

Perspectives on Europe: language issues and language planning in Europe

Edited by Anthony J Liddicoat and Karis Muller



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Contents

Acknowledgements	iv
Language issues and language planning in Europe Anthony J Liddicoat and Karis Muller	1
Language and national identity Peter M Hill	11
Language planning, linguistic diversity and democracy in Europe Anthony J Liddicoat	21
Language competition in European Community institutions Karis Muller	41
French monopoly of the linguistic marketplace: a regional perspective Nicole George	61
Jack Lang and minority languages: a radical change in French linguistic policies or more of the same? Henri Jeanjean	81
The problem of English as the <i>lingua franca</i> of scholarly writing from a German perspective Winfried Thielmann	95
Croatia's independence and the language politics of the 1990s Maja Mikula	109
Doing it our way: language politics in the clash between Istrian regionalism and Croatian nationalism Dean Vuletić	125
Language and politics in the Republika Srpska Andjelija Dragosavljević	141

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Croatia's independence and the language politics of the 1990s

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Introduction

The political climate in Croatia in the early 1990s, at the time of the country's secession from former socialist Yugoslavia and the ensuing war on its territory, was marked by an overwhelming desire to purge the new state as thoroughly as possible of any 'Yugoslav' content. The new regime needed a new set of symbols on which to base its own legitimacy, in opposition to the one operating under the previous system. Power is always vested in symbolic order, but the logic of nationalism requires the ordinary citizen to accept this order at the face value, as something primordial, natural, and by implication, unquestionable.

The developments in the language arena of the newly independent former Yugoslav states have been interpreted as a form of 'nominal language death', or 'political dismantling of a language' (Greenberg 1999, p 141). It is, however, important to see both the 'birth' of Serbo-Croatian in the 19th century and its recent assumed 'death' as sociolinguistic, rather than purely linguistic phenomena. The legitimacy of 'Serbo-Croatian' as a 'twin language' went hand in hand with the legitimacy of South-Slav co-habitation in a unified state. Throughout the 20th century, both were disputed by different segments of what was Yugoslav society. While state involvement in language matters varied significantly in scope and nature during that period, co-habitation itself, with the associated people mobility and private and public ties across the republican borders, further erased the differences between the closely related idioms. In the early 1990s, the new political borders were reinforced through 'linguistic cleansing' (Langston 1999, pp 179–201), under slogans emphasising the close relationship between language and nation. During the war on Croatia's territory, words were like soldiers: 'The loss of a single Croatian word is the same as the loss of a Croatian soldier. By the same token, the rescue of a single Croatian word is equal to the rescue of a Croatian soldier'¹ (Babić 1999, p 6).

Undoubtedly, language can be used as a powerful instrument for 'mobilizing large numbers of people around symbols and values with a high emotional potential.' (Brass 1991, p 303) The notion of intimate correlation between language and nation is commonly seen as a product of the Romantic era in general, or of German Romanticism in particular. For Herder, Fichte, Humboldt and other Romantics, the German language was the spirit of what

was German. Thus, national identity was regarded as dependent on the purity of the nation's language. Although nation itself is a modern phenomenon, related ideas can be traced as far back as the Old Testament. The original harmony among Adam's descendants before their arrival in the valley of Shinar was essentially of a linguistic nature (*Genesis* 11:1). By the same token, the dispersal of peoples, which followed the presumptuous construction of the tower of Babel, was achieved through a curse of multiplication of mutually unintelligible languages, so that 'they may not understand one another's speech' (*Genesis* 11:7).

Language autonomy: one language or two?

There is no doubt that native speakers of Croatian and Serbian do not need interpreters to understand each other, but, nevertheless, most of them would nowadays probably claim to speak two distinct languages. Asserting the autonomy of the Croatian language was considered one of the vital objectives of the Croatian language politics² in the 1990s. It has been argued that Croatian's claim to linguistic autonomy is not supported by either of the two conventional criteria for language autonomy, *Abstand* (intrinsic linguistic difference from other language varieties) or *Ausbau* (conscious efforts to shape an autonomous language):

the Croatian and Serbian standard languages are extremely similar not only because they developed out of the same general dialectal base, but also because they reflect processes of standardization which from the 19th century on were ultimately directed towards the creation of a unified Serbo-Croatian norm (Langston 1967, p 181).³

While the Universal Decimal Classification⁴ of languages, originally maintained by the *Federation Internationale pour l'Information et la Documentation* in the Hague, assigns Croatian and Serbian two separate codes, 808.62 and 808.61 respectively (Loknar 1995, pp 19–20), this fact in itself does not reflect the complexities of the matter. The Serbo-Croatian language is a 'language of agreement'. If we limit ourselves to observing its communicative possibilities, we will come to a conclusion that there is only one language, with a number of variants. At the same time, historically, culturally, and symbolically, Croatian, Serbian and Bosnian (with Montenegrin as an additional possibility) are autonomous languages. Antun Šoljan, a renowned literary author, has compared this inherent contradiction of Serbo-Croatian language to the two towers of Zagreb Cathedral:

... when you are looking at them from, say *Kaptolska klet* [a restaurant almost directly opposite to the Cathedral], you will see two; when you are observing them from *Gradska kavana* [a cafe on Zagreb main square], you can see only one. Therefore, from a scientific perspective, Croatian and Serbian are one language because they belong to the same diasystem, but from a literary, historical and cultural perspective, they are two languages, each having its own past and identity (Loknar 1995, pp 18).⁵

Although the complex history of autonomy debate in nineteenth and twentieth century Croatia falls beyond the scope of this paper, a brief outline of major developments in this area is necessary for a better understanding of the issues at stake. At the time of the Illyrian

movement — a Croatian cultural revival from under Habsburg yoke — Croats were speaking three different dialects: Štokavian,⁶ Kajkavian and Čakavian. Each of these dialects also had a distinct popular and literary tradition and thus a capacity to be standardised in its own right. The Illyrians — most of them Kajkavian — were nevertheless inclined to adopt the Štokavian dialect as the literary standard. They believed that the Štokavian variant had two significant advantages: on the one hand, it had been used by the Dubrovnik Renaissance and Baroque writers; on the other, it was closely related to the literary language Serbian that philologist and language reformer, Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, had promoted as standard in nearby Serbia.

In 1850, a group of prominent Croatian and Serbian intellectuals⁷ met in Vienna to discuss the possibility of adopting a unified language. They declared that the 'Serbs and Croats were one people, and, therefore, should have a single literature, which also requires a common literary language.' (Wachtel 1998, p 28) This common language was to be based on the Ijekavian variant of the Štokavian dialect, spoken in Eastern Herzegovina, parts of the Adriatic coast, Bosnia, Montenegro and Western Serbia. To many Croats it comes as a great surprise that Karadžić used the 'Ijekavian' variant of the 'Štokavian' dialect and sought to promote that variant in his reforms. At the same time, Ljudevit Gaj wrote the so-called 'horned e', 'ě' in syllables deriving from the proto-Slavonic *yat*. The Vienna Agreement had little immediate or practical impact in Croatia, where the Štokavian norm had been standardised by the Illyrians in the first half of the century. The Illyrian norm differed somewhat from the one promoted by Karadžić: in addition to disagreements involving plural case endings, the Illyrians preferred a morphologically based orthography⁸ over Karadžić's 'phonetic' solution of 'write as you speak'.

By the time Karadžić's norm asserted itself in Croatia through publication of three authoritative normative texts — Ivan Broz's *Croatian Orthography* (1892), a *Dictionary of the Croatian Language* started by Broz and completed by Franjo Iveković (1901), and Tomo Maretić's grammar (1899) — Serbia had discarded Karadžić's Ijekavian norm and adopted the Ekavian variant. Throughout the twentieth century, the Croatian and the Serbian norms co-existed and cross-fertilised each other, naturally or by design, as the 'western' and the 'eastern' variant of a diasystem undergoing never ending name changes. Older Croats are understandably bemused by this dynamic: for example, it is reported that, looking at her school certificates from 1926 to 1937, a woman found four different names for essentially the same school subject: language of education (1926), Serbo-Croatian language (1927–29), Croatian or Serbian language (1930) and Serbocroatoslovene (1931–37) (Loknar 1995, pp 13).

The period of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918–41) was characterised by continuous efforts to erase the differences between the two norms. It is not widely known that, in the 1920s, even some prominent Croatian writers — such as Tin Ujević, Dobriša Cesarić and Miroslav Krleža — began writing in the 'eastern', Ekavian variant, following the mainstream unitarist impulses (Anić 1998, p 29). Their enthusiasm waned after the assassination of Stjepan Radić (1928) and the writers returned to their previous practices.

In the early 1940s, during Ante Pavelić's ill-famed Independent Croatian State (*Nezavisna država Hrvatska*, NDH, 1941–45), purist tendencies in language politics loomed large on

the agenda of state authorities. As any traces of pre-war unitarism were systematically eradicated, interventions related to the lexical level of language were the most pervasive. In addition to the introduction of newly coined words and 'rehabilitation' of archaic ones, swearwords were prohibited; toponyms were 'Croatised' and non-Croatian names for children discouraged. More importantly, Vuk's 'phonetic' spelling system was replaced by etymological, or morphological orthography (*korijenski pravopis*). A *Legal Regulation on the Croatian Language, its Purity and Spelling* (1941) proclaimed that 'the Croatian official and literary language was the jEkavian or iEkavian variant of the stokavian dialect', and that 'the etymological orthography should be used instead of "phonetic" spelling' (Moguš 1995, p 216).

As World War II was drawing to a close, the Antifascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ) announced its own views on the language question in a future Yugoslav state. At its first meeting in January 1944, the council proclaimed that all decisions and announcements of the Council had to be published officially in Serbian, Croatian, Slovene and Macedonian languages, since 'all these languages have equal rights on the entire territory of Yugoslavia' (Loknar 1995, p 4). Indeed, in the early post-war years, all important state documents were written in all four languages.

After this initial status quo, a project undertaken by the Serbian publisher, *Matica srpska* of Novi Sad, breathed new life into the seemingly dormant unitarist idea. The result was the Novi Sad Agreement (1954) which declared that the 'national language of Serbs, Croats and Montenegrins is one language. Hence the literary language, which had developed on its basis around two main centres, Belgrade and Zagreb, is a single language with two pronunciations — Ijekavian and Ekavian.' (Moguš 1995, p 201)⁹ It also stated that the Serbs and Croats used two official variants of the same language, 'Serbo-Croatian' and 'Croato-Serbian' respectively. Within this formula, Serbo-Croatian was seen as a pluricentric and pluriethnic language, with (at least) two centres determining norms for correct usage.

In 1960, the agreement was followed by the simultaneous publication of a Serbo-Croatian/Croato-Serbian orthographic manual in Novi Sad (in Ekavian and the Cyrillic script) and Zagreb (in Ijekavian and the Latin script) (*Pravopis* 1960). Another project informed by the spirit of the Novi Sad Agreement — a joint dictionary, was published seven years later (Jonke and Stevanović 1967). In the late 1950s, Croatian linguists were increasingly feeling that the 'marriage' brought about by the Agreement was not between two equal partners, i.e. that it enabled Serbian words to penetrate more forcefully into the Croatian usage. The frustration was exacerbated by the fact that some Croatian media — namely, Zagreb Radio — introduced main daily news programs in the Ekavian variant (1955–56).

The members of the Zagreb Linguistic Circle articulated their aggravation with this situation in a document entitled *Declaration on the Name and Situation of the Croatian Literary Language* (1967). The declaration discarded the name 'Croato-Serbian' and demanded the right for Croats to have their own literary language. It pointed at the ambiguity of the constitutional rule about 'Serbocroatian or Croatoserbian language', which in practice privileged the Serbian language, prevalent in the state media, the central news

agency Tanjug, the joint programs of Yugoslav Radio and Television, federal post, railways, state and party administration, legislature, diplomacy and, above all, the army.¹⁰

Tito called the declaration a 'stab in the back' to the principle of brotherhood and unity (Loknar 1995, p 121). It was repudiated by the members of Serbian minority in Croatia unwilling to call their language 'Croatian' and pushing for the introduction of new school curricula which would respect the Eastern variant of the diasystem (Loknar 1995, p 32). Publicly condemned in Tito's Yugoslavia, the declaration was hailed by the authorities in the independent Croatia of the 1990s as a document of crucial importance and a symbol of resistance to linguistic unitarism.

The 1990 Constitution of the Republic of Croatia states that the official language in the Republic is Croatian and the official script Latin. While internally there may be no doubt now of what the official language in the Republic of Croatia is called, problems arise internationally, where Serbo-Croatian has established itself as a standard denomination in university departments of Slavic languages, commonly used language textbooks, and the media. Some of these institutions acted promptly in accepting the nominal death of the Serbo-Croatian language,¹¹ but others were slower to react, since this radical policy shift entails allocation of significant additional resources that many were unable to afford.

Molding an autonomous language for an independent state

Among the Croatian linguists of the 1990s, we can identify three distinct trends reflecting radically different views on the language question. The first current, holding on to the tradition of rapprochement, was the least popular and even considered politically suspect in the first years of Croatia's independence. When confronted with the existence of two or more linguistic renditions fulfilling essentially the same function within the system, the linguists identifying with the first current would tend to adopt the rendition existing in both the Croatian and the Serbian variant as the norm. The adherents of the second current — most of whom had been among the original signatories of the 'Declaration on the Name and Situation of the Croatian Literary Language' and enjoyed full support of the party in power throughout the 1990s, the Croatian Democratic Community (HDZ) — largely endorsed the appellation 'Croatian Literary Language' and considered the Croatian language as a separate political, functional and socio-cultural entity, but saw it linguistically as a variant of the Croato-Serbian diasystem. In determining normative solutions, they claimed to be guided by the internal linguistic logic displayed in the Croatian literary corpus.¹² The third and most attention-grabbing current, which saw the Croatian language as a separate entity which had been progressively 'contaminated' by Serbian elements over the last 150 years, produced the most vocal purists, innovators and would-be reformers of the standard idiom. The most well-known among these linguists is certainly Bulcsú László, a vocal advocate of the etymological spelling system and author of hundreds of neologisms designed to replace international, mostly English words commonly used in military and scientific jargon (László 1993). Like Humpty Dumpty in *Through the Looking Glass*, uncritical reformers saw themselves as 'masters of words', entitled and, indeed, called to introduce new words and define their meaning and usage, more or less as they liked.

In practice, these radical reformers were pursuing essentially the same objective embraced by the government, which was to mold a Croatian language as autonomous as possible.¹³ Even the strategies they most commonly employed — coinage of neologisms and revival of archaisms — were essentially the same. However, the party in power — with well-known linguists such as Dalibor Brozović and Stjepan Babić among its ranks — demonstrated considerable awareness of the dangers of uncritical butchering of the language. Many ‘proscribed’ words and syntactic choices figured prominently in the classics of Croatian literature, and their exile meant simultaneously a denial of the nation’s precious literary tradition. The linguists fully sympathetic to the nationalist regime and actually taking part in the higher echelons of the political hierarchy, could not but express concerns that over-zealous ‘purification’ might have disastrous effects on language’s polyfunctionality and vitality. Appeals for moderation and repeated entreaties to would-be reformers, from all walks of life, to leave language planning to professional linguists were formulated in politically flavoured metaphorical warnings that ‘we might accidentally throw out the baby with the bath water’.¹⁴

However, mainstream linguists themselves also embraced the method of re-introducing long-forgotten lexical forms from nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century dictionaries, published in periods of weakened unitary tendencies, including the pro-Nazi Independent Croatian State (NDH). They were motivated by a conviction that these words did not die a ‘natural death’, but were forcibly removed from the system by the regimes of the two Yugoslav states Croatia was part of. Neologisms with no record in Croatian literature were also considered acceptable, and indeed sometimes desirable replacements for ‘suspect’ words. Prominent linguists were employed by the state-run papers to write columns designated to educate the speakers as to which words can be considered as Croatian proper, and which are marked as ‘foreign’, usually ‘Serbian’.

Moreover, lexical differences between Serbian and Croatian were the subject matter of the rather popular genre of the Croatian normative literature of the 1990s, the so-called *razlikovni rječnici* (differential dictionaries). The most comprehensive and widely used among them is Vladimir Brodnjak’s *Razlikovni rječnik srpskog i hrvatskog jezika* (1991).¹⁵ The 30,000 entries in this dictionary include those words which are common in Serbian, but also appear ‘legitimately’ in the Croatian language, with a slightly different meaning, as well as those which appear in it as variants of style. However, in the political climate of the early 1990s, Brodnjak’s book was the Bible for all language enthusiasts identifying with the national cause, with or without linguistic sensibility or education. Among them, those more interested in the national revival than in the vitality and polyfunctionality of language, were rushing to interpret all words in the left column as ‘Serbian’ and, therefore, unacceptable. These impatient interpreters of the book may have been unaware of the fact that they were thus implicitly denying a large part of the Croatian literary corpus, in which those words appear. Also, some of the banished words had morphosyntactic advantages over those proposed as their replacements.¹⁶

Throughout the early 1990s, the efforts by *bona fide* language planners and their self-authorized cohorts were focussing on establishing the autonomy of the Croatian language by shaping a language as distinct as possible from Serbian. These initiatives were largely supported by the greater part of the population, struggling to self-discipline their language

practices, and thus distinguish themselves from their war adversary, the Serbs. However, Croatian purism of the 1990s was not limited to de-Serbianisation. Like its German and French antecedents, it was by definition also apprehensive of international, mostly English words in its lexical lore. The resistance to English was foreshadowed by the late president Tuđman, who — among other remarks carrying essentially the same message — noted on one occasion that ‘American words nowadays colonise the Croatian space.’ (*Vjesnik*, 27 March 1993, p 26) A publication reflecting more general purist concerns is Mate Šimundić’s rather excessive *Dictionary of unnecessary foreign words in the Croatian language* (1994), which offers a number of archaisms, neologisms and, semantically, only marginally related Croatian translations as alternatives for widely used words of foreign origin.

Croatian is sometimes regarded as a language resisting loan words because of the nation’s long experience with foreign, primarily Austrian domination, characterised by aggressive Germanisation. This is in fact seen as an additional difference between Croatian and Serbian, since the latter is believed to be highly accommodating to foreign words, as a result of Serbia’s cultural ties and religious affinities with Russia (Babić 1995, pp 18–21). Thus, while Serbian tends to adopt foreign words and adapt them to its own ‘phonetic’ system, which is then reflected in spelling, Croatian — like German — tends to replace foreign words with indigenous forms. This phenomenon explains the relatively high incidence of calques or literal, part-for-part translations of foreign words.

In addition to Serbian influence, Communist internationalist ideology was also blamed for the widespread use of loan words during former socialist Yugoslavia. A number of words were proscribed in the 1990s because of their omnipresence and the political resonances they acquired during the five decades of communism. Words like *partija* ‘party’, *sekretar* ‘secretary’, *centralni komitet* ‘central committee’, etc., were among the most obvious examples of the words overloaded with political connotations.¹⁷

Resistance to English influences was evident in widespread attempts to design Croatian equivalents for commonly used loan words pertaining to terminologies related to state administration, military and scholarly disciplines. Traditionally, the Croatian language purists have been active innovators, particularly in this area, ever since Bogoslav Šulek’s (1874–75) well-known *Hrvatsko-njemačko-talijanski rječnik znanstvenog nazivlja*. Some of Šulek’s neologisms — for example, *kolodvor* ‘railway station’ or ‘bus depot’, a calque or part-for-part translation of the German word *Bahnhof*; or his *zrakoplov* ‘airplane’ from the German *Luftschiff* — demonstrated unusual resilience, and have remained standard in the Croatian language to the present day. Adoption of newly coined words was considered a matter of urgency, as synonymy — or temporary acceptance of both the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ norm — was seen as detrimental and likely to produce confusion. However, lack of coordination among language innovators, instead of reducing uncertainty, produced more of it. Even the speakers with highly developed national consciousness and a strong desire to safeguard their language from foreign influences were perplexed with multiple translations of commonly used loan words such as ‘helicopter’ (*vrtiložnjak* or *zrakomlat*), ‘bypass’ (*mimovod*, *premosnik*, *premosnica*, *obilaznica*) (Babić 1995, p 12), ‘hardware’ (*očvršje*, *sklopovlje*, *strojevina*, *sklopnjak*), ‘software’ (*napudbina*, *napudba*, *programska podrška*), or ‘printer’ (*pisač*, *pisaljka*, *tiskaljka*). To the average speaker, comfortably familiar with

these words in their original English form, most of the proposed new words sounded ridiculous and, consequently, they did not have a lasting effect on the linguistic practices of Croatians.

To add to the confusion, some international loan words were considered more acceptable than others. A notorious example of this is the word *šport*, privileged by some over *sport* because of its prevalent appearance in that form, under German influence, in the first half of the twentieth century, i.e. prior to post-WWII socialist Yugoslavia. Also, the insertion of the vowel 'a' in the consonant clusters *-kt*, *-nt*, *-rt* and *-pt* at the end of loan words such as *projekt*, *agent*, *koncert* or *recept* (*projekat*, *agenat*, *koncerat*, *recepat*) was deemed characteristic of Serbian usage, but the discredited practice was still considered acceptable and, indeed, as contributing to the prosodic appeal of the language.

We have seen that Croatian language purists were hostile to loan words in general and Serbian words in particular, sometimes to the detriment of the vitality and communicative capacity of the Croatian language. Although purist tendencies elsewhere commonly exhibit a similar aversion to non-standard dialects of the language,¹⁸ Croatian purists of the 1990s were more lenient towards Croatian dialects, and may have even secretly bemoaned the fact that štokavian — the only dialect shared by the Serbs — had been accepted as standard in the nineteenth century, rather than, for example, kajkavian, the dialect commonly spoken at that time by Zagreb intelligentsia. Tomislav Ladan's recently published dictionary *Words — Their Meanings, Use and Origins* (2000), for example, includes words commonly used in urban spoken idiom, particularly that of Zagreb and its surroundings. The author sees kajkavian and čakavian dialects as valuable sources of lexical wealth for a Croatian *koiné* yet to be developed, 'as a synthesis of our rich linguistic tradition and the contemporary scientific achievements' (Loknar 1995, p 54).

Although lexical recommendations informed a great deal of the Croatian language politics of the 1990s, this was only a part of more extensive endeavours, which were just as concerned with other aspects of language, such as syntax and orthography, or spelling practices. In particular, certain syntactic choices were regarded as bearing the ideological stigma of the old regime. For example, the sequence involving a noun followed by a possessive genitive instead of a noun preceded by a possessive adjective was seen as a residue of Yugoslav unitarism (e.g., 'writers of Croatia' *pisci Hrvatske* versus 'Croatian writers' *hrvatski pisci*). The former solution was indeed rather consistently enforced by the Yugoslav regime in one particular context, that is, in referring to Croatian nationality, since it was considered that the adjective 'Croatian' *hrvatski* would discriminate against the Serbian minority in the republic.

Another controversial example involves the Croatian usage of the infinitive, rather than *da* + conjugated present tense of the verb, in constructions involving verb complements, for example, *želim jesti* 'I want to eat', (as opposed to Serbian *želim da jedem* 'I want that I eat'). While the use of the infinitive in these constructions is more properly Croatian, there are instances when the construction '*da* + present' is equally acceptable, or even the only possible solution. One such instance occurs when the two verbs have different subjects, for example, *želim da ona jede* 'I want her to eat'. Despite the fact that *da* + present is a common construction in Croatian usage, evidenced extensively in literature, language

planners of the 1990s had a strong preference for the infinitive form in all instances, even when this would, strictly speaking, be considered incorrect usage (Langston 1999, p 192).

Polemics about the correct writing practices in the Croatian language have animated Croatian literary and linguistic circles ever since the earliest attempts at standardisation in the seventeenth century (Moguš 1995, pp 119–25). The secession of Croatia from Yugoslavia in 1991 has reintroduced attempts to replace the prevalent 'phonetic' spelling practices, reflecting phonemic variants occurring in pronunciation due to the surrounding sounds, with etymological or morphological spelling (*korijenski pravopis*), which privileges maximum transparency of the original form of the constitutive morphemes. Since both alternatives have a tradition in the Croatian literary practice, privileging one over the other has always been grounded in politics.

The polemic reached its peak in 2000 and early 2001, when two orthographic textbooks, the first one written by Stjepan Babić, Božidar Finka and Milan Moguš (BFM) (2000) and the second by Vladimir Anić and Josip Silić (AS) (2001) were published in the space of less than two months. Both textbooks essentially advocate 'phonetic' spelling, but they notably differ in three aspects: writing of the reflex of *yat* after the so-called 'covered *r*' as *e* and *je* respectively (e.g., AS *pogreška* versus BFM *pogrješka* 'mistake'); writing of the negation of the short form of the auxiliary verb *htjeti* 'will' as one word versus two words (AS *neću* versus BFM *ne ću*); and the omission versus preservation of consonants *d* and *i* in front of *c* (*otac* 'father', genitive AS *oca* versus BFM *otca*). Since the solutions proposed by Babić, Finka and Moguš display considerable affinity to etymological spelling, and since they had not been commonly used since at least 1960,¹⁹ these authors have been accused of wanting to return to the spelling practices implemented in Pavelić's Independent Croatian State, while Anić and Silić have been considered guilty of yugo-nostalgia.

Originally, the textbook written by Babić, Finka and Moguš had been prepared for publication in 1971, but was repressed in the aftermath of the Croatian Spring. Subsequently, it saw two publications and one reprint in London, which is why it is now popularly called *Londonac*. Since 1994, the second edition of *Londonac* has been accepted as the norm. In the past, 'phonetic' and etymological approaches to Croatian orthography were never entirely consistent. To varying degrees, they always allowed 'exceptions', i.e. graphemic strings more characteristic of the rival approach than of their own established rules. While the earlier editions of the *Londonac* in these controversial cases offered two solutions, the latest edition — while still largely based on 'phonetic' principles — dismissed the alternatives which respected the rule of 'write-as-you-speak' in favour of those rendering word origins more transparent.

The suggestion that the graphemic sequence *ije*, deriving from long *yat* (treated as two syllables, in words like *lijep* 'good-looking', *bijel* 'white', *uvijek* 'always') be replaced by *ie* (treated as a diphthong: *liep*, *biel*, *uviek*) was equally controversial, primarily because linguists themselves could not reach a consensus as to whether the Croatian language in principle accommodates diphthongs or not. The opponents to this solution were stressing that this innovation might confuse the uneducated Croats, unable to distinguish between *ije* deriving from long *yat* and the same sequence arising from phonemic adaptation of loan words (e.g., *higijena* 'hygiene'), or from morphological and morpho-syntactic

considerations (e.g., *smijem se* 'I laugh', from *smijati se* 'to laugh') (Samardžija 2000, p 87).

Conclusion: language and power

It is commonplace that political persuasion often dictates the linguistic choices we make. Political correctness is reflected in language: by replacing 'mankind' with 'humanity' or 'disabled' with 'physically challenged', we declare ourselves as proponents of a certain worldview. In Croatia of the 1990s, the medium was indeed the message. Those unwilling to accept purist arguments were likely to be regarded as opponents to the regime, traitors to the national cause. This fusion of language and power became most obvious in April 1995, when a parliamentary deputy from the ruling Croatian Democratic Community proposed two highly controversial draft bills on language matters.²⁰ The first proposal involved a drastic mutation of the standard language, focussing mainly on lexical 'purity' and orthographic practices. According to an article by Daria Šito-Sučić, around 30,000 words were to be banned as 'non-Croatian' (Šito-Sučić 1996). The other proposition intended to establish a Government Office for the Croatian Language, which would monitor linguistic practices and provide the means for penalisation of 'transgressors', with pecuniary fines or even imprisonment of up to six months. Both proposals were foreshadowed in late president Tuđman's Christmas address to the nation five months earlier. On that occasion, Tuđman deplored the high presence, in his view, of 'foreign words' in the Croatian language, and remarked that the problem had to be tended not only by the parliament and the government, but also by local and municipal councils. He also made comments about the necessity of establishing a government office for language matters (Vujnović 1995). Despite this authoritative forewarning, the parliament rejected both draft bills, which had been previously ridiculed by the independent media. The incident gave rise to critical comments by a number of prominent linguists, who maintained that the desired change in linguistic practices could not be achieved overnight, but had to be developed gradually, through consistent education (Samardžija 2000, p 85).

Indeed, one of the results of the Croatian language politics of the 1990s was the creation of the frightened, self-conscious speaker. Marko Samardžija, author of several publications on the language politics in the Independent Croatian State, comments on this state of affairs:

I feel embarrassed when I see a person who has used a 'wrong' word and then realised that a shadow of disquieting doubt has been cast on his Croatian credentials and his loyalty as a citizen. People halt in the middle of a word, then they go back to the beginning, they rewind their sentences looking for a different, better word. That entails frustration and insecurity in speech and writing. There is no spontaneous communication when the speaker is inhibited, frustrated (Samardžija 2000: 57).²¹

Significantly, not even the most prominent standard-bearers of language purity could help occasional 'slips of the tongue'. Thus, it has been reported that even the late president Tuđman 'accidentally used the 'Serbian' word for 'happy', *srećan*, instead of the 'Croatian'

sretan, during a live speech. His error was edited out of later broadcasts on state television, but the opposition press had a field day.' (Woodard 1996, p 18)

Purist tendencies in Croatian language politics have a long tradition. In the near future, it is likely that they will continue to develop along the familiar path of 'double resistance': against Serbian words and other foreign words, mostly English.

In their desire to join the European Union, the Croats at the beginning of the twenty-first century, are opting for supranational integration, which will introduce new issues of concern for those interested in molding the language into what they see as its 'primordial' form. The present day European Union of fifteen has eleven official languages, and legislative and policy issues should, in theory, always be communicated in all of them. However, English is already the original language of 55% of official documents, compared with 42% drafted in French, and 3% in German. Some fear that English may gradually impose itself, notably in the context of enlargement (Europe Information Service 2001, 102 and Phillipson 1999, p 98).

In the context of a future enlarged European Union, an unlikely question may impose itself on the speculative observer: if the Habsburg domination resulted in South-Slavic political, cultural and linguistic rapprochement in the 19th century, can we imagine a similar strategic development in an enlarged Europe dominated, politically, by its richer countries and, linguistically, by English? Probably not in the foreseeable future, at least not until the wounds heal.

Notes

1. *Gubitak jedne hrvatske riječi isto je što i gubitak jednog hrvatskog vojnika. Odnosno spas jedne hrvatske riječi isto je što i spas jednoga hrvatskog vojnika.*
2. I use the broad term of 'language politics' to signify all principles, beliefs and decisions reflecting the attitude of a particular society or social group towards the verbal repertory at its disposal. This definition, which takes into account the early work of Joshua A. Fishman, was offered by Bugarski (1986, p 72).
3. The terms *Abstand* and *Ausbau* were originally introduced by Kloss (1967, p 29–41).
4. The Universal Decimal Classification (UDC) — a project based on enlightenment ideas and developed at the end of the 19th century by two Belgian bibliographers — is an indexing and retrieval language for the 'whole of recorded knowledge', which uses a classification system based on arabic numerals.
5. *Razgovor o jeziku mene osobno uvijek podsjeti na Zagrebačku katedralu: kada je gledate recimo iz Kaptolske kleti, onda se vide dva zvonika, kada je gledate iz Gradske kavane, vidi se samo jedan. Dakle, po znanstvenom kriteriju hrvatski i srpski su jedan jezik jer pripadaju istom dijasistemu, ali po književnom, povijesnom, zbljskom kriteriju, kulturološkom kriteriju, to su dva jezika, svaki sa svojom prošlošću i identitetom.*

6. Unlike the other two dialects, which were reasonably unified, the Štokavian dialect had three distinct variants — Ijekavian, Ekavian and Ikavian — reflecting different renditions of the Church Slavonic vowel *yat* as (*i*)*je*, *e* or *-i* respectively (see also Dragosavljević in this volume).
7. The group, which included Croatian writers such as Dimitrije Demetar, Ivan Kukuljević and Ivan Mažuranić; Serbian philologists Đura Daničić and Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, was joined by the Slovene Slavist France Miklošič.
8. Morphological orthography (also called morphonological, etymological, or root orthography) tends to preserve individual morphemes within a word in their original form, not taking into account the consonant changes occurring in pronunciation (e.g., *bolestnik* 'sick person', rather than *bolesnik*; *jedanput*, 'once' rather than *jedamput*). Also, the diphthong deriving from *ě* (*yat*) is spelled as *ie* in long syllables (e.g., *svie t* 'world', where it is considered a one-syllabic diphthong. In short syllables, it is spelled as *je* (e.g., *svjetski* 'worldly').
9. *Narodni jezik Srba, Hrvata, i Crnogoraca jedan je jezik. Stoga je i književni jezik, koji se razvio na njegovoj osnovi oko dva glavna središta, Beograda i Zagreba, jedinstven, sa dva izgovora, ijekavskim i ekavskim.*
10. The full text of the Declaration can be found in Loknar (1995, pp 118–120).
11. The International Program of BBC in London, for example, did this as early as September 1991, when two separate language programs — for the Croatian and the Serbian language — replaced a common Serbo-Croatian program.
12. See for example, Dalibor Brozović's 'Ten Theses of the Croatian Standard Language,' originally published in 1971: 'The rights of the Croatian standard language are determined by the functions it performs for the Croatian nation, and not by the degree of similarity or dissimilarity it may have with other languages. The fact that, after being adopted by the Croatians, the Neo-Štokavian dialect ... was adopted as the basis for a standard language also by other nations that speak the dialects of the Croat-Serbian diasystem, does not permit us to speak, not even from the strictly linguistic point of view, of a concrete Croato-Serbian standard language. Not only because the choices were made independently and at different times, and not only because their dialectal bases are not identical, but because for every standard language as such the culturo-linguistic superstructure is of essential importance' (Brozović 1975, p 209).
13. In practice, this meant 'as different from Serbian as possible'.
14. Some of the words threatened to be exiled from the language, although they clearly contributed to its lexical corpus as legitimate and enriching stylistic variants and their presence could be verified in both the literary tradition and everyday usage were: *hljeb* 'bread', *lampa* 'lamp', *hiljada* 'thousand', *veče* 'evening', *kičma* 'spine', etc.
15. Brodnjak's dictionary is not the first of its kind in the history of Croatian language standardisation. It's well-known precedent was Petar Guberina's and Kruno Krstić's (1940) *Razlike između hrvatskoga i srpskoga književnog jezika*.

16. For example, the maligned noun *izvještaj* (report) can assume a number of suffixes in morphosyntactic combinations such as *izvještajni* 'reporting (Adj)', *izvještajništvo* 'reporting (Noun)', etc, while the 'politically correct' *izvješće* 'report' allows no such possibilities (Babić 1995, p 90).
17. The Croatian equivalents of these words are *stranka*, *tajnik*, *središnji odbor*.
18. Thus, for example, the NDH's *Legislative Order on the Croatian Language, its Purity and Orthography*, declared on 14 August 1941, stipulated that all texts written in dialect had to bear a clear statement of that fact (Samardžija 2000, p 51).
19. The year of joint publication of *Pravopis hrvatskosrpskog književnog jezika* and *Pravopis srpskohrvatskog književnog jezika* by Zagreb, Matica hrvatska and Novi Sad, Matica srpska.
20. This initiative had a precedent in Pavelić's Independent Croatian State, which also stipulated penalties for ignoring language regulations, i.e. the prohibition of swearwords and other words considered inappropriate by the authorities. About the language policy in NDH, see Samardžija 1993a and 1993b.
21. Nelagodno mi je kada vidim čovjeka koji je upotrijebio 'pogrešnu' riječ i osjetio da pada neugodna sjena sumnje na njegovo hrvatsvo ili njegovu građansku lojalnost. Ljudi zastaju u pola riječi pa se vraćaju na početak, 'vrte rečenicu unatrag tražeći drugu, bolju riječ. To za sobom povlači frustracije, nesigurnost, u govoru i u pisanju. Spontane komunikacije nema kad govornik ima bilo kakvu inhibiciju, bilo kakvu frustraciju.

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