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LINGUISTIC POLITICS IN EX-YUGOSLAVIA:

THE CASE OF PURISM IN CROATIA

Tea PRŠIR

1. INTRODUCTION

Linguistic purification has existed in Croatia before its political independence in 1991, as will be discussed in §2. In the 19th century, purification was focused against non-Slavic languages such as German, Hungarian, Latin and Italian. After the Yugoslav wars it focused against “Serbianisms”. By this term, Croatian purists designate the words that entered the Croatian language during the years of common state history with the Serbian people. Serbianisms were the main preoccupation for some Croatian linguists from 1990 until 2000. They proposed (and sometimes even imposed) discarding these and replacing them with neologisms. This paper addresses the delicate question of what happens when words commonly used by a majority of the population suddenly become “foreign” words.

1.1 *What is purism?*

There are two levels of purism. The first level is one of an ordinary, spontaneous purist tendency. It is about wanting to take care of language by knowing its rules, by being able to choose the most appropriate word when expressing oneself. Not many speakers do this consciously, except if they need it in their job, such as teaching or journalism. I call this level “from bottom to top” purism, in the sense that it emerges from cultural and social heritage.

The second level of purism is “from top to bottom”. It is a more or less violent dictate by institutional political bodies prescribing norms that are quite often far remote from current use of language. Violent linguistic purism is related to political and social attitudes such as nationalism, xenophobia or conservatism, all of them being amplified by war or other sources of political insecurity. During the 1990s, purism was welcomed as a facet of the explosion of hatred against Serbs, but also because of the

feeling that the Croatian language was not on an equal par with the Serbian language in ex-Yugoslavia, as explained under 2.4.1.

1.2 How do foreign words enter language?

They do so by contact, when two linguistic communities (whether on the level of nation or of ethnic group or of region) exchange on a cultural, economic and media basis. This happens to an even greater extent if two or more communities live in the same country, as was the case in ex-Yugoslavia. Quite often, communities are not in an equal socio-economic-political position and quite often language is the first instance to reflect these differences, as will be shown in an overview of the historical background of the Croatian language.

Language contact can lead to a wide range of situations. Some foreign words are introduced because they depict a new reality, such as *internet* for example. Others are difficult to translate because of their stratified semantics, such as *cool*,¹ often used in Croatian.

I claim that language contact is not sufficient for transition of words/expressions from one language to another. There must be a motivation for users in terms of need or affect. Users need a foreign word if there is no appropriate term in their vocabulary or if loanwords have a different connotation than the ones already existing. Sometimes taking in a new word depends on fashion, as within the young generation of speakers. Many of these words drop out of use by the time they become adult. But if the fashion persists, it means that users invested it affectively. So they will use it more and more regularly and this practice will possibly push aside a dominant word. This kind of process is common and it occurs all the time in all languages, without endangering them. Croatian is a language that was in more or less close contact with other languages (Latin, Italian, German, Hungarian, Turkish, Slovene) during centuries, but still succeeded in preserving itself. Many regional languages disappeared in Europe. France, for example, succeeded perfectly in undertaking, since the 17th century, the extermination of any idiom but French, and obtained a strong linguistic unification of different ethnic groups. In contrast, in Spain, one regional language, Catalan – that was considered an inferior idiom for centuries – became the major argument of a local nationalism that is threatening state unity. Perhaps Spain would not have this problem if Catalan had been “killed” earlier.

On one hand, ethnic groups in ex-Yugoslavia resisted the assaults on their language once they entered in union with surrounding countries, or were conquered by them. On the other hand, it seems that drastic measures against languages were not undertaken (or at least not on the long-term) since all countries of ex-Yugoslavia have their own language today! A closer look at the historical background will explain some of the processes involved in linguistic issues of keeping and defending language.

1 *Cool* glides through its original semantics of cold, fresh to express among Croatian youth satisfaction (“Cool! I won the lottery!” *Cool! Dobila sam na lotu!*) or to describe someone favourably (“He/she is cool!” *On/ona je cool!*).

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Linguistic politics after war and in today's Croatia still reflect historical and political events that took place over the last 160 years. The relationship with Serbia takes a particular place in these events. The common, and/or parallel, linguistic history of Croats and Serbs starts within the European trend of the 19th century to standardise national languages. Some educated representatives of the Slavic people living in the region of future Yugoslavia made proposals for a common language, though the idea of a common nation was much less developed. The Yugoslavian peoples always lived in a federation acknowledging their mutual differences.

2.1 *National Movements, Standardisation of Language and Identity*

The 19th century was a period of national movements rising all over Europe. Southern Slavic people founded movements to promote their identity based on language and culture: Slovenian national movement, the Illyrian movement or the Croatian national revival, Matica Srpska Society. At that time they felt threatened by the Hungarian and German cultures and languages, since Croatia and Serbian Vojvodina were in personal union with the Kingdom of Hungary that was part of the Austrian Empire.² This threat, plus the one of the Ottoman Empire on the southern borders, was at the origin of the idea of their unification, which would be achieved only in 1918. Their common Slavic identity mainly reflected in language since their common heritage grew up into different ethnicities under the influence of surrounding civilizations: Catholic Austria, Hungary and Italy for Croatia and Slovenia, and the Muslim Ottoman Empire for Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia & Herzegovina. In spite of the Ottoman domination for 500 years, Serbia managed to keep the Cyrillic alphabet and Orthodox religion.

From the genetic linguistic viewpoint, the dialects spoken by Southern Slavic people have common features since they belong to the same family of Western South Slavic languages. The very first basis of a common language was put up back in 1850, in Vienna. The Slovenian Franc Miklošič, head of chair of Slavic Philology at Vienna University, invited Croatian³ and Serbian⁴ writers and linguists to discuss a common basis for the terminology used in Austrian administration concerning South Slavic people. They signed a document known as Vienna Literary Agreement, which is often referred to as the first framework for the standard Serbo-Croatian⁵ language mostly established on suggestions by Vuk Karadžić. Following the German and Italian model, they agreed to choose one of the existing dialects: the NeoŠtokavian dialect spoken in Eastern Herzegovina. Under the

2 That became the dual Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1867. (Since 1102, Croatia joined Hungary in personal union. Since 1527, Croatia, as well as Hungary, became autonomous parts of the Austrian Empire under different forms until 1918.)

3 Ivan Mažuranić, Dimirije Demeter, Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski, Vinko Pacel, Stefan Pejaković.

4 Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, Đuro Daničić.

5 The term *Serbo-Croatian* first appeared in 1836 in the writings of Jernej Kopitar, a Slovenian philologist.

influence of Western and Northern Slavic languages, a morpho-phonological⁶ orthography was proposed, as well as diacritic signs for letters that evolved and stabilised over time to č, ć, đ, dž, š, ž, lj, nj for Croatian. Yet, this agreement had no immediate application and it was not accepted completely. In fact, Croatia preferred the orthography of the linguistic reform of Ljudevit Gaj,⁷ introduced in schools in 1862.

Popović (2004) describes similarities and divergences between Serbian and Croatian programs of language reform. They were both guided by the idea that the people cannot access education if teaching is not performed in their everyday language. This care for people's knowledge expanded to become the basis of nation and its identity.

2.2 Name of the language

It seems that it was a problematic task for the Croatian parliament to name the language in its standardised form. In 1861, it was decided to call it "Yugoslavian". In 1867, the denomination of "Croatian or Serbian" was adopted. This indicates the important presence of Serbs on the territory of Croatia. In fact, they migrated⁸ from Serbia in the 15th-16th century, fleeing the Turks, and were stationed as paid soldiers on the borders between the Ottoman and the Austro-Hungarian Empires (regions called Military Frontier, situated at the Southern and Eastern borders with Bosnia of present-day Croatia). Migration and mixing of populations resulted naturally in linguistic change as well: distinctive features of the East and West Štokavian variants melted into a new *NeoŠtokavian* dialect, called afterwards the Serbo-Croatian language, and also called the Middle South Slavic Diasystem by linguists who wish to avoid any national flavour for this idiom spoken by four nations (Bosnians, Croats, Montenegrins and Serbs).

NeoŠtokavian pushed aside *Kajkavian* and *Čakavian*, the other two dialects spoken in Croatia to the present day. The capital of Croatia, Zagreb, is traditionally *Kajkavian*, but its population adopted *NeoŠtokavian*: in the beginning at an institutional level, and later on at other levels. Linguistically, there are more differences between *Kajkavian*, *Čakavian* and *Štokavian* within the complex Croatian language system, than between Croatian and Serbian standard languages that share *Štokavian* as a common basis. *NeoŠtokavian* has its variants or accents depending on the reflex of the common Slavic

6 Morpho-phonological orthography keeps track of the underlying form of the word, most frequently of the nominative case (*zadatak* – *zadatci*). Phonological orthography is based on phonological rules inherent to every language, which determine its pronunciation (*zadatak* – *zadaci*). The latter was prevalent throughout the history of Croatian.

7 Gaj was a journalist, writer, linguist and politician. He published the first newspaper in Croatian, *Novine Horvatske* ("The Croatian News") and was a central figure of national movement.

8 I failed to find the exact number of Serbs who moved to Croatia in this period. When Serbia started to gain independence from the Ottomans, Serbs migrated back to Serbia. According to Lampe and Jackson (1982:116), between 1834 and 1874, 666,000 immigrants came to Serbia, most of them Serbs.

grapheme *yat* (**ě*/) that can have at least three pronunciations. Here is an example for the word “beautiful”:

Ekavian (*lepo* */*ě*/ > /e/), Ikavian (*lipo* */*ě*/ > /i/) and Ijekavian (*lijepo* */*ě*/ > /je/, /ije/).

This aspect of accent varies from region to region in ex-Yugoslavia, independently of country borders. *Ekavian* is used mainly in Serbia, but also in Croatian East Slavonia and Northern Istria. *Ijekavian* is used mainly in Croatia and Montenegro. *Ikavian* is spoken in Croatia’s regions of Dalmatia and Istria. The accent can even change from one island to another, so we will not go further into detail.

Fluctuation in language denomination continued for years, reflecting the complexity of political unification of South Slavs that was strongly marked by their specific national and linguistic identity.

2.3 Purism in the 19th century

Since language purification comes along with national and identity awakening, Croatian linguists and philologists, active in the Illyrian movement, published a number of works defending the Croatian language. Together with Gaj, Bogoslav Šulek was particularly engaged in purifying the language from German, Hungarian and Italian influence, but also from much more ancient words with Greek or Latin roots. For example, *termometar* (thermometer) becomes *toplomjer*. Šulek was inspired by other Slavic languages that he was familiar with (himself being of Slovak origin). When he could not find a Slavic word for some recent and scientific terms, he would create neologisms. Some of Šulek’s new words survived; for others there were two attempts for their rehabilitation. The first one during the Independent State of Croatia, 1941-1945 (cf. 2.4). The second one with the latest big wave of purism starting with Croatian independence in the 1990s (cf. 3).

Some Croatian philologists were openly against Vuk Karadžić’s proposal with regard to *NeoŠtokavian* dialect. In 1856, Šulek published the article “Serbs and Croats”, where he presented historical, philological and literary reasons why the denomination Serbo-Croatian was not appropriate. He argued that Croatian coastal writers (particularly in Dubrovnik) had used *Štokavian* for centuries as literary language and it was never called Serbian.

During this period, two streams developed in Croatia: *Vukovci*, who followed the ideas of Vuk Karadžić; and those close to the Illyrian ideas of Gaj and Šulek. In other words, opposition persisted between those with a tendency for a common language for Serbs and Croats and those without. This did not always depend on nationality. For example, the Croatian poet Antun Branko Šimić (1898-1925) was a fervent follower of the idea of a common language. In his writings, he changed his childhood *Ijekavian* accent for the *Ekavian*. At the beginning of the 1900s, for a short period, many young Croatian writers followed his example. In this way they expressed their support for the proposal that the common variant of the *Štokavian* dialect (i.e. Serbo-Croatian) should be the *Ekavian* accent used by Serbs and the Latin script used by Croats. The basis of this halfway proposal was a survey about common language realised among South Slavic intellectuals, in 1912, by Jovan Skerlić, a Serbian historian of literature and politician.

In 1892, Ivan Broz published Croatian Orthography, based on phonological rules. Although it evolved, its skeleton has been used ever since. Whether this orthography is based on Vukovian, or on Gaj's school, or on something in between is complex to determine. Regardless, Broz's orthography – later on published under Broz-Boranić and finally under Boranić – was the one used in Croatia for the longest period, with some breaks due to historical events described in the next paragraph.

2.4 Status of Languages in Yugoslavia

At the end of World War I, Southern Slavs had to provide some historical legitimacy for their demand to create a new and independent state. Their argument was pan-Slavic brotherhood,⁹ and a common language, or at least, resemblance between languages. The name of the kingdom included three nations: Kingdom of Serbs, Slovenes and Croats, and the official language was Serbo-Croato-Slovene. This situation changed in 1928, when Croatian political leaders were killed in the Belgrade parliament and King Alexander installed a dictatorship. In 1929 the kingdom changed its name to The Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and linguistic politics renamed the language Yugoslavian,¹⁰ and imposed the Serbian norm (*Ekavian* accent) in schools and institutions throughout the country. It implied that the national movement in Croatia to maintain the particularity of Croatian standard language and orthography was endangered. Croats resisted these policies, but changes came only in 1939 with the announcement of World War II. Croatia gained autonomy as *Banovina* within the Kingdom and the Croatian orthography manual by Broz-Boranić came into force again. Shortly after, in 1941, the new Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska* – NDH) formed as the result of a political agreement with the German invader. The territory of NDH encompassed today's Bosnia and some parts of Serbia. Lexical purism, as initiated by Šulek, took a central place in the linguistic politics of NDH, despite its multiethnic composition. Morpho-phonological orthography came back into force, which Brozović (1998) describes as a step back from Croatian achievements in linguistic standardisation since the 1890s. By the end of World War II, in 1945, the NDH ceased to exist, and Croatia became one of the six federal republics of new communist Yugoslavia.

9 “Brotherhood”, with “Unity” of people were central concepts throughout Yugoslavian history.

10 By observing inscriptions on the banknotes of the Yugoslav dinar, one can follow the language change in its official use. The first banknotes printed in 1920 contained Serbian, Croatian and Slovene. Those printed in 1929 contained only Serbian Ekavian norm, recto with Cyrillic script and verso with Latin. The 1944 series has Croatian, Serbian, Slovene and Macedonian with a clear distinction between the Croatian and Serbians variant at the level of lexicon and script: *krivotvorenje* vs *фалсификовање* (*falsifikovanje*) (falsification), *tisuća* vs *хиљада* (*hiljada*) (thousand). This remained unchanged until the Yugoslav wars.

2.4.1 Yugoslavia 1945-1991

From its very beginning – at the Second *AVNOJ*¹¹ conference in 1943 – Yugoslavia recognised different nations and their particularities. Four languages had official status: Macedonian, Slovene, Serbian and Croatian; they figured on all federal state documents. Each Republic determined the language to be used in schools and institutions. Croatia continued its standardisation following once again Boranić's orthography. The 'Croatian philologist society' was founded and the journal for Croatian literary language *Jezik* has been published since 1952.

Because of the fascist, nationalist context of NDH, purism was observed with scepticism and animosity in communist Yugoslavia. Nevertheless, the Croatian variant kept its purist words. For example, *glazba* (music) or *ljekarna* (pharmacy) coexisted with *muzika* and *apoteka*, more international words, considered Serbian. In today's Croatia, the same speaker can use two variants depending on context.

Contrary to Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian and Montenegrin were, and remain, open to loan-words from different languages. This can be understood as one among many other consequences of their dispersed historical, political and cultural development.

The issue of a common language for Croats and Serbs resuscitated with a survey (inspired by Skerlić's 1912) that preceded the Novi Sad Agreement *Novosadski dogovor* in 1954. Thus, 104 years after the Vienna Literary Agreement, linguists and writers from Serbia and Croatia, but also from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, gathered in Novi Sad to discuss the basis of Serbo-Croatian. The idea of sacrificing Croatian Ijekavian accent and Serbian Cyrillic script was refused. They agreed that the name of the common language would be double: Serbo-Croatian with Ekavica and Cyrillic script in Serbia (e.g. *млеко* "milk"), and Croato-Serbian with Ijekavica and Latin script in Croatia (*mljeko*). By this, they underlined differences, instead of blurring them. Common Croatian and Serbian commissions elaborated a common orthography and a dictionary to be printed in two versions, in Zagreb and Novi Sad. The orthography was published in 1960,¹² but the dictionary with homogenised terminology stopped at letter K.¹³

Until 1960, most of the time Croats called their language Croatian; for 10 years it was called Croato-Serbian, and from the 1970s until the end of Yugoslavia it was called Croatian or Serbian, or only Croatian.

In Serbia, the name Serbo-Croatian appeared at the end of the 19th century, and persisted unofficially until 1997 – when a dictionary containing the denomination

11 *Antifašističko Vijeće Narodnog Oslobođenja Jugoslavije*, Anti-Fascist Council of the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia.

12 *Pravopis hrvatskosrpskoga književnog jezika s pravopisnim rječnikom* (izradila Pravopisna komisija), Matica hrvatska – Matica srpska, Zagreb-Novı Sad, 1960.

13 *Rječnik hrvatskosrpskoga književnog jezika* (knj. I. A-F, knj. II. G-K), Matica hrvatska-Matica srpska, 1967.

Serbian Language and Literature¹⁴ (*Srpski jezik i književnost*) was first published – and officially until 2006 when the new constitution changed the name into Serbian and allowed only Cyrillic script in official documents, giving up the Latin one.

The culmination of Croatian disagreement about linguistic politics was expressed by the Declaration on the name and status of the Croatian literary language (*Deklaracija o nazivu i položaju hrvatskog književnog jezika*), published in March 1967. Croatian scholars demanded a more transparent legislation for language use, pointing out that the Croatian standard should be used wherever there is a Croatian population. In spite of strong disagreement and the annoyance of the Yugoslavian government in reaction to the Declaration, the political movement Croatian spring *Hrvatsko proljeće* took place. This movement was seen as a nationalistic awakening of Croats, whereby Croats pointed out the centralisation of political power and demanded greater civil rights, as well as economic and democratic reforms. During the movement, in 1971, Babić, Finka and Moguš published the Croatian orthography *Hrvatski pravopis*, from which they deliberately omitted Serbian. It was banned and did not appear in libraries until 1990. Together with the Declaration, this orthography is perceived as one of the symbols of the fight for language independence and it will take an important place in the latest wave of purism in Croatia.

The constitution of Yugoslavia from 1974, preceded by the amendments of 1971, calmed down protests all over the federation by assuring greater autonomy to the republics. Articles 170, 171, 214, 243, 246, 247 and 271 guaranteed greater freedom in the use of national languages. Article 138 of the constitution of the Socialist Republic of Croatia¹⁵ stated: “In the Socialist Republic of Croatia, the language in public use is Croatian literary language – the standard form of people’s language of Croats and Serbs in Croatia, its name is Croatian or Serbian.” And Article 293 stated that all federal texts of Yugoslavia were to be published in Croatian literary language, with Latin script.

Nevertheless, this period was the strictest period of communist Yugoslavia. Many newspapers and books were banned; many people ended up in prison or lost their jobs, sometimes just for having a different point of view.

3. PURIFYING ATTITUDE IN INDEPENDENT CROATIA

In the 1990s, Croatia experienced rapid changes of the dominant ideology, as the country switched from a social-communistic mono-party system to a liberal-capitalist multi-party system.

14 Đukić, Borivoje G., 1997, *Rečnik gramatičkih književnih pojmova, pravopisnih oblika reči, izraza i fraza srpskog jezika i književnosti: za učenike V, VI, VII i VIII razreda osnovne škole: podsetnik – odgovori za redovnu nastavu i prijemne ispite*, Zemun.

15 Članak 138. *U Socijalističkoj Republici Hrvatskoj u javnoj je upotrebi hrvatski književni jezik – standardni oblik narodnog jezika Hrvata i Srba u Hrvatskoj, koji se naziva hrvatski ili srpski.* Članak 293. *Autentični tekstovi saveznih zakona i drugih saveznih propisa i općih akata donose se i objavljuju u službenom listu Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije na hrvatskom književnom jeziku, latinicom.*

The falling apart of ex-Yugoslavia resulted in an even stronger politicisation of language that became one of the means of national expression. The old question of independence of Croatian from Serbian became topical and allowed a rapidly expanding purism. Moreover, the idea that these were two distinctive languages spread, provoking linguistic secessionism. In the linguistic and identity representations of Southern Slavic people (as of many others) there is the belief that a nation must have its own language¹⁶ (cf. Kremnitz 2008).

In the 1990s, it was common to hear in the media that Croats would not know their own language, that they forgot the meaning of the words they were using, and so on. The underlying argument can be sketched as follows: “If you are a ‘true’ Croat, you will speak ‘pure’ Croatian.” But what is “pure” Croatian? Croats were just as confused about it as they were about the statement of some linguists that Serbian had become a foreign language. Croats know the differences between the two variants and can recognise after a few words whether the speaker is from Zagreb or from Belgrade, and still they understand both. However, whoever tried to object was considered as enemy of the Croatian nation and, by the same logic, was suspected of being pro-Serbian. And who is a “true” Croat? 1 million of the 4,785,000 inhabitants declared themselves not to be Croats in 1991. 10 years later, there are 460,000 non-Croats, not to mention an important number of mixed marriages.

The general idea about linguists – since the 1990s, and still today to a lesser extent – is that they are prescribing how to write and speak correctly (Kapović, 2011: 11). This is, of course, wrong, since linguistics is about describing languages (although this fact can be easily put aside in the chaotic times of war). In nationalistic terms, the linguist’s job would be to protect the national language, furthermore the national identity. Yet, not all Croatian linguists devoted their time and energy to this task. The purist hysteria concerned particularly those close to the political scene and who got an important place in the media to express their politico-linguistic positions. Many newspapers (*Vjesnik*, *Vijenac*, *Telegram*, *Školske novine*, *Nastavni vjesnik*, etc.) had columns reserved for linguistic advice. On television, a special program (*Navrh jezika* On the tip of your tongue) and talk shows regularly address linguistic education and discussions.

The language purification “fight” can be divided into two major periods: in the 1990s against Serbianisms, and since 2000 against Anglicisms. The decline of Serbianism-hunting coincides with the death of Croatian president Franjo Tuđman at the end of 1999. Even if nationalism persisted after his death, at least it was not growing any more and the opposition could express freely without being accused of being pro-Serbian. Like in any autocratic system, during the presidency of Tuđman there was only pro and contra: “If you are not with us, you are against us.”

16 This is not the case for some Western nations (Austria, Belgium, Switzerland), which are able to define themselves on a basis other than a linguistic one.

3.1 Institutions and events

By which means did the purifying attitude take place since the very beginning of the war? A number of institutions and events were created to honour the Croatian language and to contribute to its preservation and pureness.

a) In order to commemorate the Declaration, shortly after Croatian independence the Days of the Croatian language (*Dani hrvatskoga jezika*) were created, taking place on 11-17 March every year. Besides institutional and media manifestations, the main events take place in schools, where pupils learn about the Declaration and develop the “spirit” of pure Croatian language. Still, some of those who signed the Declaration – Brozović 1997: 88 – complained that the events were formal but not effective. Babić (Babić, 2002: 39) deplored the lack of enthusiasm and blamed politicians for not providing more efficient measures for remembering the historical fight for Croatian language, and for not promoting its continuation.

b) In 1995, a proposition of law about the Croatian language contained the following clauses: elimination of 30,000 foreign words, most of them Serbianisms; regulation of the language in all public domains; return to the linguistic propositions of the NDH period; fines, and even prison terms for not respecting the language. This proposition was not adopted and the government of Tuđman received severe criticism.

c) The Croatian Academy of Science and Arts, HAZU, provoked strong comments by publishing the Declaration on the Status of the Croatian language *Izjava o položaju hrvatskoga jezika*. Immediately, this 2005 Declaration recalled the one of 1967. But Croatia had been independent for 15 years and Croats were using their language freely. So, what is the interest of this Declaration? Academics do actually believe that Croatian is in danger. The danger is that Europe would not understand that Croatian is different from Serbian and would put them in a sort of common “yugo-language”. Therefore, HAZU declared the fight for the separation of Croatian language studies from Serbian, Bosnian and Montenegrin across the world. They further declared to keep monitoring the status of Croatian in the EU, for fear that it would disappear in the middle of much bigger European languages. Just as with the 1995 Law proposition, this Declaration was not well received by the Croatian public and experts. Since the direct strategy failed, language purists proceeded with their goal by softer, indirect means.

d) On Babić’s initiative, the journal *Jezik* has organised since 1993 the contest for the best new pure Croatian word. Since 2006, the Foundation Dr. Ivan Šreter has sponsored the contest. The foundation is named after a Croatian doctor who was discriminated in the 1980s for using the Croatian language.

e) A Council for standard Croatian language norm *Vijeće za normu hrvatskoga standardnog jezika* was first founded in 1998 and dismissed three years later. This coincided with political changes at the beginning of the 21st century: the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), Tuđman’s party, lost the elections for the first time. The Social Democratic Party (SDP) won the elections. This change influenced linguistic politics in a certain way. Soon, HDZ regained its political majority in the following parliament elections in 2003. The Council was created again in 2005 and dismissed again in 2012 by the new Croatian government Kukuriku coalition, close to SDP

values. The ups and downs of the Council reflect by and large political changes, and thus the relationship between politics and linguistics.

f) The Council was hosted by the Institute of Croatian language and linguistics. Their goals:

Temeljna je zadaća Instituta znanstveno proučavanje hrvatskoga jezika, njegovanje hrvatske jezikoslovne tradicije i očuvanje hrvatskoga jezičnog identiteta.

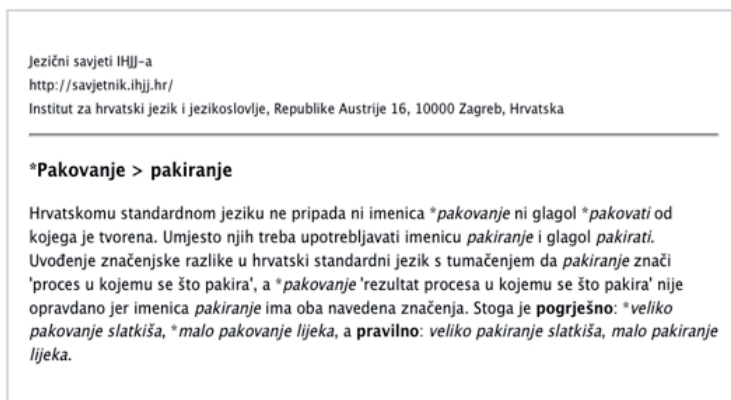
The main task of the Institute is the scientific study of the Croatian language, its Croatian linguistic tradition and the protection of Croatian language identity.

In other words, the Croatian linguistic tradition is the one of purification that comes along with Croatian language identity. The Institute makes an effort to stay “close to people” by answering questions about frequent errors. If they require linguistic advice, citizens can call the Institute for a price ranging from 6.88 to 8.28kn per minute (about 1€ per minute, cf. <http://www.ihjj.hr/index.html>). But citizens should trust them unconditionally, since there are not always scientific explanations for the proposed language changes. One version of the word is “wrong” and another is “right”, simple as that! Most of the “wrong” words are considered Serbianisms.

3.1.1 Serbianisms

In fact, some Serbianisms are etymologically Turkish words, but a rough classification made them Serbianisms. The others actually belong to the Serbian lexicon and were commonly used in ex-Yugoslavia, such as *pasoš* (passport) that was successfully replaced by Croatian *putovnica*. But many other alleged Serbianisms are difficult, if not impossible, to kick out of Croatian. For example, words *učesće* (part), *saučesće* (condolences) are still going strong in spite of many recommendations for using the Croatian words *udio*, *sućut*. Here is an example of how the Institute explains the difference between *pakovanje* and *pakiranje*, two words commonly used in Croatia:

Figure 1: Linguistic advice about words *pakovanje/pakiranje* (pack1/pack2). Retrieved from Institute web page, 14/12/2011.



My translation of the text in the figure 1:

*Pack1 > pack2 (there is no difference in English for the two words)

The noun *pack1 does not belong to the Croatian standard language, neither does the verb that forms it *to pack1. Instead of them, one should use the noun pack2 and the verb to pack2. Bringing into the Croatian standard language a difference in meaning with the explanation that pack2 means “process of packing”, and pack1 “result of process of packing” is not justified because the noun pack2 has both meanings. Therefore wrong are: *big pack1 of sweets, *small pack1 of medicine and right are: big pack2 of sweets, small pack2 of medicine.

Even if there is exceptionally an explanation about the difference between two words, this difference is prescribed by the Institute who says that *pakiranje* has two meanings. Regardless, speakers use the two words in their everyday speech with the apparently wrong “meaning difference”. Thus, a large majority of Croats misuse the word *pakovanje* (pack1) since they use it for describing the “result of process of packing” (according to an empirical survey, cf. 3.5). Moreover, *pakovanje* is absent from the Dictionary of the Croatian language (2000: 796). There is only *pakiranje* with meaning of “process of packing”, there is nothing for “result of process of packing”. Nevertheless, one can still find it on a big poster publicly displayed during the electoral campaign in 2011 (cf. figure 2).

Figure 2: Electoral campaign poster with the colours of the Croatian flag:

on the red, the question What is the difference?;

on the white, the logos of different political parties;

on the blue, the answer The same shit – different pack!;



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Even if, already in 1995 (the end of the war in Croatia), the “historical fighters” for independence of the Croatian language, Katičić and Brozović, signalled the ridicule and abusive practice of some linguists tracking Serbianisms (Greenberg, 2004: 117), this practice has persisted until today, in a more silent way. The current linguistic politics

emphasise differences and minimise common features of Croatian and Serbian. These questions, which word is Croatian and which one is Serbian, caused plenty of conflicts between linguists. For example, one can read in the foreword of the Dictionary of the Croatian language (*Rječnik hrvatskoga jezika*) that the authors split up after 4 years of work, and before finishing the dictionary. A new work team was formed in order to complete the work started. In this dictionary, there is no abbreviation for Serbian among the languages from which Croatian has borrowed words. This implies that there are no words that have come from Serbian to Croatian, contrary to the claims of linguistic discussions prior to its publication in 2000.

3.2 Standardisation

Croatist¹⁷ – standardologists are linguistic experts in purifying Croatian and in supervising its norms and usage. They are proud of their tradition because when faced with “new” attacks by Anglicisms, Croatian is ready, as it has “developed a self-defence system” (Badurina, 20/2/2005, in Novi List). When purism is pushed to its extreme, it compares to xenophobia in language: fear of other words, fear of the words of others. And yet, language borrowing is common to all languages. English, for example, has 30% of its words of French origin, and has many other foreign words taken from Latin, German and other languages. The fear of a language dying because of a growing number of foreign words is not justified from historical linguistic viewpoint. A language is dying only if its speakers disappear¹⁸.

Kapović (2011: 12, 34) criticises the intricate relationship between purism and standard. When purists are prescribing orthographical and grammatical rules they fail to specify that these rules refer to a standard variant of language and not to language in general. In other words, they forget that a standard is primarily a pragmatic tool for mutual understanding between members of one community at an institutional level. If a standard language becomes too normative and starts to marginalise the other speech variations, the speakers feel attacked and linguistic insecurity grows. Linguistic politics in the last 20 years enlarged the gap between spoken and standard language. Moreover, some of the new words are rare or do not even exist in spoken language, as if standard language should be distinguished as much as possible from the spoken one. The Council for standard Croatian language norm had this task, but had no major influence. The real influence comes from *lektori*: proof-readers of public writings (newspapers, literature or scientific books, articles, etc.) whose job is, in the first place, to correct orthographical and grammatical errors. In Croatia, they do however much more than that; they “serve quite often, with some honourable exceptions, to conduct lexical censorship and serve as ‘neo-croatistic infantry’¹⁹” (Kapović, 2011: 124).

17 Croatists are linguists specialised in Croatian studies.

18 In 2010, the Croatian fertility rate was of 1.45 children born/woman, one of the lowest in the world. Additionally, since 1991 Croatia lost 328,000 of its population, according to a survey of the *Croatian Bureau of Statistics* in 2011.

19 *[lektori] nerijetko služe, uzčasne iznimke, kao provoditelj i jezične cenzure i “neokroatistička pješadija”.*

A *lektor* applies purist correction, substituting the “foreign” word with the “Croatian” one, and participating actively in linguistic nationalism. The violence of linguistic politics in the 1990s reflects nowadays in the confusion about grammar, orthographic rules and vocabulary.

3.3 Orthography

After the first free edition of Babić’s, Finka’s and Moguš’ Croatian orthography in 1990, the others followed rapidly: in 1994, 1995 and 1996. At each new edition there were new rules introduced, first as an option (e.g. *zadaci* or *zadatci* “assignment, task”) and then as a rule (*zadatci*). In this way orthographical changes were gradually introduced in Croatian. Its fourth edition from 1996 is today’s official orthography in Croatia.

Even if there is one official orthography, the situation is complicated, as illustrated by the demand of the Society of professors of the Croatian language for a unique orthography, addressed to the Minister of Education in October 2009. Six thousand professors signed this petition; they expressed their discontentment and frustration that in Croatian schools there are currently five different orthographies²⁰. In one school pupils learn to write, e.g. *grješka*, *ne ću*, *brjegovi*, and in another *greška*, *neću*, *bregovi*. What will happen when they meet in high school or at University? With another teacher, will they use a different orthography? Well, they will have to switch from one rule to another. Fortunately, litigious rules are few, and orthographies resemble each other for most of their content. A side effect is that the image of Croatian linguists became somewhat negative. Their insisting on some details was perceived as oppressive.

3.4 Publishing Boom

In the period from 1990-2010 a publishing boom occurred in the domain of Croatian language advice (*savjetnici*), instructions and dictionaries (and of orthographies, as mentioned above). The purpose of Dictionaries of differences between Croatian and Serbian was to promote the idea of two distinctive languages: 8 dictionaries were published between 1991 and 1995. In twenty years, nearly 40 books dedicated to linguistic advice were published. The most prolific authors published 3 (Stjepan Babić), 4 (Stjepko Težak) or 6 books (Nives Opačić) on more or less the same topic. The book most in demand had 4 editions (Ilija Protuđer). Some old books of linguistic advice first published at the end of the 19th century (Broz), or before WWII (Stojković, Dujmušić), were revived. The previously mentioned linguistic journal *Jezik* regularly publishes linguistic advice and purist discussions.

This publishing boom relates to an important gain for publishers and for authors. Economic reasons interfere with patriotic ones. Little by little linguistic heroes, “fighters” for language identity in the beginning of Croatia independence, turn out to be “conflict profiteers” trying to publish as many books as possible with more or less scientific content. Some of these books were even sold at kiosks with newspapers.

So how did Croats survive all this “bombing” by books and media discussions about their language? As usually, humour helps to evacuate tensions. Together with

20 A similar problem exists in Montenegro. Two new letters were introduced in 2009: <http://www.gov.me/files/1248442673.pdf> and this led to chaos in orthographical norms.

other ex-Yugoslavians, Croats started to invent funny, but most of all, ridiculous new words following the logic of purists. For example, the tie *kravata* became *okolovratni dopupnik*, “round neck till umbilicus”. Joking aside, how did Croats receive the new and pure words? An empirical study provides insight of how some of these words have spread in everyday use, since, as pointed out, standard and private use of language can differ significantly.

3.5 Empirical Study

For a survey, I concentrated on two points:

i) Reception of purism by Croatian speakers. Do they have conscience of the presence of purisms, i.e. the new words proposed by the institutions mentioned above (3.1-3.4)? Yes, they do. Do they agree with the new lexical norm? Most of them do not.

ii) What is the effective use of purisms? Which version do speakers use: the one prescribed or the one of usage, both, or none?

The study is rather small, 32 informers, so it should be considered as a pilot study. A more important survey should confirm these preliminary results. A spreadsheet of 26 words was available through Google Docs. Words are presented in pairs: the first one is the purism and the second one is the corresponding loan word that took its roots in language and is commonly used. The informers had to provide following data: how old they are, what their job is and where they live in Croatia (a majority was from Zagreb and Šibenik).

According to the answers, the twenty-six word pairs are classified as follows:

a) All of the informers use the second variant. It means that the following purisms did not enter Croatian: *brzoglas-telefon* (phone), *izostavnik-apostrof* (apostrophe), *putničarstvo-turizam* (tourism), *izvikivač/pretragač-broker*, *velezgoditak-jackpot*. The last two words still keep their foreign orthography; it indicates that they entered Croatian recently. The following two words belong also to this group since only a couple of informers use also the first variant: *nadnevak-datum* (date) and *sklonidba-deklinacija* (flexion). Most of the words are international, even if some have English orthography.

The words under a) are purisms refused by speakers. Even though the list contains only words with nonzero occurrence in Croatian language, informers do not use them.

b) A majority uses the second variant; about a quarter of the informers use both variants:

b.1) Internationalisms: *jezikoslovac-lingvist* (linguist), *zračna luka-aerodrom* (airport), *zaporka-password/šifra/pin*, *prijenosno računalo-laptop*, *elektronska pošta-mail*.

b.2) Serbianisms: *poglavito-naročito* (particularly), *prijam-prijem* (reception), *sućut-saučešće* (condolence).

c) A majority uses both variants:

c.1.) Internationalisms: *tipkovnica-tastatura* (keyboard), *ljekarna-apoteka* (pharmacy), *računalo-kompjutor* (computer), *nadzor-kontrola* (control), *popis-lista* (list).

c.2.) Serbianisms: *izvješće-izvještaj* (rapport), *pakiranje-pakovanje* (pack), *udio-učešće* (part).

The separation into Serbianisms and Internationalisms under b) and c) is based on whether the prescribed word is Slavic or not. For b) and c) the survey indicates that both variants cohabit, with loan word dominating for couples of words in b).

d) A majority uses the first variant. It supposes that these words entered Croatian: *prosvjednik-demonstrant* (demonstrator), *zemljopis-geografija* (geography), *doigravanje-play off*. *Prosvjednik* and *zemljopis* have existed since Šulek (1990 [1874-1875]: 884, 1339), but *doigravanje* is a much younger word that achieved acceptance because of its exposure in sport media.

Some purisms are accepted and others not. As I proposed in the introduction, one of the reasons is probably affective, (but this should be checked by further tests on linguistic representations). Even if some speakers do like purisms, these must conquer a majority in order to enter Croatian language. Words can enter by habit, when speakers are exposed to them whether they like it or not (for example, sport comments). Another example: one informer (working in a lawyer's office) said that she prefers *izvještaj* but all official documents mention *izvješće* so she got used to it. In general, office workers or scholars (about 60% of the informers) use more purisms than service or hand workers. Some informers told that their use of a given word is not correct, even though they use it. Almost half of the asked informers from the working class refused the survey without much explanation. Those who answered told that they did not know the new lexicon and grammatical rules. They insisted that I should consider their answers with precaution. Linguistic insecurity is common in the working class, even without the policy of language purification, so it is difficult to know which part is due to a social factor and which one is a result of recent linguistic policies.

Problematic of foreign words and linguistic insecurity is completed by some internal linguistic tensions between speakers of different dialects within Croatia.

4. INTERNAL LINGUISTIC TENSION IN CROATIA

The war caused important migrations within Croatia. Speakers of different dialects moved to bigger cities—especially to Zagreb—increasing variation and influencing local speaking. Native speakers from Zagreb speak the *Kajkavian* dialect and they complain about “language contamination” as a consequence of newly arrived speakers of the *Štokavian* dialect (not only from Croatia, but above all from Bosnia and Herzegovina)²¹. Speakers would largely discuss purism on the level of correct pronunciation and of vocabulary by saying: “Before the war, we didn't speak this way.”

Recently, there have been debates in the media about the language of cartoons. An association from Split—with spokesman Robert Pauletić—is blaming cartoon distributors in Croatia for favouring the *Kajkavian* dialect (particularly Zagreb's version), to the detriment of the Croatian Standard Language. The argument is that it is easier for the speakers of other Croatian varieties to understand the Standard Language. They blame cartoon translators for discrimination and underline that the policy of using dialects in public speech would be acceptable if the proportion of different Croatian

21 It is the same phenomena that one can observe in Zurich, for example, where Swiss German speakers feel threatened by German German speakers, whose number increases steadily.

dialects was respected. In Serbia, there is also debate about cartoons: the majority of cartoons are sold with Croatian translation, so Serbian children use some Croatian words in their everyday speech, as reported by “shocked” parents.

In January 2012, Croatian channel RTL Television received a warning from the Council for electronic media because they broadcast a Serbian movie without subtitles. This reanimated the question of whether Serbian and Croatian are two distinct languages or not. Other television channels said that they have also broadcast without subtitles, and that they will continue this practice since “translation would be ridiculous” (*Večernji list*, 23/01/2012). The main argument is that the audience better understands Serbian standard than Croatian movies in *Kajkavian* and *Čakavian* dialect. The Council for electronic media took measures concerning the Serbian and Bosnian languages only in 2012, but the broadcasting has been taking place for years. According to one survey²², 72% of Croats are against the sub-titling of Serbian movies, 20% are for and 6% do not care about it.

5. DISCUSSION

What happened in Croatia in the last 20 years is a contemporary example of different ways of politics interfering with language and identity. The purism issue relates to the complex question of denominating the languages spoken in the region of ex-Yugoslavia. Therefore, it is quite impossible to avoid the discussion about Serbo-Croatian and its political and identity homologues: Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin and Serbian. We have four nations with their political and identity independence. Their standard languages are variations of what used to be called standard Serbo-Croatian and whose official denomination is not used in any of the four countries. From a more nationalistic point of view, their standard languages rather resemble one another, but are unique standard languages. From the Bosnian and Montenegrin point of view, the denomination Serbo-Croatian is not convenient first of all because their identity is left out. From the Croatian point of view, the denomination ‘Serbo-Croatian’ is not convenient because of historical reasons punctuated with conflicts. As it was said before, centuries of separation of the peoples and their different foreign influences resulted in differences in style, vocabulary, grammar, morphology, orthography, phonetics and the stress system, syntax and scripts. So, even if speakers from Croatia and Serbia understand each other, they cannot speak fluently each other’s variant.

We saw that divergence and disagreement about what should be the common language of Croats and Serbs have persisted since the 19th century. Understanding Yugoslav languages’ history and their political context helped to clear the ground for understanding how the extremist linguistic politics described here are possible.

The complexity of the linguistic situation can be inferred from titles such as Croatian linguistic swamp *Hrvatska jezična močvara* (Raguž, 2010)²³. This recent book describes the main streams in Croatian linguistics, their disputes, and the problems

22 <http://www.monitor.hr/anketa/?page=vote,results,1231>

23 Or “Confrontations, polemic duels about Croatian language and orthography”, *Sučeljavanja: Polemički dueli oko hrvatskoga jezika i pravopisa* (Pranjeković 2008).

growing out of it. To enter this “swamp” of Croatian linguistics would take too much time, space and energy. After a closer look, it seems that in post-war Croatia, the main enemies of the Croatian language are the Croats themselves – more precisely, a very small part of them, passionate about pure and unique Croatian language. We saw that their power is directly correlated with politics. And they continue their fight even though the linguistic threat that first came from Austria, Italy and Germany, and then from Serbia, ceased to exist.

What is the fight about once nations gained their independence and the Croats can speak freely their language? Is there still a need to argue? Apparently, yes. The ideological motivations persist, but they are nowadays internal: about dialects, about religion, and of course, about politics.

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