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Language as a Symbol of a Fractured Country

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Abstract

In this paper we look at the bipolar Serbo-Croatian language which has undergone various processes in the past two centuries: a) integration in the mid-nineteenth century; b) variation during SFR Yugoslavia, when a common, but not a 'unique' Serbo-Croatian language was promoted, and when national varieties were tacitly allowed within the borders of the republics; c) disintegration upon the fall of SFR Yugoslavia in the 1990s; and d) the promotion of successor standard languages (Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian, Montenegrin). In these processes, unitarian and separatist language policies have constantly changed, and many times the language has been a symbol (its name, script, certain lexemes, etc.) and a means of connecting with the national identity that the advocates of nationalist politics used to promote their political ideologies – by enforcing linguistic changes with the aim of creating as many differences as possible between 'Our' language and 'Their' language.

Following the historical and cultural context, the paper describes the period during the 1990s, which is marked by turbulent socio-political changes, showing that the tendencies towards the dissolution of Serbo-Croatian could have been expected. Two contradictory approaches to Serbo-Croatian and successor languages are further highlighted: on the one hand, it is considered to be a common, polycentric (standard) language realised in national varieties (Bosnian, Montenegrin, Croatian and Serbian); while on the other hand, these languages are considered to be separate standard languages with their own histories and language and cultural particularities. For that reason, forced linguistic changes are implemented by the language policies of the newly-formed states with the aim to preserve and strengthen national identities. This is illustrated by the examples of language nationalisation, including purist cleansing of lexis in Croatia, the enforcement of Cyrillic script in Serbia, the

introduction of new phonemes/graphemes in Montenegro, and the nationalist education policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a response to these language policies, a language document entitled The Declaration on the Common Language was published online in 2017. However, it does not offer any concrete solutions for different linguistic realities, but instead advocates the idea of language standardisation which has not been particularly successful in the past. It is therefore concluded that linguists should take into account the limited influence of politics on language and begin conducting systematic language research from the philological and cultural standpoint, putting political views and agenda aside.

Keywords: disintegration of Yugoslavia, language policy, Serbo-Croatian, successor languages (Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian, Montenegrin), language nationalisation, The Declaration on the Common Language

要旨

本稿は、過去 2 世紀の間に様々な歴史的プロセスを経た両極言語セルビア・クロアチア語を考察する。a) 19 世紀半ばの言語統合の時代。b) ユーゴスラビア社会主義連邦共和国時代。すなわちセルビア・クロアチア語が唯一ではないが、共通語として推奨された時代であり、同時に国民の多様性が連邦共和国の地域内で暗黙のうちに承認されていた時代。c) 1990 年代のユーゴスラビア社会主義連邦共和国の崩壊にともなう共通言語解体の時代。d) 後継標準言語（クロアチア語、セルビア語、ボスニア語、モンテネグロ語）の構築。これらのプロセスにおいて、統一主義と分離主義言語政策は絶えず変化し、何度も言語は、その名称、書記体系、特定の語彙などにより、国民のシンボルとして捉えられ、国家主義者が利用した国民的アイデンティティと結びつく手段となった。彼らは自らの政治的イデオロギーを促進するために、「我々の言語」と「彼らの言語」の間に可能な限り違いを強調し、言語的な差異を構築していった。

このような歴史的、文化的な文脈に従って、本稿は 1990 年代の状況について記述する。1990 年代は急激な社会的・政治的変化によって特徴づけられる時代であり、セルビア・クロアチア語の解体が志向された時代である。この時期はセルビア・クロアチア語と後継言語に対する 2 つの矛盾するアプローチに大別される。一方では、セルビア・クロアチア語はボスニア・モンテネグロ・クロアチア・セルビアの共通（標準）言語であるとい

う見方。他方、これらの言語は、独自の歴史と言語および文化を備えたものであり、セルビア・クロアチア語とは分離した別の標準言語であるという見方。そのため、連邦解体後の新たな国家体制の中で、国民的アイデンティティを維持・強化することを目的として、新たな言語政策に基づいて言語改革が行われた。すなわちクロアチアでの語彙の純粹主義的浄化、セルビアでのキリル文字の実施、モンテネグロでの新しい音素・書記素の導入、ボスニア・ヘルツェゴビナでの民族主義教育政策を含む、言語の国有化である。これらの言語政策を受けて 2017 年に『共通言語に関する宣言』がオンライン上に公表された。そこには異なる言語の現実に対する具体的な解決策には言及がないが、共通言語化のための基本的な精神が言及されており、それに従い、言語学者は言語に対する政治の影響が限定的であることを考慮し、政治的立場・政治日程とは全く別に、哲学的小および文化的観点から体系的な言語調査を先導するべきであると結論づけられている。

キーワード：ユーゴスラビア社会主義連邦共和国解体、言語政策、セルビア・クロアチア語、クロアチア語、セルビア語、ボスニア語、モンテネグロ語、国家言語化、共通語宣言

1. Introduction

We begin the discussion with the well-established assertion that linguistic identity, as a bearer of cultural and societal values, is a complex phenomenon that differs from one language to another, and which is determined according to various criteria¹, among which each can be a defining factor in determining the identity of a given language. That is why determining the linguistic identity of some languages has caused heated debates, most often because linguistic criteria have been disregarded and political interests played their part instead. As we shall see, the linguistic identity of the Serbo-Croatian language has always been tied to national identity, so that the political elites used the symbolic power of the language by encouraging national collectives to take action and fight each other (Škiljan 2002: 275). Serbo-Croatian had an important role in the formation and the disintegration of Yugoslavia², when the advocates of nationalist politics proclaimed it as the most important national symbol, by which its primary, communicative purpose was replaced with the symbolic.

We start from the claim that language communities construct their languages, which is why Serbo-Croatian successor languages:

[...] Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian, Montenegrin, as all other national languages, are constructs (...) by which national elites define imaginary language communities that symbolically match national collectives, the areas within which the elites can apply their social power. It can be therefore claimed that language communities ultimately construct their own languages (Škiljan 2002: 280).

We shall try to illustrate Škiljan's claim by the linguistic situation in the Serbo-Croatian area. The aim of the paper is to show how the language – the bipolar Serbo-Croatian language standard – has throughout history been not only a means of communication and a symbol but a means of connecting with the national identity. Furthermore, every linguistic discussion in the mid-South-Slavic area has always been a political one, especially during turbulent times. Following a short overview of the historical and cultural context, we look at what was happening with Serbo-Croatian during the tumultuous 1990s, when it became “a symbol of a fractured country” (Bugarski 2012: 73), pointing to the fact that there had been linguistic disagreement about the language before the 1990s and that the dissolution of the Serbo-Croatian language could have been expected. Language-related events in the 1990s, caused by the changes in the social and political situation, aroused interest in many (socio)linguists from the area and abroad, who spoke, sometimes in quite a contrast to each other, of Serbo-Croatian and its successor languages (Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian, Montenegrin). This is not just about the change in the status, i.e. the name of a language and about its national affirmation, but also about the change in the corpus, which is reflected in forced changes, i.e. language nationalisation through (re)standardisation, which we illustrate by nationalist language policies in the newly-formed states after the disintegration of Yugoslavia; Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro. In this process, those involved in shaping language policies in the newly-formed states were very apt in using language to achieve their political goals by advocating national and territorial homogenisation of each state.

2. Historical and cultural context

The forming of the bipolar Croatian-Serbian language standard with two varieties at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century was the result of the establishment of a symbolic connection with national identity. During the twentieth century, the language was being formed and changed in accordance with the strategies of Croatian and Serbian social and political elites that had social power. This bipolar standard enabled the identification of language communities with ethnicity and used their ideologies to create a “new supra-ethnic collective whose unified language will serve both as a symbol and a means of communication [emphasis added]” (Škiljan 2002: 274). Language policy in multilingual and multinational federative Yugoslavia (1943–1991) was based on the principle of ‘brotherhood and unity’ of the peoples and nationalities (today’s minorities) and the equality of the three languages of the people (Slovenian, Serbo-Croatian, and Macedonian) and of the languages of the nationalities and ethnic groups (more on that in Požgaj Hadži 2014: 60-61). As far as Serbo-Croatian is concerned, the policy allowed its national varieties within the borders of the republics (Western or Croatian, Eastern or Serbian, and two standard idioms: Bosnian and Montenegrin); however, at the same time it demanded the acceptance of a supranational language community which would be equated with the all-Yugoslavian idea (disregarding Slovenian and Macedonian as national languages, as well as other minority languages in Yugoslavia). Even though western (Croatian) and eastern (Serbian) varieties have developed in different social, political, historical, and religious circumstances, and under the influence of different languages, there have never been major differences between them, especially not structural ones, because both varieties developed from the same Neo-Štokavian dialect (cf. Požgaj Hadži 2014: 62-65). However, with time, the varieties became testimonies to national distinctiveness. This was used by political elites to highlight the connection between the language and the nation, and this became a fertile ground for the development of separatism. Simply put, two opposing options kept coming to the fore: unitarian and separatist³, and throughout history it was Croats and Serbs who dealt with the issues of a common, but not ‘unique’⁴ Serbo-Croatian standard language.

In the relationship between the language of the Croats and the language of the Serbs, the general public has always manifested the relationship:

[...] between those peoples, between unitarianism and so-called separatism, between Orthodoxy and Catholicism, between the Latin and the Cyrillic script, between Ustashas and Chetniks, between the east and the west, etc., even more so because in the first and second Yugoslavia it was not allowed to explicitly talk about national problems, especially Croatian problems, so language, as many times before (in Croatian history the word *language* itself was used to mean 'people'), gained wider meaning and a more important role than it actually has.

(Pranjković 2008: 56)

Moreover, in the linguistic discussion on the bipolar Serbo-Croatian language standard, the political aspect of these issues was always in the foreground, starting with the name of the language, which was an object of contention from the very beginning. It is interesting to note that in the Vienna Literary Agreement, which was signed in 1850 in Vienna by both Croatian and Serbian linguists, there is no mention of the name of the new, common standard language (for more on that see Požgaj Hadži 2014: 52-54). Its name is mentioned around a hundred years later in the Novi Sad Agreement (1954), in which the first point reads:

The national language of Serbs, Croats, and Montenegrins is one language. Therefore, the standard language which has evolved on its basis around two major centres, Belgrade and Zagreb, is unique, with two pronunciations, Ijekavian and Ekavian.

(see facsimile of the Novi Sad Agreement in Moguš 1995: 202)

The second point also refers to the name of the language, by saying that “it is always necessary to emphasise both its components in official use”⁵, whereas the third point refers to the equality of the scripts: Latin and Cyrillic (it points out that both scripts should be learnt equally in Croatian and Serbian education systems), and the fourth point covers the equality of pronunciations: Ijekavian and Ekavian. We must highlight that a number of points in the signed Novi Sad Agreement were a matter of contention from the very beginning, especially the

‘uniqueness’ of the Serbo-Croatian language and its name. If the language had been given a supranational name, it probably would have ‘survived’ the disintegration of Yugoslavia.⁶

As we have previously noted, language policy in Yugoslavia allowed national identification with individual varieties within the borders of the republics but, at the same time, it required acceptance of a supranational language community. The question arises as to what was happening with culture in that context, since we know that language and culture are intertwined and that all “culture was created thanks to language, through language and, to a large extent, in language” (Bugarski 2005: 17). Did Yugoslav culture policy, as well as language policy, require acceptance of a supranational culture? We can truly speak, as Ristić⁷ says, of the fusion of “all cultures in a new, common culture”, or about the unitarian concept that was “applied in the USSR, where instead of national equality and multicultural society, the Soviet man, the Soviet people, and the Russian language were promoted as a transcultural idiom...”. We would like to draw attention to the fact that already in the 1970s Ristić suggests “a unique Yugoslav cultural area that does not imply a predominant culture, nor a culture that is created by the amalgamation of all cultures into a new identity; it implies equality and multiculturalism”⁸ to which we add interaction, exchange, openness etc. within one or several cultures, which was to develop interculturalism from the mid-1970s, when Europe began to face mass migrations – still a current topic today.

3. The disintegration of the country and the dissolution of the language – an expected process?

The consequence of social and political events and the war in the tumultuous 1990s was the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the emergence of independent states in 1991 and 1992 (Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia, today North Macedonia) and in 2006 (Montenegro). It is common for such turbulent periods to be accompanied by changes in the language – not only changes in the status, i.e. the name of the language, but also changes in the corpus; these are actually forced changes that primarily promote various nationalist ideologies. Out of the three languages of the peoples in Yugoslavia, only Serbo-Croatian caused dispute –which, it soon became apparent, was not as ‘unique’ as was noted in the Novi Sad Agreement. There was a

tendency already in the 1960s, but also later, to separate the languages and protect the 'rights' of individual varieties. For example, in 1967 in Croatia the Declaration on the Status and Name of the Croatian Literary Language⁹ was published, demanding the equal status for both Serbian and Croatian in the Yugoslav federation; the beginning of the 1970s was marked by the forbidden cultural and political movement called 'Croatian Spring', which demanded greater Croatian national rights within Yugoslavia, including linguistic rights; the 1980s were marked by the struggle against nationalism in textbooks in Croatia (e.g. words from western and eastern varieties had to be equally used in Croatian textbooks, such as *glazba/muzika* for *music*). Although most of the dissatisfaction with unitarianism came from Croatia, heated debates took place in the 1980s in different Yugoslav republics (and the world) regarding the relation of language and nation, language and politics, about whether there is such a thing as a Yugoslav language policy and what it should be, considering the unique Yugoslav communication area (for more on that see Škiljan 1988). For example, these issues were discussed at several conferences. Let us mention the conference Language and National Relations held in Sarajevo in 1984¹⁰, when the participants discussed the status of the linguistic expression in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is characterised by recognisability and authenticity, and mostly advocated a supranational linguistic expression. In the 1980s, in defining a language and a language community, preference was given to the territorial and communicative criteria that were replaced after 1991 by the national criterion, meaning that what is nationally acceptable is authentic (Vajzović 2005: 526-527). Language policy and language planning were also discussed at the panel of the XII Congress of the Association of Slavic Societies of Yugoslavia in Novi Sad in 1988, titled 'Language Policy and Language Planning in Yugoslavia' (Vasić 1990, ed.), as well as at the conference at the University of London in 1989, called Language Planning in Yugoslavia (Bugarski and Hawkesworth 1992, eds.)¹¹. The discussion on the topic took into account the uniqueness of the Yugoslav communication area and the languages of the peoples, nationalities (minorities), and ethnic groups, and it also pointed out a number of sensitive linguistic issues that stem from different views of language planning (whether a common language or individual varieties are planned). Drawing attention to these three randomly selected sets is important because of two facts: firstly, many linguistic issues in the Mid-South-Slavic area were a source of problems even before, and they continuously caused disagreement, announcing in a way the disintegration of the

federation and linguistic changes and, secondly, some of the topics that were being discussed in Yugoslavia in the 1980s are current topics in today's newly-formed states (e.g. the lack of systematic language policy). The only difference is that the discussions in Yugoslavia were held among individual republics, whereas in the newly-formed states (which includes Slovenia and North Macedonia), they are held within individual nations – and usually they come down to disagreement between the nationally radical and the moderate (similar in Mønnesland 2001: 19; Požgaj Hadži 2013: 337-338).

Based on this brief reminder of the linguistic situation in Yugoslavia in the 1980s, and there were similar examples from the nineteenth century on, we can conclude that the events related to Serbo-Croatian in the 1990s could have been expected. In the past two centuries, Serbo-Croatian has undergone, according to Radovanović (2001: 170), various successful or less successful processes: “Integration (of language), Variation (in language), Polarisation (of varieties), Disintegration (of language), and Promotion (of varieties into separate standard languages)”. These processes were conditioned by extra-linguistic facts (the disintegration of the Yugoslav federation) and resulted in the nominal death of a common, but not a ‘unique’ language, and the former varieties became standard languages – Croatian, Serbian, and Bosnian from 1990 to 1993 and Montenegrin standard language in 2007. The change in the name of the language resulted in other turbulent processes – the point is not only in the changes in the standardisation processes of individual standard languages, i.e. their (re)standardisation and national affirmation, but primarily in achieving various political goals through language and in the national and territorial homogenisation of each of the peoples (Baotić 2001: 209). Rapidly, the successor languages became tools of nationalist ideologies, and the communicative function of the language was replaced by the symbolic – linguistic changes began to be enforced, reflected in various forms of linguistic engineering, especially in Croatian standard language and in Bosnian, and later in Montenegrin standard language. In short, language, as many times in history, was misused in the 1990s; it “served as a factor in the destruction of Yugoslavia” (Bugarski 2012: 41), only to be counted at the end of the process:

[...] among its major victims: Serbo-Croatian officially ceased to exist.
From the very beginning of the Yugoslav idea, it shared its fate and it

was buried in the same tomb with the federation whose shaky unity it symbolised and supported (Bugarski 2012: 41-42).

4. Serbo-Croatian and successor languages in the 1990s

The events around Serbo-Croatian and in successor languages during the 1990s aroused the interest of a number of researchers from the countries involved, as well as from abroad, who tried to find reasons for the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the dissolution of Serbo-Croatian and who tried to find an answer to the question of how many languages are ‘hidden’ in Serbo-Croatian – one, two, three or four?¹² The answer needs to take into consideration different levels of study that were often neglected in discussions during the 1990s. There were also certain misunderstandings regarding the interpretation of the word ‘language’ (cf. Mønnesland 2013). As far as the linguistic and communication level is concerned, we have already noted that Serbo-Croatian is a common, but not a ‘unique’ language, based on the Neo-Štokavian dialect that was realised in different varieties (Ijekavian, Ekavian; Latin/Cyrillic script). However, the situation is different when looking at the standard language from the sociolinguistic point of view; it is sociolinguistic factors that:

[...] need to be the most important when determining the status of a standard variety as a separate language. Standard language is clearly a product of conscious human choices, so the decision to proclaim a certain language variety a special standard language is simply one of those choices (Peti-Stantić and Langston 2013: 85).

In cases described in this paper, it is appropriate to uphold Radovanović’s (2001: 170) demarcation between the “‘linguistic’ language (=communicative, linguistic plane) and the ‘political’ language (=symbolic, glottopolitical plane)”, bearing in mind that the latter refers to standard languages as official instruments of state, nation, and culture. We also concur with Radovanović’s (2001: 170) view that every linguistic language is also a political language because the recognition of its linguistic identity depends more on political will than on scientific judgement; this means that the authorities agree upon the number of languages to be used. Moreover, the question arises as to linguistic self-determination to which every society/state and language community is

entitled to; in this context, that is the issue of self-determination of Croatian in regard to Serbian, Bosnian, and Montenegrin, Serbian in regard to Croatian, Bosnian, and Montenegrin, etc. As pointed out by Badurina (2015: 60), “if the Croatian society/state and language community wants to call its language Croatian (because, among other reasons, it 'feels' it as such), then nobody is entitled to deny this right to it.” The same of course applies to Serbian, Bosnian, and Montenegrin society/state and language community.

What, then, was happening with Serbo-Croatian and its successor languages in the last decade of the twentieth century? Serbo-Croatian, as a prestigious language of communication not only in Yugoslavia, but abroad as well, became stigmatised in the society of the 1990s (e.g. in Slovenia, cf. Požgaj Hadži and Balažić Bulc and Miheljak Vlado 2013). It slowly began to disappear from the list of languages, and members of successor language communities started to fight for the recognition of their languages and their entry into the list of languages of the world. In cases:

[...] where language community was not created spontaneously, through communicative practice, but instead represents a construct that is a part of a political project in which it is most often identified with an imaginary ethnic community (and the language in such a project is promoted as one of its symbols), we should differentiate between *internal recognition* of a language from *external recognition*.

(Škiljan 2008: 80)

Firstly, internal recognition takes place within the language community in which certain political elites use various mechanisms to develop a sense of language as an important national symbol, with the most efficient implementation of that recognition being through education. Secondly, external recognition is granted by other language communities and it is regulated by international law; the main prerequisite for external recognition of a language is its formal and legal internal recognition (Škiljan 2008: 80). In the process of gaining recognition for successor languages and in their (re)standardisation (for more on that see Požgaj Hadži and Balažić Bulc 2015), there have been attempts to create as many differences

between ‘Our’ and ‘Their’ language as possible – in lexis, orthography, language structures, phonology, etc., depending on the language (this shall be discussed later in the paper).

4.1 A common polycentric standard or separate standards?

Language-related events in the Mid-South-Slavic area, especially the role of politics in them, have attracted interest from a number of researchers from the countries involved and abroad. A short overview of writing¹³ on the relation of Croatian standard language to other standard languages formed on the Neo-Štokavian basis (Serbian, Bosnian, Montenegrin) points to two opposing viewpoints (Badurina 2015; Peti-Stantić and Langston 2013; etc.). Most linguists from abroad, as well as those from Serbia, find that it is “one common (standard) language that is usually called Serbo-Croatian, with polycentrism being one of its defining features” (Badurina 2015: 59); this language is realised in several independent national varieties: Bosnian, Montenegrin, Croatian, and Serbian. The linguists prove this with the thesis of mutual intelligibility among speakers of the aforementioned standard languages¹⁴ and their structural similarity. On the other hand, the majority of Croatian linguists consider it a matter of genetically related, but autonomous standard languages that have developed in different historical, cultural, religious, and other circumstances, which makes them separate languages. They rely on the fact that every nation has the right to call its language whatever it wants; they also point out the differences among the languages. Although Serbo-Croatian was the official language of former Yugoslavia, from the Croatian official perspective it was a fictitious construct imposed for political reasons; unified, real Serbo-Croatian never actually existed. What existed were two native, standard languages: Croatian and Serbian, with their histories and language and cultural particularities (Peti-Stantić and Langston 2013, etc.). Without going into more detail on the matter, we believe that the Croatian and Serbian standard languages have always been two separate idioms on the sociolinguistic level (at the level of standard), which therefore makes the criteria of structural similarity, genetic relatedness, and mutual intelligibility¹⁵ irrelevant (for example, the latter relies on personal experiences and speakers’ beliefs). After all, national languages, as can be seen from Škiljan’s (2002: 280) quote in the introduction, are constructs by which national elites define imaginary language communities that symbolically match national collectives. “Simply put, the Croats’ native language is Croatian,

the Serbs' is Serbian, the Bosnians' is Bosnian, and the Montenegrins' is Montenegrin, regardless of how differently or similarly to each other they may actually speak." (Škiljan 2002: 281).

5. How languages became nationalised

Direct connection and interdependence of language and politics is always a current matter, and it is surely unavoidable in the periods of the affirmation of a particular language, i.e. its internal and external recognition. Every language policy is conducted in accordance with the ideology and general politics of a society that takes institutional (and non-institutional) steps to influence language and its use. What were the language policies of the newly-formed states? They set out to find as many differences as possible among individual standard languages, which were most often in contradiction with linguistic reality; e.g. they introduced neologisms, orientalisms, they banned Latin script, introduced new phonemes/graphemes, etc. – these became the main features of national identity. As these linguistic changes are usually justified by the preservation and the strengthening of national identities and the needs of national culture, we can talk, according to Mønnesland¹⁶, about language nationalisation carried out by certain political elites, backed by government. He talks about different types of language nationalisation; let us mention some of them with examples related to our topic:

- choosing a particular norm (choice of Štokavian, and not Kajkavian dialect for the basis of the common standard language – Serbo-Croatian)
- convergence (of Serbian and Croatian standard languages in the Vienna Literary Agreement of 1850)
- unification (Bosnian standard language idiom for all nations in Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- purism (defence against Serbian language during the 1990s in Croatia)
- differentiation (introduction of neologisms in Croatia in the 1990s)
- changing the name of the language (Illyrian/Croatian > Croatian or Serbian > Croatian Literary Language > Croatian)
- tradition (enforcement of Cyrillic script in Serbia in the past decade), etc.

These changes were initiated by various language councils for the cultivation and preservation of language, academies, political elites (government, ministries,

parliament), but also individuals who, in the newly-formed states, became the creators of language policies and who, because of their rather mainly nationalist ideologies, set out to create as many differences as possible among individual standard languages. Therefore, language nationalisation is conditioned not only by external (the new socio-political system) and internal reasons (changed stance towards neighbouring languages, increased interest in linguistic issues, partisan activities of certain linguists working in different councils, academies, etc.), but primarily by political reasons. The result of language nationalisation was the radicalisation of language policy and of the approach to the issues of standard languages in the newly-formed countries (Pranjković 2008: 84), which we shall illustrate with the examples of purist cleansing in Croatia, the enforcement of Cyrillic script in Serbia, the introduction of new phonemes/graphemes in Montenegro, and the nationalist education policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

5.1 On the purist cleansing of lexis

As far as Croatia is concerned, language nationalisation was most evident at the lexical and orthographical level¹⁷, as pointed out by different authors (for example, Pranjković 2008: 84-58; Badurina 2015: 67; Požgaj-Hadži and Balažić Bulc 2015: 71). Here we shall look at the lexical level, which is usually subject to changes the most. In the 1990s, lexical choice marked the speakers politically; good lexemes strengthened the national identity and, of course, highlighted the symbolic, instead of the communicative function of the language. Lexical changes created uncertainty in speakers who began to feel afraid of using their native language (Opačić 2014: 32-44). New lexemes had different standard language status; for example, terminology (in military, law, administration, etc.) gained absolute supremacy overnight in comparison to the previous period (*putovnica* instead of *pasoš*). Some lexemes were revitalised, i.e. they came back from the passive into the active vocabulary, so instead of archaisms and/or historicisms, they were called revivals (*županija*, *kuna*). Some lexemes were politically imposed (*djelatnik* instead of *radnik*, *prisutnost* instead of *nazočnost*) and no linguistic reason can be found to support the claim that they are better than the old ones, apart from the explanation that they are ‘more Croatian’ and that they could not be used during unitarian years (sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic reasons) (Požgaj Hadži and Balažić Bulc 2015: 74; Badurina 2015: 69-70).

The Croatian language was also nationalised through the introduction of neologisms (New Croatian) that “emphasise the differences between Croatian in Croatia and Croatian under the influence of Serbian in former Yugoslavia” (Lučić 2009: 13). Alongside *zrakomlat* as a symbol of the identity of Croatian, Babić came up with many other neologisms in 1994 (*kopnica* for AIDS-HIV; *mamutnjak* for jumbo jet, etc.), but people did not actually use them (for more on that see Granić 2013: 78; Požgaj Hadži and Balažić Bulc 2015: 71-73). What also changed was the attitude to foreign words, especially towards Serbian words that “represent the enemy that endangers not only the manifestation of national identity, but the nation itself” (Lučić 2007: 338). That is why that period is marked by the publishing of a number of dictionaries of differences between Croatian and Serbian, handbooks on language use, among which the most popular are those that had a certain authority behind them (institutes, the academy, etc.), and even dictionaries of superfluous words in Croatian (Peti 2006: 507-530; Peti-Stanić and Langston 2013: 157-202). A great role was also played by advice on language use in the media (columns, radio, TV show, etc.), which mostly revolved around lists of forbidden words and recommendations of ‘more Croatian’ lexemes (more on that in Peti-Stanić and Langston 2013; Požgaj Hadži and Balažić Bulc 2015: 71-75).

As we have already pointed out, various institutions, the academy, councils, individuals, etc. participated in the various forms of language nationalisation. How did the media govern the Croatian language? According to research by Peti-Stanić and Langston (2013) and Czerwiński (2005), there had been some cleansing of the Croatian language following 1991, but these changes were neither sudden nor consistent, as has been claimed by some authors relying on their intuition. The media was polarised so that the choice of certain lexical units depended on the ideological orientation of the media, which indicates the political dimension of linguistic purism. The more ‘national’ the source was, the more likely it was to implement purist language policy. However, not even the extremely nationalist media were consistent in following the recommendations, and they used proscribed lexemes alongside pure Croatian lexemes. It was mostly about the changes in the frequency of use of certain forms, and not about the complete replacement of existing lexemes with the new ones. Despite language nationalisation, the language defends itself, i.e. it either accepts or does not accept

changes. At the turn of the millennium, we can talk about the normalisation of the lexical norm; according to research by B. Barić (2014: 42), Croatian “stopped with radical purist interventions”.

5.2 On the “hysterical enforcement of the Cyrillic script”

Unlike the linguistic changes during the 1990s in Croatian and Bosnian, the Serbian language was not undergoing any changes and it did not need to differentiate itself from Croatian in terms of lexis, orthography, or anything else, because it always had the prestigious status in Yugoslavia. Whereas in Croatia nationalisation campaigns were organised by institutions (which we have illustrated with the example of purist cleansing of Croatian), in Serbia there were informal groups that ‘took care’ of the Serbian language and its people. Far from saying that there was no language nationalisation, but here we speak of the “reductive type of nationalism” that primarily stands its ground (Bugarski 2012: 52). In this sense, the Cyrillic script was vehemently defended by the authorities as “Serbian national sanctity”, whereas Croatian Latin script – Gajica¹⁸ needed to be banned not only from official, but from public use as well – seeing that private use cannot be controlled (Bugarski 2012: 53). Attacks on the Latin script resulted in the amendment of Article 10 of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia¹⁹ in 2006, which states that only the Cyrillic script is in official use in the Republic of Serbia. This not only diminished the status of the Latin script as an alternative script for Serbian, but it is also something that is contrary to linguistic reality, which is confirmed by Klajn’s research from 2002 (in Bugarski 2013: 96) that showed 39.8% polled Serbian citizens use the Latin script, 21.9% use the Cyrillic script, and 38.3% use both scripts. Similar research carried out at the end of 2014 showed that slightly more respondents use both the Latin script (47%) and the Cyrillic script (36%), except in Belgrade where 61.6% respondents use the Latin script. M. Stevanović concludes that the Cyrillic script is “not on its deathbed” and that the Latin script is not a threat to the Cyrillic script as long as it is in the Constitution and as long as textbooks are published in the Cyrillic script (Požgaj Hadži and Balažić Bulc 2015: 76-78). We agree with Pančić who points out that:

[...] the hysterical *use of the Cyrillic script in absolutely all areas* was not just an act of violence against the Other; it was primarily the

exorcism of the Other in Us (...) The Cyrillic script ‘as such’ is, of course, entirely innocent in the whole story (Pančić 2000).

5.3 On the new phonemes/graphemes *ś*, *ź*

Since the introduction of the Montenegrin standard language as the official language in Montenegro in 2007, linguistic questions continue to be political issues. Language as a symbol of national identity is used to serve the interests of certain political elites. There are opposing views on the fundamental questions regarding the re-standardisation of Montenegrin: some believe that Montenegrin needs to go back to its roots, to the language that was spoken more than a hundred years ago, while others believe that its re-standardisation needs to observe generally accepted theories and attitudes on codification (Glušica 2011: 272; Lakić 2013: 144-145; Požgaj Hadži 2014: 81-82). The main principle of the current Montenegrin language policy, which is carried out by the Montenegrin Government through its institutions and individuals, is to create as many differences as possible between Montenegrin standard language and other languages with Neo-Štokavian dialect at their core. Because of this, the nationalisation of Montenegrin is reflected not only in linguistic changes, but in the changes to the system as well. The phonological system of Montenegrin has increased by two new phonemes/graphemes: *ś* and *ź*, which were taken from Montenegrin folk speech, for example *śekira* instead of *sjekira*; *źenica* instead of *zjenica*, the so-called jot varieties (Požgaj Hadži and Balažić Bulc 2015: 85-86). Not only do these phonemes/graphemes present a communication barrier, but their introduction, alongside cultural shock, resulted in the disunity of the Montenegrin society: on the one hand, there are those who are not changing their orthographical and orthoepic habits, and on the other, those who “are changing their expression overnight, using the new jot varieties as evidence of political and national eligibility and affiliation” (Glušica 2010: 36). Current language policy in Montenegro is carried out from the position of power of the decision-makers who still use language to promote their political agenda; every discussion about the Montenegrin standard language continues to cause controversy, so its re-standardisation can be regarded as being at the beginning of the process.

5.4. On the nationalist education policy

Following the parliamentary elections in 1990 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, three standard languages gained legal recognition: Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian; this move illustrated the symbolic and political function of language (for more on that see Požgaj Hadži 2014: 78-79). In terms of communication, there are no problems; however, problems arise when trying to re-standardise each of the languages and when the languages have to function in legislation, media, education, etc. (more on that in Požgaj Hadži and Balažić Bulc 2015: 78-83). It is known that the education system has an important role in forming language policy, and people who are involved in educational language policy in a certain country are aware of this (Joseph 2006: 46). In Bosnia and Herzegovina, language as a symbol of national identity is present in curricula, textbooks, teacher training programmes, etc. What is specific about education in Bosnia and Herzegovina is that it is carried out in three different standard languages, including also other cultural and historical particularities. In addition, there is another unusual way of protecting the language rights of students of different nationalities – nationally separated schools and classes (more on that in Palić 2009: 120; Halilović 2014: 131-132; Požgaj Hadži 2014: 79-80). This phenomenon of education in Bosnia and Herzegovina is known as ‘two schools under one roof’, which is the worst example of nationalist education – it has been highlighted as unacceptable for years (Katnić-Bakaršić 2013: 124-125; Pašalić Kreso 2008: 353-374) but, unfortunately, it still continues to exist.

6. Conclusion

As we have seen, in the formation of the common state of Yugoslavia and in its disintegration, language played an important part, primarily as a symbol (its name, script, lexis, etc.), but also as a means of connecting with the national identity, which was used by various political elites to promote their political ideologies. We have shown the journey of the bipolar Croatian-Serbian language standard in the past two centuries (from integration, over variation, to disintegration and promotion). In the second Yugoslavia, a common, but not a ‘unique’ Serbo-Croatian language was promoted, and tacit recognition of supranational language community was sought, as were the greater rights of individual varieties (which was prohibited politically). In contrast to that period, in the newly-formed states

following the 1990s, as a consequence of the disintegration of Yugoslavia, language was used to promote political agenda through its nationalisation, by introducing various, necessary and unnecessary, linguistic changes.

The dissatisfaction with such language policies and language manipulation was expressed in a language document entitled *The Declaration on the Common Language*²⁰. The document sparked debate and immediately divided the public diametrically into those supporting and those opposing it. The signatories of the document believed that the language used in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia and Serbia was “a common standard, polycentric language” and that “the use of four different names for standard varieties – Bosnian, Montenegrin, Croatian and Serbian – does not make them four different languages”.²¹ In this way we return to the idea of language standardisation, which, as we have seen, was not successful, despite constant efforts for more than a century. On the other hand, the opponents criticised the document, among others, because of its incompetence, politicization, incompleteness, non-innovation, terminological imprecision, etc.²² In addition, it appears twenty-five years after the disintegration of Yugoslavia, that it neither initiates constructive dialogue nor does it offer any concrete solutions for different linguistic realities experienced by the newly-formed language communities. Nevertheless, the Declaration warned linguists that “it is high time inclusive language policies were formed in the Mid-South-Slavic area, which would further enable language standardisation based on language practice rather than prescribe it according to the sentiments of authorised individuals and which would also respect linguistic variation, dialectal variation and regionality.” (Balažić Bulc and Požgaj Hadži 2019, in press).

Looking at the linguistic situation in the Mid-South-Slavic area today, we can say that the processes of language nationalisation have ceased in some languages (Croatian, Serbian), some still have a number of unresolved issues (Bosnian), while others have just begun the process of re-standardisation (Montenegrin). We agree with Peti-Stanić and Langston (2013: 85), who believe that, after more than three decades of promoting the thesis of the inseparable link between language and identity (Croatian, Bosnian, Montenegrin, Serbian), we should finally go back to scientific judgement and open up to the systematic research of language from a philological and cultural standpoint, putting political agenda aside.

- ¹ For example, Katičić (1992: 47) speaks of structural, genetic, and value criteria, to which Kapović (2010: 137) adds two more: the criterion of standardisation and the criterion of mutual intelligibility.
- ² The shortened name Yugoslavia is used throughout the paper to refer to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.
- ³ A number of authors wrote about this, e.g. Pranjković 2008, Bugarski 2012, Mønnesland 2013, etc.
- ⁴ Serbo-Croatian was a common language used by different nations; it was not unique, not one single language, but divided into varieties.
- ⁵ In line with this, the names of the language in official use were: Serbo-Croatian in Serbia and Montenegro, Croato-Serbian (or Croatian or Serbian) in Croatia, and Serbo-Croatian/Croato-Serbian in Bosnia and Herzegovina; Serbian, or Croatian, were used colloquially.
- ⁶ The short overview of Croatian–Serbian linguistic relations is based primarily on the works of Škiljan (2002), Pranjković (2008), Bugarski (2012), and Požgaj Hadži (2014).
- ⁷ According to Dušan Jovanović, Ristić is considered “one of the greatest European theatre directors of the second half of the twentieth century”. He is one of the founders of KPGT (Kazalište, Pozorište, Gledališće, Teatar – each letter stands for the word theatre in four languages), a non-institutional theatre group that was active all over Yugoslavia from 1977 until the early 1990s. Their legendary performance, *The Liberation of Skopje*, raised a lot of dust, primarily because of a number of new elements (the choice of music, amateur actors, etc.); as for the language, criticism was directed to excessive linguistic ‘brotherhood and unity’ (they used various languages: Serbian, Croatian, Macedonian, Slovenian, Albanian, ...)
- ⁸ Interview: Moj obračun s nama [My confrontation with us], *Vreme*, n. 1119, 14-6-2012, /<www.vreme.com/cms/view.php?id=1058070> (21 March 2019).
- ⁹ See the text of the Declaration <ihjj.hr/iz-povijesti/deklaracija-o-nazivu-i-polozaju-hrvatskog-knjizevnog-jezika/50/> (21 March 2019).
- ¹⁰ See *Jezik i nacionalni odnosi* [Language and national relations], Sveske, 5-6, Institut za nacionalne odnose, Sarajevo, 1984.
- ¹¹ We must point out that at the same university in September 2000 another conference with almost the same participants and organisers was held, and the conference proceedings titled *Language in the Former Yugoslav Lands* (Bugarski and Hawkesworth 2004, eds.) was published.
- ¹² The question can be found in the titles or headings of papers by various authors, e.g. *One or three languages?* (Kovačević 2001: 33), *From one language to three: the supremacy of politics over linguistics* (Remetić 2001: 45), *Serbo-Croatian: how many languages* (Bugarski 2002: 9), *From one to four* (Škiljan 2002: 261), *A bit of Internet linguistics: one, two, or a myriad of languages* (Žanić 2007: 10), etc.
- ¹³ These are various monographs, conference proceedings, research papers, codification manuals, etc. We shall mention here two monographs that have caused much controversy in Croatia: *Language and Nationalism* (Kordić 2010) and the translation into Croatian of Greenberg’s *Language and Identity in the Balkans: Serbo-Croatian and Its Disintegration* (Greenberg 2004, 2005), which was the topic of the round table organised by Matica hrvatska on 2 February 2006, and which hosted the most prominent Croatian linguists; two years later, a collection of papers titled *Language Identity Expressed in Language* (Peti-Stanić 2008, ed.) was published, containing Greenberg’s response to the discussion. We cannot help but wonder whether Greenberg’s book would have been noticed had it not been translated into Croatian.
- ¹⁴ In regard to this, it is interesting to note two opposing reactions to subtitling Serbian movies into Croatian (Žanić 2007). In March 1999, the Serbian movie *Rane* appeared in Croatia in which the slang dialogues were subtitled into Croatian, and this made the audience in the cinema cry with laughter and it aroused controversy in the press. On the other hand, in 2003 in Croatia, the film *Zona Zamfirova* was shown, in which the dialogues in Torlack, an idiom spoken at the beginning of the nineteenth century in south-eastern Serbia, were subtitled into standard Croatian, but this did not cause any reaction.
- ¹⁵ See the research on the understanding of Serbian among Croatian secondary school students (Barić 2011).
- ¹⁶ Lecture by Svein Mønnesland, titled ‘Language Nationalisation’, *Njegoševi dani* 6, Nikšić, 2015. I thank the Professor for the materials from which I have taken the types of language nationalisation.
- ¹⁷ For more on that level see Požgaj Hadži and Balažić Bulc 2017: 271-286.
- ¹⁸ Named after the Illyrian reformer Ljudevit Gaj (1809-1872).
- ¹⁹ “In the Republic of Serbia in official use are the Serbian language and the Cyrillic script. Official use of other languages and scripts is established by law, on the basis of the Constitution.” See The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, Office for Public Relations of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade, available at: www.ustavni.sud.rs/page/view/sr-Latn-CS/70-100028/ustav-republike-srbije (21 March 2019).
- ²⁰ The Declaration was published online after the fourth regional conference entitled *Language and nationalisms*, which was held in Sarajevo in 2016 (the previous three conferences were in Podgorica, Split

and Belgrade). The conference was organized by the association Krokodil (<www.krokodil.rs/eng/>), local partner associations in other countries and the working project group. The working group was comprised of linguists from each country: Hanka Vežović (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Božena Jelušić (Montenegro), Snježana Kordić (Croatia) and Ranko Bugarski (Serbia). Following the proposal by Snježana Kordić, the group invited other participants to each conference (for more details on the conferences and signatories - linguists, writers and intellectuals from the region and the world, cf. Bugarski 2018: 48-96).

²¹ Cited from the text of the Declaration: <jezicinacionalizmi.com/deklaracija/> (21 March 2019).

²² For a detailed text analysis cf. the article *Deklaracija o zajedničkom jeziku iz sociolingvističke perspektive* [The Declaration on the Common Language from a Sociolinguistic Perspective] (Balažić Bulc and Požgaj Hadži 2019, in press) and the monograph *Govorite li zajednički?* [Do you speak the common language?] (Bugarski 2018).

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