

A contemporary sociolinguistic look at former Yugoslavia

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Presentation overview

- aim
 - to present sociolinguistic turmoil in newly-formed countries following the disintegration of Serbo-Croatian into new standard languages

- how?
 - historical standpoint without emotion, with the issue of objectivity and balance
 - personal ideas + literature + discussing the issue with linguists
 - theoretical framework on linguistic identity + situation descriptions + open question

[Theoretical framework (1)]

- questions
 - who we are, where do we come from, what we are?

- identity : linguistic identity (LI)
 - different among languages
 - complex phenomenon composed of ethnic, cultural, regional... identity

[Theoretical framework (2)]

- determining LI
 - vehement discussions because of unacceptance of linguistic arguments and because of prevailing political interests
- discussing LI
 - a combination of structural, genetic and sociolinguistic identity
- types of LI
 - singular (e. g. Mongolian, Albanian)
 - complex (e. g. Dutch, German)

[Identity of the *S-C language* (1)]

- LI and imprecise name of the *S-C language* a matter of dispute
 - supranational name would have probably survived the disintegration of Yugoslavia!
- frequent question in the 1990s
 - is S-C one language or two?
 - answer:
 - from a linguistic point of view: one
 - from a sociolinguistic point of view: two

[Identity of the *S-C language* (2)]

■ *Serbo-Croatian*

- New Štokavian dialect from Herzegovina
- various official and unofficial names
- native to 73% of population (SFRY census from 1981)
- considered as one language of:
 - 2 variants:
 - eastern (Serbian) and western (Croatian)
 - 2 standard expressions:
 - Bosnian and Herzegovinian and Montenegrin

[Identity of the *S-C language* (3)]

- the disintegration of Yugoslavia
 - administrative death of the prestigious *S-C language*
 - variants became standard languages in newly-formed countries:
 - 1990–93: Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian
 - 2007: Montenegrin

S-C in the last decade of the 20th century ⁽¹⁾

- **linguistic engineering**

- **Croatia**

- from 1970s tendency to move away from S-C

- “there came a wave of purification and Croatisation, and public language was cleansed of all that even resembled Serbian or was reminiscent of Yugoslavia, and substitute words were found by reviving archaisms, institutionalising regionalisms and creating neologisms” (Bugarski 2009)

S-C in the last decade of the 20th century (2)

■ linguistic engineering

○ **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

- emphasis on Near Eastern features and linguistic and cultural tradition

○ **Montenegro**

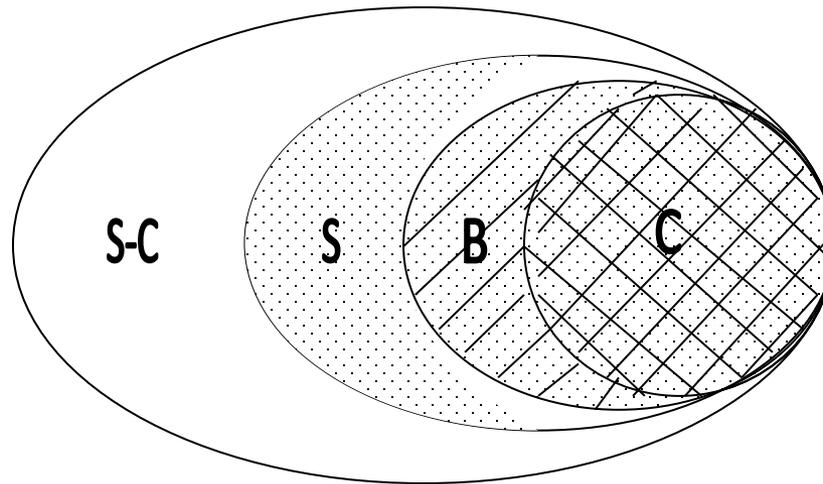
- Looking for identity in Montenegrin dialectal base, history and folklore

○ **Serbia**

- no need to emphasise and prove its identity
 - “Serbian was standing still and observing as its related languages took leave.” (Bugarski 2009)

“Same Serbo-Croatian salad with various national dressing”

- S-C in relation to the Theory of Markedness (Bugarski 2005)
 - S-C: widest unmarked base; S: less specific, neutral; B: more specific in pronunciation, orthography and lexis; C: most marked
 - no clear borders; pouring into each other



Language policy and linguistic reality after 1990

- sociolinguistic situations in newly-formed countries
 - conceptually different
 - intention: present what is typical and particular for a given standard

⇒ Croatia

[Croatia (1)]

- how to regard the relationship between Croatian and Serbian?
 - from a structural, genetic, sociolinguistic, contrastive... standpoint, but with POLITICAL aspect dominating discussion



why?



- public disinterested in linguistic issues

[Croatia₍₂₎]

- the relationship **between the language of Croats and the language of Serbs** was reflected in the general public as

“the relationship between the nations, between unitarianism and so-called separatism, between Orthodoxy and Catholicism, between Latin and Cyrillic script, between Ustashas and Chetniks, between east and west, and so on. That was the case especially because in the first and second Yugoslavia it was not allowed to openly discuss national issues, particularly Croatian issues, so language, as so many times before (in Croatian history the word *language* was used to mean *people*) gained greater significance and a more important role than it actually has”

(Pranjković 2008)

[Croatia (3)]

- more important events:
 - 1960s – the *Declaration on the Name and Status of Croatian Standard Language*
 - 1970s – the time of the Croatian Spring when the agreement from Novi Sad was abandoned
 - 1980s – the fight against nationalism in the language of textbooks
 - 1990s
 - discussion about Croatian which most often proves its independence and **identity in relation to Serbian**
 - negative type of LI which took the form of aggressive linguistic engineering

[Croatia (4)]

- the model of Croatian purist language planning
 - reinforcing national identity, highlighting symbolic function of language, introducing archaisms, attacking quasi-Serbian words...
 - proscribed nationally appropriate use of Croatian = “pure” Croatian
 - **lexical stereotypes**
 - “without competition *Croatia, Croat, Croatian...*” (Tafra 2005)

[Croatia (5)]

■ Croatisms

- lexemes of high symbolic charge: illustrate Croatia's independence (Škarić 2005):
 - *glede, u svezi, nazočno, zamolba, preslika, nadnevak...*
 - intervention in military, legal and administrative terminology
 - media helped spread the trend
- people's speech labelled them politically ⇒ fear of native language

[Croatia (6)]

- neologisms, i. e. **New Croatian**
 - neologisms by Babić (1994)
 - *kopnica* for AIDS; *mamutnjak* for jumbo jet; *mondenci* for the rich, and so on.

- Competition for the best Croatian word by journal *Jezik*
 - 2007, 500 entries, 47 shortlisted
 - *uspornik* for *speed bump* or *sleeping policeman*
 - “amateur individual making up of new lexical items, which is often unsystematic and without purpose, is bad folklore” (Kovačec 2006)

[Croatia (7)]

■ stance toward Serbian words

“they represent the enemy who poses a risk not only to manifesting national identity but also to the nation itself” (Lučić 2007)

- dictionaries of differences, handbooks on language use, dictionaries of redundant words...
 - Brodnjak + dilettante dictionaries with lists of “forbidden” words
 - praise vs criticism
 - caused many misunderstandings

[Croatia (8)]

■ orthographic issues

- *Language Committee* of CCCPS requested in 1992 institutions to support:
 - etymological or phonological orthography
 - fight for creating as many differences as possible between Croatian and Serbian (see *Sučeljavanja* by Pranjković)
- today
 - fight for an official orthography handbook
 - Babić, Finka and Moguš:
“promote actual Croatian orthography tradition”
 - Anić and Silić; Badurina, Marković and Mićanović:
“followers and advocates of orthography based on the Novi Sad Agreement” (Badurina, Pranjković 2009)

[Serbia (1)]

■ Serbian

- tied to Croatian: structurally, genetically and sociolinguistically; periods of common standardisation, almost completely mutually intelligible
- official in Serbia and Republika Srpska and, until 2007, Montenegro + *lingua communis*
- name change justified unlike script change
 - status of Latin script diminished in the Serbian Constitution from 2006 – opposes linguistic reality

[Serbia (2)]

- unlike Croatian, it was not changed from without
 - “it is on its turf, a basis of former Serbo-Croatian...” (Bugarski 2009)
 - did not need to justify its single-word name by moving lexically and structurally away from Croatian
- popular ideas by individuals and informal groups on defending endangered Serbian
 - aim: return Serbian to its Orthodox tradition by writing, for example, menus in imitation of medieval script

[Serbia (3)]

- Serbian linguistic nationalism
 - *A word on Serbian*
 - “a linguistic law of the Serbian people” published in 6 languages and in 300 000 copies (!)
 - an outrageous thesis that all speakers of Štokavian are Serbs, just of different religion, and that their languages are variants of Serbian
 - language bureaucratisation, language of war, hate speech...

[Serbia (4)]

- Serbian linguistic nationalism
 - the relationship between Cyrillic and Latin script
 - Serbian digraphia makes it unique in the world
 - from 1970s Latin script increasingly used
 - research by Klajn in 2002
 - 39.8% Latin script; 21.9% Cyrillic; 38.3% both
 - folklore rendering
 - FOR Cyrillic script: patriots
 - “it is the most beautiful script, a national treasure which must be defended at all cost... its extinction would mean the extinction of Serbian...” (Bugarski 2009)
 - AGAINST Cyrillic script: traitors

[Bosnia and Herzegovina (1)]

- rather complex linguistic situation
- language policy has been/is lead from *without*
 - *Bosnian and Herzegovinian standard language expression*
 - magazine *Oslobođenje*: articles in Latin and Cyrillic script
- today
 - three standards (Constitution of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2002)

[Bosnia and Herzegovina (2)]

- discussion on the name Bosnian lang.
 - *Charter on the Bosnian Language*, 2002.
 - terms: Bosnian, Bosniak (politically influenced) and Bosnian/Bosniak
- communication in reality
 - common standard norm is “alive”
 - problem not seen by experts and politicians but by language users who have to learn the norm of their language AGAIN
 - General Bosnian Language? (Mønnesland 2005)

[Bosnia and Herzegovina (3)]

- the issue of standardisation
 - centres for Croatian and Serbian are abroad, they have no influence on language policy
 - standardisation of Bosnian – result of enthusiasts
 - three approaches
 - radical: non-functional revival of archaisms
 - moderate: middle course between Croatian and Serbian norm
 - conformist: Bosnian just a new name for *Bosnian and Herzegovinian standard language expression*

[Bosnia and Herzegovina (4)]

- three standards in reality
 - education:
 - classes in Croatian, classes in Serbian, but also *two schools under one roof* (nationally divided classes)
 - Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo:
Department of Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian
 - without *and*: one three-standard language

[Bosnia and Herzegovina (5)]

- nobody pleased with linguistic situation
 - policy creators because norms are not upheld
 - users can not seem to speak their language
 - community deals with the inability to function in any common way
- speakers more afraid of influence
 - “of the neighbouring standard (“their” language and “our” language) than of the influence of the geographically removed but powerful English language” (Katnić-Bakaršić, 2009)

[Montenegro (1)]

- language name
 - not discussed during the time of S-C
 - in 1992: *Serbian language of ijekavijan type*
- from 1990s on – fight for Montenegrin
- political debates gain heat in 2004
 - subject *Serbian language* renamed to *native language* (Serbian, Montenegrin, Croatian, Bosnian)
 - deciding on language name left to parents and children

[Montenegro (2)]

- Montenegrin Constitution (2007)
 - Montenegrin official, Latin and Cyrillic script equal; Serbian, Bosnian, Albanian and Croatian in official use
- Montenegrin
 - ijekavijan features make it similar to Bosnian and Croatian; lexis brings it closer to Serbian and Bosnian
 - the issue of standardisation?

[Montenegro (3)]

- Committee for the Standardisation of the Montenegrin Language (2008)
 - First, literary stream
 - return to the language of Njegoš; archaisms
 - introduce ś and ź
 - Second, linguistic stream
 - take S-C as the basis for Montenegrin
 - disagreement between streams brought the work of the Committee to a halt

[Montenegro (4)]

■ orthography

- three authors, two from abroad – strange!
 - Perović, Silić, Vasiljeva: *Orthography handbook of the Montenegrin language and Dictionary of the Montenegrin language (spelling dictionary)*, 2009

■ grammar book

- co-authored by Croatian experts
 - Ćirgić, Silić, Pranjković: *Grammar of the Montenegrin Language*, 2010

■ criticism:

- archaisms, reliance on Croatian grammar

[Montenegro (5)]

- establishing the Montenegrin norm
 - should be based on linguistic principles, not emotion and patriotism
- Montenegrin is just beginning to resolve important issues of standardisation

[In place of a conclusion (1)]

■ question

- what is the right way to present such complicated sociolinguistic situation at universities abroad?

■ answer

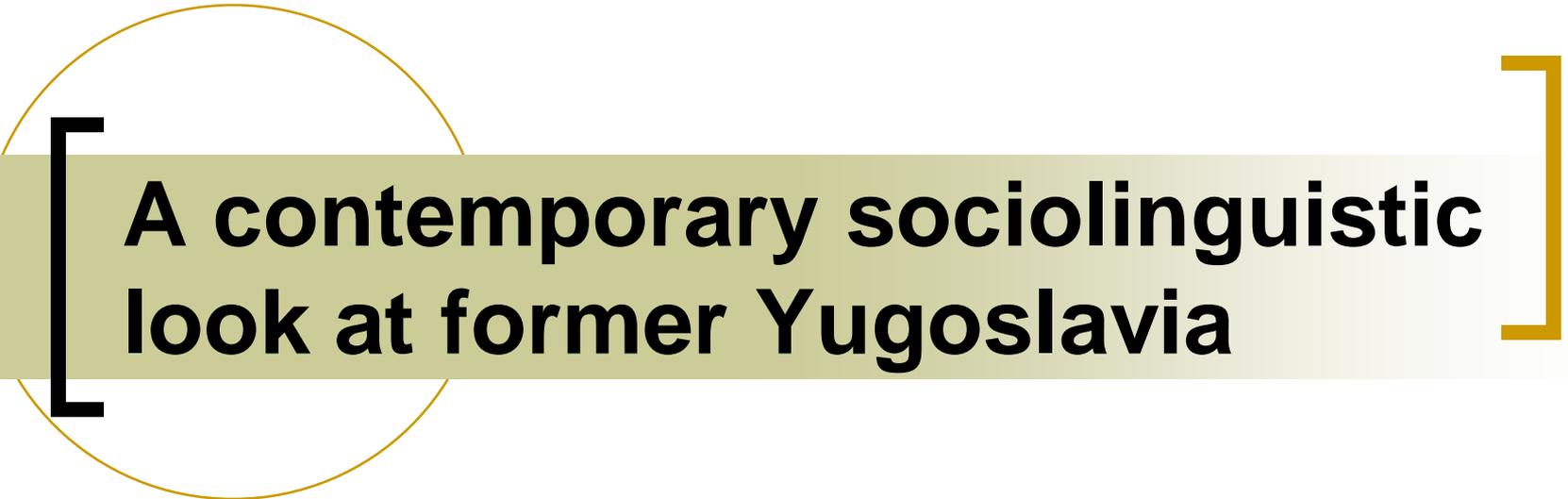
- monograph *Between politics and reality, Linguistic situation in newly-formed countries of former Yugoslavia* (Ljubljana, 2009)
- title points to the connection between language and politics
 - language standardisation is never just a linguistic issue, even more so, it is a political one

[In place of a conclusion (2)]

- *Between politics and reality*
 - content
 - 1st part: descriptions of sociolinguistic situations in newly-formed countries, including Slovenia and Macedonia
 - 2nd part: status of linguistic variants within L1
 - 3rd part: status of foreign languages

[In place of a conclusion (3)]

- *Between politics and reality*
 - intended for use by
 - those teaching Slavic Studies, especially abroad
 - represents
 - scientific and professional basis for mutual understanding
 - helps develop cultural tolerance
 - tolerance important in overcoming prejudice and stereotypes among languages and cultures



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