called anti-Bulgarian. They create a negative attitude towards the Bulgarian. These textbooks, "in line with the State Educational Requirements, with the adapted curricula of the Ministry of Education and Science for Bulgarian language and literature for students living abroad", were my first disappointment and comments about their condition were sent to Bulgaria while I was still in Sydney (Issa 2016). Because I was forced to use them while teaching "undercover", pretending to be a newly appointed teacher at the Bulgarian Sunday School.

In the preparatory class, four books from the "Hand to Hand" series of the publishing house "Prosveta" were used. I don't know why they are called books for children abroad - they have pictures anyway and can be used by all children in the world. The teacher was a long-time children's teacher in Bulgaria, but she had no idea what adapted education was. When I went to first grade, I came to the conclusion that I don't have, either.

The First Grade ABC book is an iconic textbook. It keeps a lot of fond memories of the first student thrills. In Sydney in 2016, "ABC and reading book for first grade pupils living abroad" of the authoritative publishing house "Prosveta" was used. I was hoping to finally see an adapted textbook, but it is simply called that way. The texts are "adapted" by changing the names of the characters from the stories and are enriched with more Bulgarian names of people, probably because children abroad have not heard them. Thus, Bulgarian Australians are left with the impression that names such as Vida, Ancho, Yancho, Pepo, Nono, Yono, Kolyo, Penyo, Nedyo, Botyo, Zlatyo, Enyo, Stoyo, Gruyo, etc. are names of their peers in Bulgaria.

Texts are ill-conceived. For example, the rose, our national symbol, is represented in the lesson about the letter „з“ [z] by a picture of a rose next to another picture of a bison and

the following explanatory comment: "Next to a pink rose is Bizzy the bison. He is wild. But roses also enchant wild bison."<sup>3</sup>

The lesson about the letter "c" [s] takes the Sydney native to the countryside. There, Simo processes hay and straw, under the linden tree is the calf Nessi, and on the pole is the rooster Peter, who wakes up the village. In his yard, Simo has planted lettuce and tomatoes, beans and peppers<sup>4</sup>. Nobody understands anything from the story. However, there is an "aid" verse: "Lisa sits on a blue chair and sprinkles fine salt"... As a linguist, I understand that colleagues have adopted/borrowed (why not say copied) this and other similar puns from speech therapy aids, in order to "pass" their texts as adapted, but our children abroad are not ill. They simply do not know the meanings of the words and would hardly imagine a fox "salting itself with salt". I firmly believe that the lack of semantic transparency in the texts is unacceptable.

The first day in this class I came across the letter „ж“ [zh] and had to teach a lesson in which a man came across some acorns on the road between two villages, which hit him between the eyebrows and he wondered why the oak gave birth to them at all. The teacher tried to translate this work into English, but she could not recall the words for "oak" or "acorn" and hurried to give me the floor. I said that we would not teach this lesson, nor would we write in the workbook created on the topics of the ABC book - the sentence to demonstrate the letter "ж" - "Women and Joro are spreading jelly on slices of bread." Since I've never seen slices of bread with jelly before, I suggested we get to know one another first. I asked them where they *lived*. I asked them what they *wished*. We started a game of *wishes*, we also said *wishes* to each other. We took *scissors* to *cut* pictures of *giraffes* and wrote the *wishes* on them. I made sure they started with "*I wish you...*" and most were about a happy *life*. By the end of the class, everyone was writing "ж" and suggesting the sound in all positions: *frog, may*, etc. The full-time teacher, a lawyer by education, justified herself that the children did not understand anything from the textbook.

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<sup>3</sup> This and all quoted texts from the textbooks are placed in the appendix to the dissertation as photographs taken in situ from the textbooks themselves.

<sup>4</sup> In the yards of the houses of the Australian Bulgarians there are exotic bushes and whimsical flowers arranged around miniature benches, gazebos, statues. The plants mentioned in the lesson, if they even know their names in Bulgarian, for them are products from the store shelves.

I could go on and on about the misunderstandings in all the ABC book lessons, but I will end the description of this "adaptation" with my failure in the letter "в" [v] lesson. There is a text with the title "Buffalo in a whirlpool". It reads: "There is a buffalo in the whirlpool. And by the whirlpool, on a willow - a crow. - Buffalo, is fish swimming in the whirlpool or not? – Crow, crow! If a buffalo is digging in a whirlpool, no fish is swimming in the whirlpool." I had to translate as well. The whirlpool made it difficult for me, but the children realized that the buffalo had gone inside, therefore the fish could not swim there... I was interrupted. I fell silent. The children started speaking in English and discussing ecology, stunned by this violation of the laws of nature, killing the fish and polluting the environment in such a mindless way. In Australia, keeping the planet clean is priority number 1. "You have a strange country," said an older child, to whom I read the text some time later. I was very hurt by this second person of the verb - *you have*... The second part of the book for the first grade is the reading book and the word Bulgaria is not present in any text.

In the second grade "Bulgarian language and reading book for students living abroad" there was also one textbook of "Prosveta" publishing house. The material is similar, there is no trace of adaptation to a second language environment. The first lesson I came across was Noun Gender. Here, the teacher was Russian, and "Noun Noun" was written on the board. Each analysis of a noun began with the question whether it was animate or inanimate, and the correct answer was written against the noun extracted from the text, after the hyphen, before the gender and number.

The next class it was my turn and I had to continue with the gender category by having the students learn the rule: "Nouns have gender. The noun **desk** is masculine (masc.) – the word **one** is added before it. The noun **notebook** is feminine (fem.) – the word **one** is added before it. The noun boy is in the neuter gender (neut.) - the word **one** is added in front of it. I immediately rushed to tell them *why*. I explained it exactly as I explain it to foreign students. The teacher remarked to me: it was too early in the second grade for such an explanation. I objected: in Bulgaria it might be too early, because children born in our country know the meaning of words and agree intuitively. But in an environment where children ask: "What is this?" for every second word, we cannot rely on anything else but the methodology for teaching Bulgarian as a foreign language. The children understood me immediately, and instead of recognizing gender, we began to agree with adjectives.

The next important topic in the "adapted" textbook is the verbs. It is simplified in terms of terminology and directly gives tasks: name who does what! With pictures of animals and the words *walk, run, gallop, fly, jump, climb, swim, crawl*. This textbook is adapted not for another country, but for another biological species that is distinct from the human; various of its representatives can be seen in the zoo.

In the next lesson, new verbs, intended invariably for the same species, enrich the vocabulary of Australian Bulgarians - *croak, cuckoo, coo, chirp, rattle, circle, shoot, fly away*. The verbs that are learned at home in Bulgarian hardly imitate the sounds of the colorful Australian birdlife to compare them with Bulgarian. It is the worst adaptation, unsuitable south of the Equator.

The second part of this booklet contains the reading. It includes works with rural themes that are wonderful for us, but incomprehensible to children in a big foreign city. The characters of the texts are all the time in the fields, reaping, sowing and plowing, digging the soil and tying up the vines. The changing of the seasons is present as a theme in great detail and colour, but quite incomprehensible in Australia.

The winter landscapes in the poems of poets such as Valeri Petrov and the prose of writers such as Emilian Stanev are not adapted, they are unsuitable for a country where it has never snowed, migratory birds have never gone anywhere and never returned, victorious heroes would never use the expression "Hold on now so I can see you, Mary, you dragon, hundred-headed bastard!" from the wonderful fairy tale of A. Raztsvetnikov.

In the third-grade textbook, the material suddenly becomes more complicated. Maybe that's why there were only two children in this class. The very first lesson, "Communication", which should show third graders speech etiquette in the Bulgarian language, presupposes dialectological knowledge. But the children in Sydney do not recognize the dialects, they speak either only English or "broken" Bulgarian. For example, none of them uses the nominative forms of our personal pronoun at all: "Who has a pencil? - Me.; Who is your best friend? - You."; "Let's see what you've done?" - It wasn't me! (it was not I)". The textbook adapters apparently don't know this because personal pronouns don't appear until the middle of this textbook - on page 64, in the third grade. I would start with the personal pronouns in first, even before first grade. But I was only a teacher for six Sundays.

The impression that the children acquire about Bulgaria based on the textbooks is of the presence of non-existent social orders from the time of the patriarchal village in Bulgaria. They are not moved by it, nor by the beauty of Bulgaria, and we have nothing to blame them

for. My young students grew up with the impression that bison lived in the Rose Valley, that fish-killing buffalos roamed our clear mountain streams, that our agriculture consisted of ploughmen, sowers, and diggers who spoke some simple language that was probably not "correct" Bulgarian. Add to this the firm intention of the parents never to return, because it is bad in Bulgaria, and the inverted mirror south of the Equator reflects information turned to nothing, ugly distorted by the scholars-adapters who won projects for millions of leva, approved by the Minister of education and science in our country.

### **2.3.3. The role of Bulgarian linguistics. The Bulgarian language as a second native language**

I choose this term – “second native language” - in my opinion, the most appropriate in terms of teaching our language to compatriots abroad, opposing to the proposals to unify the conceptual apparatus in linguistics within the borders of the EU, as if the quality of teaching depends on it. The work of Bulgarian linguistics so far (and for now) is to theorize, define and adapt the conceptual apparatus to Western models. Better results are expected from this activity, but they remain in the realm of wishes and do not find application in practice. This makes them unnecessary.

The most relevant for Bulgarian sociolinguistics is the definition of Roger Bell, who considers any language that is acquired after the first to be a second language (Bell 1980: 293-295). In the Bulgarian sociolinguistic literature, comprehensive analyzes are made on the basis of this terminology. Some of our linguists put a lot of effort into establishing clarity and order in the terminology: "The first language is the first in terms of time of acquisition, but it is not necessarily the one with the highest degree of mastery" (Dimchev 2014: 157). But then he (according to Bell's terminology and according to the concept accepted by world sociolinguistics) is not the first. I support Dimchev's terminology, despite its burdensome informativeness regarding the "ontogenetic approach to individual personality development", because the Bulgarian language, which I am talking about in the dissertation, is second, or third, or perhaps fourth in terms of proficiency, but at the time of acquisition it is the first for all who have gone abroad after infancy. For those born abroad, it is second in terms of proficiency, in many families it is also second in acquisition time, but since it is *the native language of their parents*, it cannot be reduced to the concept of 'next language' for them, either. I believe that for the sake of terminology, we should not neglect the audience, and Bulgarian children in Sunday schools are the most important audience for us.



These are not our potential business partners, nor refugees with status remaining with us, nor Bulgarian citizens from the minorities, nor even our students. These are our children. Therefore, here I use "second" as the antithesis of the first, but "native" as the language of the motherland and I call the Bulgarian language for the Bulgarian students from the Bulgarian Sunday schools *second native*. To make it clear that it must be learned as a second language, if it was not mastered intuitively in childhood, but in no way to overlook the fact that it is only second in order, but is native, because it is the language of our family, of our people, the language of the abandoned homeland, of mother's and father's homeland, of what some call the ancestral homeland (and that is why they survived 200 years in the diaspora), of Bulgaria.

#### **2.4. The language attitudes of the immigrants. A questionnaire-based study**

Since the main task of the dissertation is the study of the living speech of immigrants, the results of the surveys both from Sydney and from other places in the world, processed after my return, are not presented in the text in full, by analyzing the frequency distributions of the responses to each question, and only individual answers are commented on. First of all, I am interested in the attitude that immigrants have towards their native language. Secondly, whether they are willing to study it themselves or encourage their children to do so. From their (the immigrants') *attitude* towards everything Bulgarian, some, albeit not linguistic, conclusions can be drawn.

In Sydney, completing the questionnaire on paper embarrassed most of the respondents and they did not overcome the so-called "paradox of observation" but managed to "fool" them that the questionnaire is all I want from them. After tediously filling it out, the respondents indulged in "sweet talk" without suspecting that I was recording them. In the survey they thought *about* the language, and in the conversations they thought *in* the language. Attitudes towards using our native language and learning it at school were only part of the survey, and the survey was carried out on the spot, alongside the hidden recordings on the Sunday School grounds, in the homes of Bulgarians living in Sydney and at meetings of Bulgarians in other places – a community center, a restaurant, a dentist's office, walks. The survey lasted for 46 days, and the questionnaires, as a side activity, were hand-delivered to those willing to participate, and were also sent electronically to all (400 in number) members of the Bulgarian Patriotic Society "Rodina". Unfortunately, only 20 people responded to my 400 requests. This survey in the dissertation is called "first".

After returning from Sydney, I sent a new survey (in 2017) addressed to all continents, and after an 8-month break I sent an improved version (in 2018). The responses received (2019, 2020, 2021) became fewer and fewer and in early 2022 I gave up and pulled the survey out.

In conclusion, the characterization of the attitudes of Bulgarian immigrants towards their native language and native education abroad is valuable in terms of the future work of Bulgarian linguistics and Bulgarian educational institutions, for which the main priority should be *to slow down the process of origin dissociation of Bulgarians abroad and of the forgetting of the Bulgarian language by the generations*. Only if we are not indifferent to this sore problem can we hope for attitudes of identification with us and co-belonging to us on the part of the immigrants.

## **2.5. The functions of the language of the Bulgarian immigrants in Sydney**

The functions of the language of the immigrants in Sydney are presented through an unconventional comparison with Laurent Binet's "The Seventh Function of Language" (Binet 2018). This work of art, containing extraordinary symbolism and intellectual provocation, actually shows the possibility of directly influencing people with the power of words. The reason I interpret the functions of the language of the persons studied in Sydney by reference to it is threefold. **The first:** the language of the Bulgarian immigrants is described, commented on, and interpreted from the *symbolic side of the essence of the language*.

**The second reason:** in the fiction of Binet's novel, the classification of Roman Jakobson, his well-known six-component model, is chosen, and the **third** reason is that the characters follow the trail of the seventh function, designated under the name "magic or incantation function". I also found a similar feature in Sydney. It is not as it is described in the novel, it is "magical" only in its effect on me, it does not possess any other magic, but it *signifies* the immigrants as Bulgarians, that's why I call it *signifying*. It explains the existence and the use of the Bulgarian language by applying all the other communicative functions, without which the immigrant in Sydney can easily live. Despite the difficulties, some parents patiently and insistently speak to each other and to their children in Bulgarian, knowing that the probability of fulfilling the intentions encoded in their speech strategies is small, because they have to be decoded by people who are not (at all or completely) capable of this. And this insistence, to speak in Bulgarian, goes beyond the simple verbal exchange, and at the same time by saying anything, *signifies the speaker as a Bulgarian*.

### 3. Chapter two

#### The Bulgarian language in Sydney, Australia

"The first organized Bulgarian group arrived in Australia in November 1907" (Staykova 2011: 22), but there are reports that the first Bulgarian who came to the country was born way back in 1809, and the next Bulgarian immigration wave to Australia was in 1876. There are reports of several Bulgarians fleeing during the April Uprising, who managed to reach the "lower land". According to statistics from 1891, only 14 Bulgarians live in Australia<sup>5</sup>. After the Ilinden-Preobrazhensky Uprising of 1903, about a hundred more settled on the continent.

The first compact Bulgarian colony was formed in the city of Perth, Western Australia, in 1906-1907. This is actually the "real" Bulgarian emigration, which subsequently (1912) also grew in the Adelaide area. In the subsequent historical stages, more groups of Bulgarian emigrants arrived on the continent as refugees, quickly integrated into the local society, found work, created families, and began to be perceived as economic immigrants. Even today, refugees still live in Sydney: political émigrés from the early years of socialism (Issa 2019).

The Bulgarian state began to show interest in Bulgarians in Australia only in the late 1970s, accepting the Yugoslavia-imposed division of our diaspora into Bulgarians and Macedonians. We in Bulgarian linguistics would very much like to call the descendants of these emigrants from the part severed from the Bulgarian national flesh (today's North Macedonia) "Bulgarian-speaking", but this is frivolous. "Bulgarian speakers" in Australia are only those who want to be so. There are three thousand of them. Another thirteen or more thousand from the territory of today's Bulgaria are Australians, and some other "others", descendants of exactly these immigrants, are Macedonians. And they shout it at the top of their lungs. They don't join us. They run away from us, but that doesn't bother anyone in Australia. Because two-thirds of immigrants run away from their own people on impulse.

#### 3.1. The modern Bulgarian urban language situation in the city of Sydney, Australia

This chapter describes the conceptual apparatus adopted from the classic work with the same title by the founder of Bulgarian sociolinguistics M. Videnov (Videnov 1990), which marks the beginning of a new direction, *sociolinguistic futurology*. In order for the terminology

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<sup>5</sup><[https://bg.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%91%D1%8A%D0%BB%D0%B3%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%B8\\_%D0%B2\\_%D0%90%D0%B2%D1%81%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%B8%D1%8F](https://bg.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%91%D1%8A%D0%BB%D0%B3%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%B8_%D0%B2_%D0%90%D0%B2%D1%81%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%B8%D1%8F)>, посетен на 28. 07. 2019 г.

to be unambiguous when describing the Bulgarian language of our immigrants, I look for continuity with the terms in "The Modern Bulgarian Urban Linguistic Situation" and I present fragments of the linguistic situation in Sydney. The purpose of this attempt (to lay the same theoretical foundation as in the study of Bulgarian urban dialects) is (in case it turns out to be successful) to propose the idea of applying this methodology to the study of all Bulgarians abroad.

Since our Bulgarian studies is traditionally and consistently late with empirical research, and then waits for European and American scholars to refine a conceptual apparatus in order to borrow and translate it, borrowing the familiar, "our", methodology for researching the language of our compatriots abroad seemed to me to be the right direction. I think that, if it works, this will lay the foundations of a "new field" in Bulgarian sociolinguistics - *sociolinguistic emigrantology*.

During the study of the modern Bulgarian urban language situation in Sydney, a synchronous "slice" was made of the social structure of the huge city, of course not of the whole (in terms of population, it is three times larger than Bulgaria), but of those areas of it, where Bulgarian presence was discovered - workplaces, Bulgarian homes and above all - the Bulgarian school. The conclusions after the completion of the research are that the modern Bulgarian urban language situation (in Sydney and everywhere else) can be studied by employing the model of included observation, although all-Bulgarian situations are located in the unique microworld of families only.

### **3.2. The language of the Bulgarian families in Sydney**

Each family follows its own rules. Depending on how the problem of separation and fusion of linguistic contact systems is solved, there are various unwritten laws that distinguish a particular family.

The reason for the special attention given to families in the dissertation is that conversations in a family environment best show whether our language is alive (and how much it is used), to what extent there is a favorable perspective for our culture to preserve its sustainability. In the text of the thesis, only a few examples are given, in view of the promised anonymity, with the language in families who do not mind the publicity received.

Most often mentioned here is the Bogevi family, in whose home I was a guest, whose help I benefited from and with whose members I shared my first impressions of the speech of the Bulgarian immigrants. I call it "our family" because I am a part of it, just as the four of them are part of mine. The extensive description of the language situation of this family also

includes the first of many interviews I took with the father - Yavor BogeV. As I expected, the interview showed the interviewee's skepticism regarding the preservation of the language in the distant country. He believes that this is not mandatory at all, that everyone chooses what to do in their free time - learn a language, do sports or something else. However, practice shows that Yavor BogeV's children never benefit from their father's tolerance of free choice and speak far better than the children of those who declare that they will teach their children our native language at any cost. He does not teach them in Bulgarian, but the practical benefits in life, but always through communication in his own language. Thus, they participate in everything in Bulgarian.

The mother's name is Diana BogeVa. For the maintenance of the Bulgarian language of the two children, she has the main merit, with the insistence that this is an unbreakable law in the dialogues of the family. In this desire of hers, Diana is sometimes too imperative, but at other times she is creative. She creates conspiratorial schemes in the games of the children and their friends from Bulgarian families, in which they are convinced that they are a "secret society" of people/children that no one else understands, if they do not want to be understood. It's like they're in a game of hide-and-seek or a team competition where they have something the others don't - like a code they can crack in order to defeat the opposing team. The children immediately "get hooked". The speech of the two children of our family (or at least one, depending on whose friends the members of the group are) is present in almost all the dialogues, parts of which are shown in Chapter Three, in the excerpts of the probes.

In the dissertation, special attention is paid to several more families, called the "other" families. The general impression of their speech is that the language of the first generation, of those who emigrated in adulthood, is entirely Bulgarian in the conversations between the spouses. It is varied with all the options that were available in Bulgaria at the time of leaving the country and depends on the place in Bulgaria where the family lived before emigrating. The family mesolect is the most supported version of the Bulgarian language because it is practiced every evening in conversations with the elderly parents, if they live in Sydney, or in Bulgaria on Skype.

In some of the families, the parents' occupation does not allow them to spend enough time with their children. It is not enough for Bulgarian language lessons either. The decision of each family regarding the use or abandonment of the Bulgarian language is strictly individual and different. Most of the parents give up, not that they are "o'kay" with their children speaking only English, but they see that there is nothing to be done. Fortunately, there are those who are of different opinion. The study describes the bright example of Dr. Svetlana

Nikova, a well-known dentist in Sydney, who solves the problem by long stays in the homeland. In her optimistic interview, there is a firm belief in our bright future. Without hesitation, she decided to include her child in this future of Bulgaria, and also in the present, because Mitko learned the language well. The next day I saw him at school. He spoke the way his peers in Sliven speak.

Most families do not spend such a long time in Bulgaria, but those who care about our native language are looking for a way to preserve it. The most profitable "strategy" is the presence of a Bulgarian grandmother. The research describes one such family with one such grandmother, whose grandchildren speak much better than most children from the school (there are three of them and they did not attend the Bulgarian school). My conversation with the grandmother and her grandchildren is the first to be presented in transcription, following the model I proposed for the probes presented in Chapter Three. Here the interferences from English stand out and the big surprise is revealed: that they are not subject to any regularity, as it happens in languages when they are foreign to each other. In the mixed language of the children, deviations sometimes appear, other times they do not. Therefore *one/no mixed language can be learned*. A relatively good/understandable Bulgarian, however, can.

The most important thing is not the constant speaking of Bulgarian, but the ability to smoothly switch from one language to another. This phenomenon, known in sociolinguistics as "code-switching", in some families (in most of them) is difficult, the knowledge of the Bulgarian language is so little that every phrase causes stops, our language is abandoned and gradually forgotten. There are, of course, exceptions. The research presents the most outstanding one: the development of bilingualism in the daughter of the Bogeви family, the respondent I have observed for the longest time - from her birth until now (20 years), my most valuable informant in the dissertation thesis and the best assistant in Sydney: Lily Bogeва. Against the background of the general picture, in which the functions of our language in children are oriented in the direction of decay, parallel to growth, she is a proof that it is possible, based on the available, albeit scarce knowledge, with good motivation and persistence, that the functions reverse their direction. Lily's bilingual speech, even when changing the language several times in the same sentence, retains its inherently suggestive impact.

### **3.3. The Bulgarian Sunday school – institution and reality**

The purpose of the school, as an institution, is related to obtaining knowledge, acquiring knowledge, synchronizing the consciousness with the reality immediately

surrounding the person. In the so-called "Bulgarian Sunday schools" is supposed to achieve this goal from a distance, since it is about a foreign reality in which our reality is shown. Therefore, mastering the Bulgarian language should be the most important task of every Bulgarian Sunday school. Unfortunately, in these schools of ours, only the most basic dialogue skills are achieved.

The Bulgarian Sunday School in Sydney has existed for 12 years. Its existence in itself is an achievement in a place so far from Bulgaria and in a time so unfavorable for the languages of the immigrant communities in the "global" century. Children are taught there, of whom at least 60% did not speak Bulgarian fluently. The complex theory with the terminology of grammatical categories, which they will study in English at the university, only if they decide to follow linguistics, was complicated by texts that take the imagination of those who have learned a little Bulgarian at home, to the fields, in the vineyards, with plowmen, diggers, and peasants who devote themselves to their noble agricultural work in the patriarchal Bulgarian village.

In order to explain how they are dealing with the situation, with several interviews, as well as continuous conversations throughout my stay in Sydney and after that, the director of the Bulgarian Sunday School, Mrs. Marina Mileva, stepped in. As one of the most serious difficulties she pointed out to me on the very first day was the selection of teachers<sup>6</sup>. It turned out that there are almost no people from the small Bulgarian community in Sydney willing to teach the children. The real-life problems of the school are discussed in detail in the dissertation and presented in my extensive interviews with all the teachers. I promised them after my return that I would make a proposal: instead of creating textbooks and aids adapted from Bulgaria, we should create the same standards, tests for the entry level, as well as for the higher levels, equal for the whole world, and provide them to the schools; that they accept and form their groups according to the results shown on admission to the school, according to these criteria; then to undertake different teaching of the Bulgarian language - as a second native, as a second foreign, depending on the level, and the textbooks should not be adapted, but *open to adaptation* by themselves, in a way that is undoubtedly better than our proposals.

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<sup>6</sup> In the following few years after my return and until now, Principal Mileva continues to complain about the difficulties in the selection of teachers and the lack of people willing to join the noble cause. Although she is very happy with the new teachers who are currently (2022) teaching, it turns out that they also have another (not pedagogical, not philological) professional and educational status, that some of them have accepted the job temporarily and she is again faced with the problem of finding teachers.

### **3.4. The communication patterns of the three generations in Sydney and information technology in the New World**

Already during the field research, I began to assess the possibilities of continuing the contacts between me and the persons under study after my return from Sydney. Analyzing each conversation recorded during the day and listened to in the evening at home, it was clear that this would be a conversation to be continued in case I had time for another meeting. In most cases it was not enough for me, so I decided to continue communicating with them on the Internet.

Among the Bulgarian immigrant community in Sydney, Internet communication in Bulgarian are being implemented contrary to expectations. Discourse practices, as specific forms of speech behavior in social networks, relate paradoxically to the communication of the oldest. They are relatively less in the middle generation and minimal in the youngest. What is the reason for the paradox?

The reason why, despite the expected hyperactivity of the group of children, I define their Internet communication practices as *negligible*, is that here we are talking about communications in the Bulgarian language, and the children either do not know Bulgarian, or, even if they do, they do not use to communicate on the Internet. The representatives of the middle generation are also not particularly active in communicating in Bulgarian on the Internet. They have dedicated themselves to their professional improvement in English.

The generation of the grandparents is characterized by an unexpected activity - "post-modernity", thanks to which our native language is enriched in terms of themes and preserved for another generation, even improved by the paradoxical "surfing" of the older generation. Thus, it broadens the horizons and knowledge of Bulgaria, and the role of adults, thanks to technology, is no longer only to preserve Bulgarian traditions, but to preserve the life of our language.

## **4. Chapter three**

### **Field research of the language of the Bulgarian community in the foreign language environment of Sydney**

The field survey shows the types of structural norms, ie., the norms in the forms of existence of the Bulgarian language in Sydney. This is how the mechanism of the normative complex in the speech of the Bulgarians there is penetrated. The difficulties arise from the fact that the language community is surrounded by and mixed with the inhabitants of the host country; the representatives of the immigrant community come from different parts of our



country, they speak different regional variants of our language, characteristic of the time when the person emigrated. This can be a period of up to half a century of differences, during which the Bulgarian language is characterized by various old and new features. Abroad, Bulgarian immigrants do not lead a unified life, therefore there is a lack of the kind of consolidation that becomes a national normative complex in Bulgaria and acquires the highest prestige. As there is no injunction of public opinion, regional markers are also observed in the highly educated middle generation.

In Bulgarian sociolinguistics, it is accepted that the synchronic section of a given studied group emphasizes an analysis of the middle, economically active generation, which synchronizes the communication between the youngest and the oldest. "Precisely the differences between the taste of one and the other is the real change in the boundaries of the three living generations, bearers of a given language" (Videnov 2010: 53). In the immigrant community, the research is more complex. The middle generation mainly uses the foreign language. It is not by chance that it is called bilingual here. They speak English at a high level and use only it during the working day. In the morning and evening, if they have decided to try to preserve the Bulgarian language for their descendants, they switch to Bulgarian at home. When they talk to their parents, they easily join the regional phonetics that they used as children in Bulgaria. In such a situation in the foreign language environment, it is very difficult to match the social portrait of these respondents with their speech behavior in the family.

For the youngest generation, the Bulgarian language is not the first either in terms of proficiency or frequency of use. It is second native and ranges from well known, to little known, to almost unknown. Whatever its level, fragments of the language of the host country are aggressively wedged into it. They are present in children's Bulgarian speech at all levels - from the types of intonation contours and their variation, through the deformed lexemes with English roots and Bulgarian suffixes and inflections, the rearranged word order, to the complete replacement of the Bulgarian phrase with an English one.

To achieve the main goal of the dissertation, the field research was carried out using the so-called *included observation*, i.e. I myself was included in the chain of communication while visiting the homes of Bulgarian families who invited me, in the Bulgarian Sunday School where I taught, and in meetings with Bulgarian friends in which I participated. Through this tried-and-tested method of deployment, I tried to break into the communication chain through direct involvement. I also made several attempts to withdraw from the conversation and leave the children alone with a microphone secretly on. Unfortunately, these attempts of

mine turned out to be in vain because the conversation immediately after my withdrawal switched to English.

#### 4.1. Informants

The persons investigated, also called informants or respondents, are 80 people.

The only feature common to the group is real (and stated/declared) *Bulgarian ethnic origin*. This implies opportunities for integration and unification of members, for contacts among them based on a common language, and possibly also for social relations such as solidarity, corporatism, as well as differentiation from other groups. In the proposed dissertation I define the condition of *identification* as a condition of crucial importance. Therefore, only those Bulgarians who *identify themselves as Bulgarians* and recognize themselves as part of our people are included in the study. They are marked with an acronym - **АБВ** [ABC] - the first letters of our alphabet. They are not united socially, professionally, or otherwise, except that they are a group of Bulgarians. I use the abbreviation from „АзБукиВеди“ [“AzBukiVedi”] of the Holy Brothers Cyril and Methodius, because the main criterion by which I include them is Bulgarian origin, belonging to the Bulgarian people, which refers to mastery or desire to master our Word, speaking at least, our language. Their *identification as Bulgarians* is the group's most unifying feature.

Conversely, its most contrasting feature is *age*. It divides the informants into three subgroups - respectively **A**, **B** and **C**. The main objective factor for them, leading to the use/abandonment of the Bulgarian language, is the *generational* factor. That is why I define *age* as the second most important feature. The representatives of the three different generations have different sociolinguistic status. Despite the literally accepted terms from Bulgarian sociolinguistics, according to which the informants are divided into *young, old, and elderly*, the difference here is greater. In Bulgaria (and in every single-national state) "each individual is a component of the urban communicative community in which he reproduces himself as a social being, i.e. is included in the performance of one or another public function" (Videnov 2010: 63), including through his speech. In the Bulgarian ethnic community in Sydney, the three generations are charged with polarly opposite characteristics, including through their speech. All other features are subject to age (to the extent that it determines the preferential use of the Bulgarian or English language).

The generation (subgroup) of the young, marked with the letter **A**, includes, in addition to the young, the little ones - from 5 to 25 years of age. Despite the large range, these are the

children from friendly families and from the school, therefore the group is sometimes also called "students". It is about my students from the school and the children of the studied families of school and university age. This is the most important stratum of informants because there the Bulgarian language (with very few exceptions) is either totally absent, or is mastered at an unsatisfactorily low level, and/or is subject to native language interference (native English) to such an extent that sometimes it is incomprehensible. On the other hand, they are the most important component of the ABB group, the first component - A - means "ABC-learners", as they were called during the Revival - with the hope of their successes and desire to learn Bulgarian to revive our disappearing language, our national self-esteem and future.

The second component of the ABB group includes the middle generation, burdened with the most responsibilities. I call it subgroup B [B] - "bilinguals". They actively use both languages: for the education of children and for communication with parents - one, for professional realization and public appearances - the other. Bilinguals constantly code-switch even within their families, because of the children's preference to speak Australian English, or because the children do not know enough (or any) Bulgarian. The age range of this group is also very large, even twice as large as that of group A - from 25 to 65 years.

The third component of the ABB group is subgroup B [C] - "adults". The adults generation does not consist of just grandparents without social activities, who have come to raise grandchildren in Sydney. There are also political immigrants from half a century ago, whose language and life wisdom alone are worthy of a separate study. Here (in sub-group C) I include only the grandparents, actually only one grandfather.

The subjects of group A were 33 – 15 boys and 18 girls. 24 of them are students from the Bulgarian Sunday School. In the text of the dissertation, they are indicated by a number placed in brackets (from 1 to 24). In the probes, after the corresponding number, also in brackets, the person's belonging to group (A) is noted. The place of birth - Bulgaria, Australia or a third country - is marked with symbols. For those born in Bulgaria or Australia, these are triangles – ▲ for Bulgaria (born above the Equator) and ▼ for Australia (born below the Equator). For those born in a third country, I use ■. After the respective symbols for those born in our country or in another country other than Australia, the period is also given - years or months since the child arrived on the continent country. Finally, to indicate gender, the generally accepted symbols of Mars (♂) for male and Venus (♀) for female are given. The age of the school's students is not recorded. It varies from 5 to 10 years, but differences in the degree of Bulgarian language proficiency do not depend on it. Some of the children in the preparatory group do better than most first graders and some second graders. The interpretation

code for each quoted student has the following sample form: (9) (A) ▲ 2 yr. (♂). This means that the person is a boy, a student, born in Bulgaria and has lived in Sydney for two years. The remaining 9 persons from this group are children of our friends. They are marked with capital letters of the Bulgarian alphabet. These are the letters Л, А, М, К, Ж, Б, б, Ч and И. After them (A) is written for belonging to the group, the place of birth and the period, as well as the gender (following the model for the students) and finally, in parentheses, the age<sup>7</sup>. In the case of these children, it is important because the participants range from very young children to students in their 20s. The example interpretation code for their designation would look like this: Ч (А) ■ 10 y. (♀) (17). It shows that the person is a 17-year-old girl who was born in a third country and has been living in Sydney for 10 years.

The informants of the middle generation (group B) are 40, but 19 of them are not considered in the probes because they participated only with surveys or with short remarks in the school yard, without introducing themselves and without giving consent to be quoted. In their episodic inclusions in conversation, their names are not noted, with the exception of one, a twentieth respondent, called AI (an additional informant who declined to identify himself but agreed to use the recording of him talking to another subject after realizing that it is recorded). Thus, the persons examined, marked as bilingual, round up to 20 people. Fifteen of them are women, and only five are men. All informants from group B are marked with the following capital letters from the Bulgarian or Old Bulgarian alphabet: Б, В, Д, Я, X, O, IO, П, Ш, Ф, Р, Т, Е, З, С, III, Ц, H, Ъ and Ѡ. These are followed by the person's belonging to group (B), the period during which they have lived in Australia, the sex with the symbols of Venus and Mars, and finally, in brackets, the age. The place of birth of all is Bulgaria, so it is not noted. An example interpretation code of a randomly selected person looks like this: D (B) 16 (♀) (42). I.e., the person is a Group B female, aged 42, and has lived in Sydney for 16 years.

In the group of adult respondents, I include seven people, six grandmothers and one grandfather, all monolinguals, speaking only Bulgarian. The letters with which the ladies are designated are Г, Ё, У, Ж, А, ІС, and the elderly gentleman - with ЪІ. In the interpretation code for their designation, the marker place of birth, similar to that of bilinguals, is absent. Gender is also not noted, as all but ЪІ are female. The identification code of each interviewed

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<sup>7</sup> In an address form or when others talk about them, the letters, as with bilinguals and adults, are put in quotation marks, and with students only the first digit is used, indicating the number with which the child is marked, also put in quotation marks.

person has the following example form: Я (B) 10 (68). I.e., this is a group B female, age 68, living in Australia for 10 years. The most important indicator of this stratum is the *time* spent in Australia, as well as age. Interferences from the English language in their idiolects are not detected. However, interesting deviations from the Bulgarian language standard are found, related to the time spent in the foreign country. In their stories, in addition to unmistakably recognizing where they are from, it is almost precisely recognizable *how long* they have been abroad. The difference between the speech of 65-year-old grandmothers and that of 85-year-olds was like a color photograph contrasted with a black-and-white, outdated photograph. If Bulgarian sociolinguistics decides to correct its mistake of not studying the urban neighborhoods and individual moments of the interesting evolution of the rural dialect, it can successfully study the idiolects of the immigrants.

#### **4.2. A sociolinguistic description of representative probe excerpts**

I borrow the term “probe” from “Veliko Tarnovo language” (Videnov, Baychev 1999: 74). The meaning of the concept - "a segment of an idiolect" - allows us to name in the same way as on the territory of our country typical samples of the linguistic behavior of the studied persons. By presenting excerpts from our conversations, I try to capture the speech atmosphere in Sydney. The difference from the model in "Veliko Tarnovo language" is that in it each probe is a selected part of the idiolect of only one informant, and here all participants in the conversations are represented. The reason lies in the different goals that this study sets: to track not only the damage caused by interference or other deviations, but also the attitudes, the readiness to preserve our language in a foreign country. This a topic was commented on in most of the dialogues of the respondents. The other reason for presenting entire speech situations is that children – the most important informants – are involved (especially at school) episodically, monosyllabically, briefly. If separated, each student's speech does not provide sufficient material for a probe. And even if it is possible to present one idiolect where the interferences from English can be distinguished, at another moment, with other interlocutors, the same person may not allow them or allow others. This proves the developmental processes in language, especially when it is mixed. Being in constant motion, such a language can neither be memorized nor learned. It lives only in his *transience*.

The recordings described in 25 probes are divided thematically - recordings from the school, from family meetings with friends, from meetings in public places and from conversations in our family. They are presented on 168 pages in the dissertation - from the 331 to the 499, and after each of the probes, the available deviations in the speech of each of

the participants in the corresponding conversation are indicated. After each of the thematic sections, the *sociolinguistic markers* characteristic of the respective groups and situations are described. In all conversational probes the *age* marker is decisive.

## 5. Conclusion

The observations on the linguistic behavior of the studied persons lead to two important conclusions about the state of the Bulgarian language in Sydney. The first is *linguistic*: a *special intermediate system* of our language is established on the territory of the city, which is partly national in relation to Bulgarian and specific in relation to the new environment. However, among the multitude of specific facts, the presence of *the common language norm* for the city of Sydney of the Bulgarians living there can be observed. Although it is not a regulator of public life in the foreign country, this norm also has its imperatives, notions of correctness and prestige, value orientation and models of linguistic behavior. This second conclusion is *sociolinguistic*.

The reasons for using or abandoning the Bulgarian language depend either on the desire and convictions of the immigrants, or on the "role structure of the situation" (Kitaygorodskaya, Rozanova 2007). At a time when interference is a problem for whose solution not only the factor of *linguistic structure* but also the factor of *linguistic culture* plays a role, code switching does not depend on structural factors at all. Since the transition from the habitual use of the Bulgarian language to the use of English is rather due to extra-linguistic reasons, the interferences that walk the path of the transition that leads to the code switching can be ignored. But if the intention is to prevent the code switching and its *replacement* with Bulgarian, the interferences should be commented mainly in linguistic aspect.

### 5.1. Interferences in the language of the examined persons

With a more precise use of the terminology for interferences, it can only be used for the researched persons from group B, since the respondents from group A know Bulgarian at an unsatisfactory level and in many cases use an English word, expression, whole utterance, since they do not have any idea of what their Bulgarian counterpart is, and those from group C do not know English at all. "The cases of deviation from the norms of each of the two languages which arise in the speech of bilinguals from their knowing more than one language, i.e., resulting from linguistic contacts, is the phenomenon of interference" (Weinreich 1979: 22). That is, for there to be interference, one must know both languages... Nevertheless, here "interference" means *any deviation* from one language at the expense of the other, regardless

of the level of proficiency of one or the other. It is about the process of adaptation of the foreign language material to the structure of our language, noticed in the speech behavior of the respondents.

Interferences in their speech are mostly *not native*, but *foreign*. For the representatives of group C, they are the only type. Although they do not speak English, they also use in the flow of their Bulgarian speech English names of streets and neighborhoods, mountains and other localities, as well as English expressions related to the grandchildren's activities. These are few and do not violate the integrity of our language. It is Bulgarian, with no prospect of being replaced or forgotten, it simply "turned" in the direction of the foreign one and after seconds "returned" to its lane again. Undoubtedly, this wedging of English vocabulary *deviates* the vector of ideal monolingualism of the respondents of group C, just as the life of the elderly in the homeland is *diverted* in their late years in the direction of delayed emigration. Abroad, where it is too late to adapt, they are like broken branches from a tree, or cut down and planted elsewhere. A tree without a root... I call this process **DEVIATION**.

Interferences in the speech of bilinguals are also mainly from the foreign language. For them, the Bulgarian language is native (first in terms of proficiency, but already second in terms of usage). They speak English to the same extent, they try to speak only in English at work, at home with their children and with their parents only in Bulgarian, and this fills one language (English rarely, due to concentration in a work environment; or Bulgarian often, due to relaxation, fatigue and rest at home, or carelessness in view of the children's refusal to answer in Bulgarian) with elements of the other. For most of the respondents from group B, it happens that the Bulgarian language gradually becomes unnecessary both for the career and for the home, because they have not managed to keep it and oblige their children to use it as a home language. They have not forgotten Bulgarian, but they no longer have anyone to speak it with. In a house where no one speaks Bulgarian, the language, called in our sociolinguistics "passive" (Pachev 2006), will soon be almost completely forgotten, dead, and this house will no longer be in the "other Bulgaria", but in a foreign homeland. I call the abandoned communication of the native language **DEBULGARIZATION**.

In the speech of the Bulgarians from Sydney, there are *native language interferences* and they are the most numerous, but they also have a direction from English to Bulgarian, because they are in the speech of the informants whose native language is not Bulgarian. These are the multiple interferences of the ABC group A respondents whose first language is English. No matter how much they know Bulgarian and whether they recognize it as a second native language, they do not stop helping each other with their first native (English) language and

sprinkle every Bulgarian phrase with numerous interferences at all levels. These are the children, our children, who will not teach Bulgarian to their children. No matter what the parents wrote on the census lists, Australian Bulgarians are part of another nation. Not ours, though they were born of us...

I call the complete replacement of the Bulgarian language with a foreign one **ORIGIN DISSOCIATION**.

Interferences are described in detail in the dissertation and are classified according to the type to which they belong. Lexical ones are difficult to distinguish from loanwords in the Bulgarian language from English and are found mainly in the speech of bilinguals. Naturally, they are also perceived by children<sup>8</sup> and are related not so much to interference as to acculturation. In order to make a distinction and explore theoretically what is what, a distinction analogous to the distinction between language and speech, Malinowski proposes the notion of a "zero point in the contact of cultures" (Malinowski 1945). It turns out that what for the historian of the language is the result of the interference of the other language, for the native speaker of both languages this may not be so... Group B informants did not accept (they were even offended) when I said that there are interferences in their language. When confronted with a recording of their own speech, interspersed with English words, my new friends "seize" on terms from various fields, such as education systems, and explain that they have no way of knowing what they are called *now* in Bulgaria.

Of the probes presented in the dissertation, the (transcribed) phonetic interferences are most clearly visible. The "Australian" accent is unmistakably recognized by other English speakers and its presence in children's Bulgarian language is a fact. It manifests itself mainly in the *intonation*, impressively sing-song and melodic, which also stretches the Bulgarian words, and they resemble onomatopoeic mutations in slow-motion animation. This is how the vowels are "dragged". Many of the consonants are replaced by their English correlates, or other English sounds similar to the correlates, and sometimes the Bulgarian ones are also pronounced. This confuses the researcher because the interferences are present in some places and not in others. Therefore, I do not think that the phonetic interferences in the language of the representatives of group A have the classic form that they have in other different, foreign languages, where there is an identification of the phonemes of the first language when learning another. Here the substitutions are irregular and more importantly – *unequal, unstable,*

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<sup>8</sup> Thus, respondents from group A, even if they know the word 'krenvirshi', will never use it, because at home both mom and dad call 'krenvirshi' 'sausages', even though they speak Bulgarian.



*because both languages of the ABC students are native.* The one, the first, the one used every day, is mastered at a high level and spoken fluently. The other, the second – learned in childhood, and then forgotten in school; or in Sunday school, and then during the week abandoned; or at home from mom and dad, but as the syntax becomes more complicated, it becomes annoying - it is controlled at a low or very low level, with a poor vocabulary, with unfamiliar more complex word order constructions. These cause classical interference on the grammatical and syntactic level - they are replaced by words and expressions from the first language in order to make the speech act seamless, but on the phonetic level this is not the case. The phonetic level is the baby level, children who speak Bulgarian at home can pronounce our hard [r], clear [t], and [ə], and [u] – all sounds. But they do not know when and where, because their Bulgarian language is almost or entirely passive. Therefore, in places, very often, they use English phonemes - the "easier" ones, which they are more used to, and in other places, in the same position, they do not use the same ones. If these incessant fluctuations were native language interferences, wherever there is [t], for example, they would replace [t] or [th], not alternate them indiscriminately. Unlike foreigners, the children of Bulgarian immigrants can correct themselves at any moment because the *signs of the native language relate to the signs of the foreign language in one way, and to the signs of the other native in another way.* I call this other way "recalling" because both phonetic systems are available in the associative memory of Bulgarian Australians. That is why I so insistently call the Bulgarian language of ABC children, no matter how few words they know in it, *second-native.*

Grammatical interferences: despite the morphological deformations in the language of the Bulgarian immigrants, despite the danger of it passing completely into English, the "citadel", as Doza (cited in Weinreich, 1979) calls morphology, does not easily give up. The ethnic substratum leaves its traces even after the native language has dropped out of circulation. In the probes presented in this study, the deformations are clearly visible, as well as the cases of activity in borrowing from English into the Bulgarian language. The English language equivalent is normally preferred in terms of content. In terms of expression, however, it falls within the morphological structure of the native Bulgarian, with which the speaker shows that he uses, that he has not forgotten his language. This leads to the deformations. Manifestations of speech always precede manifestations of language. English root morphemes are used with new denotative functions modeled on Bulgarian morphemes, which is called "resistance to direct transfer" (Weinreich 1979: 83). It is due not to the structure of our recipient language, but to the difference between it and the structure of the English source

language. Naturally, in the field of grammar (morphology) this choice occurs far more often than in the field of phonetics. Sometimes it leads to semantic expansion or calques. English root morphemes present in verbs also remain in impersonal verb forms, in participles formed by said verbs, and in nouns. The most serious and frequent morphological deformations in the language of the children of immigrants in Sydney are in the use of pronouns, specifically personal ones. It is known that in modern spoken English a pronoun can be in the indirect case even when it is not an object. It is usually used as part of predicate function, e.g. *It is they*, or a complement, but not a subject. The most examples of deformed sentences from the use of accusative Bulgarian forms instead of nominatives are:

(1) – Who wants to come?

- *Me, me!* (a group answer of second grade students at the school to a question related to visiting the other class).

(2) – Who is your best friend?

- *You [accusative]*.

- And at school?

- Bianca.

- Who is your better friend – *me [accusative]* or Bianca?

- *You [accusative]* (a conversation between two 13 year old girls).

(3) – I am coming straight away to see what you have done!

- *It wasn't me, it wasn't me [accusative]!* (a boy, 11).

- We will see if it wasn't *you [accusative]*. (the father's answer marked by inertia).

Parents don't seem to be particularly annoyed by this use and rarely correct it. The same goes for teachers:

(4) The teacher: - Do you know what a sage is? - Yes, me (answer of a 7-year-old boy chosen for the role of a wise man in a play).

- Do you know what a mother-in-law is?

- Not me.

The teacher: - Of course not you. We chose a girl.

Cross-linguistic identifications also occur in the area of word order. Many syntactic interferences were registered in the probes. They occur mainly in children when they combine the various linguistic elements and subordinate grammatical and semantic to logical concepts in order to make an argument-predicate connection. "Which beach are we going to?" is not the only question in which the preposition is moved to the end of the sentence, a construction unthinkable in the Bulgarian language. For many of these "mistakes" it can certainly be said

that they have established themselves as a norm in most families, which implies the mandatory use of exactly such constructions. Thus, the meaning expressing the grammatical categories loses its categoriality. Interferences of all kinds and types intertwine and overlap, and all together exist in combination. The process is accompanied by various mechanisms for adapting anglicisms, analogous to the mechanisms of changing the Bulgarian picture of the world with an Australian one. Gradually, immigrants develop a subconscious emotional attachment to the English language, through which they consolidate the foundations of their semiotic behavior. The mentioned total situations are a basis for evaluating the language, which is subsequently perceived as richer, more refined, and more expressive than the native Bulgarian. And the native Bulgarian becomes unpreferred, unusable, deformed by the many impurities, which is why it is called mixed, intermediate, or passive. Regarding the Bulgarian immigrants in Sydney, I call it "transitional".

## **5.2. The transitional language of Bulgarian immigrants in Sydney**

"In its dynamic development, sociolinguistics borrows many concepts from descriptive linguistics and classical sociology and creates new concepts that shape its terminological apparatus over the years. The original positing of the discipline, that social development is an essential factor and underlies change at all linguistic levels, unfolds and fills the spaces defined territorially and socially; it crosses, erases and moves borders, parallel to the political changes in the world; it develops with the pace of the changing new time and permanently fixes the dynamics of changes in social communication in the 21st century" (Issa 2021: 1). We live in a time where language models of artificial intelligence are already moving into the mode of mass accessibility; technologies cease to be called "new" and global communication is a fact. For better or worse, language change or replacement is something normal.

In the process of the study of group ABC, it became clear that the language of the three generations (this is clearly visible in the probes) is different - English (for group A), mixed (for group B) and Bulgarian (for group C). This made it particularly difficult to choose a single term to designate the language of the Bulgarian immigrants in Sydney. After quite a bit of hesitation, I definitely chose the term "transitional language".

"The term 'transitional language' for modern Bulgarian immigrants corresponds to the term "transition" that we use for the period after the fall of the socialist regime in our country. Because by "modern immigrants" I mean those who left the country after 1989, at the time of the transition, characterized by multifaceted political, economic and spiritual changes, since it

was the transition that unleashed emigration and it acquired the form it has now, and the specific language used has (at least in Sydney) truly 'transitional' characteristics” (Issa 2021: 9-10).

In Sydney I saw the process of *transition* from our national being and consciousness to a supranational and truly global one. Bilinguals (first-generation immigrants), unlike immigrants in Europe, mixed with other globalizing Europeans who try to copy American models and end up on the other side of the globe. Globalization as a process has been completed there. They skip that period of adaptation to the second language environment where Europeans and we communicate in English while learning French, Italian, Spanish, Swedish, because they know English beforehand. It is the official language, in Australia no one makes them learn one, two or three more to prove themselves. In the environment of 200 languages and cultures, Bulgarians gain self-confidence, which they do not have in Europe, because the high-ranking people there are local, and in all Australia are immigrants.

The transitional language is a challenge for Bulgarian linguistics, a large-scale test in which to capture the algorithm of the process and to take into account the degree of deformation and forgetting of the Bulgarian immigrant language in the various parts of the world where Bulgarians live. Society expects a *counter-algorithm* for delaying the forgetting of the native language, and preserving its life as long as possible, always. Because while it is alive, language, although transitory, guarantees stepping into the future.

### **5.3. Deformation of Bulgarian speech. Language Forgetting Algorithm**

The situations presented in the recordings from the probes and the remaining dialogues are characterized by their multifacetedness from a cultural, semiotic, communicational, functional, and physical aspect. They provide opportunities for meaningful and physical changes in thinking and speech. From all the mentioned interferences, *chain reflections* can be observed on the remaining elements of the overall grammatical structure of the Bulgarian language, deformed under the influence of English.

From the words and expressions used in the conversations and reflected in all the probes, it can be seen that there are deformations in the language of the Bulgarian immigrants in Sydney. In terms of Weinreich's classical language contacts, the recipient language is stronger and more systematically supported because of the concentration of the population (along borders or remaining inside the country as a minority) *in one place*. Today we need more up-to-date research relevant to the requirements of our time. Bulgarian immigrants in Sydney are so *scattered* that the term 'contact' is hardly correct, Bulgarian has minimal chances to survive due to the immersion of the immigrants in the other culture.

Deformations, within this, as well as any similar study, can be accurately counted. The idea is *to find the speed of the released potential energy of the deformation* and to answer the question: to what extent its speed will erase the elements of Bulgarian speech realization and replace them with English ones. If an algorithm is compiled for classifying the deformations in the language of the Bulgarian immigrants throughout the world, one can also look for an ***opposing algorithm*** - to continue its life. The goal is to outline from the beginning the parameters (sizes, dimensions, degrees) along which the Bulgarian language functions. Since parametric systems are based on algorithmic principles, algorithmic thinking and algorithms are at the heart of parametric design. Such a design, a product included in the programs for studying the Bulgarian language in our schools abroad, would help its faster and better learning.

On the territory of Sydney (as probably nowhere else in the world) there is no algorithm that can prevent the processes of movement of Bulgarian-language usages towards decay and fading, nor prevent cultural deliberation in the distant future. Assimilation is a natural phenomenon, and our fusion is inevitable. It happens gradually and irreversibly, its speed is directly proportional to the time that separates the immigrants from our country, and inversely proportional to the proximity of Bulgaria to the other country. The process is rhythmic, like a flawlessly working clock mechanism that ticks almost silently and imperceptibly. At first glance, its rhythm is unbreakable, but only at first glance. Because an algorithm is possible to find a solution to a significant part of the problem. This algorithm leads to ***a delay in forgetting*** the native language in the foreign language environment. Sociolinguistics can program such an algorithm of its own, which will track the step-by-step displacement of Bulgarian components by their foreign-language counterparts, identify the various forms and the places in the Bulgarian phrase where individual fragments of the native language lose stability, and manage (and as far as possible suppresses) the appearing interferences. Based on the algorithm of deformations established through included observation, it is possible to predict what possibly (and after how long) awaits us in the future.

The forgetting of our language by Bulgarian immigrants around the world is cyclical, the movement is zigzag, because with the next (with each next) Bulgarian emigrants, renewal comes again. The language of the newly arrived (initially not deformed) is encapsulated in home communication, it gradually begins to be influenced by the language of the host country, used by every member of the family outside the family, regardless of how well he knows it. The young generation gets used to using the new language the fastest, it becomes high and representative, Bulgarian remains in a state of a low language in the diglossia that has

occurred, and the cycle repeats itself again. The intervention of Bulgarian linguistics in this process (at the national level) is mandatory. The language policy of Bulgaria (at the institutional level), oriented towards the legal protection of our language abroad (in fact, for now only in Europe), is not sufficient. In order to achieve *the main goal, the continuation of the life of our language abroad*, preventing its forgetting, it is necessary to solve a sociolinguistic "smaller", but no less important task, as in mathematics, to discover the algorithm itself, which in mathematical discourse is called recursive. Therefore, our linguistics, after proceeding to the calculation of parameters, variables and ratios, after inventing (or borrowing from the exact sciences) equations that express a set of qualities as explicit functions of a number of independent variables for the corresponding parameters, must very quickly orientate itself towards parametric and algorithmic *modeling of countermeasures* which, through generalized approaches for concretely solved cases, to stop, interrupt or slow down the processes of dissociation of the Bulgarian immigrants.

#### **5.4. Algorithm of delaying the forgetting of the Bulgarian language**

Why should we look for an algorithm for actions that slow down forgetting, since the process will not change its direction, the Bulgarian language will not become official anywhere abroad and its life will continue within two, three, at most four generations? Because the death of the language in the family does not mean the total end of the Bulgarian immigrant language in general, or in the relevant region, but only applies to the specific family. Other families are constantly arriving from Bulgaria. "Their Bulgarian language is preserved at first, then its use weakens, then disappears, but more and more families come. The goal of Bulgarian linguistics should be *to preserve our language as long as possible*, for more than two or three generations" (Issa 2021: 13). In order to make possible a kind of *beat-similar intercession* between the older immigrants, who in the rhythm of the "tango dance" - two steps forward towards English (the first sharp and sudden, necessary and desired with the start of the new job; the second slipping reluctantly into the same forward direction in communication with the children) - to take a confident step back in the native milonga<sup>9</sup>, where the new arrivals reach them and "step in". And all these new arrivals, when they accidentally or deliberately end up in the same milonga - organized or deliberate associations with compatriots - to pour into their not yet forgotten, but impoverished and outdated Bulgarian language, the juices of

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<sup>9</sup> The clubs and gatherings where tango is danced are called milonga.

fresh innovations and new forms that arose in Bulgaria after the departure of the first ones but constituting an important part of the sociolect of the latter.

The first way to slow language loss has to do with self-identification. It depends on the attitudes of the immigrants, on the *family*. *Self-identification constructs identity*. Of course, identity will not slow down the forgetting of our language, as the recordings demonstrate. It is not a guarantee of *grammatical competence*<sup>10</sup>, but it implies *strategic competence*. It refers to the verbal and non-verbal strategies that communicators use to initiate, maintain, correct, with which to preserve the Bulgarian language within the limits of their capabilities and in their families. The best possible scenario is the presence of *sociolinguistic competence*, as it covers the sociocultural code of the language with an understanding of the social context of communication, the relations between Bulgarians and Bulgarians, the shared information with an emphasis on the communicative goal of the communicators, the ability to apply according to the sociocultural code in the language, a correct speech strategy with appropriate vocabulary and in the necessary register, a style appropriate to the situation.

Apart from the family, the other place where the delay in forgetting the language can take place is the *school*. Children have a chance to speak Bulgarian to a higher degree and for a longer period of time if they attend a Bulgarian school. Here the most important goal is the acquisition of *discursive competence*, with interpretation of the message and personal reaction in the overall discourse. Such a combination of grammatical forms and meanings which would lead to the realization of a coherently connected oral or written text in Bulgarian language, cohesive in form and coherent in meaning, was not achieved at the Bulgarian Sunday School in Sydney, as can be seen from the probes with recordings of the lessons, but the goal cannot be any other. Even if it is mastered during the process of education, this competence does not remain in the mind forever. The students graduate from the foreign school and find realization in the life of the foreign country at a time when humanity is entering a new era, characterized by dynamic changes in the way knowledge is integrated into the global cultural environment. The time in the Bulgarian school remains only a memory and the Bulgarian language gradually falls behind in use. "And this time expires, it is not infinite, unlike normal astronomical time, but it is cyclical: in the place of the successful graduating class in the Bulgarian school comes a new graduating class; they finish and leave; then (at another time) comes a new one" (Issa

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<sup>10</sup> The concept of "grammatical competence" combines the familiar Chomskyan "linguistic competence" and the "formally possible" of Del Hymes and includes the linguistic code: grammatical rules, vocabulary, syntax, pronunciation, correct notation.

2021: 14). With a good organization, "overlapping" at class meetings can change both the rhythm and the look of the dance. In construction-architecture terminology, we call this model the "subtact push method". "Pushing" is not appropriate in tango, which is a dance for two. Therefore, instead of the two-member dance of married couples, current and former graduates from the Bulgarian school join hands here. They dance a collective dance. It is called a 'horo'. And as we know very well, the horo, the "whirling horo", twists and turns in the process of pushing. And only a big, strong, and robust "torsion stiffness"<sup>11</sup> can hold our phrase Bulgarian, wrapped not around the stem of the Australian English language, but around the three pillars of Bulgarian language preservation - family, school, community. A community possessing the "seventh function" of the Bulgarian language. A community of Bulgarians.

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<sup>11</sup> The term "torsional stiffness" is used in construction to extend the life of buildings.



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