

Nomachi Motoki
Hokkaido University
Sapporo, Japan

The Gorani People in Search of Identity: The Current Sociolinguistic Situation Among the Gorani Community of the Former Yugoslavia¹

Gorani – Kosovo – Yugoslavia – Serbo-Croatian – Bosnian – language planning

Introduction

With the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia, one of its official languages, the former Serbo-Croatian, has also now become four state- or ethnicity-oriented standard languages: Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin, and Serbian. Each of the four polities, i.e., Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia,

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Montenegro, and Serbia, has its own language policy and language planners to codify each post-Serbo-Croatian language. Particularly, language planners of Bosnian, Croatian, and Montenegrin tend to be engaged to distance it from the others (cf. Voss 2011: 762–774, Bugarski 2012: 50–51).²

This splitting of Serbo-Croatian is not only a matter of creating or re-standardizing languages with new names; it has also required new interpretations or re-interpretations of existing fields related to the former Serbo-Croatian language. For instance, today, “Serbian dialectology” deals only with those dialects that Serbs speak (Ivić 2009: 7);³ almost the same can be said for Croatian dialectology (Lisac 2003: 9. See also Greenberg 1996).⁴ According to Jahić et al. (2000: 34), the Bosnian language has five dialects spoken by Bosniaks or former South Slavic “Muslims or so-called *Muslimani* ‘Muslims’ with a capital letter M,” all within the former Bosnia Eyalet of the Ottoman Empire that included the present-day Sandžak region, divided between Serbia and Montenegro.⁵ Some Montenegrin scholars, such as Čirgić (2011), have established Montenegrin dialectology as a part of Montenegrin studies

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2 As is pointed out by Bugarski (*ibid*), Serbian is an exception in this case because its speakers did not feel any necessity or desire to prove that the language is different from other varieties of the former Serbo-Croatian.

3 According to Ivić (*ibid.*), *...srpskim možemo smatrati one dijalekte kojima govore Srbi, odnosno populacije koje svoj govor nazivaju srpskim* ‘...we can regard as Serbian those dialects which Serbs speak or the population which calls its own dialect Serbian’.

4 In his book entitled *Croatian Dialectology*, Lisac writes: *u ovoj knjizi obrađeni su štokavski i torlački idiomi kojima govore Hrvati* ‘in this book the Štokavian and Torlak idioms that Croats speak are wrought.’

5 Thus, the subject and nature of this “new” dialectology is not identical with that of the traditional dialectology that studies the dialects in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

(*montenegrinistika*), and have reinterpreted past works as achievements of the Montenegrin dialectology, bringing them within this tradition.⁶ Probably, the same story has played out in literary studies as well (cf. Čirgić 2011: 13).

The effect of this type of re-interpretation is not limited to scholarly fields. On the contrary, such re-interpretation urges community members to reframe their ethnic and linguistic positioning in new political circumstances, which can then be, as a natural consequence, reflected in language and language education policy in both top-down and bottom-up directions, based on their new and old identities.⁷

In this context, of particular interest to us, in various respects, is the case of the Gorani ethnolect, particularly in Kosovo.⁸ Gorani people are South Slavic Muslims “who speak Serbo-Croatian” (Garde 2004: 265) within Kosovo,⁹ whose political and social situations have changed drastically after the series of wars in the 1990s in the former Yugoslavia and Kosovo’s independence. In light of these changes, one may wonder, first, what corresponding changes have there been in Gorani people’s

6 The term “Montenegrin dialectology” can be understood in two ways: the study of dialects in the geographical area of Montenegro, or the study of the dialect complex of the newly established Montenegrin language. Needless to say, targets of analysis can naturally overlap, but the two notions are different. In his introduction to the translation of Milan Rešetar’s *Der štokavische Dialekt* (1907) into Montenegrin, Čirgić wrote that Rešetar occupies one of the headmost places in Montenegrin studies. See Rešetar (2010: 28).

7 It is also important to note that there are resistances to such a top-down “language identity planning.” Here we could mention various conferences and declarations concerning the unity of the former Serbo-Croatian: <http://jezicinalizmi.com/konferencije/>. As the most recent declaration one can mention *Deklaracija o zajedničkom jeziku* “Declaration of the Common Language” (2017) signed by various intellectuals from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and others. For details, see Bugarski (2018).

8 For the sociolinguistic situation of the Gorani ethnolect in Albania, see Steinke (2016: 360–375) and Steinke (in this volume).

9 As will be discussed in Section 3, views on the linguistic affiliation of the Gorani ethnolect varies. For instance, Brozović and Ivić (1988) regard it as a dialect of the Macedonian languages.

linguistic identity and in their closely related national, ethnic, religious, and other identities. Second, what have been the concrete forces and mechanisms driving these changes? Third, given that the results of these changes are not monolithic in the Gora region in general, why? On the last point, Gorani people in Macedonia may provide interesting material for comparison, because they belonged to a different political entity on a micro-level, although roofed by a common political entity, the former Yugoslavia, on a macro-level.

Against the abovementioned background, in what follows I will analyze the current sociolinguistic situation of the Gorani ethnolect, with particular attention to language planning among the Gorani community. First, I will provide basic information about the Gorani people and their language (Section 1). Then, changes in the Gorani population will be analyzed, because they could be key to understanding the dynamics of the Gorani people's identity both in Kosovo and in Macedonia (Section 2). In the next two sections, the main streams of Gorani national/ethnic and linguistic identities—pro-Bosniak orientation (Section 3) and pro-Gorani orientation (Section 4)—will be discussed, with special attention to aspects of their language planning. After that, I will proceed to a summary discussion and conclusion.

1. Brief Characteristics of the Gorani People and Their Language

The Gorani people are a Slavic people who inhabit one town and 29 villages in the mountainous area called Gora (MAP 1) in the Balkan Peninsula; this area is today divided among three countries: Albania (9 villages), Macedonia (2 villages) and Kosovo (1 town and 18 villages).

The Gora region was divided in 1923 between Albania and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes; then, when the Republic of Macedonia was established within the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia after World War II, there appeared internal borders within Yugoslavia, which have now become state borders.

Today, the Gorani people are all Muslim, having converted from Christianity during Ottoman rule. The process of Islamization lasted

Map 1: Major Settlements of Gorani People



approximately from the 16th to the 19th century (Selišček 1929: 406).¹⁰

Kosovan Gorani are typically multilingual: bilingual (Gorani ethnolect and former Serbo-Croatian, mostly its Ekavian variety of Neo-Štokavian or Serbian variant), trilingual (plus Albanian), or quadrilingual (plus Turkish, particularly those Gorani people who live in Prizren, out of the Gora region). Although there are no exact data, according to my interview with Sadik Idrizi, a scholar and writer of Gorani origin, the most typical situation of Gorani in Kosovo was Gorani-former Serbo-Croatian bilingualism. To be more precise, the languages are in a situation of diglossia in which the former Serbo-Croatian functions as a high variety used in official situations, while the Gorani ethnolect is a low variety used in private situations.

Among themselves, Gorani people call themselves *našinci* ‘our people’. In addition, two ethnonyms are also used: *Gorani* and *Goranci* (plural)—the former particularly by Gorani people and the latter often by outsiders.¹¹ In a similar manner, their ethnolect is called by locals *naški* or *našinski* ‘in our way/in our language’, or *goranski* (cf. Lutovac 1955: 54), and in Albanian *gorançe* and *shkenisht* (Dokle 2007: 11). The Gorani ethnolect can be linguistically characterized as a Balkanized South Slavic variety whose linguistic affiliation is disputable (For details, see Section 3).

2. How Many Are They? Variable and Invariable Identity Among the Gorani People

2-1. Kosovo

According to the 2011 Census of the Republic of Kosovo, there are 10,265 Gorani in Kosovo.¹² For the first time in history, this census officially

10 The estimate of the beginning and end of the period of Islamization varies. For instance, Dokle (2011: 233) regards it that the Islamization of the Gorani people started in the 14th century and continued until the mid-19th century. For an overview of the different opinions on Islamization, see Mladenović (2011: 53–56).

11 According to Dokle (2007: 11), Albanians characterize Gorani people *potur*. There are various opinions on the etymology of this word. One of the possible interpretations is ‘Turkified, converted to a Muslim’.

12 At 0.6% of Kosovo’s population, the Gorani people are the seventh-largest

included the Goran ethnic option as a recognized minority, under the *Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Communities and Their Members in Republic of Kosovo* (2008).¹³ Before the dissolution of Yugoslavia, there was no option to choose “Gorani” as a separate ethnic group. The situation is complicated by the fact that, when the Gora region was part of the Ottoman Empire, all Muslims were counted as “Turks,” but that meant Muslims, not ethnic Turks (cf. Garde 2004: 148), according to the systems of *millet*s of the Ottoman Empire, as religion was the primary source of identity (Friedman 1999: 5). Therefore, it is impossible to follow exact demographic changes among Gorani people even up into the 20th century. However, based on the census results one may estimate their number at least over the last 100 years, as their ethnic/national identity has shifted. There have been significant migrant waves from the Gora region to various Balkan countries, Turkey and Western Europe (cf. Hasani 2012: 314, Idrizi 2012: 36), but one can still observe unnatural dynamics in the population of the area where Gorani people have been dominant. Let us take a close look at the results of each national census from the establishment of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes up to today.¹⁴ The national censuses can be classified into five

ethnic group in size, after Albanians (1,616,869, 92.9%), Bosniaks (27,533, 1.6%), Serbs (25,532, 1.5%), Turks (18,738, 1.1%), Ashkali (15,436, 0.9%), and (Balkan) Egyptians (11,524, 0.7%). See the 2011 Census results: <http://ask.rks-gov.net/media/1615/stanovnistvo-prema-polu-i-nacionalnosti-na-nivou-naselja.pdf>

13 For details, see http://www.assembly-kosova.org/common/docs/ligjet/2008_03-L047_en.pdf

14 The census data are taken from the website of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, except for the 1921 Census, which are taken from *Definitivni rezultati popisa stanovništva od 31 januara 1921 god.*, published in Sarajevo in 1932. For the 1931 Census: <http://pod2.stat.gov.rs/ObjavljenePublikacije/G1931/pdf/G19314001.pdf>; For 1948: <http://pod2.stat.gov.rs/ObjavljenePublikacije/G1948/pdf/G19484001.pdf>; for 1953: <http://pod2.stat.gov.rs/ObjavljenePublikacije/G1953/pdf/G19534001.pdf>; for 1961: <http://pod2.stat.gov.rs/ObjavljenePublikacije/G1961/pdf/G19614001.pdf>; for 1971: <http://pod2.stat.gov.rs/ObjavljenePublikacije/G1971/pdf/G19714001.pdf>; for 1981: <http://pod2.stat.gov.rs/ObjavljenePublikacije/G1981/pdf/G19814001.pdf>; for 1991: <http://pod2.stat.gov.rs/ObjavljenePublikacije/G1991/pdf/G19914026.pdf>. The data for the 2011 census are taken from the website of the Kosovo Agency of Statistics: <http://ask.rks-gov.net/>

groups, depending on the method of making a census in which political changes are reflected.

2-1-1. 1921 and 1931 Censuses

Table 1. 1921 Census (Gora District)¹⁵

| Total in the Region | Religion | | | Mother tongue ¹⁶ | | |
|---------------------|----------|----------|--------|-----------------------------|-----------|-------|
| | Orthodox | Catholic | Muslim | Serbs or Croats | Albanians | Turks |
| 12,817 | 4 | 1 | 12,812 | 6,224 | 6,375 | 218 |

Table 2. 1931 Census (Gora District)

| Total in the Region | Religion | | | Mother tongue | | |
|---------------------|----------|----------|--------|--|----------|-------|
| | Orthodox | Catholic | Muslim | Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, Macedonian | Albanian | Other |
| 14,127 | 228 | 22 | 13,877 | 7,484 | 6,630 | 12 |

In both the 1921 and 1931 Censuses, Gorani people are to have declared Islam as their religion, since, as noted, they were entirely Islamized by the mid-19th century. At the same time, they may have had very little reason to declare as Albanians who are also mostly Muslims, even though some of them might have spoken Albanian, because their language or affiliation to the Slavic linguistic family is one of the most salient elements of their ethnic identity in relation to Albanians (cf. Antonijević 1995: 26. For details, see Section 3).¹⁷ That is, the combination of Islam

¹⁵ This is a translation of *Srez Gorski*.

¹⁶ In the 1921 Census, mother tongue was defined explicitly by ethnic affiliation.

¹⁷ In this respect we may consider the observation made by a Russian diplomat and ethnographer, Ivan Jastrebov, in the 1870s. According to Jastrebov (1909: 95), “*Žiteli Gory vse govornjat po serbski...Gorane ne ljubjat govorit’ po arnautski*” (All inhabitants of the Gora region speak Serbian...Gorani people do not like speaking Albanian). The first part does not mean the linguistic identification of locals, because the local people or *poturčennye serby* ‘Turkified Serbs’ called their language “the Bosniak language” (Jastrebov 1899: ix). However,

and Slaviness is the basis of the identity of Gorani people, though it is not clear to which ethnicity/nationality they belonged more concretely than “Slavic.” With regard to the “Turks” in the 1921 Census, it is not clear if they were “authentic” Turks or if some or all were Gorani people who being Turkish-speakers declared themselves as Turks, because in the last quarter of the 19th century, the Ottoman government established schools in the Gora region to teach the Turkish language to the locals (Jastrebov 1909: 95. See also Idrizi 2012: 38).

2-1-2. 1948 Census

Table 3. 1948 Census (Gora District)

| Total in the Region | Unspecified Muslims | Monteneg-rins | Albanians | Turks | Macedo-nians | Serbs |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------|-----------|-------|--------------|-------|
| 20,140 | 6,697 | 18 | 12,048 | 0 | 0 | 1,375 |

Neopredeljeni muslimani ‘Unspecified Muslims’ is a category for those South Slavic people who do not identify themselves as either Serbs or Croats, not to mention Montenegrins or Macedonians. In the Gora region they are most probably Gorani people; however, one cannot deny that there might also be Gorani people among those who declared their nationality as Serbs. Also, it is interesting to note that there was no one who declared themselves as a Turk, under which category Gorani were recognized until the beginning of the 20th century, although, first, mother tongue was not a criterion for choosing an ethnicity in the 1948 Census, and second, Turks had been officially recognized as an ethnic minority group in Yugoslavia in 1946.¹⁸

the second part does indicate Gorani people’s attitude toward Albanian, which could be reflected in the results of the censuses. This situation has continued into the present. According to Victor Friedman (in personal communication), he saw pro-Milošević graffiti in Kukuljane. And there were 2 mosques in Brod: one for Albanians and one for Gorans.

18 According to Lutovac (1955: 54), who conducted ethnographic research in the Gora region in 1936, 1937, 1948, 1949, 1951, and 1953, “the older generation of Gorani people did not call their language ‘Serbian’ because they are ‘Turks’. The younger generation did not call it Serbian either, since the Gorani ethnolect is not identical with the Serbian literary language.”

2-1-3. 1953 and 1961 Censuses**Table 4. 1953 Census (Gora District)**

| Total in the Region | Unspecified Yugoslavs | Macedonians | Albanians | Turks | Serbs |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------|-----------|-------|-------|
| 20,147 | 2,735 | 144 | 9,319 | 7,367 | 448 |

Table 5. 1961 Census (Municipality of Dragaš)¹⁹

| Total in the Region | Yugoslavs | Macedonians | Albanians | Muslims | Turks | Serbs |
|---------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|---------|-------|-------|
| 21,028 | 2,515 | 26 | 9,346 | 3,464 | 5,454 | 150 |

As seen in Table 4, a new category, *Jugosloveni neopredeljeni* ‘Unspecified Yugoslavs’, was introduced in the 1953 Census. They are presumably Gorani people, but this category seems not to have been a “popular” choice among Gorani people in comparison with ‘Unspecified Muslims’ in 1948. There may be two reasons for this. First, it is unclear with regard to ethnic and cultural/traditional affiliation. Second, in this period, according to Idrizi (2012: 45), many Gorani people prepared to migrate to Turkey, because the economic situation after World War II did not improve and Gorani people were not satisfied with the policies of the Serbian government in general. As further pointed out by Idrizi (ibid.), religious solidarity with Turks and nostalgia for Turkish rule might have helped drive this ethnographic change, but the most important reason might have been a practical one, the pursuit of better life conditions.

In the 1961 Census, the new category of *Muslimani jugoslovenskog porekla* ‘Muslims of Yugoslavian origin’, in short, Muslims, was introduced. The term is used to mean those South Slavs who feel that they are Muslims as an *ethnic* affiliation, but not necessarily a *religious* one.²⁰ One may not be sure if these differences were clear enough to

19 This is a translation of *Opština Dragaš*.

20 According to the *Methodological Explanations* (page 5) of the 1961 Census. <http://pod2.stat.gov.rs/ObjavljenePublikacije/G1961/Pdf/G19614001.pdf>

induce Gorani people to choose this “Muslim” identity, but this new category seems to have been more familiar to their sense of identity than “Yugoslavs.”²¹

2-1-4. 1971, 1981 and 1991 Censuses

Table 6. 1971 Census (Municipality of Dragaš)

| Total in the Region | Yugoslavs | Macedonians | Albanians | Muslims | Serbs |
|---------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|---------|-------|
| 26,850 | 50 | 13 | 13,867 | 11,076 | 139 |

Table 7. 1981 Census (Municipality of Dragaš)

| Total in the Region | Yugoslavs | Macedonians | Albanians | Muslims | Serbs |
|---------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|---------|-------|
| 35,054 | 99 | 17 | 18,623 | 15,942 | 93 |

Table 8. 1991 Census (Municipality of Gora)²²

| Total in the Region | Yugoslavs | Macedonians | Albanians ²³ | Muslims | Serbs | Turks |
|---------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| 17,102 | 188 | 0 | 687 | 16,088 | 53 | 60 |

Tables 6, 7, and 8 show basically the same tendency: Gorani people identify themselves as Muslims. The most striking difference between the 1961 and 1971 Censuses consists in the fact that in the latter *Muslimani* ‘Muslims’ with a capital letter M were recognized as a nationality, due to a decision of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, the national

21 In the 1961 Census, those who declared a “regional” affiliation as their national affiliation, such as *Bošnjak*, *Hercegovac*, *Dalmatinac*, *Bokelj*, *Istranin*, *Goranin*, *Bunjevac*, *Šumadinac*, etc., were classified into the category “Yugoslavs.”

22 The Municipality of Gora was formed in 1990 and abolished in 1992. This municipality was one of the parts of the former Municipality of Dragaš, together with the Municipality of Opolje.

23 Most Albanians in the Gora region boycotted the 1991 Census.

communist party and ruling party, in 1968. It is important to note that the new category was created particularly for Muslims who spoke Serbo-Croatian in Bosnia and Herzegovina.²⁴

In the data available to me, there was no definitive information about the number of Turks in the Gora region. According to the data shown in Idrizi (2012: 47), in 1971 and 1981, there were, respectively, 1,238 and 176 people in the region who declared themselves to be Turks. This rapid decrease in the category “Turks” can be explained by the fact that in the 1960s people became able to go out from Yugoslavia to Western Europe as Gastarbeiters; therefore, Gorani people now had a range of possible destinations in addition to Turkey, but better than Turkey particularly for economic reasons, and there was no practical necessity for them to be Turks any longer.

2-1-5. 2011 Census

Table 9. Ethnic and cultural affiliation (Municipality of Dragaš), 2011 Census²⁵

| Total in the Region | Gorani people | Bosniaks | Albanians | Turks | Serbs |
|---------------------|---------------|----------|-----------|-------|-------|
| 33,997 | 8,957 | 4,100 | 20,287 | 202 | 7 |

Table 10. Mother tongue, 2011 Census

| Total in the Region | Serbian | Bosnian | Albanian | Turkish | Other |
|---------------------|---------|---------|----------|---------|-------|
| 33,997 | 1,975 | 4,693 | 20,194 | 109 | 6,978 |

In the 2011 Census there was no difference between ethnic and national affiliations; the census was conducted according to ethnic and/or cultural affiliation, with results shown in Table 9. “Bosniaks” here are Gorani

²⁴ A Muslim communist from Bosnia and Herzegovina who was involved in this issue, Salim Ćerić (1968), called Muslims *Muslimani srpskohrvatskog jezika* ‘Muslims of the Serbo-Croatian language’.

²⁵ The Municipality of Dragaš includes the former Municipality of Gora and Municipality of Opolje.

people who have modified their identity from “Muslim” to “Bosniak,” as was the case in Bosnia and Herzegovina and elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia (cf. Idrizi 2012: 51).

It is important to note an important discrepancy in the 2011 Census, as seen in Table 10. Although Gorani people are recognized as an ethnic/cultural group, their language is not recognized in the Census.²⁶ As a result, those classified as “Other” presumably include some portion who declared “Gorani” as their mother tongue. It is also important to note that there are 1,975 people who have declared Serbian as their mother tongue. Considering the fact that there are only 7 Serbs in Gora according to the census data, most of these Serbian-speakers must also be Gorani people.²⁷

Thus, as shown in the various censuses, Gorani people have declared their nationalities in various and shifting ways, most often as a reflection of the political situations they have been facing. However, this does not mean that their ethnic identity has been weak. On the contrary, it has been strong, as shown by the fact that they have not been assimilated by the majority Kosovan Albanians. In general, Gorani people can be characterized as those who clearly differentiate political (variable) and ethnic (invariable) identities.²⁸ However, the relationship between the two identities is nested within a broader Serbo-Croatianness, because, with the exceptional option to be “Turks” in 1950s and 1960s that they took up for various reasons including political and economic ones, most Gorani people in Kosovo always identified themselves as part of the

26 For the status of the Gorani language, see Section 3.

27 According to Serbian scholar Mitra Reljić (2013: 97), 72/108 (67%) of her informants declared that their mother tongue was Serbian or some version of it such as Old Serbian, Old Štokavian Serbian, etc. One may wonder if there was any influence of the interviewer’s nationality on interviewees’ answers in her research.

28 The political variability may be explained by their traditional way of being ruled. Gorani people have been traditionally loyal to their rulers—to the Ottoman Empire and then to Yugoslavia. According to a local teacher of Gorani origin, there is a saying in the Gora region: *Ako z’naš da nekoj radi protiv država a ti ne go kažuješ i ti si ka njego* ‘If you know that someone is doing [something] against the country, but you do not tell it, then you are just the same as him’. (Haljilji-Šuko 2014: 83).

Serbo-Croatian-speaking ethnic/national group. The long, continuous educational tradition particularly among Gorani elites in Kosovo is key to explaining this. In the beginning of the 20th century, Serbian-language schools opened in major villages such as Vranište (1918), Brod (1920), Restelica (1922), Rapča (1929) and others (cf. Idrizi 2012: 36. See also Haljilji-Šuko 2014: 12), and have continued to operate up until today.²⁹ Thus, being in a milieu where Serbian/Serbo-Croatian was functioning as the High language, Gorani people accepted it as their written language and mastered it in the school curriculum.

2-2. Macedonia

It is hard to determine the concrete number of Gorani people in Macedonia, as in Kosovo. First, Gorani people have not been recognized as a minority group in the country. Second, they are scattered in Tetovo or Skopje rather than having a particular area of residence, and they often identify as Torbeš or Macedonians-Muslims in those towns. However, there are two villages in Macedonia where Gorani people are a majority: Urvič and Jelovjane, situated in the municipality of Bogovinje (See Map 1). These Gorani people moved from villages in the Prizren Gora, such as Kruševo, Leštan, Brod, Restelica (in present-day Kosovo), Borje (in present-day Albania), and others in the 18th and 19th centuries (cf. Vidoeski 1973: 22, Trifunoski 1976: 386–388).

2-2-1. Dynamics of Ethnic/National Structure in Census Data for Urvič and Jelovjane (1953–2002)³⁰

According to Trifunoski (ibid.), in Urvič there are inhabitants of both Slavic and Albanian origin, while Jelovjane has a few inhabitants of Turkish origin (three houses, one family name only). However, as Tables 11 and 12 show, the most striking feature is that, unlike the situation in Kosovo (judging from the census data), the Gorani or Slavic people in these villages in most cases declared themselves to be Turks and did not

²⁹ There are also schools where Bosnian is taught, but linguistically, the difference between two languages is small even where the formal standards are considered and for locals, negligible. For details, see Section 3.

³⁰ All the Macedonian demographic data are provided by the State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia via e-mail, by my request.

Table 11. Urvič

| Year | Total | Macedonians | Albanians | Turks | Bosniaks/Muslims | Others |
|------|-------|-------------|-----------|-------|------------------|--------|
| 1953 | 1,027 | 9 | 3 | 1015 | — | 3 |
| 1961 | 770 | 0 | 8 | 761 | — | 1 |
| 1971 | 747 | 0 | 33 | 712 | — | 1 |
| 1981 | 830 | 7 | 74 | 634 | — | 115 |
| 1991 | 774 | 1 | 106 | 656 | — | 11 |
| 1994 | 811 | 1 | 95 | 699 | 0 | 0 |
| 2002 | 756 | 17 | 113 | 640 | 0 | 2 |

Table 12. Jelovjane

| Year | Total | Macedonians | Albanians | Turks | Bosniaks/Muslims | Others |
|------|-------|-------------|-----------|-------|------------------|--------|
| 1953 | 1,067 | 60 | 9 | 997 | — | 5 |
| 1961 | 687 | 3 | 24 | 658 | — | 2 |
| 1971 | 743 | 10 | 18 | 713 | — | 1 |
| 1981 | 892 | 32 | 14 | 648 | — | 197 |
| 1991 | 845 | 0 | 15 | 781 | — | 48 |
| 1994 | 719 | 2 | 18 | 670 | — | 25 |
| 2002 | 599 | 5 | 40 | 439 | 8 | 7 |

change their identification as such over the years, although they could have chosen to be Muslims since 1961 or Bosniaks after the collapse of Yugoslavia. Locals might have declared themselves as Muslims, Bosniaks or even Gorani people and been included as “Others,” as locals do know that they are Gorani people, but in reality this has not happened, which shows the depth of their ethnic/national affiliation to Turkishness.³¹

31 It is important to note that there are various varieties of their identification, though many locals identify themselves as Turks in the end. Here are a few patterns found in interviews conducted in May, 2018. 1. Gorani people only in the past: According to an imam in Jelovjane, locals were Gorani people because their ancestors came from Prizren Gora, but now they have become Turks. 2. Turks, not Gorani people at all: they are Turks, not Gorani people at all by denying the fact that their ancestors came from Prizren Gora. 3. Gorani people, but also Turks: Another way of identification is that local people in those villages are indeed Gorani people, but it is a local identity (such as Skopjans), which is not an ethnic identity. In the latter sense, they are Turks.

2-2-2. Mother Tongues in 2002 Census**Table 13. Mother tongues in Urvič and Jelovjane (2002)**

| | Total | Macedonian | Albanian | Turkish | Bosnian | Serbian | Other |
|-----------|-------|------------|----------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| Urvič | 756 | 2 | 113 | 640 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Jelovjane | 599 | 48 | 30 | 512 | 5 | 2 | 5 |

It is also important to note that most Gorani people in these two villages declare Turkish as their mother tongue, as Table 13 shows. However, in reality, most Gorani people here do not speak Turkish;³² instead, they speak Gorani dialect and Standard Macedonian.³³ In their village school, Gorani people do not learn Turkish either.³⁴ Their logic is: Turks' mother tongue should be Turkish, even though they do not speak it in reality.³⁵

Why these striking differences within the same ethnic group? The main reasons seem to be the following: first, unlike in the Kosovan part of the Gora region, in Macedonian Gora the Serbian/Serbo-Croatian language was not introduced into the educational curriculum until the 1980s. Even in the 80s, Serbo-Croatian was not taught on a regular basis; instead, locals learned the Macedonian language as the official

32 According to locals, there are indeed people who speak Turkish, but they learned it as a foreign language, not as a mother tongue.

33 According to Trifunoski (1976: 384–387), the local populations in two villages have accepted Macedonian and speak it, but at the same time he calls the language *torbeški jezik* 'a language of Torbeši (= Macedonian Muslims)'. It is not always clear exactly what he means, but Trifunoski seem to identify the Gorani ethnolect as Macedonian.

34 According to Tairi Lokman, a local historian and teacher from Urvič, the application to invite a teacher of Turkish at the local school was declined by the local government a couple of times. However, the course will possibly be implemented from September 2018.

35 According to Serif Mustafa, one of my informants from Jelovjane. Also, Victor Friedman (in personal communication), stated that the same attitude is already seen in Marko Cepenkov's ethnic anecdotes from the 19th century. It is also important to note that some local people deny the Turkish identity, because they indeed do not speak Turkish at all and their mother tongue is a dialect of Macedonian. Such people argue that they are Macedonians and, to be more precise, "Macedonian Muslims."

language of Macedonia, introduced in the school curriculum as an obligatory language after WWII. Thus, Gorani people were not simply “Muslims of the Serbo-Croatian language,” on the one hand. On the other hand, the category “Macedonian” is difficult for Gorani people to identify with, because they have had a tradition of viewing themselves as Turks for centuries, and the notion of the Macedonian nationality is, first, historically foreign to them and, second, fairly closely associated with Orthodoxy. In addition, some local people believe that they are Slavicized Turks, which justifies their identification with Turks.³⁶ Thus, it is not surprising that there is no movement in favor of official status for the Gorani language nor much desire to standardize it in Macedonia,³⁷ unlike the case among Kosovan Gorani people, as will be shown in the following sections.

3. Into Bosniaks and the Bosnian Language: Beginning of New Incorporation?

As we have seen in 2-1-5, in Kosovo more than 30% of Gorani people regard themselves as Bosniaks and their mother tongue as Bosnian. It is notable that these Gorani people of Bosniak orientation, together with other South Slavic Muslims in Kosovo, succeeded in introducing Bosnian as an official language at the municipal level, as confirmed by the Assembly of Kosovo in 2006 and then by the Constitution in 2008. Why do these Gorani people choose Bosnian ethnic/national identity, even though given the chance to declare themselves in a different way? There seem to be multiple explanations for this phenomenon.

³⁶ For instance, the abovementioned Tairi Lokman from Urvič.

³⁷ This situation is parallel to that of the West Polesian dialects and local speakers' linguistic identity of the Western Polesia. In the Belarusian West Polesia, local activists tended to regard their subdialect as too different from Belarusian (and Russian) to include their subdialect into Belarusian, which was one of the driving forces to create a separate West Polesian literary language in the late 1980s in Belarus. On the other hand, in the Ukrainian West Polesia, their subdialect is close to standard Ukrainian, therefore local activists did not see a reason to create a separate West Polesian literary language, but rather regarded their own subdialect as a part or a dialect of Ukrainian. For details, see Nomachi (2017).

3-1. Religion and its Cultural Tradition

According to Joseph (2004: 163), both ethnic and national identities are focused on or justified by a common cultural heritage. The cultural heritage is often related to a religious tradition, which means that religious and ethnic identities are often closely connected. In the Western Balkans, after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, in this territory religion has become the most salient feature of national identity and functions as an ethnic/national symbol (cf. Mønnesland 2013: 257). Thus, roughly speaking, today in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, it is often regarded almost automatically that Serbs are Orthodox, Croats are Catholic, Bosniaks are Muslim, and vice versa, and then, behind the nationality, a given national cultural heritage is taken for granted.³⁸

Discussing Bosnian identity at the turn of the 20th century, Alexander says, “Bosnian identity, in its Bosniak form, was based on the historical amalgamation of Slavic and Islamic elements into a unique blend of culture, which was enriched by the best of Arabic, Persian and Ottoman Turkish cultural contribution but which remained quintessentially Balkan” (Alexander 2013: 414); similarly, as has been pointed out by Mønnesland (2013: 258), Bosniaks, as a nation, are defined according to their Oriental cultural background. These statements can be applied to Gorani people’s identity as well, which can then be regarded as a natural continuation of their Muslim identity developed and shared with the Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina (now under the name of Bosniaks) since the 1960s.³⁹ One striking difference between Gorani people and

38 It is important to note that the majority of Albanians in Kosovo are Muslims. Thus, language is still at issue.

39 In addition, it is noteworthy that in the Post-Yugoslav era Slavic Muslims in the Sandžak region have embraced the Bosniak identity, which is a clear parallel and remote cause for Gorani people to become Bosniaks. For Bosniaks in Bosnia, in turn, there is no established common view on this topic. According to Senahid Halilović (in personal communication), Bosniaks do not know much about Gorani people and do not have close contact with them, although he himself respects Gorani people’s declaration of their ethnic/national affiliation. On the other hand, Vajzović (2012: 71) opines that it is difficult to accept the declaration of Gorani people to be Bosniaks, because except for Slavic origin and religion, they have nothing in common from geopolitical, ethnic, cultural, linguistic viewpoints.

Bosniaks, however, is that among Gorani people the category of “Serbian Muslims” never gained popularity, which makes it easier for Gorani to identify themselves as Bosniaks.⁴⁰

Of course, Gorani people can also be viewed as closer to Macedonian Muslims, and indeed there have been various actions to justify the integration of the Gorani people into Macedonians by *Sojuz na Makedoncite so islamska religija* ‘the Alliance of Macedonians of the Islamic religion,’ headed by Ismail Bojda, who is originally from Brod and now lives in Skopje. However, these efforts have not had any visible success, as can be seen in the results of the latest Census.

3-2. Language

One might think that, being Bosniaks, those Gorani people who identify as such would naturally take the Bosnian language as their mother tongue. In that light, however, if they in fact regard the Gorani ethnolect as a part of the Bosnian language, then it might be a bit complicated, though the census data do not reveal this situation.

From a purely linguistic viewpoint, the fact is that the Gorani ethnolect is situated in the periphery of Balkan Slavic and has been formed with a mixture of linguistic features of the North Macedonian dialects and Serbian dialects of the Šar Mountain area and of Metohija (Mladenović 2001: 518), whose oldest layer belongs to Serbian (Mladenović 1995: 111).⁴¹ In addition, authoritative linguists from the former Yugoslavia such as Pavle Ivić (1991: 216) and Božidar Vidoeski (1998: 312) regard the Gorani dialect as a West Macedonian dialect. In any case, the Gorani ethnolect’s linguistic structure is much closer to the Macedonian than the Serbian standard language, considering the presence of a series of typical Balkanisms (Mladenović 2001: 536). One reason why Gorani people in Kosovo do not regard their mother tongue as Macedonian is that the

40 Indeed, there are scholars such as Harun Hasani (2011: 312–313) who regard Gorani as Islamized Serbs and argue that their dialect belongs to the Serbian language.

41 Mladenović (2012: 129) opines that the Gorani dialect is a peripheral dialect of the West Macedonian dialect with infiltration of Serbian features. See also Vidoeski (1998: 312).

standard Macedonian language has never become an official language of Kosovo and Gorani people have never learned it in school. Instead, as indicated above, they learned Serbian/Serbo-Croatian in school, which was sufficient to perform all administrative functions in Yugoslavia. Thus, one might wonder if there is any good reason to link the Gorani ethnolect with Bosnian or treat it as a Bosnian dialect. Idrizi (personal communication) justifies the link as follows:⁴²

I want to emphasize that the Gorani dialect is equally far both from Serbian and Bosnian that existed almost 150 years as a single language (Serbo-Croatian/Croato-Serbian). The differences between them are rather of political than of linguistic nature.⁴³ The Gorani dialect can be Bosnian in the same degree as Serbian dialects in Sirinička Župa or Vranje.

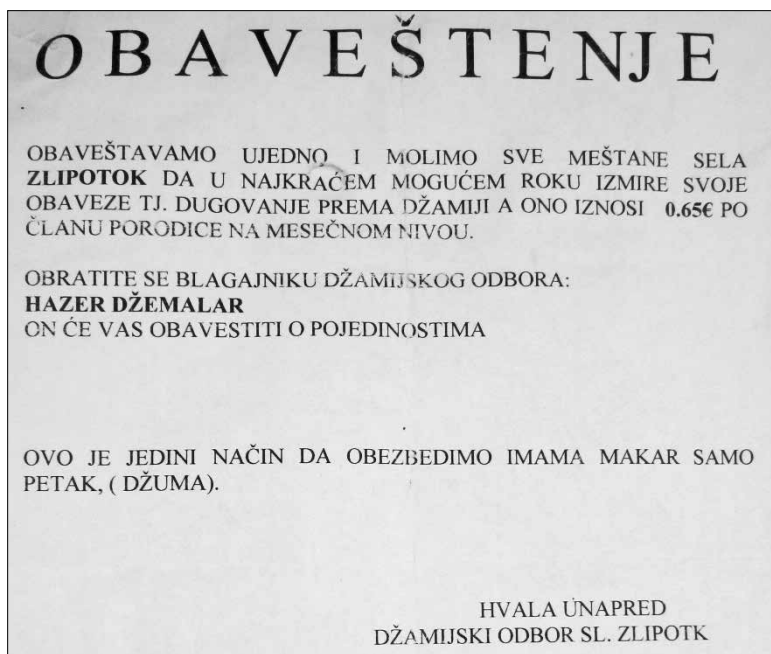
On the other hand, it is worth noting that in Yugoslavia, Gorani people learned only the Ekavian variety of Serbo-Croatian, which today underlies one of the two forms of the Serbian standard language, but not Bosnian, whose standard variety is Ijekavian based. Thus, the variant of the former Serbo-Croatian that Gorani people speak is in essence nothing but Serbian.⁴⁴ However, this fact does not always mean much for Gorani people. During my field research conducted in Zlipotok in the Gora region with the late Ramadan Redžeplari in 2012, I showed six local Gorani people coming to mosque a notice written in Ekavian using the Latin alphabet (Picture 1) on one of the walls of the mosque and asked

42 Želim naglasiti da je goranski govor podjednako udaljen i od srpskog i od bosanskog jezika koji su gotovo 150 godina egzistirali u okviru jednog jezika (srpskohrvatski/hrvatskosrpski) i razlike među njima su više političke nego lingvističke prirode. Goranski može biti bosanski u onoj mjeri u kojoj mogu biti srpski govori Siriničke Župe i Vranja.

43 However, the Ekavian–Ijekavian difference is not always marginalized. For instance, the school textbooks include works that were originally in Ekavian (for instance, Hamid Isljami's literary works), but have been rendered in the textbooks in Ijekvian in order to make them sound more Bosnian.

44 Thus, it comes as no surprise that a significant number of Gorani people have declared Serbian as their mother tongue in the latest census. Indeed, one has to note that *Muslimani* cannot be automatically identified with Ijekvians, though the portion of the Ekavian *Muslimani* is rather small.

Picture 1: Notice at the entrance of the Mosque in Zlipotok



them for the name of the language in question. All of them replied to me, *bosanski jezik* ‘the Bosnian language’, or simply *bosanski* ‘Bosnian.’⁴⁵

For them, the correct name of the former Serbo-Croatian used among Gorani people should be Bosnian, as a language of Muslims.⁴⁶ On

45 In Bosnian standard, the following forms should be used: *obavještenje* ‘notice,’ *obavještavamo* ‘we inform,’ *mještane* ‘locals,’ *mjesečni* ‘monthly,’ *obezbjedimo* ‘we assure,’ *unaprijed* ‘in advance.’

46 The same reasoning can be found among some Bosnian linguists. For instance, Jahić et al. (2000: 39) count the Gorani dialect as a dialect of Bosnian, though Jahić (1999) does not include any Gorani dialect among the Bosnian dialects. By the way, one of my informants Nuhija Tairovci who uses only the Ekavian variety told me that his idiolect should be called Bosnian because it contains many lexemes of Turkish origin that are shared more with Bosnian than with Serbian.

the other hand, they differentiate Bosnian from the Gorani dialect by the fact that the Gorani dialect is just for colloquial use. This is one reason why they use the Qur'an in Bosnian translation and do not really need a Gorani translation of the Qur'an.⁴⁷

In addition, preference for the Bosnian language is motivated by a practical reason, particularly for leaders working on Gorani people's cultural heritage. One of the school curriculum developers in the Bosnian language, Sadik Idrizi (2014), explains as follows:⁴⁸

In the instruction of the Bosnian language, in almost all grades, contents and texts are taken from local literature of the Gora region and texts of famous authors and creators of the region... Only in the frame of school curricula in Bosnian can Gorani people express and affirm their own linguistic, folkloristic, cultural and other specialties.⁴⁹

47 According to Hadži Muharem, an imam in Prizren, it is difficult to develop a Gorani translation of the Qur'an because the Gorani ethnolect does not have an established standard variety, which means that such a translation could spoil the holiness of the Qur'an and cause wrong interpretation of it.

48 This citation is taken from Sandžak Press: <http://sandzakpress.net/afirmacija-jezika-i-kulture-gorana>. The translation is: *U nastavi na bosanskom jeziku, gotovo u svim razredima, planirani su sadržaj i tekstovi iz narodne književnosti Gore, te tekstovi poznatih pisaca i stvaralaca iz ove regije... Jedino u okviru školskih programa na bosanskom jeziku Gorani mogu iskazati i afirmisati svoje jezičke, folklorne kulturološke i druge posebnosti.*

49 According to Idrizi (ibid.), the following authors' works are introduced in the textbooks. II grade: *Dolapče* (Hamid Isljami); III grade: *Šamar* (Sadik Idrizi), IV grade: *Amidah Bream* (Hamid Isljami), *Persijski ćilim* (Sadik Idrizi); V grade: *Paket za djecu* (Hamid Isljami), Gorani folklore songs and stories, *Čekmedže* (Ramadan Redžepčari); VI grade *Azil* (Sadik Idrizi), *Pismo iz Gore* (Hamid Isljami), *Haiku* (Vejsel Hamza), Gorani folklore stories; VII grade: *Nevjesta* (Vejsel Hamza), *Murat i Razija* (Jonus Koljo); VIII grade: *Majka* (Vejsel Hamza), *Lopovčić* (Hamid Isljami), Gorani balade *Jusuf i Džemilja*; IX grade: Poems (various authors), proses (Sadik Idrizi); X grade: *Hasanaginica*, *Omer i Merima*, *Derzelez Alija* in Gora folkore epic and lyric poetry, Gorani folklore prose taken from Nazif Dokle; XI grade: some works by Gorani poet Zejnel Abedin Ferhat. It is also important to note that the textbooks include works of Bosniaks from other parts of Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia in addition to literary works from Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this context, it is worth

3-3. Politics

It goes without saying that Bosniaks are today the largest and most influential national group among Slavic Muslims in the Balkans. There are also Slavic Muslims such as Torbeši (Macedonia, Albania), Pomaks (Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey) and others, but none of them is strong or numerous enough in a political sense to serve as an alternative center of gravity and there are no close historical links between them and the Gorani either. To save oneself or one's group from domination and aggression, it can be useful to be a part of a larger group, as long as their identity does not contradict one's own established identity too much. Hence, it is not surprising that neither Bulgarian nor Macedonian political campaigns to incorporate Gorani people into Bulgarians or Macedonians were that successful,⁵⁰ even though Bulgaria offered more useful passports than the Kosovan or Serbian and even though there would have been chances for schooling under better conditions in the "mother country."

Thus, one can conclude that the new "integration" of Gorani people into the Bosniaks and the Gorani ethnolect into the Bosnian language are not a case of involuntary assimilation, and are not "anti-Gorani" phenomena at all. On the contrary, this on the one hand is an evolution of the Gorani people's traditional identification based on the linguistic, historical, and cultural backgrounds they share with Bosniaks in Bosnia, keeping their national and ethnic identities in a nested form; then too, on the other hand, Gorani people are aware of their political weakness as they have become a minority in the new political milieu, which forces Gorani people to struggle for their existence. For this purpose, being Bosniaks could be the best choice for them.

noticing that these textbooks include literary works in Ekavian if the writers are Muslims. As such an example, one can mention Rabija Šaronjić, a writer born in Montenegro and her poem entitled *Dobar čovek* (not *čovjek*) 'A Good Man,' included in the text book of VII grade.

⁵⁰ The number of the Gorani people who desire a Bulgarian passport (which, of course, is an EU passport) has been growing, thus in a sense it could be a success. Bulgarians also established *Udruženje Bugara Kosova* 'The Association of Kosovan Bulgarians' in Priština in 2012 in cooperation with the State Security for Bulgarians Abroad. However, it is not clear if the number of Bulgarians would ever become larger, because the Kosovan government permits multiple citizenship.

In this context, it is important to note that being a Bosniak does not automatically mean not being a Gorani. According to Mangalakova (2008: 29), many Gorani people recalled that the abovementioned Sadik Idrizi regarded himself as Gorani as late as 1999 but that after that he became a “greater Bosniak than the Bosniaks.” However, this is not correct; in fact, Idrizi’s intention has been to keep a Gorani micro-identity within the Bosniak macro-identity, because, according to him, the micro-identity is not enough for the Gorani to preserve themselves as a distinct group in the Balkan context.⁵¹

4. Continuing Dissolution? Gorani People and Gorani Ethnolect as Independent Entities

As can be seen in the results of the latest 2011 Census, the most popular ethnic/national identification of Gorani people is simply—“Gorani people” (ca. 69%). This result is also understandable because Gorani people were Muslims (with a capital letter M) in the sense of nationality until the 1991 census, but they were not until recently “Bosniaks,” a notion most closely linked geographically and politically with Bosnia, where the Gorani people are not collectively from.⁵² As pointed out by Billig (1995: 9, citation after Mønnesland 2013: 10), “Having a national identity also involves being situated physically, legally, socially, as well as emotionally: typically, it means being situated within a homeland, which itself is situated within the world or nations.”

Those who are against the identification of Gorani people as Bosniaks tend to be sensitive about the difference of language varieties in question and criticize its “unnaturalness” in terms of asserting the Bosnian language to be their language (see also Section 3-2). One can

51 This is according to my personal communication with Sadik Idrizi, dated October 21, 2017.

52 Haljilji-Šuko (2014: 11) criticizes those who claim the Bosniak identity, on the basis of the principle that it is logically impossible for parents to be Gorans but children to be Bosniaks. In reality, however, this often happens. One of my informants from Zlipotok told me that he declared himself as Gorani, but his sister declared herself as Bosniak.

find such a statement, for instance, in Haljilji-Šuko (2014: 12) who claims as follows:⁵³

Now in some schools children learn Bosnian. I do not know whether such schools have qualified teachers...Now the school has the name *Svetlost* ‘Light’, but if their instruction is in Bosnian, then why it is not written as *Svijetlost*.⁵⁴

For non-Bosniak-oriented Gorani people, their separateness is expressed mostly on the linguistic level; however, they are also conscious that they do not have their own normative grammar and writing system, which would be needed for education in Gorani (cf. Haljilji-Šuko 2014: 12). As another reason, one may mention the fact that the Bosnian literary language as a successor of Serbo-Croatian is a relatively new phenomenon, because of which, its prestige is not necessarily high among Gorani people.

Thus, it comes as no surprise that there has appeared a kind of language planning to establish a codified and standardized Gorani language as an official language. Two different ways of pursuing this ultimate goal have been utilized, as the next section will discuss in detail.

4-1. Status Planning: Collaboration with International Organizations

In 2006, “[b]ased on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and its Protocols, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, and taking into account the

⁵³ *Sega vo nekuje škole deca učet na bošnjački. Neznam a imaje ovja škole stručni kadar...Sega škola nosi ime „Svetlost“, pa ako je nastava na bošnjački, zašto neje napišano „Svijetlost“.* The correct form should be *Svijetlost*, which itself also shows that Gorani people are indeed not familiar with Ijekavian forms.

⁵⁴ In addition, their Gorani accent makes it difficult for Gorani people to be accepted as Bosniaks. According to Haljilji-Šuko (2014: 11), some Gorani people who have lived in Bosnia for their entire life are treated as Albanians there. He does not specify the reason, but one could speculate that this is due to their softened pronunciation of *l* like *lj*, which is shared with Albanian, and is, moreover, taken as emblematic of an Albanian accent in former Serbo-Croatian.

Hague Recommendations regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities and the Oslo Recommendations regarding the Linguistic Rights of National Minorities, the Guidelines on the use of Minority Languages in the Broadcast Media, and with the intention to regulate the use of languages,” the *Law on the Use of Languages* was adopted by the Assembly of Kosovo.⁵⁵ This law guarantees the right to use of minority languages, in Article 2, which is quoted in part here:⁵⁶

2-3. In municipalities inhabited by a community whose mother tongue is not an official language, and which constitutes at least five (5) percent of the total population of the municipality, the language of the community shall have the status of an official language in the municipality and shall be in equal use with the official languages. Notwithstanding the foregoing, exceptionally, in Prizren Municipality the Turkish language shall have the status of an official language.

2-4. In municipalities inhabited by a community whose mother tongue is not one of the official languages of Kosovo and which represents above 3 (three) percent of the total population of the municipality, the language of the community shall have the status of a language in official use in the municipality in accordance with the provisions specified in Article 8. In addition, a community whose language has been traditionally spoken in a municipality shall also have the status of a language in official use within that municipality. Pursuant to Article 35, municipalities shall adopt detailed regulations on this issue within six months of the promulgation of this law.

Theoretically, Gorani could and still can have official status in the municipality of Dragaš, because Gorani people comprise more than 26% of the whole population of the municipality (8,987/33,997), but not elsewhere.

The *Law on the Use of Languages* also required the Kosovo government establish a Language Commission to supervise the *Law's* implementation (Article 32); this was accomplished in 2007. However, the Language Commission did not function effectively, and as a result the implementation of the *Law on the Use of Languages* was not

55 http://www.assembly-kosova.org/common/docs/ligjet/2006_02-L37_en.pdf

56 http://www.assembly-kosova.org/common/docs/ligjet/2006_02-L37_en.pdf

Picture 2: Appointment of representatives of each linguistic community to the Language Policy Board



REPUBLIKA E KOSOVËS – ZYRA E PRESIDENTIT
 REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO – OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
 REPUBLIKA KOSOVA – URED PREDSEDNIKA
 KESHILLI KONSULTATIV PËR KOMUNITETE
 CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL FOR COMMUNITIES
 KONSULTATIVNO VEĆE ZA ZAJEDNICE

| | | | |
|-----------------|--|------------------------|--------------|
| PËR | Kryeministrin e Republikës së Kosovës, z. Hashim Thaçi | DATE DATUM DATE | 23.04.2012 |
| | | Reference | Nr. 001/2012 |
| CC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presidentes së Republikës së Kosovës znj. Atifete Jahjaga, • Zyrës për Çështje të Komuniteteve, z. Srdan Popović, • Zyrës Ligjore të Kryeministrit, z. Besim Kajtazi | | |
| NGA | Keshilli Konsultativ Për Komunitete | | |
| SUBJEKTI | Vendimi për emërimin e përfaqësuesve për anëtarë të Bordit për politika të gjuhëve | | |

Në mbështetje të nenit 60 të Kushtetutës së Republikës së Kosovës, duke u bazuar në nenin 2 paragrafi 1. i Statutit të Këshillit Konsultativ Për Komunitete, si dhe në nenin 7 paragrafët 3 dhe 5 të Rregullores nr. 07/2012 për Zyrën e Komisionerit për Gjuhët, Këshilli Konsultativ Për Komunitete, në mbledhjen e mbajtur më 23 prill 2012, mori:

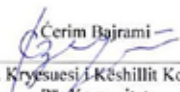
VENDIM

PËR EMËRIMIN E PËRFAQËSUESVE PËR ANËTARË TË BORDIT PËR POLITIKA TË GJUHËVE

1. Nga një (1) përfaqësues për secilin nga komunitetet gjuhësore në vijim:

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Lulzim Canaj | për gjuhën shqipe |
| 2. Petar Miletić | për gjuhën serbe |
| 3. Çerim Bajrami | për gjuhën boshnjake |
| 4. Ercan Kasap | për gjuhën turke |
| 5. Kujtim Paçaku | për gjuhën rome |
| 6. Josip Blaško | për gjuhën kroate |
| 7. Snežana Karadžić | për gjuhën malazeze |
| 8. Ramadan Redžepari | për gjuhën gorane |

2. Vendimi hyn në fuqi ditën e nënshkrimit.


 Cerim Bajrami
 Zv. Kryesuesi i Këshillit Konsultativ
 Për Komunitete

successful. The problem was recognized not only by national minorities but also by the Kosovo government and the international community. Thus, considering a range of international experiences and best practices, the Office of the Prime Minister and the International Civilian Office, with the support of national minority groups, agreed to establish a new administrative unit of the Office of the Language Commissioner in 2012, funded by the Budget of Kosovo; the Office of the Prime Minister also agreed to provide a separate budget for the Office of the Language Commissioner.⁵⁷

Under the auspices of Article 6 in *Regulation No. 07/2012 on the Office of the Language Commissioner*, where the “Gorani language” is mentioned as one of the languages of linguistic communities of Kosovo together with Albanian, Serbian, Bosnian, Turkish, Romani, Croatian, and Montenegrin, the Language Policy Board was established (Picture 2).⁵⁸

The inclusion of the Gorani language was due to the efforts of Avnija Bahtijari, who is of Gorani origin and who worked in the secretariat of the Communities Committee within the Presidency of the Republic of Kosovo, and on the legal side, to the Office of the Prime Minister, Legal Office, and Office for Communities. Ramadan Redžepari (1944–2016), a local writer and self-taught ethnographer, was appointed as the first representative of the Gorani language on the Language Policy Board (for details on Redžepari, see 4-2.). Bahtijari expected that the Language Policy Board would function for standardizing the Goran ethnolect under Redžepari’s guidance as well; however, because of his illness and age, Redžepari stepped down from the position of the representative of the Gorani language without any significant work having been done toward this goal.

The activity of the Language Policy Board continues in cooperation with The Mission in Kosovo of the Organization for Security and

⁵⁷ This information has been provided by Mr. Maurizio Montipò, who worked for the International Civilian Office, and to whom I am extremely grateful for his help and discussion with me.

⁵⁸ See p. 6 and p. 9 in *Regulation No. 07/202 on the Office of the Language Commissioner*.

Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), protecting and promoting Human rights including minority language rights as one of the goals. However, according to Zaimi Fergap, the representative who took over Redžepłari's role, the Language Policy Board has a merely decorative function, to create the appearance for foreign officials that language rights are respected and minorities were given enough attention in the frame of law.⁵⁹

There is also a political party, *Pokret za Gora* 'Movement for Gora,' organized by the abovementioned Avnija Bahtijari that has declared the standardization of the Gorani language as one of the party's priorities in its manifesto,⁶⁰ but, to the best of my knowledge, there has been no concerted effort to standardize the Gorani language in a top-down manner.⁶¹

4-2. Corpus Planning and Ramadan Redžepłari

It was not coincidental that Ramadan Redžepłari became the first representative of the Gorani language on the Language Policy Board, because he was one of the first Gorani people who had tried to develop a written form of the Gorani ethnolect. While there have been many poets and writers in Gorani both before and after Redžepłari, using the Serbian Cyrillic script or the Latin script of the Gajica type, it was Redžepłari who set up a unique writing system for his mother tongue.

Redžepłari, who was born in Zlipotok in Gora and lived in Prizren, actively published Gorani folklore texts and songs, including originals by him, written in several Gorani dialects, and compiled a "Great Gorani-Serbo-Croatian-Bosnian Dictionary" (over 110,000 entries) (Redžepłari 2016: 73). Unfortunately, the dictionary has not been published, as the author passed away before finalizing it.

59 According to my interview with Zaimi Fergap.

60 This document is entitled *Program političke stranke „Pokret za Gora—PG“* "Program of the political party "Pokret za Gora—PG." The document was provided to me by Avnija Bahtijari.

61 It is interesting to note that there are a range of opinions among Gorani people with regard to standardization of their language. For instance, the abovementioned Zaimi Fergap thinks that standardization of the Gorani language could be harmful because such a linguistic unification may cause the loss of diversity of the Gorani dialects.

Picture 3: Redžeplari's *Instruction for a Good Reading*

UPUTSTVO ZA LJESNO ČITANJE

Da bi moglo has goranski da se pišuje ka šo zborot Gorani, toga trebet harfoji (slova) šo ge nema vo bosanski, srpski, hrvatski i makedonski jezik, a ge ima vo druge jezici, pa će kulanđisujem takve glasoji a harfoji nešto sljične.

Urnek:

| | | | |
|-----------------------|----------|---------|-----------------|
| 1. turski | I | - slovo | |
| arnautski | Ě | - slovo | |
| goranski će bide vake | | | Ī - harf |
| 2. arnautski | X | - slovo | |
| goranski će bide vake | | | Ž - harf |
| 3. turski | Ū | - slovo | |
| arnautski | Y | - slovo | |
| goranski će bide vake | | | Ū - harf |
| 4. arapski | Ā | - slovo | |
| goranski će bide vake | | | Ĥ - harf |

I. za dlđigo čitanje nat harf išaret je - (~)
urnek: amā - će se čita vake: amaaa.

II. za ovlaš čitanje nat harf išaret je - (°)
urnek: aima - m - slovo se čita ovlaš

III. za dupljiranje slova išaret je - (˘)
urnek: džāde će se čita vake džādde.

At first, Redžeplari did not have any intention to codify the Gorani language; he wrote in Gorani because *jen miljet ako ne pišuje, on neće ima zajedničko pamtenje; će zabrava* '[i]f a nation does not write, it will not have a common memory and it will forget (one's root)' (Redžeplari 2014: 33) and *da bi moglo has goranski da se pišuje ka šo zborot Gorani, toga trebet harfoji šo ge nema vo bosanski, srpski, hrvatski i makedonski jezik* 'what is written just like Gorani people speak should be authentic Gorani, some letters that do not exist in Bosnian, Serbian, Croatian or

Macedonian are needed' (Redžeplari 2005: 13)

For that purpose, Redžeplari introduced a few new letters and diacritics into the Latin alphabet of Serbo-Croatian (Picture 3).

Traditionally, even though Gorani people are Muslims, they were not against the Cyrillic alphabet, whereas other Balkan Muslims may not prefer to use as the Cyrillic alphabet is a symbol of Orthodox Church; for example, one of the most productive Gorani poets and writers, Hamid Isljami (1959–2013), used Cyrillic for most of his works in the Gorani ethnolect. Obviously, Redžeplari took the Latin script as a way to be closer to the Bosnian, Turkish and Albanian languages, all of which he was familiar with and had mastered impeccably.⁶²

62 In this context it is noteworthy that sometimes Redžeplari calls the former

Redžepłari's view on the Gorani ethnolect gradually evolved, however, as that can be seen in the content of his publications. In the introduction to his first book, *Čekmedže* 'A Treasure Box,' published in 2005, he wrote as follows:

Since until now nobody has tried to write such a book in Gorani (at least I do not know any), I will try to create it as the first touchstone (*Čekmedže*, p. 11)⁶³

However, by the time Redžepłari published the third volume of *Čekmedže* (2011), his intention seems to have changed. In the introduction of the volume, he wrote as follows:

Since until now nobody has tried to write such a book in the Gorani language (at least I do not know any)...I expect that I have done the first touchstone for the step-forward Gorani grammar (*Čekmedže* 3, p. 9)⁶⁴

Thus, unlike in the first, 2005 volume, by 2011 the author was explicitly using the word *jezik* 'language' for the Gorani ethnolect, and mentioned a future grammar of the Gorani language.⁶⁵

Redžepłari introduced three more letters to the Latin alphabet in *Čekmedže* 3 to make his writing system more adequate for the Gorani language (Picture 4).

Serbo-Croatian *širpsko-bosanski jezik* 'Serbo-Bosnian language' (Redžepłari 2014: 98). This implies that Serbian and Bosnian are the same language for him and it is these languages that matter for Gorani people.

63 *Deka du sega, na goranski nikoj vake ne pokušaj, (bare mene ne mi je poznato) ja će se obidem da parajim pırva sībica.*

64 *Deka du sega, na goranski jezik nikoj vake ne se obidef, (bare mene ne mi je znıto)...pa hesapim da som zapraif pırva sībica za vo goranska natamošna gramatika.*

65 The word *gramatika* 'grammar' itself does not mean a normative grammar. However, in my interview with Redžepłari in Prizren in 2012, he clearly told me that he meant a normative grammar for a future standard variety of the Gorani language. In addition, when we visited Nazif Dokle (1945–2014) in Albania, Redžepłari suggested to Dokle that they work together to establish a standard variety of the Gorani language, but Dokle did not agree with Redžepłari. The reason was that before standardizing their language, Gorani people have to make efforts to save the language, particularly in Albania.

Picture 4. Modified writing system in *Čekmedže 3*

Za tija moj predlog je da tija nove slova (harfoji ili grateme) bide između slične i srodne slova, ka šo ge naznačujem zdola, da između:

Č – i – Ć - bide i vakof harf: Ç ;
pa između harfoji:
L – i – Lj – da bide i vakof harf: Ļ
i između harfoji:
N – i – Nj - da bide i vakof harf: Ṇ.

However, he himself could not master what he had invented, and indeed one can find many inconsistencies in his publications.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, his writing system was welcomed by some Gorani people, one of whom, Čemal Asani, makes the following comment:

Let me repeat, it would be very nice if all Gorani people would accept those letters, of course with certain modifications, in which case, I think, we would help standardization of our dearest Gorani language spoken and passed on down to us by our ancestors (Čemal Asani's review of Redžeplari's last book *Gorske kajnaci* published in (2014)).⁶⁷

Notwithstanding the efforts of Avnija Bahtijari to promote Redžeplari's activity, including distribution of his publications among pupils to let them know that the Gorani ethnolect could have a written form and help them learn Redžeplari's writing system and read his

66 For instance, Redžeplari has registered the lexeme *deljikanlija* 'a young man' in his glossary of *Čekmedže 3*, but he uses forms such as *deljikanlija* and *delikanlija* as well.

67 *Jope veljim mlogu ubavo bi bilo ka bi sme ge ukabulile sve Gorani harfojiti, tabi i so nekuje korisne izmene biduje, samo toga mene mi se čini, mlogu bi sme prinesle za standardizacija za naš najmif goranski, šo ni go zborile i ostajlje ka amanet našete stare.*

works, as far as I know, there are not many Gorani people who follow this orthography.⁶⁸ One of the major reasons is that this writing system remained a personal language tool and was not actively shared, and there is no significant difficulty to using other writing systems such as Albanian (as Nazif Dokle and others do, particularly in Albania⁶⁹) or Bosnian (as Sadik Idrizi and many others do, particularly in Kosovo) with only a few modifications if one wishes to write in Gorani, though any necessity of doing so is rather rare in their everyday life.

To conclude, the Gorani ethnolect in Kosovo is *de jure* an independent language, and can serve as a good threshold case of Kamusella's definition of a language: "a language is a politically (in the broadest meaning of this term) empowered lect, a direct reflection of the actual political situation of the speech community—that is a (ethnic) group which speaks (and writes) this lect." (Kamusella 2015: 19). On the other hand, it does not implicate the visible presence of any standardization of the Gorani language, which might be unusual in the Balkans, where 'a language' is expected to be standardized (cf. Radovanović 2003: 202).⁷⁰ At this stage, Gorani is not even a literary microlanguage, but remains on the level of a so-called literary dialect (cf. Duličenko 2015: 574). However, this does not mean that there is no potential to develop a standard variety. According to Bahtijari, there are Gorani people who indeed long to have a standardized variety of the Gorani language.⁷¹ In this context, it may be worth noting that there are two local radio stations that have religious and cultural (including folkloristic topics) programs

68 Another reviewer of the book, Sait Ibiš, let me know when I interviewed him that he actively uses the earlier version of Redžepčari's writing system.

69 It is important to note that Nazif Dokle compiled his monumental *Rečnik goranski (nashinski)—Allbanski*, using the Albanian writing system.

70 For instance, Bošnjaković and Sikimić (2013: 190) assert that the Bunjevac ethnolect can only be called *govor* 'a lect', not *jezik* 'a language', because it does not possess a standardized form.

71 This is according to my interview with Avnija Bahtijari, who told me that for Gorani people not to be assimilated, a standardized language with its own script is imperative.

in the Gorani ethnolect, and thus there is a sphere of Gorani usage other than in colloquial communication.⁷²

Conclusion

In this article, analyzing the current sociolinguistic situation and background of the Gorani people and their ethnolect in the former Yugoslavia, what I have shown can be summarized as follows:

1. Throughout their history, Gorani people in Kosovo have changed their avowed national identity depending on the political situations that they were facing. Gorani people in Kosovo almost always regarded themselves as Serbian/Serbo-Croatian-speakers with Muslim religious orientation, except for their Turkish identification in the 1950s and 1960s, which happened most probably for a pragmatic purpose based on historical reasoning. This can be explained by the political milieu, in which Gorani people all learned Serbian/Serbo-Croatian in their school curriculum as a state language. In contrast, Gorani people in Macedonia still tend to regard themselves as Turks—a general Gorani tradition, on one hand, as suggested above, whose persistence in Macedonia can be explained by the different school system, with instruction in Macedonian and no schooling in Serbian/Serbo-Croatian.

2. Today, most of the Gorani people in Kosovo identify themselves either as Gorani people or as Bosniaks. The former is a reinterpreted

⁷² They are Radio Gora (<http://radiogora.org>) and Radio Bambus (<https://bambus-radio.it.gg/Po%26%23269%3Betna.htm>). According to Nuhija Tairovci, the present director of Radio Gora, the radio station was established in the early 1990s with financial support from the then municipality of Gora. After the war in Kosovo, he started to work for OSCE and then he came to the idea to broadcast in the Gorani ethnolect. There were various obstacles and his idea was realized only in 2002. In addition, it is worth mentioning here that between 2003 and 2008 *Radio Sto Plus* in Novi Pazar had a program in Gorani *Gora u srcu* ‘Gora in Heart’ for those Gorani people who left Gora for Novi Pazar after NATO’s bombardment of Kosovo in 1999. They discontinued the program as many of the target audience ultimately left Novi Pazar for Western European countries. This information was provided by Ishak Slezović, the director of the radio station.

reiteration of their identity as a separate ethnic group, while the latter is a “rephrase” of their identity caused by political changes in the 1990s, but basically a continuation of their identification as South Slavic Muslims who speak Serbian/Serbo-Croatian. Thus, the “new” integration of the Gorani people into “Bosniakdom,” in terms of both ethnic and linguistic identities, has been a perpetuation of their twofold identity in a nested form. While the Gorani identity has been stable as a homogeneous and specific micro-identity of Gorani people, the Bosniak identity is instead a political macro-identity with Muslim religious orientation. Their new “mother tongue,” Bosnian, is chosen as a renamed recasting of the former Serbo-Croatian into a language spoken by South Slavic Muslims.

3. A new departure of the Gorani people and their ethnolect from the traditional “South Slavic Muslims who speak Serbo-Croatian” characterization has begun as a result of a new political context in which the Gorani ethnic identity can appear as an independent one, which means a reshaping of the traditional nested way of Gorani self- and group identification. This has been accelerated by the presence of various international organizations in Western Europe who monitor minority rights in Kosovo by crafting laws and implementing them in cooperation with the Kosovan government. Taking advantage of this situation, the Gorani ethnolect is recognized as a separate minority language by the *Regulation on the Office of the Language Commissioner*. However, in reality, this status does not function effectively, at least, at this stage because the Gorani language has not yet been standardized on the one hand and because the *Law on the Use of Languages* is not respected enough, on the other. In this context, Ramadan Redžepari’s works are innovative: the first effort to challenge the task of codifying the Gorani language. However, at this stage, one has to admit that Redžepari’s written variety of the Gorani ethnolect remains only Redžepari’s idiolect.

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