

Karachay-Balkar, Karachay and Balkar Complex: Ethnicity, Language and Authority

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Abstract: The aim of this article is to discuss suitability and functionality of the language names Karachay-Balkar, Karachay and Balkar as well as the historical background and ethnic issues. The ethnic languages Karachay and Balkar are characterised to show their converging and diverging features. Attention is paid to the problem of Karachay and Balkar variants of Karachay-Balkar as a language established by the Soviet language policy. Some questions of administrative division of the native territories of Karachays and Balkars, their relations with other nationalities in their republics are also examined. The paper also shows a few cases how the policymakers use linguistic and ethnic matters to achieve their goals.

Keywords: Karachay-Balkar, Karachay, Balkar, ethnicity, languages, dialects, politics

Özet: Bu makalenin amacı Karaçay-Balkar, Karaçay ve Balkar dil adlarının uygunluğunu ve işlevselliğini ve ayrıca tarihsel geçmişini ve etnik meseleleri tartışmaktır. Karaçay ve Balkar etnik dilleri, yakınsak ve ayrışan özelliklerini göstermek için nitelendirilmiştir. Sovyet dil siyaseti tarafından oluşturulan bir dil olarak Karaçayca-Balkarcanın Karaçay ve Balkar varyantları sorununa dikkat çekilmiştir. Karaçay ve Balkarların ana topraklarının idari bölünmesine ilişkin bazı sorunlar, cumhuriyetlerindeki diğer milletlerle ilişkileri de incelenmiştir. Makale ayrıca, siyaset yapıcılarının hedeflerine ulaşmak için dilsel ve etnik meseleleri nasıl kullandıklarına dair birkaç örnek

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Anahtar sözcükler: Karaçayca-Balkarca, Karaçayca, Balkarca, etnik köken, diller, lehçeler, siyaset

Introductory notes

There are three concepts on the crossroads of history, linguistics, ethnicity and literacy, Karachay-Balkar, Karachay and Balkar, which are often misunderstood and cause a headache for those who try to define them in an inambiguous way.

Karachay-Balkar is the name of the standardized written variety approved as a norm for Karachays and Balkars in the 1920s. Karachay is defined as the name of the ethnic language of Karachays and Balkar as the ethnic name of Balkars. Karachay-Balkar is a product of the Soviet language policy, but ardently supported by Karachay activists in Turkey who opt for the language unity. Lumping two very close languages in one is unique in the Turkic world and is not common worldwide. Outside the Soviet Union, there was one similar case in Yugoslavia where Serbo-Croatian functioned as a unique language of the state. Even in Czechoslovakia, Czech was not united with Slovak. Naturally, Karachay and Balkar share more common traits to be united than Serbian and Croatian. Firstly, Serbs were Orthodox, Croats were Catholics and Bosnians were Muslims. Secondly, Serbs were rather Russia-oriented, while Croats preferred the West European culture with Italy, Austria and Germany. Among the Bosnians, there was always pronounced or unspoken sympathy for Turkey. As a result, Serbo-Croatian did not outlast the fall of Yugoslavia even though Serbian, Croatian and Slavic dialects spoken in Bosnia are very close to each other.

The aim of this article is to show some knotty aspects of Karachay-Balkar complex and answer such questions as: (1) what is the ethnic, linguistic and political background of Karachay-Balkar, (2) does Karachay-

Balkar really function as such in all spheres of life, (3) what are the functionality spheres of Karachay and Balkar, and (4) what are the prospects for survival of Karachay-Balkar. Karachay-Balkar is not a ghost language, it exists, at least as a product of language policy officially approved, has its users and has a standard, although with some bias towards ethnic languages. At the same time, there are no native Karachay-Balkars speakers, for anybody who is native speaker, speaks either Karachay or Balkar. There may be exceptions in the terms of bilingualism or ‘bidialectism’ in mixed families, but this question has not been yet examined.

1. Ethnic perspective

With relation to ethnicity, Karachay-Balkar may only be used as an interethnic name for two closely related Turkic peoples, Karachays and Balkars. This term is mostly used by the national-minded Karachays and Balkars, especially the Karachay minority in Turkey. They argue that Karachays and Balkars are one people and nationality who share the history and language. For example, Kaňşay (1993: 10) says that a subdivision of Karachays (Karaçaylı) who are now called Balkars (Malkarlı) were once resettled by Russians and received this name from a place name.¹ This is not true of the Balkars who inhabited their present territory before its annexation to Russia. As is known, the voluntary accession of the Balkars to Russia took place in 1827 and Klaproth who travelled to their territories in 1807 and 1808 has noted that Malkars or Balkars lived on the river Cherek (Tscherek) (Klaproth 1812: 505).² According to Klaproth, the number of Balkars living on the Cherek was more than 1,200 families, but the region of Psigon Su, Argudan, Bezengi and Kholam (Chulam) also belonged to Balkars, although the latter was inhabited by Svan families (Klaproth 1812: 531–535). In contrast, the land on the Chegem and Cherige

¹ It must be added that the same may be said about Karachays, though *Qaraçay* should rather be a geographic term, not name, for no river like this is known in the homeland of Karachays, and the name of the pass *Qaraçay Awuŝ* in the Kuban basin as well as the settlement *Qizil Qaraçay* must be later, see below.

² More generally, he calls them Tatars and notes that they live on the following rivers: Kuban, Bakhsan, Chegem, Nalchik, Cherek and Argudan (Klaproth 1812: 503).

(Tscherigä) was said to belong to Kabardians. Among ten Balkar villages listed by Klaproth, there was Ulu Malkar which was the main village and other villages most of which bore non-Turkic names, e.g. Iskanta or Mochaula (Klaproth 1812: 535). Sometimes Klaproth (1812: 512) called the present-day Karachays and Balkars after the names of rivers and valleys which they inhabited, e.g. Balkar and Chegem. However, he also stressed similarities between the people of various areas, e.g. maintaining that the population of the Bakhsan and the Karachay was the same (Klaproth 1812: 531).³

A similar geographic division of Balkars into Holamlı, Biziñılı, Çegemli, Baḡsanlı and Malqarlı is found in Filonenko (1940: 2).⁴ However, he adds that these denominations have not survived among this people and Holamlı, Baḡsanlı and Biziñılı call themselves Tawlu⁵ ‘mountaineer(s)’ or Malqar, from an eponymous ancestor of unknown origin who once settled in the gorge of the Cherek river. Filonenko links the ethnic name *Malqar*, in his view transformed into the form *Balkar* by Russians,⁶ to the name of the river Malka on which they lived in the 9th–10th century. He explains dialect differentiation of the Malkar language with migration and diverging process in various habitats.

Another Karachay-Balkar activist and linguist in Turkey, Tavkul (2000: 1) argues that Balkars (Malkarlı) emerged in the 16th century. In his view, the Karachay-Balkar people split into several groups such as, e.g., Karachays (Karaçaylı), Orusbiy (Orusbiyli), Chegem (Çegemli), Kholam (Holamlı), Bezengi (Bızıngılı) and Balkar (Malkarlı) due to migrations at the end of the 17th century (Tavkul 2000: 3). It is usually said that the 1861 land demarcation of the North Caucasus into Kuban and Terek districts by

³ There were also earlier reports on the Karachays and Balkars, but the first detailed one belongs to Klaproth (Adiloğlu 2005: 65).

⁴ Note the use of such interesting forms as *Biziñiçi* ‘Bezengian’ and *Baḡsançı* ‘Bakhsanian’.

⁵ Mistakenly *Tawlulu*; corrected basing on Filonenko (1974: 29).

⁶ In his later study, Filonenko (1974: 29) argued that this transformation was attributed to Kabardians; the same opinion was expressed in Kokov and Şaxmurzaev (1970: 38).

Russian rulers separated Karachays from Balkars (Adiloğlu 2016: 25). Karachays have found themselves in the former and Balkars in the latter. However, it is not entirely clear if all Balkars of the Terek province and later administration units which emerged from it were really Balkars or also included Karachays. After the Bolshevik revolution these districts were transformed into various formations, autonomous regions and republics, and finally, the Karachay-Cherkess Republic and the Kabard-Balkar Republic were established within the Russian Federation in 1992.

As is the case of many old ethnic names, the origins of the names *Qaraçay* and *Balqar* ~ *Malqar* are unknown. As Pritsak (1959: 340) claimed, the etymology of *Qaraçay* is unclear and its explanation as *qara* ‘black’ and *çay* ‘spring’ is nothing more than a popular etymology. Golden (1992: 391) stressed that all self-designations used by this people, i.e. Karachays and Balkars, aside from *Tawlı* ‘mountaineer’ are unclear. Although the etymology of *Balqar* ~ *Malqar* is obscure, it seems to be easier to explain than that of *Qaraçay*. From several etymons proposed so far, probably one of two presented by Filonenko (1974), earlier also admitted by Kokov and Şaxmurzaev (1970), Xabičev (1971: 128) and others, can be considered. Before going into detail, it is needed to determine whether *Balqar* or *Malqar* should be etymologized. In my opinion, we should opt for *Malqar*, for it is used by both Balkars and Karachays, although the change *b-* ~ *m-* in words especially with a nasal consonant, liquids or approximants is common. Any attempt to relate this form to the ethnic name of Caucasian Bulgars must be rejected for the phonetic reasons. Firstly, *u* in the first syllable cannot develop into *a* in common Turkic. Secondly, the consonant *ɣ* is unlikely to be strengthened into *q*, a reversion process of lenition would be more likely. Another important point to establish is that *Malqar* can be etymologized on the grounds of neither Karachay-Balkar nor any other Turkic language. Therefore, the only possibility is to take this word as an exonym. Filonenko’s (1974: 29–30) first etymology linked *Malqar* with the name of the river Malka. If this is correct, we cannot be discouraged by the fact that the Balkar name of this river is *Balıq* (*suw*)

(Xabičev 1971: 128). By the way, the name *Baliq* is the Balkar phonetic adaptation of an old river name *Malka* or *Malqa*, correlated with the Kabardian form *Balk'* (Kokov and Šaxmurzaev 1970: 38), from the time when Balkars lived on it. Xabičev's interpretation of the final *-ar* from the Turkic *er* 'man' is for the phonetic reasons unacceptable. Filonenko's (1974: 30) idea of explaining it from the Kabardian definitive suffix *-ar* is more reasonable, but note that the Kabardian definitive suffix has the form *-r* (Šagirov 1967: 168), not *-ar*.

The question whether the Balkar form, i.e. *Malqar*, or the Kabardian one, i.e. *Balk'ar*, is older and primordial should be answered, but it must be verified by the data. Kokov and Šaxmurzaev (1970: 38) argue that the Balkar form is the original and Kabardian is its adaptation. This may be correct if we take Balkars as the people who inhabited this territory before Kabardians which is supported by historical and archaeological facts. Kokov and Šaxmurzaev (1970: 38) quote an interesting fact that Svans call the Kabarda land *Malkar* and Kabardians *Malkarar*.

The name *Ullu Malqar* is directly unrelated to the name of the river *Malka* as it is located on the river Cherek far away from the Malka. Therefore, notwithstanding the etymology of *Malqar*, the name *Ullu Malqar* must be an ethnooikonym, i.e. a habitation place name emerged from an ethnonym.

As far as river names are concerned, it is interesting to note that Xabičev (1971: 128) observed that the Balkars used the name of the *Čerek* river as the generic term for the 'river' and drew the parallel to the Karachay name of the *Qoban* river which has become the Karachay generic term for the 'river', e.g. *Teberdi qoban* 'the river Teberda' (TS 406).

Naturally there are not only various opinions about the origin of the language names, but also about the origin of Karachays and Balkars as well as their original language or languages. According to Filonenko (1940: 2), Balkars once inhabited the steppes and were driven to the south to less fertile canyons and valleys in the mountains by more powerful peoples, i.e.

Kabardians. In search of a new homeland, they drove away Ossetians (Thordarson 2011: 765). Xapaev (1997: 10) is of the opinion that Kipchaks sought refuge from the invading Mongols in the mountains together with Alans (Ossetians) in the 13th century and this was the beginning of the formation of Karachays and Balkars. In his later study, Filonenko (1974: 45) also concludes that in the pre-Mongol period Ossetic was spoken in the whole territory of Balkaria. As is seen on map 8 in Xapaev 1997, in the 1920s the Ossetians inhabited only a few small enclaves, on the river Terek in the easternmost part of Kabard-Balkar Republic and north to the town Nartkol with no contact with Balkars as well as around the town Karachay (Rus. Karačajsk), and near the river Kuban in Karachay-Balkar Republic, having Karachays as their neighbours in the region of Karachay only.

Because of many loanwords and a few phonetic features untypical of Turkic, some researchers claimed that Balkars were originally of non-Turkic origin and acquired a Turkic language. In my opinion, we do not have good tools to verify these claims, for the critique, as well as the critique of the Bulgar origin, see Appaev (1960: 6–8). According to Akbaev (1963: 9–10), Karachays and Balkars inhabited the Caucasus since the 9th–10th century. Abaev (1960: 131) argues that this must have not been earlier than the 10th century, because it was the time when Alans embraced Christianity from whom Karachays and Balkars were also Christianized. The mountain valleys and gorges they inhabit open from the northern lowlands inhabited by Circassians since the 14th–15th centuries. Therefore, Akbaev assumes, Karachays and Balkars must have moved from the lowlands before the arrival of Circassians and Abaev shares the same opinion. In his view, this happened in the 13rd century when Karachays and Balkars were escaping from the invading Mongols. There are many place names in Karachay and Balkar regions revealing Ossetic names or Ossetic elements which evidences an earlier habitation of Ossetians/Alans there, e.g. Old Ossetic *dan* ‘river’, *kam* ‘gorge, canyon’ and *dor* ‘stone’ (Abaev 1960: 128–129).

Some western researchers also pronounce the opinion of mixed origin of Karachays and Balkars. Pritsak (1959: 341) is of the opinion that acquiring

a Kipchak language by Karachays and Balkars who inhabited their historical lands earlier was at the end of the 11th century. Golden (1992: 391) says that the ethnic origin of Karachays and Balkars is probably mixed, but the final formative component is the Kipchak influx in the 13th-14th century post-Chinggisid period.

What is clear is the concept of Balkars in the narrow sense. In this sense Balkars are representatives of the Karachay-Balkar complex who lived on the Cherek river until 1944 when they were deported to Central Asia and allowed to return in 1957, though at first not to their original habitation places. The same is true of the language which Pritsak (1959: 342) calls *Čerek-Balkarisch*. In the broad sense, Balkars are the representatives of the Turkic population of the Kabard-Balkar Republic or the non-Karachay members of the Karachay-Balkar complex. In Čečenov and Axmetova's view (1997: 272), Karachays and Balkars are two kindred ethnic groups of one nation.

The Balkars were in close contact with Kabardians while outside their home villages, especially on the way to the capital city Nalchik. Historically, contact with Ossetians was very important. Note that Karachays and Balkars are called *Alan* by Megrelians and Noghays and they also used this denomination to themselves (Pritsak 1959: 341, Abaev 1960: 131, Xabičev 1971: 126), which is the old name the Iranians in the Caucasus to which the ancestors of Ossetians belonged, while Ossetians and Ossetia is called by Balkars *Tegey* (Xabičev 1971: 129, Tavkul 2000: 389). Interestingly, Ossetians call Karachays and Balkars *Assi* ~ *Assy*, which is very close to an old form of the name of Ossetians (Pritsak 1959: 341, Golden 1992: 391). According to Abaev (1960: 132–134), Ossetic loanwords in Karachay and Balkar are in fact a substrate that emerged between the 10th and the 14th century. As he argues, the substrate is not a linguistic phenomenon only, it encompasses all aspects of culture.

No survey has been conducted to answer the question how many Turkic residents of the Kabard-Balkar Republic consider themselves Balkars and how many just Chegem, Kholam, Bakhsan and Bezengi. In other words, the

identification with the local homeland and the Balkar part of the republic should be examined. This problem does not exist in the Karachay-Cherkess Republic where all members of the Karachay-Balkar complex are Karachay. A sociological survey would also be desirable to learn how many Karachays and Balkars opt for the Karachay-Balkar interethnic identification in the practice of everyday life in their actual administrative units.

What is clear is that Balkars in their republic are contrasted with Kabardians who form the majority of the republic (502,615 or 57% in 2021), while the number of Balkars amounted to 120,898 or 14%, being the third nation after Russians (and Russian-speaking other nations and ethnic groups) whose number was 174,768 or 20% in 2012. The same is true of Karachays who in their republic are contrasted with Circassians (Cherkess) and who are the minority but concentrated on the capital city Cherkessk. The number of Karachays in their republic was 205,578 or 44% out of 469,865 in 2021, while Circassians were the next nationality (58,825 or 13%).

According to map 8 of the ethnic composition of the two republics in the 1920s (in Xapaev 1997), Karachays inhabited the whole southern-central part of their republic except for the valley of the river Ullu İnğik (Rus. Bol'šoj Zelenčuk) inhabited by Russians, and a few enclaves in the north. As for Balkars, they inhabited the whole southern part of their republic from the western border, including the upper stream of the river Malka to its bent to the east and the upper streams of all rivers, Bakhсан, Chegem, Cherek etc., up to the eastern border of the republic.

The future will show how the ethnic integration or disintegration can develop.

At the end of this section, a short note on the religion should be made. There are many hints to a relatively late spreading of Islam among Karachays and Balkars, i.e. the 18th century. In their epic tradition a rich pre-Islamic pantheon has survived. The supreme God was *Teyri*, a variant

of Old Turkic *Tāŋri*, also *Ullu Teyri* ‘Great God’, *Han Teyri* ‘King God’ and *Kök Teyrisi* ‘God of the Heaven’ (Džurtubaev 2011: 167). In a Balkar epic, Old Turkic Goddess, *Umay* appears (Džurtubaev 2011: 93). Archaeological evidence also demonstrates that the 17th-century Karachay burial was pre-Islamic, even called heathen (Aleksieva 1960: 98). There are historical documents and linguistic evidence attesting that Karachays and Balkars were Christianized (Golden 1992: 391, Džurtubaev 2011: 179), probably as early as the 10th century (Abaev 1960: 131).

2. Linguistic perspective

In the studies on Karachay and Balkar before the creation of the term Karachay-Balkar by the Soviet language policy these two languages have never been treated as one, e.g. Aqbaylanı (1334/1916).

The first competent study on Karachay is due to Pröhle who visited Karachays in 1908. He published a glossary (Pröhle 1909a: 83–150) and a grammatical sketch with texts (Pröhle 1909b: 215–304). According to Pröhle (1909a: 83, 1909b: 215), the stops *k* ‘*q*’ *t*’ and the affricate *č*’ were strongly aspirated, basically in the initial. In his glossary, in addition to Turkic words, he included Russian, Kabardian, and naturally Arabic and Persian loanwords with the foreign consonants *c* [IPA *ts*], *f*, *h* and *χ*. This early and first presentation of Karachay is invaluable, but Pröhle did not go into extralinguistic questions. He took Karachay as an independent language that preserved its Turkic character in a pure form.

Balkar was first studied in 1910 by another Hungarian scholar, Julius (Gyula) Németh. He has observed that this language slightly differed from Karachay (Németh 1911: 91). However, in his Kumuk and Balkar glossary there are few Balkar words. In addition, they are common with Karachay, e.g. *kuwančsüz* ‘unhappy’ and *tauruχ* ‘story, tale’ (Németh 1911: 134, 148). However, Németh was also one of the first researchers to note the characteristic Balkar consonants *ğ*’ *ts* *č*. From his notes it is clear that he could not study Balkar dialects in depth, for he only said that Balkar has a palatalized *ğ*’ in place of Karachay *ğ*, but there are also some areas where

Balkar has *c ʒ* [IPA ʈ dʒ] instead of Krč. *č ž* [IPA ʧ ʤ] (Németh 1911: 91). As is seen, he could not study the Cherek valley dialect profoundly where the Karachay consonants *č ğ* have the *ʈ z* equivalents.

Therefore, it is Pröhle who must be considered the first to publish a Balkar glossary, grammatical sketch, texts and comments. Pröhle (1915: 171) says that the Bakhsan and Chegem dialect may be regarded as transitional between Karachay and Balkar. In his view the Karachay aspirated consonants are non-aspirated in Balkar. He was first to notice that the equivalents of Krč. *č ž* are *c [IPA ʈ] z* in Balkar, e.g. Krč. *üč*, Blk. *üc* ‘three’ and Krč. *žol*, Blk. *zol* ‘road’, with some exceptions, e.g. Krč. *žet’í*, Blk. *žeti* ‘seven’ (Pröhle 1915: 171).

As far as *f* is concerned, he noted that it is pronounced with rounded lips (Pröhle 1915: 171). Therefore, it may be assumed that this consonant is not a real *f*, but a bilabial weak equivalent of *p*, i.e. IPA *ɸ*. Pröhle rendered it as *f* saying that there is no other *f* in Balkar.

It was already Pröhle who established some Kabardian words in Balkar, e.g. *adež* ‘Handpferd’ (Pröhle 1915: 198), denoting here an ‘off-horse’ in a pair of horses (cf. Guzeev 2003: 10). Balkar-Kabardian language contact was intensive, since Pröhle (1915: 166–167) has noticed that many Balkars speak Kabardian fluently.

After establishing the written standard Karachay-Balkar language by the Soviet language policy makers, researchers outside Karachay-Cherkess and Kabard-Balkar Republics adhered to this policy, what is seen in handbooks and descriptions, e.g. Johanson (2021: 22) or Károly (2022: 79). Menges either takes Karachay and Balkar separately as two very close languages or takes them together as Karachay-Balkar (e.g. Menges 1995: 43, 54, 117, 176). The situation is similar with the international articles and studies on Karachay and Balkar, e.g. Siemieniec-Gołaś (2000) and Nedjalkov (2002). An interesting case of uncertainty is Gruzdeva and Paramonova (2022) who in the title of their paper call the language they examine Balkar, but in the keywords call it Karachay-Balkar. However, the authors of another paper

in the same volume, Manina and Veznesenskaia (2022) do not hesitate to name it Balkar.

Baskakov who was very influential in the Soviet Union and through this also in the international Turkology, distinguished two dialects, one *c* or Balkar, the other *č* or Karachay (Baskakov 1960: 153). However, he added that the former was spoken by the majority of Balkars⁷ and the latter by Karachays, but he did not disclose what dialect the remaining Balkars spoke, adding only that there were also some mixed subdialects. Čečenov and Axmatov (1997: 285) are a bit inexact, for they distinguish a *č ğ* dialect and a *c z* dialect but contrast the latter not with the *č ğ* features of the former, but with the *ğ ž č* features.

According to Filonenko (1940: 2 and 1974: 36), basing on the development of the consonants *č* and *ğ ~ ž ~ ʒ* the Balkar dialects may be classified into three groups:

(1) The *c* (IPA *ts*) and *z* or Cherek or Malqar group. The change *č > c* and (OT *y- >*) *ğ > z* is characteristic of the inhabitants of the following habitation places on the Cherek river: Upper Balkar (Verxnjaja Balkarija): Işqantı ~ Şqantı, Künnüm, Sawtu; Middle Balkar (Srednjaja Balkarija): Quspartı, Muşol, Şawrdat; Lower Balkar (Nižnjaja Balkarija), Taşlıtala and majority of Qaşqataw ~ Qaşqataw.

(2) The *č* and *ž* or Bakhsan and Chegem group: BİLİM ~ Billim, Tegenekli,⁸ Qoy Sürülgen Gıgış ~ Gagiş, Lower and Upper Bakhsan, Upper Chegem, Aq Topuraq, Dumala ~ Numala, Orusundak and Bulunyu. Therefore, this group is very similar to Karachay and it is the basis of standard Balkar.

(3) The mixed or Kholam-Bezengi group: BİZİŃİ, ŞİQİ, Sovetskij⁹, Lower, Middle and Upper Kholam, and partly Qaşqataw ~ Qaşqataw. The

⁷ If Tavkul's (2000: 5) claim that the *č* dialect is spoken by 90% of Karachays and Balkars is correct, Baskakov's assertion about the majority is false.

⁸ In Filonenko (1974: 36) erroneously *Tegenenli*.

⁹ Absent from Kokov and Şaxmurzaev (1970), probably the name has been changed.

mixed character of this group consists in inconsistent change $\check{c} > c$ and (OT $y- >$) $\check{g} > z$. As he points out some words are pronounced with an alternative \check{c} or c , e.g. *bičaq* «бчакъ» or *bcaq* «бцакъ». However, regarding the second change, in addition to the alternation $\check{z} \sim z$, e.g. *zer* ~ *žer* ‘earth’, there is also the alternation $\check{g} \sim \check{d}$, but shown in another word, and only with one variant *đawrun* ‘shoulder blade’ (Filonenko 1940: 3).

As we can assume from Appaev’s (1960: 6) observation that the pronunciation of the consonants $\check{z} z \check{t} \check{c}$ differs from valley to valley in Balkaria, this classification must be a bit inexact. There is need to geographical mapping and establishing isophones. Akbaev (1963: 63) provides the following distribution of standard Karachay-Balkar \check{g} «дж»: Karachay \check{g} , Bakhsan \check{g}' «дж’», Chegem \check{z} «ж», Kholam–Bezengi $\check{z} \sim z$ and Malkar (i.e. Cherek) z .

In contrast to Filonenko, Appaev (1960: 16) distinguishes two basic dialect groups, one in the Bakhsan and Chegem valleys which is the basis of written Balkar, and the other Cherek and Kholam; thus, the dialects may be subdivided into four groups: Cherek, Kholam–Bezengi, Chegem and Bakhsan:

1. The Cherek dialect. The basic phonetic feature for distinguishing this dialect, but also the other ones, is $\check{c} > \check{t}$ and $\check{z} > z$, e.g. *tsiftsiq* < *čibčiq* (sic) ‘sparrow’, *üts* < *üč* ‘three’; *zol* < *žol* ‘road’, *züz* < *žüz* ‘hundred’ (Appaev 1960: 17–18).¹⁰

Of other distinguishing features, two are most characteristic: (1) $p > f$, e.g. *čapraq* > *čafraq* ‘leaf’; (2) $q > \chi$ and $k > \zeta$ (IPA)¹¹ before a consonant, e.g. *kökte* > *köçte* ‘in heaven’; *učqan* > *učχan* ‘flying’ (Appaev 1960: 21–22).

2. The Kholam–Bezengi dialect. The change $\check{c} > \check{t}$ and $\check{z} > z$ occurs, but not always, i.e., it seems to be optional, e.g. *tsibin* ~ *čibin* ‘fly’, *tsana* ~ *čana*

¹⁰ Appaev’s notation is inexact and must be corrected in transcription, for the critique, see Akbaev (1963: 14).

¹¹ A commoner symbol in Turkic studies is x' or χ' , as in Pröhle (1915: 170).

‘sledge’; *zol* ~ *žol* ‘road’, *züz* ~ *žüz* ‘hundred’ (Appaev 1960: 28–29). The same is true of the first feature shown above, e.g. *uruf* ~ *urup* ‘when striking’, and the change $k > \chi$ seems to be common, but it is restricted to the palatal k , e.g. *kesχendi* ‘he cut’ < *keskendi* (Appaev 1960: 29–30).

It must be noted that there are also classifications of the common Karachay-Balkar language into dialects. For example, Akbaev (1963: 21) selected eight distinguishing features and divided Karachay-Balkar into two dialects and two basic subdialects: (1) the basic *č* dialect with the Bakhsan-Chegem subdialect, (2) Malkar or *t̥* dialect as well as (3) Kholam–Bezengi mixed subdialect. Xapaev (1997: 10–11) distinguishes three dialects: Karachay-Chegem (*č* dialect), Malkar (*t̥* dialect), and a mixed one.

Pritsak (1959: 341–342), in his otherwise excellent description, but based on limited material, states that Karachay is not diversified dialectally and is a unique language, while Balkar falls into a few dialects. Basing on Filonenko’s grammar, Pritsak (1959: 342) recognises three Balkar dialects.

Balkar is also distinguished from Karachay by the number of Ossetic loanwords. Abaev (1960: 129) stressed that there are fifty-eight Ossetic loanwords in Pröhle’s materials established by Schmidt, but he himself has established 200 loanwords (Abaev 1960: 130). Balkar also uses an Ossetic counting system with Ossetic numerals. Filonenko (1940: 51–52) reports that this system is widespread throughout the whole of Balkaria and used particularly often by shepherds, and has a few variants. It must really be the case, since the numerals demonstrated by Filonenko differ from those shown in Baskakov ed. (1966: 137).

However, ten Ossetic loanwords common to both Karachay and Balkar have been established by Miller as early as 1884, e.g. *kirdik* ‘grass’ (Abaev 1960: 129), see also TS (36), *uwanik* ‘young calf, young bull’ (Abaev 1960: 129), see also TS (688).

There was an attempt to relate Karachay-Balkar words to Proto-Turkic (Siemienieć-Gołaś 2000). There are a few problems with such an approach: (1) a number of words, e.g. *baba* ‘father’, do not belong to basic lexicon

and some are derived, e.g. *ǧuwuryan* ‘quilt’; (2) some items, e.g. *batir* ‘brave’, are culture words of uncertain etymology, according to Clauson (1972: 313) Xiongnu; (3) some words are clearly loanwords like *qalay* ‘brass’ which is of Persian origin, first attested in the 13th-14th centuries (Rybatzki 1994: 231). Therefore, this study should relate the examined Karachay and Balkar vocabulary to Old Turkic at the earliest, but in some cases even to Middle Turkic, not Proto-Turkic.

2. 1. Present-day differentiation of Karachay and Balkar

Karachay-Balkar is not an ideal interethnic language, since there are many words that do not have cross-dialectal forms common to both components of the Karachay-Balkar complex. Therefore, some are either Karachay or Balkar and the use depends on the nationality, and—if this is a printed text—on where it was published. Some variants are grammatical, mostly phonetic, and some are lexical.¹² Some modern Karachay and Balkar researchers admit that Karachay-Balkar has two variants and do not try to codify Karachay-Balkar. For instance, Kučmezova (2024: 18) says that Karachay-Balkar is the language of a nation which includes two ethnically and linguistically related groups and has two local names, *Qaračay til* and *Malqar til*, and a common name *taw til*.

2. 1. 1. Phonetic differentiation of Karachay and Balkar

Phonetically divergent words may be presented in such pairs as Krč. *bütew* ~ *bütöw*, Blk. *bitew* ‘whole, all’; Krč. *küyöw* ~ *küyew*, Blk. *kiyew* ‘son-in-law’; Krč. *miyik*, Blk. *biyik* ‘high’; Krč. *mičχi*, Blk. *bičχi* ‘saw’¹³; Krč. *qarnaš*, Blk. *qarindaš* ‘brother’; Krč. *oyay*, Blk. *uyay* ‘not’; and Krč. *šorqa*, Blk. *šorxa* ‘waterfall’. These differences emerged from regular phonological processes and are easily predictable, but sometimes a difference is substantial and unpredictable, e.g. Krč. *šoχ*, Blk. *šuyoy*

¹² The semantic differences are not discussed in this article.

¹³ Appaev (1960: 18) gives two alternating forms used in the Cherek dialect, *bixtsi* and *bixxi*, while *bičχi* is said to be the literary Balkar form.

‘friend’. For more sound variation and examples, see Kučmezova (2014: 99–100).

2. 1. 2. Lexical differentiation of Karachay and Balkar

Kučmezova (2014: 100) provides a few lexical differences between Karachay and Balkar, e.g. ‘to switch something off’ is *ğuqlat-* in Karachay and *öčült-* in Balkar. One may find many lexical cases of divergency in good dictionaries. The standard Karachay-Balkar dictionary by Tenišev and Süyünčulu (TS) qualifies many lexical units as Karachay and Balkar. However, this qualification, although very important, does not specify the exact status of a word, since the user does not know if it is Karachay and Balkar in a narrow or broad sense. Some studies qualify divergent words as regional lexical units. For example, ‘rooster’ or ‘cock’ is *χoraz* or *adaqa* in Balkar and *guguruk* in Karachay (Šavaeva 2011: 38, see also TS 711, 190, 21). However, it is unclear which of these words is regional and it is also unknown if there is a cross-dialectal word or all the three are restricted geographically. Of these, *guguruk*, with its basic variant *gugurukku* (TS 190), is certainly onomatopoeic, *χoraz* is a Persian loanword and *adaqa* is of unknown origin. Looking up the Russian–Karachay-Balkar dictionary, we see that the Russian word *petux* ‘cock, rooster’ is translated as 1. *gugurukku*, *qičiriwču* and Balk. *χoraz*, *qittay* (SO 417). In TS (449) it is qualified as a Balkar word, but *qičiriwču* (< *qičir-* ‘to shout’ + wčU) comes up without any qualification (TS 450). Therefore, we learn a new word for the cock, which may be cross-dialectal, but it is more likely that it is Karachay. Unfortunately, the Balkar–Russian dictionary lists neither *qičiriwču* nor *qittay*. Anyway, from the first word glossed in the entry, i.e. *gugurukku*, it is clear that the Karachay words are treated as basic. Interestingly, the three-volume dictionary lists the word *adaqa* without any qualification and glosses it in Russian as *petux* and in Karachay-Balkar as *χoraz* and *qittay*, also without dialect qualification, but *gugurukku* is ignored (QMAS 1, 49). It is probably because this dictionary was compiled, edited and published by Balkar linguists in Balkaria. However, the word *qičiriwču* is also absent in this great dictionary, whereas Appaev (1960: 17)

provides the Cherek Balkar form *q̄tsir̄iw̄ču* and contrasts it with written Blk. *q̄ičir̄iw̄ču*.

The table below shows some lexical differences between Karachay and Balkar:

No	Karachay	Balkar	Karachay-Balkar	Meaning and source
1	ayač tawuq	qaq̄ȳič	–	woodpecker Š 38
2.	–	ad̄ir	iš kerek	utensil, instrument TS 24
3.	ağ̄ira-	–	aȳir̄il-	to separate TS 24, 39
4.	akka	–	appa	grandfather TS 41, 69
5.	amma	inna	–	grandmother TS 63, 758
6.	–	aq̄ilman	aq̄illi, esli	wise TS 46, QMAS 1, 107
7.	–	ayt̄yl̄i	belgili, at̄i ayt̄ilyan	famous TS 34, QMAS 1, 81
8.	ḡil̄inquš	uku	–	awl Š 38
9.	tuč	aq̄qalay	–	aluminium TS 43, 657

With dialect levelling which is the worldwide process due to development of literacy, education, urbanization and intensive communication, and which is also observable in the Karachay-Cherkes, but basically in the Kabard-Balkar Republic, some cross-dialectal forms emerge, but at the same time new literary and colloquial variants come to life (Kučmezova 2014: 78–103). However, in the case of Karachays and Balkars, there is another factor that accelerated dialect levelling, the deportation of the whole nations in the years 1943 and 1944. As Xapaev (1997: 66) has established, all small villages—the population of some did not exceed 5–10 inhabitants—ceased to exist. When a community disappears from a place, even after its reestablishment in a new place within a larger settlement the continuation of their traditional lifestyle, customs and dialect is difficult to retain. At the same time, due to distinct administrative and political forces, despite Karachay influence on Balkar and vice versa,

divergence of both languages is commonplace, and it will never be levelled (Kučmezova 2014: 59).

The reality of everyday life in high mountains has left some interesting traces in the linguistic conceptualization of the world among Karachays and Balkars. For example, the idea of something that is as old as the world is expressed by the word *taş* ‘stone’, i.e. *taş ğaratılyanli* (Kaňsay 1993: 11) ‘since the creation of the world (*lit* ‘stone’)’ or *taş ğaratılyanli beri* ‘id’, glossed as ‘çok eski’, i.e. ‘very old’ (Tavkul 2000: 381), or *taş ğaratılyandan beri* ‘id’ (QMAS 3, 410). According to Kaňsay (1993: 11), the idea of homeland may also be associated with ‘stone’, i.e. *tuwyan taşibiz* ‘our native motherland’, *lit* ‘our native stone’.

There are also several interesting idioms and sayings connected with the word *taş* ‘stone’, e.g. *taş sal-* ‘to build a house’, *taş-ayaç ülüşü bol-* ‘to have a share in something’, *taş-topuraq adam* ‘many people’, *taş basdırma-* ‘to make one’s life impossible’ (Žaraşıwlanı 2017: 435–437).

As the descendants of nomadic Turks in the steppe know the richness of its products, so Karachay and Balkars in the mountains can distinguish many kinds of stone, e.g. *soslan* ‘granite’ (TS 568), *tütür* ‘limestone’ (TS 664), *kök taş* ‘sulphate’ (TS 338) and *otluq taş* ‘flint’ (TS 612).

3. Authority and related issues

3. 1. Historical background

A thorough examination of the political issues lying behind language use, linguistic processes and aspects of language policy requires discussion of the legal and practical issues of implementation of Soviet language policy in Karachay-Cherkess and Kabard-Balkar administrative units which cannot be done in an article not exclusively devoted to these questions. Therefore, only a few notes will be presented.

Going back to the Russian past before the Bolshevik revolution, it seems that the Russian ruling elite did not apply any legal measures for the conquered peoples except for administration which was Russian, and all

administrative procedures must have been done in Russian. As Adiloğlu (2016: 25) claims, in the first period of Russian dependence the Russian rulers left many matters to the local aristocracy and did not interfere in their inner matters. According to this author, Russian general Nicolai Petrushevich who took over the administration in 1865, learned Karachay-Balkar and maintained friendly relations with the local population.

From the 14th century to the beginning of the 19th century, the situation of Karachays and Balkars was relatively stable. According to Хапаев (1997: 76), in the 19th century there were 136 settlements inhabited by Karachays and Balkars.

In the course of time, the influence of Russian was gradually growing up. As is seen from Pröhle's Karachay glossary (1909a), there are various Russian loanwords, some of which are linked to everyday life and normal Russian-Karachay contact, but some to official and administrative issues, e.g. *barazá* 'furrow' < Rus. борозда, *barışná* 'lady' < Rus. барышня, *banq* 'bank' < Rus. банк, *böçké* 'barrel' < Rus. бочка or *ginirál* 'general' < Rus. генерал (Pröhle 1909a: 91, 95, 103). In his grammatical sketch of Karachay, Pröhle (1909b: 215) noted that Russian loanwords were being more and more used by the Karachays and some Karachays who hardly know any Russian are eager to use such utterances as *Qislovódsqı panravıcca etti-mi saññá?* 'Have you liked Kislovodsk?'

A similar observation was done by Pröhle in his study on Balkars. He described Balkars as poor people who live in the romantic entourage, but in sorrowful conditions. When children saw a foreigner, they demanded from him *dawaj dengi! dawaj dengi!* 'give money! give money!' (Pröhle 1915: 166). Naturally we must have in mind that such mixed codes were used in conversation with a stranger and this was the contact language with an outsider, but not necessarily their natural language. Code-mixing and code-switching was also used in the matters related to Russians and Russian administration, e.g. *Inaraldan büjuruq bolyándı Baısanuqqa Bişlaq-zawot salırya* 'It was a command of the governor (general) to build a cheese

manufacture' (Pröhle 1916: 108). Note that Karachays and Balkars have their own word for *Kislovodsk*, it is Narsana.

With the creation of the Soviet Union in 1922 and the Karachay-Cherkess Autonomous Region, partly transformed into a Karachay and a Cherkess autonomous regions in 1926, abolished in 1943, restored in 1957 as Karachay-Cherkess Autonomous Region and a republic in 1992; and Kabard-Balkar Autonomous Region,¹⁴ transformed into an autonomous republic in 1936 and elevated to a republic in 1992 within the Soviet Union, then Russian Federation, the Soviet authorities started implementing their language policy. The essence of this policy was the creation of the Karachay-Balkar language as a literary language common to Karachays and Balkars as a tool of their overall politics. The policymakers, including some pro-unionist ideologists on both sides, tried to implement the idea of one common language as they could think it would be possible because of the following reasons: (1) a high degree of linguistic similarity, (2) common genetic roots, (3) common religion of the language speakers, (4) existence of transitional dialects, (5) relatively short tradition of literacy in the same writing and common historical literary language in the background, (6) similar contact languages and Kumuk as the common interethnic language in the past, quite similar to Karachay and Balkar, and (7) the similar historical past. Beyond these historical and structural factors, the political imperative was certainly very important.

The politics for which a good tool in the form of an effective common language was needed envisaged such aims as centralisation, class struggle, bringing up an atheistic society and other communist utopias. Moreover, both republics have been established in an ethnically mixed way that can lead to tensions and, therefore, give the central government opportunity for intervention. Namely, both republics were created with a Turkic and a Circassian ethnic component instead of uniting Karachay and Balkar

¹⁴ The word order of republic names, i.e. Karachay-Cherkes but Kabard-Balkar, reflects the proportion of ethnic composition, which indicates that Karachays are more numerous but Balkars are smaller in number in their republics.

territories into one administrative unit in the south and two Circassian peoples into another in the north to form republics on the ethnic principle. This administrative-territorial formation was more favourable to Karachays who enjoined the majority in their republic than to Balkars who were in minority behind Kabardians and Russians in theirs. Karachays had their own Karachay Autonomous Region between 1926–1943 which Balkars never enjoined.¹⁵ The unprecedented rise of education, press and book publishing in local languages which started in the mid-1920s was accompanied by first victims of political persecution which culminated in the 1930s.

This period broke in August 1942 with the German invasion and occupation of the territories of Karachays and Balkars. It is little wonder that after the Soviet terror and German promises to tolerate religion, recognise private possessions and national values, some Karachays and Balkars engaged into cooperation with them. However, the German period did not last long and on 15 March, 1943 the Soviets regained the lost land. With shelling and bombing, they devastated Karachay and Balkar villages and shortly after then all the people were punished for the collaboration and deported Central Asia. Karachays were deported on 2 November, 1943, and Balkars on 8 March, 1944 (Adiloğlu 2005: 135). They were allowed to return in 1957. The period of deportation was a traumatic time when the language could not be practised outside homes and close friendly circles. After the return, education in native languages was restored, and newspapers and books started to appear from 1957 onwards.

3. 2. Language and authority

According to Aliev (2012: 199–200), the Soviet history of Karachay, Balkar and Karachay-Balkar studies may be subdivided into two periods: (1) between 1922–1937 the standard language was established and called

¹⁵ This conflict-created formation led to the protests of Balkars in 1991, 1996 and 2005 who demanded the establishment of their own republic on the ethnic basis, see Russia: Balkars Launch New Campaign for Own Republic.

Karachay-Balkar and (2) 1937–1962¹⁶ the standard language of Karachay publications was called Karachay and that of Balkar publications was called Balkar with two different spelling variants based on Cyrillic script. However, it was not always the case, e.g. a Russian-Karachay dictionary was published in 1926, a Karachay grammar was published in two volumes in 1930, another grammar for schools also in two volumes appeared in 1931 and 1936 (Baskakov ed. 1966: 386–387).

Karachay is a stronger component than Balkar in the Karachay-Balkar pair. It is because they are more numerous and constitute the majority in their republic. Their language is more uniform than Balkar and even said to have no dialects. Moreover, their language is the basis of written standard Karachay-Balkar. However, the Karachay priority is never stressed and in practice the Balkar component gains preference in publications in Balkaria. In fact, most of recent basic linguistic works such as grammars and dictionaries have been edited and published by Balkars in Nalchik, the capital city of the Kabard-Balkar Republic. It may be proved by the data. For example, among the grammars, dictionaries and other studies on language included in the bibliography in the Karachay-Balkar grammar by Baskakov ed. (1966: 386–392), thirty items are called Balkar, twenty-eight Karachay-Balkar and sixteen Karachay. In item 21 (Appaev 1960, discussed above), Balkar is contrasted with Karachay-Balkar and not Karachay.

In the following, a few examples of important publications with a clearly visible Balkar brand will be provided:

1. The Karachay-Balkar grammar, edited by a Russian Turkologist, Baskakov and published in Nalchik, despite the evident Karachay spelling standard ğ <дж>, is marked by a few Balkar features such as *uġay* ‘not’ versus Krč. *oġay*, and *murdor* ‘basis, fundament’ (TS 472), see Baskakov (1966: 82, 337). In all of the subsequent publications prepared by the Balkar

¹⁶ The respective chapter of this monograph was presented in 1962 at a conference.

researchers in Balkaria and selected as the sources of the examples the standard consonant is *ž* ⟨ж⟩.

2. In the Karachay-Balkar pronouncing dictionary compiled by the Balkar researchers Guzeev and Sozaev (1982) and published in Nalchik, Balkar words are taken as standard without any qualification, e.g. *biyik* ‘high’, and their Karachay equivalents are shown with a qualifier *Qar.* ⟨кӀар.⟩ ‘Karachay’ (Guzeev and Sozaev 1982: 75, 309).

3. Another important linguistic tool, the three-volume Karachay-Balkar dictionary, edited by the Balkar researcher Guzelanī (1996–2005) and published in Nalchik, has also been compiled in Balkar standard. In the list of abbreviations, there is *Qarač.* ⟨кӀарач.⟩ ‘Karachay’ (QMAS 1, 27), but there is no Balkar. Therefore, the Balkar words and forms are regarded as basic and normal and are not indicated, while Karachay forms are, e.g. *biyik* ‘high’ (QMAS 1, 420), a Balkar form, comes up without a qualifier and is taken as a basic entry, while the Karachay equivalent *miyik* (QMAS 2, 895) is qualified as Karachay, exemplified and explained, but referred to the Balkar form. The Balkar standard is also evident in the introduction, e.g. *bitew* ‘all, whole’ (QMAS 1, 6) versus Krč. *bütew* or *murdor* ‘fundament, base’ (QMAS 1, 8).¹⁷

4. In the Karachay-Balkar dictionary of idioms compiled by Žarašiwlanī (2017), printed in Vladikavkaz, but written in the Balkar standard by the Balkar author, the basic language is Balkar. There are ca 220 idioms qualified as Karachay, while there is no Balkar qualification. This means that Balkar is taken as the basic language. The author uses typical Balkar words or words written in the Balkar standard, e.g. *bitew* ‘all, every’

¹⁷ It is unknown if a Karachay equivalent of this word is actively used. SO (684) glosses Rus. ‘fundament’ as *tüb xuna* and Blk. *murdor*, but TS (472) shows *murdor* as a Balkar word without a reference to Karachay; the compound *tüb xuna* is not given alphabetically, but only as a collocation in the entry *xuna* ‘fence’, not distinguished as a subentry (TS 712). I have not found this Krč. *tüb xuna* in texts in contrast to Balkar texts in which *murdor* is very frequent.

(Žarašiwlanī 2017: 11), cf. Krč. equivalent *bütew* (TS 150) and *uyaylawču* ‘negating’ (Žarašiwlanī 2017: 18), cf. Krč. equivalent *oyaylawču* (TS 488).

5. In the study on Karachay-Balkar phonology by aforementioned Guzeev (2010), published in Nalchik, Balkar words are also taken as standard without any qualification unlike their Karachay equivalents which are introduced with the qualifier Karachay, e.g. (Blk.) *biz* ‘awl’, Krč. *miz* (Guzeev 2010: 43).

Naturally, this is not always the case. However, it seems that the Karachay publications more frequently stress the non-standard forms of their own words and forms. For example, in Botašlanī’s dictionary of outdated words published in the Karachay-Cherkess Republic by the Karachay author, all regional Karachay and Balkar words are shown as such, e.g. Blk. *aydeš*, Krč. *aydes* ‘character, mentality’ (Botašlanī 2010: 10).

Interestingly, the entry Kabard-Balkar on the Wikipedia reveals typical Karachay language features, e.g. Krč. *miyik* ‘high’ in contrast to Blk. *biyik*.¹⁸

In many cases, despite the name Karachay-Balkar, the difference is not only in form, but also in content and actual addressee. For example, in a Karachay-Balkar phrasebook published in Cherkessk, there is *Qaračaylı* among nationalities, but there is no *Malqarlı* (Xabičev ed. 1990: 20). This phrasebook is clearly focused on the Karachay-Cherkess Republic with the following nationalities: Circassians, Noghays, Abaza, Russians and Ukrainians. Even if in the period of the seemingly firmest new linguistic unity between 1925 and 1937, the linguonyms Karachay and Balkar as well as the respective linguistic identifications do not disappear. For example, in the fourth updated edition of the Karachay-Balkar primer, we find the term ‘the Karachay language,’ i.e. *qaracaj til* (Alilanъ 1930: 35), also in the text

¹⁸ <https://krc.wikipedia.org/wiki/Къабарты-Малкъар>.

Bizni tiliBiz qaracaj tildi. Biz qaracajca sözleşeBiz. ‘Our language is the Karachay language. We speak Karachay’.

With regard to the names Karachay and Balkar in the titles, the claim that the principle of the place of edition according to which the books published in the Karachay-Cherkess Republic (Cherkessk or Qarachay şaxar) are called Karachay and those published in the Kabard-Balkar Republic (Nalchik) are Balkar is not entirely correct. This principle applies for books for children and schools, most of practical books, dictionaries of place names, etc. As far as literary works are concerned, the author is normally identified as either Karachay or Balkar, even if the publication is shown as written in Karachay-Balkar. The most evident difference between Karachay and Balkar printings is seen in the spelling standard. While Karachays use the letter ğ <дж>, Balkars use ž <ж>, e.g. Krč. *ğoq* <джокъ> ‘there is no’ versus Blk. *žoq* <жокъ>.

In the publications of the Soviet period before the deportation, the titles and the addressed readers mirror the actual trends in language policy. For example, *Bajramqullanь* (1935), published in Narsana (Kislovodsk), i.e. at the time when a Karachay administrative-territorial unit existed independently from the Cherkess and Kabard-Balkar ones, is designed to Karachays. In the preface, there is no mention of Balkars, only Karachays and their schools, books, etc., are mentioned (*Bajramqullanь* 1935: 3). From the local writers, there are works by Issa Qarakötlanь, Daut Bajqullanь, A.-Kerim Batçalanь and Xasan Bostalanь.

As a result, Aliev’s wish that the studies on the language be again Karachay-Balkar has not been fully realised. However, it should be stressed that even if the language is Karachay or Balkar as a language of the main focus, the Karachay and Balkar researchers in most of their studies of non-practical, but theoretical and research character call it Karachay-Balkar, e.g. Xapaev (1997) for the Karachay part, and Guzeev (2010) and Shavaeva (2011) for the Balkar part. This is an important symbolic label of the written standard language and remains in agreement with the current language policy.

As soon as two semi-titular republics were established in 1992, in the short period of relative democracy in Russia in the years 1992–1999 the Karachays started publishing books in Latin script, e.g. *Keçberları* (1993). However, in the post-Soviet reality, these endeavours could not be realised. With Putin's come to the Russian presidency, all efforts at cultural and linguistic desovietisation were gradually jeopardized and in 2002 the ban on the use of scripts other than Cyrillic in Russian Federation was imposed.

Nevertheless, the Karachays and Balkars always tried to preserve their culture and language. For example, in contrast to many Turkic peoples in the Soviet Union and then Russia, they used their own forms of surnames since the mid-1920s, although these forms look like calqued on the Russian use, e.g. *Ortabayları* (ST 795) < *Ortabaylarnıj* which is the plural genitive of the male name *Ortabay* (ST 803), the ancestor of the respective family, for a list of surnames used by Karachays and Balkars, see ST (791–797). They used them, at least in the publications, even in the first year after the return from the deportation, e.g. *Xubiylanı* (1957). All poets in this volume, e.g. Qasbot Koçharlanı (1834–1940), Azret Örteleni (1907–1955), Issa Qarakötleni (1900–1941), etc., who wrote in the Soviet period and composed, among others, poems glorifying and commemorating Lenin, bear the names of this type. Before this form was standardized, Karachay and Balkar educated people used the names of Islamic type, as the author of the first printed book of 1909: Al-Ĥāğğ Loqmān Al-Āsānī Al-Balqārī (Adiloğlu 2006: xix, 3, 162) and in the first period of the Soviet Union simple names mostly composed of a given name and the name of a clan, an eponym, or an ancestor, or a nickname as the surname, e.g. Appa Canibek (1864–1934) or Ismail Aqbay (1874–1937). The custom of using the form *+lanı* is old, for it is noted by Pröhle (1915: 197), e.g. *Abájlanı*. In the Russian context, the Russicized surnames were used, e.g. not Bayramqullanı, but Bayramkulov. It should be added that recently a new type of surnames has appeared, probably affected by Turkish and other Turkic languages, which consists of the stem of a family name and the word

ulu son-3POSS ‘his son’, e.g. *Guze ulu*, beside the old Karachay-Balkar form *Guzelanī* and the Russian *Guzeev* [guzejev].

3. 3. Prospects for Karachay, Balkar and Karachay-Balkar

Establishing a common language for two closely related nationalities with a name which includes both ethnic components is unprecedented in the Turkic world and very rare worldwide. The effectiveness of this policy is not challenged by separationism or particular ambitions, but by the geopolitical circumstances: (1) Karachays and Balkars do not have a common polity and (2) they share their polities with another nationality. As both of them are relatively small in number in the Russian Federation, the unique language has more chance for survival than two separate small tongues. However, the everyday practice and experience shows that it is very difficult to use Karachay-Balkar as a fully-fledged language in all fields of functionality.

If we compare Karachay-Balkar with Serbo-Croatian, another product of language policy, though created by ideologists before the formation of Yugoslavia, in the conditions of a common state the former could have more perspectives for survival than the latter. It is because Karachays and Balkars, as it was shown above, have more common points than Serbs and Croatians. Unfortunately, lack of a common Karachay-Balkar administrative-territorial polity is a very important obstacle to achieving a real common language. Another problem is created by the language name, though probably of lesser importance. The compound name Karachay-Balkar is less suitable for use than hundreds of language names that are simple words such as English, German, French, and many Turkic languages, e.g. Chuvash, Yakut/Sakha, Kirghiz or Turkmen. Moreover, the order of the components, i.e. Karachay first and Balkar after it, inevitably favours Karachays. Although it is motivated and tacitly accepted by Balkars, the ambitions of Balkars may be hurt. However, this problem may be solved by the substitution of the ethnic name *Tawlu* ‘mountaineer’ and the language name *taw til* or *tawča* which are common to Karachays and Balkars for Karachay-Balkar.

If the territorial-political conditions will not change, Karachay will enjoy preference in Karachay-Balkar for a few reasons. The first is the number of speakers with the proportion nearly two to one for Karachay. The second is the proportion of language-speakers in the respective republics and in this respect Karachays outnumber Cherkess, while Balkars are behind Kabardians and Russians. The third is the historical fact that Karachays defended their independence from Russian attacks, while Balkars accepted the Russian rule. There are also two linguistic reasons. One is that Karachay is a more uniform language and even if the claims that it does not have dialects is false, it is more suitable for a standard language than Balkar. The second is the fact that some typical Balkar features, e.g. $\check{c} > ts$, $\check{g} > z \sim dz$ and $p > f$ are deviant from a common Turkic model.

In conclusion, we must say that a political unity of Karachays and Balkars is not in the interest of Russia. The division of the Karachay-Cherkess Republic into a Karachay and a Cherkess separate units may be supported by Cherkess, but because of the location of Nalchik and the touristic complex in Elbrus the division of Kabard-Balkar Republic will not be liked by Kabardians and the local Russians. On the contrary, the split of the Karachay-Balkar language into Karachay and Balkar will probably be admired by the neighbours of their speakers and the central Russian administration. Therefore, despite inconvenience of the name Karachay-Balkar, the maintenance of this language in two slightly diverging variants seems to be the best solution for Karachays and Balkars unless they do not want to replace it with Tawlu.

ABBREVIATIONS

Blk. – Balkar

Krč. – Karachay

Rus. – Russian

QMAS 1, QMAS 2 and QMAS 3 – Guzelanî ed. 1996–2005

SO – Sujunčev and Orusbijev eds 1965

Š – Šavaeva 2011

TS – Tenišev and Sujunčev eds 1989

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