

THE MISUSE OF LANGUAGE: SERBO-CROATIAN, 'CZECHOSLOVAKIAN' AND THE BREAKUP OF STATES

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Abstract

Language, besides being known as the best form of communication known to man, is also known to serve as a marker of (national) identity. In countries such as Yugoslavia, Serbo-Croatian, as the language used by the majority of the population, saw itself splinter into allegedly different languages from the 1990s onwards, from the breakup of the Yugoslav state, as it was used as a separating factor for the strengthening of national identities. In Czechoslovakia, on the other hand, even though the state boasted two separate languages (however genetically close), linguistic nationalism did not find a fertile ground to flourish with the breakup of Czechoslovakia. This article explores the linguistic, political and societal differences and similarities between linguistic and political issues in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, comparing the diverging policies of language as a defining factor of national identity.

Keywords: Serbo-Croatian, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, breakup, linguistics

Introduction

The breakups of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia are topics that have been tackled by many an academician, from various points of view and divergent disciplines (Rogel 1998; Lucarelli 2000; Ramet 2005; Oberschall 2000; Eyal 2003; Innes 1997; Young 1994; Bookman 1994; Rychlik 2011; Buchtikova 1995; Vlachova and Rehakova 2004; Kolumber 2012; Jovic 2003; Banac 1984; Jovanovic 2017a). While nodding to the many worthwhile contributions analyzing the social, political, economic and other instances that have contributed to the historical developments in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, this article wishes to explore some of the less analyzed instances that contributed to the breakup of Yugoslavia in comparison with former Czechoslovakia. We are talking about

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language, its use and misuse, and how linguistic differences (or lack thereof) were intentionally blown out of proportions in the areas where Serbo-Croatian was spoken as a native tongue in order to foster conflict, while it never happened in Czechoslovakia, even though linguistic differentiation between Czech and Slovak was and is real. The discursive, forced creation of alleged linguistic differences between variants of Serbo-Croatian have fueled the conflict in former Yugoslavia by creating difference where there was, essentially, none. If new states were to be created, divisions had to be made, and language was a useful tool/object.

At the same time, Czech and Slovak – separate languages by themselves, even though they are closely related – have not been used as discursive support for the breakup of Czechoslovakia, even though they could have been, having in mind that in Czechoslovakia, there exists a delineation that follows national/ethnic lines. In Kamusella's words (though he concentrated on Czechoslovakia mostly, not on Yugoslavia), 'nationalisms were able to come to the political fore, but they now had the traditional ethno-linguistic goals in mind which precipitated the break-up of Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia along ethno-linguistic lines' (Kamusella 2001: 243), stressing the impact that linguistic policy had in the breakup of states. So-called 'linguistic nationalism' (Wright 2000) entered the fray. We see the relevance of the topic at hand in the fact that comparative research to the linguistic situation in former Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia has not been conducted, beside several pages in Kamusella's volume (2009) that concentrated primarily on Central Europe.

A parallel exists between linguistic issues in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, as they both boasted several languages used in daily practice. Yet 'another casualty of these wars [in the 1990s Yugoslavia] was Serbo-Croatian split into three new languages, Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian' (Kamusella 2009: 37), while the attempts of 'unifying' Czech and Slovakian existed in the early 20th century and the creation of the common state, yet never took root. Kordic noticed that social scientists and historians tend to fail to connect the importance of language to feelings of national identity leaving the issue to sociolinguists. Thus, the similarities and differences in the use of language within the breakups of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia rarely come to the fore. Whilst there was a (pseudo)linguistic 'split' in former Yugoslavia, with the newly formed local languages used as a means to a nationalist, conflict-inspiring end, there was an unsuccessful idea of a united 'Czechoslovak' language that would reflect the Czech-Slovak unity.

The article commences by elaborating on the necessary theory related to language planning, policy and identity, after which it positions the issue in a short historic context, coupled with the linguistic, theoretical differentiations of the languages at hand (and the ever-present question of the differentiation between language and dialect, up to a point). It afterwards presents specific language policies and discursive features of the language-breakup of Serbo-Croatian, the ideas of a unified 'Czechoslovak' languages, as well as the impact of these ideas to the breakup of Yugoslavia and the failure of Czechoslovak as a unifying factor (as well as the lack of linguistic nationalism within the Czech/Slovak split).

Language planning, policy and identity in theory and practice

Language can be seen as a crucial part of one's (often national) identity, as we 'present ourselves to others through our choice of language or language variety' (Wodak 2012: 216), being that language 'assumes the character of a clear identity marker' (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998: 358). Thus, speaking a certain language or dialect can prove to be crucial in the construction and comprehension of local national identities, prompting some scholars to see *identity* even as a *function of language* (Joseph 2004: 20). Having in mind the currently accepted paradigm of constructivism in regards to national identity and the 'fluidity and arbitrariness of nationality' (Joseph 2004: 93), it is a matter of the social construction of national identity by which language can be 'promoted' to the pedestal of the nation. This is conducted via language planning and language policy.

Language planning is defined as 'the methodical activity of regulating and improving existing languages or creating new common, regional, national or international languages' (Tauli 1974: 56), whilst language policy – closely related – is a 'body of ideas, laws, regulations, rules and practices intended to achieve the planned language change in the society, group or system' (Kaplan and Baldauf 1997: xi). As it is, 'the typical language policy that existed in most nation-states coincided of national languages in congruence with national state ideologies' (Shohamy 2006: 51), and in the wake of the sudden eruption of a number of nation-states after the breakup of Yugoslavia, appropriate language policies were created in order to forcefully 'bend' Serbo-Croatian's 'administrative successors' (Bugarski 2005: 137) to conform to the newly created nation-states. On the other hand, the idea of 'unifying' Czech and Slovakian into 'Czechoslovakian' came into existence even before the lifetime of the state of Czechoslovakia – as to confirm the unity – yet the attempt failed.

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It is of some importance to realize that ‘the exercise of language planning leads to, or is directed by, the promulgation of a language policy by government (or other authoritative body or person)’ (Kaplan and Baldauf 1997: xi), as language policy can be said to possess an almost strict top-down property. Governmental apparatuses, together with nationally-minded linguists, are the subjects of language policy, and its following reception by the language’s speakers. ‘It is by a variety of overt and covert mechanisms, used mostly (but not exclusively) by those in authority, that languages are being manipulated and controlled so as to affect, create and perpetuate “de facto” language policies, i.e. language practices’ (Shohamy 2006: xv); both in the case of Yugoslavia and the forced dismembering of Serbo-Croatian, as well as in the idea of ‘Czechoslovakian’, these attempts were overt rather than covert, as it was of importance to openly propagate language as an identity marker. Thus ‘language has become an essential tool for manipulation, especially within the nation-state’ (Shohamy 2006: 43), it ‘turned from an open and free system to a tool of imposition, manipulation and colonialization, mostly used by ideologues and politicians with the support of linguists and educationalists’ (Shohamy 2006: 23).

Having in mind that ‘language planning cannot be understood without reference to its social context’ (Cooper 1989: 3), an interdisciplinary conjoining of history (or any social science, for that matter, that would tackle the topic) with sociolinguistics is seen as necessary (Jovanovic 2017a). But a decade ago, this was voiced by Kamusella, who spoke how nationalist linguists failed to grasp the political, whilst political scientists and historians were often seen in need of a stronger linguistic background (Kamusella 2009: xii), pleading for a broader view. Though he did not tackle Serbo-Croatian in detail (whilst he devoted significant space to Czech and Slovak), he did see the issue at hand, saying that ‘when linguists decide that “a Bosnian language of centuries-long pedigree undoubtedly exists and is inherently different from Serbian”, or that the “evidence clearly indicates that the Slovak dialectal area consists of three distinctive, though kindred dialects”, historians and political scientists usually accept such pronouncements as givens, not worth any further analysis’ (Kamusella 2009: xiii). What tends to be ignored are the mechanisms of promoting language policy, and ‘in order to obtain meaningful understanding of the “real” language policy, there is a need to deduce it through the languages that are created as consequences of those mechanisms’ (Shohamy 2006: xv), including the wider social, historical, linguistic and political context.

Brief historical background

Divisions between nationalities, strengthened by nationalist linguistics, existed in the Yugoslav region far before the 1990s and the breakup of Yugoslavia.

During the era of the Croatian Nazi-puppet state, there were ideas of a 'new Croatian' speech, promulgated mostly by Ante Pavelic and the *Ustaša* movement. This movement was inspired by linguistic purism that will inspire the purists by the end of the century, and has contributed to the creation of compounds and calques such as the 'air-puncher' for the helicopter (*zrakomlat*), and many more. Linguistic unity was confirmed and continued, nonetheless, after the Second World War, among other instances, in the 1954 Novi Sad Literary Agreement, where linguists from Yugoslavia confirmed that they spoke a single language. The Agreement was embodied in a 800 pages long *Pravopis*, the orthographic dictionary, yet dissenting voiced, based on a Serbian/Croatian distinction, were heard already at that time, with the realization that Serbo-Croatian had two *loci*, a Serbian (Eastern) and a Croatian (Western). From the point of view of linguistics, this was both 'normal' and standard for a vast number of languages, many of which exist, like Serbo-Croatian, in a state of 'polycentric standardization' (such as British English and American English, Castellan Spanish and Mexican Spanish, etc). Yet, writing in 1967, Thomas Magner already noticed that 'more is involved here than simple language description. What is mirrored in these Lilliputian charges and countercharges are significant changes in the Yugoslav political system: running parallel to the present government policy of economic decentralization is a powerful tendency toward political decentralization, toward regional and national autonomy' (Magner 1967: 338). These tendencies will directly impact the breakup of Yugoslavia decades later, which will be elaborated on in the pages to come.

Similar unifying tendencies have taken place in Czechoslovakia with the establishment of the common state. Though Czech and Slovak, during the centuries, emerged as two distinct (yet due to proximity and social/political circumstances, highly mutually intelligible), there were ideas of a unified 'Czechoslovak' languages. Kamusella (2008) finds the idea of conjoining the two in the 17th and 18th century, connected to religious disagreements. After the Bila Hora battle in 1620, a number of Czech Protestants migrated to the northern parts of today's Hungary, where they ended up in a Slovak-speaking area, writing Czech according to the codification of the Kralice Bible, which was then 'Slovakized' in time. After the Counter-Reformation, Jesuits began using the Protestant idiom, and as a retort to the 'biblical language', they proposed vernacular Slovak. After a while of Catholic Slovak influence on the vernacular, Protestant groups 'fought back' by attempts to 're-Czech' the language by making it closer to the Bohemian standard, and thus Dolezal's *Grammatica Slavico-Bohemica* was printed in Prague in 1672. Nabelkova mentions the same, writing how 'a precursor of "Czechoslovak" may have been based on the term *lingua slavico-bohemica*, attested in the title of the grammar book by Dolezal,

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Grammatica Slavico-Bohemica, from 1746' (Nabelkova 2007: 61), so "Czechoslovak" remained the liturgical language of Slovak Protestants — and under the widespread name *biblictina* 'Bible language/Bible Czech' it retained some of its functions until the end of the twentieth century' (Nabelkova 2007: 62).

As Kamusella elaborates, there was still confusion present, as the *Grammatica* 'emulated Vaclav Jan Rosa's *Czechorecnost, seu Grammatica linguae Bohemicae* (1672, Prague), who identified the idiom of Upper Hungary's Slavophones as Bohemian (Czech). The title of Dolezal's work can be literally translated as The Grammar of the Slavo-Bohemian Language, but Slovak and Czech philologists usually settle for the more interpretative translation, referring to the language as "Slovak-Czech" (Kamusella 2009: 133). This enabled the idea of a unified Czechoslovak language centuries after, yet even though the idea had some roots in history and a common linguistic genetic background to build upon, its artificial character was too strong, and without state policy and attempts of forced language planning – for which there was no need – Czechoslovak as state policy never really succeeded, even though it was introduced in 1918, and lasted until 1939, as 'the establishment of Czechoslovakia in 1918 brought with it an official declaration of the "Czechoslovak language" as a state language in two literary forms, Czech and Slovak, accompanying the declaration of the Czechoslovak nation — this was conditioned by, among other things, the needs of the majority representation in the new state' (Nabelkova 2007: 63).

Among the reasons for the failure of Czechoslovak to take root, three come to mind. One is that 'before the establishment of the common state (and also for some time afterward) the term "Czechoslovak" emerged as an expression conceptualizing a complex language situation, when Czech as a developed literary language could and actually did serve as a cultural code for the Slovak community in Slovakia (though gradually narrowing its scope)' (Nabelkova 2007), meaning that it meant a version of Czech that would be supposed to act as the idiom for Slovaks as well. The other is the fact that in *practice*, 'Czechoslovak' often meant a mixture of Czech and Slovak that came into vernacular existence due to the social mingling and mobility within the newly formed state (Blanar 2000; Kacala 1998), which can be heard even today among Slovaks living in the Czech Republic and Czechs living in Slovakia, or within mixed marriages. The third reason was due to the separating linguistic instances which were seen in history of the Czech and Slovak lands, as Bernolák's codification of the Slovak written language (often referred to as *Bernolactina*) was an instance of division, as noticed by Kamusella (2008, p. 135), when it was understood as overly close to the Czech standard by Slovak nationalists, so the argument was

made that *Bernolactina* could be used in order to pin Slovak as a Czech dialect, which was unviable to Slovak nationalists. Thus, even with an idea spanning several centuries, Czechoslovak never saw its development (with the exception of the vernacular ‘mixture’), even though it was official for two decades in the twentieth century.

The languages at hand: a linguistic overview

The theoretical question at hand that needs to be taken into consideration prior to the deliberation about the interlocking instances of language, society and politics is the question about the very differentiation between language and dialect, e.g. when does a dialect become a language? A common expression contributed to Max Weinreich is that a language is a ‘dialect with an army and a navy’, implicating state-driven policies in creating a linguistic standard and promoting it as a separate language. This can only nominally be said to be true for former Yugoslavia, as the situation is significantly more complicated, since nationalist policies and discourses have created a type of quasi-linguistics, called also ‘retro-linguistics’ (Jovanovic 2012), which embarked on a series of successful nativism-inspired discursive promulgations in order to promote specious nationalist linguistic policies. The debate on the differences between language and dialect has been thoroughly studied in linguistics from various perspectives (McMahon and McMahon 2003; Bouckaert et al. 2012), and the constraints of a standardized research article prohibits us from an in-depth approach. What is generally accepted in linguistics is that languages exist in a so-called ‘dialectal continuum’ (Friedman 1994: 101), where one dialect – within a language – interlocks with another, with overlaps on the level of phonetics, morphology, syntax.

Mutual intelligibility is, however, one of the more important criteria in proclaiming several dialects or variations to be one language. The so-called Swadesh list, used in glottochronology and lexicostatistics, is of help at this point (Swadesh 1971), as it is used as a tool for assessing genetic relatedness between dialects and languages by comparing a set of words between two analyzed varieties – in the case of ‘Serbian’ versus ‘Croatian’, the overlap is all-encompassing, that is, 100% (Jovanovic 2012), making Serbian and Croatian (the first, primary, and most relevant political ‘split’ of Serbo-Croatian in the nineties) a single language without much ado. Heinz Kloss even used Serbo-Croatian as a ‘case in point’, as ‘the existence of the two variants must not prevent us from treating them as a single language, for there is difference between the two but no intrinsic distance apart from external features like script or spelling which have little or nothing to do with the corpus of the language’ (Kloss 1967: 31). Note that since 1967, Serbo-Croatian has not changed, so Kloss’ depiction still

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holds value; centuries are needed for two variants to become separate languages.

Language, as seen by linguists today, is truly a fluid phenomenon (not unlike nationality itself), existing in a constant flux throughout the centuries (Aitchison 2001: 3). Nonetheless, delineations between Czech and Slovak that make them separate languages are rather clear, as are the corresponding *lack of said delineations* between the ‘polycentric varieties’ of the Serbo-Croatian language, nowadays politically called Croatian, Bosnian, Serbian and Montenegrin. In the words of Groschel (Groschel 2003: 182), the idioms of Serbs, Croats, Bosnians and Montenegrins are mutually understandable, structurally alike more than enough to classify them as ‘variants of a single polycentric language’ (Groschel 2003: 183). Mørk wrote that mutual intelligibility is ‘complete’, drawing the same conclusion (Mørk 2008: 295). According to Thomas, the differences between standardized varieties of what was once the official Serbo-Croatian language are fewer than between the worldwide variants of French (Thomas 2003: 314), whilst Hinrichs, already in 1997, wrote that the differences are fewer even in the English variants spoken in the United Kingdom, the USA, Australia and Canada (Hinrichs 1997: 14). Thus, the majority languages spoken in the areas of former Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, without resorting to nationalist cleavages, are Czech, Slovak, Serbo-Croatian, Slovenian, Macedonian and Albanian, the latter three not having impacted the breakup of Yugoslavia or Czechoslovakia.

Thus, Czech and Slovak are two languages, as the common lexical treasury does not exceed 60%. A problem can be seen in the fact that Czech and Slovak are up to a significant point mutually understandable, yet only somewhat due to their genetic relatedness. We could position a minor thought experiment, envisaging a group of native Russian speakers who have lived in close proximity with a group of Spanish speakers. Many Russian speakers would be able to understand Spanish, even though it is not even a Slavic language, and vice versa, just due to their regular exposure to the language in everyday communication, including mixed marriages and workplaces where both languages would be spoken. In linguistics, we are here talking about passive bilingualism (Colomer 1990; Lincoln 1979), which is in the Czech/Slovak case made much easier due to the genetic proximity. In other words, ‘like Czech in Slovakia, Slovak in the Czech environment was considered to be “generally intelligible,” and therefore acceptable for communication, with their mutual intelligibility based on linguistic affinity as well as on the habit of reading and hearing texts in the other language’ (Nabelkova 2007: 55), which contributed to what Nabelkova called ‘perceptive bilingualism’ (Nabelkova 2007: 56). Yet a slew of differences between Czech and Slovak exist (not only at the level of the vocabulary) which would prohibit

successful communication if their speakers were not in close contact with one another, such as the differences in phonetics, morphology, orthography (there is a diverse declension system, different phonemes etc). None of the above exist in the alleged differentiation between Serbian and Croatian; there are numerous dialectal and regional differences, but they do not come even close to following either state borders, or appropriate nationality.

The discursive features of Croatian linguistic nationalism

As the breakup of Yugoslavia and the wars of the Yugoslav secession began, numerous instances that would support the difference between the newly formed nation-states and their corresponding nationalities and ethnicities were discursively set in place. The main differences were between nations, based on ethnicities, strengthened with religion, with the Serb versus Croat nation as the primary instance of differentiation, followed with the Bosniak one. Serbs, as a separate ethnicity, with Orthodoxy as a religion and the Serbian state as the country, were promoted as 'intrinsically different' from Croats, Croatia and Catholicism, which were, in turn, boasting same crucial differences with the Bosniak ethnicity, Bosnia as a state and Islam as a religion, on which a significant scholarly production can be found (Oberschall 2000; Perica 2002; Hayden 1996). Language was yet another crucial factor that was promoted as a source of difference, as every nation, in a Herderian sense, had to claim a separate language, as 'in language, this has meant the urge not only to have one language, but to have one's own language' (Haugen 1966: 928). In other words, 'in the Serbian-Croatian case, existing linguistic differences have become highly symbolic for the discontinuity' (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998: 367).

Thus, in the early 1990s, the official Croat language policy began to 'cleanse' the newly formed Croatian language of 'Serbian influences', similar to the policies enacted by the UstaSa regime of the 1940s (Busch 2004: 205). As Gudzevic wrote in 1996, 'for five years into the past, words have been tortured and banished, 'differential dictionaries' have been made. Some kind of "deserbization" or "decroatization" of language is taking place, books written in the Cyrillic script are removed from libraries, translations of classics are being declared invalid ... the Croatian Parliament gets legal propositions that promote a language police. At the same time, one language school sells diplomas for "official translators from the Serbian language"; no exam, however, is required by the candidates' (Gudzevic 1996: 982). Linguistic purism became official linguistic ideology, one that 'increases nationalism, as it teaches that everything should be classified as Croatian or non-Croatian, and that everything coming from one's own nation is declared good, while everything coming from other nations is bad' (Kordic 2010: 17). In other words, Croat linguistic purism contributed directly to the

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differentiation between nations that was necessary for the breakup of the state. As Thomas noted, even before the breakup of Yugoslavia, Croatian anti-Serbian purism was used as a 'precise barometer of Croat nationalist sentiments' (Thomas 1989: 6), especially during the era of the Croatian Nazi-puppet state; it was a viable and useful source of artificial differences in the 1990s anew. The influential Croat linguist, Stjepan Babic, went as far in 2001, stating bluntly that if a word is called a 'UstaSa' word, he would consider it 'Croatian' (Babic 2001: 232).

Purism in sociolinguistics is seen as an intrinsic feature of nationalism, as purism seeks to 'fulfill the expectations of nationalism' (Czerwinski 2005: 39). In Croatia, purism was and is presented as ethically positive: 'Linguistic purism in Croatia is primarily a positive attempt that succeeded to preserve Croatian linguistic identity during the long and hard past of the Croatian people and the language that has been under a strong influence of other cultures and languages' (Francic 2005: 191). Ulrich Ammon's words on purism – that it is, in fact, a type of 'civil war' (Ammon 1995: 186) – might be understood as an exaggeration, were it not for the actual wars that took place in the 1990s in Yugoslavia, yet again stressing how forced creation of linguistic difference serves to foster conflict.

Further discursive features that served to separate Croatian from Serbian are seen in the lexical choices used in nominal phrases with 'Croatian' as the semantic figurehead, such as 'clear', 'pure', 'specific', 'beautiful', 'understandable' and 'our/s', including the verb modality such as used in the forms 'it is necessary', 'it needs to be done', 'it is needed', 'it is beneficial', used by linguists to strengthen the reader's impression that these ideas are not to be debated (Czerwinski 2005: 131-132). Some of the leaders of the nationalist linguist movement, such as Stjepan Babic, were quite frank on occasions, claiming that 'increasing the difference [of Croatian] with Serbian' was among their unhidden goals (Babic 2001: 94)

This was all created by what Cameron dubbed a 'moral panic', which 'cannot be said to come into existence by itself, but gets *constructed* in exact ways, primarily via the media' (Cameron 1995: 83). In the case of Croatian linguistic nationalism, according to the Millroy/Millroy sociolinguistic duo, the media served 'apocalyptic visions mixed with paranoia' (Millroy and Millroy 1999: 43). The success of said paranoia was admitted by Babic himself, who in 2004, looking back, mentioned that 'many were afraid to use an occasional Serbism, which is good' (Babic 2004: 173). According to Janicki, linguist purists do not know what language is, as purism separates people into outsiders and insiders, the results of which are most commonly conflicts (Janicki 1993: 106), which were

in such a manner promoted by nationalist linguistics, fueling the differentiation that was necessary for the justification of the state breakup and creation of new states. Kordic agrees, saying that 'in Croatia, it is precisely linguists who are the bearers of such ignorance' (Kordic 2010: 51). Unlike for the breakup of Czechoslovakia, 'conflict' is one of the key terms for depiction of the breakup of Yugoslavia (Zametica 1992; Aceves 1996; Guicherd 1993; Gagnon Jr 1995; O'Shea 2005).

Serbia was seen as the discursive 'Other', against which a separate national language needed to be created, and for those reasons, some nationally minded linguists, such as Kacic and Saric, wrote how there are 'delusions and distortions that Serbian and Croatian are one language', as they saw differences on the level of both literary and standard language, including an incredulous claim that there are differences at the level of genetic relatedness; further differences were claimed to exist at the typological level, in phonetics, prosody, morphology and word formation, syntax and pragmatics (Kacic and Saric 1997), which would make those allegedly different languages completely mutually unintelligible. Other noted nationalist linguists, such as Babic, even admitted that they campaigned for the introduction of 'Croatian' words to replace words that have been discursively proclaimed as 'Serbian', such as one of the rare instances of successful linguistic micro engineering and the replacement of the word for *thousand*, 'hiljada' to 'tisuca'; Babic saw what he claimed was 'dangerous' in the fact that there was a chance for the word 'hiljada' to 'survive as a common word' (Babic 2004: 196), even though he himself admitted that the majority of the speakers in Croatia actually did use the word 'hiljada' in the same monograph.

Other authors have combined nationalist histories with politics and language, so that some of them claimed in 1993 that Serbia was leading a 'total, dehumanizing and exterminating war' (Pavlicevic 1993: 247), the 'initiation phase' of which he saw in 1783. with the idea of a common language (Pavlicevic 1993: 262). Pavlicevic further went into conspiracy theories, claiming that there was an 'oral, secret arrangement about the division of the Croatian language, and with it, its people, into a Serbian and Slovenian part' (Pavlicevic 1993: 272).

The Serbian case and the 'defense' of the language

The case of Serbian was somewhat different, even though up to a point less potent (at least during the nineties), yet evenly grounded in nationalist thought. Greenberg (2004) classifies Serbian linguistics in three categories; one are what he calls 'status quo' linguists, who claim that Serbian is an 'outgrowth' of its official predecessor, Serbo-Croatian, the second faction are 'neo-Vukovites', who promote a return to 19th century linguistic principles, and the third are

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'Orthodox linguists' who promote extreme linguistic nationalism. We shall offer another *ad hoc* classification, in relation towards the idea of Serbo-Croatian, having in mind that the vision of Serbo-Croatian is of relevance for the construction of difference prior to and during the breakup of Yugoslavia, in which one group adhere to the claim that what was once known as Serbo-Croatian is what is today known as Serbian, and that it has always been so, negating the very existence of Serbo-Croatian, which is seen as a 'stolen' Serbian language (thus other nations are 'stealing', 'eating away' the Serbian language), while the other claim that Serbo-Croatian still exists whilst equating it with its Eastern variant (Jovanovic 2012). In both cases, similar discourses are seen, among which a continuous call for the 'defense' of the Serbian language.

A first example is the 1997 monograph by Milos Kovacevic, a leading Serb nationalist linguist, bluntly entitled 'In Defense of the Serbian Language', as well as the founding of the *Society for the Study and Preservation of the Serbian Language*, both of which laid claim that, since 'defense' was needed, there was an 'attack' on the Serbian language. As Greenberg noticed, 'unlike their Croat counterparts, Serb linguists were ill prepared for the new linguistic order' (Greenberg 2004: 85), and they could not match the hyperproduction of nationalist linguistic discourse of the Croats (it could be said that they succeeded in the years to come, but that was after the breakup, and warrants separate research).

Nonetheless, some significant ways in attaining difference can be named beside the call to 'protection' and 'defense'. One of these was the insistence on the *ekavian* pronunciation (more common in Serbia than Croatia or Bosnia) that was imposed by the Bosnian Serbs in 1993 in Serb-occupied regions of Bosnia, as well as a number of orthographic manuals in the period of 1993-1996, such as the Belgrade-Niksic orthographic manual (1993), the Novi Sad orthographic manual (1994), the Orthography of 1996, as well as the *Declaration about the Serbian Language* in 1998. In the Declaration (Bojic et al. 1998), the Serbian nationalist linguist corps displayed their full credentials and ideas. Written in a somewhat archaic language, in Cyrillic, the Declaration claimed that there was an 'illusion of the Serb-Croat unity'. Croats have 'taken the Serbian language' and 'added their name to it', which was seen as a 'case without precedent in the history of any other language'. They define Croats and Bosniaks as speakers of the 'Croat (Roman Catholic) and Muslim variant of the Serbian literary language'. Additionally, the whole text is permeated with religion, undersigned by the dozen authors with a date stamp as 'Belgrade, on Ascension Day, 1998 (7506)', with the biblical year set in parentheses; many religious references are seen in the text. Note that it has already been argued that there is a 'nexus between

religion and language' (Safran 2008: 171), as both have a tendency to be used as the core of national identity. The insistence on Orthodoxy, as contrasted to Croat Catholicism, was a useful marker by which differences between nationalities were discursively strengthened, reminding the reader that alleged linguistic differences coincide with nationality and religion alike.

'Bosnian' – an 'arduous task'

When it comes to the newly formed Bosnian language, 'the birth of a new Bosniak identity coincided with the proclamation of the language in 1992' (Greenberg 2004: 136). Having in mind that national identities were crucial in the differentiation that led (among other factors) to the disintegration of Yugoslavia, it is wise to notice that the Bosniak identity was based on linguistic perturbations, and that the national and state division was promulgated primarily via the (mis)use of language; language was a key factor in separating Bosnia and Bosniacs from Yugoslavia. In summa, 'Bosniak linguistic nationalism was late to the fray, having the language already "split" between the warring sides of Serbia and Croatia. A heavy stretch needed to take place in order to create a Bosniak language out of nothing' (Jovanovic 2017b: 81); Greenberg put it bluntly: 'the task of establishing a new Bosnian language has been particularly arduous' (Greenberg 2004: 136). Thus the 'solution' for the discursive creation of yet another successor language was done by the means of insistence on the greater frequency of use of Turkish loanwords (having in mind that Bosniak nationalism is heavily based on Islam and tends to see Turkey as a 'mother hen'), as well as on the increased use of the velar fricative /x/ (Jovanovic 2017b: 82, see also: Greenberg, 2004, p. 145).

The Bosniak linguist nationalists claimed that there was a development of the Bosniak language ever since the Ottoman times (Greenberg 2004: 137). Due to the highly visible artificial nature of the project, much of the discourse had to concentrate on declarative, assertive claims such as that 'the Bosnian language is not a political invention, but a significant cultural current, which has followed Bosnia through history' (Jahic 1999: 29). The author of the quote, one of the most prolific Bosniak nationalist linguists, Dzevad Jahic, claimed furthermore that Bosnian was 'affected by the development of the medieval Bosnian state', that 'the term "Bosnian language" was begun in the Middle Ages', and that there are 'specificities of the Bosnian speech' (Jahic 1999: 28-29). Problems surfaced when 'the language planners have had to explain the uniquely "Bosnian" nature of their inherited Slavic lexical stock; on the other hand, they have had to introduce new words of Turkish/Arabic origin that might not be used by many of the members of the Bosniac community' (Greenberg 2004: 147).

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Many inconsistencies are seen in the development of the Bosnian language, including the case of the *Grammar of the Bosnian Language* by Halilovic, Jahic and Palic, in which they admitted that 'the Bosnian language has been going its own way *during the last ten years* [italics added]' (Jahic et al. 2000: 15), essentially admitting the artificiality of their own creation. The authors further claimed that they have 'accepted the hard and responsible work of its [the Grammar's] creation' (Jahic et al. 2000: 15). Two full pages were devoted to the velar fricative /x/ ('h') on pages 43-45. The non-nationalist linguist from Sarajevo, Midhat Ridanovic, called the grammar a 'complete miss' (Ridanovic 2003), calling the authors 'linguistic alphabets' for claiming that language, state and nation must always coincide and overlap (Ridanovic 2003: 3). It turned out, additionally, that the *Grammar of the Bosnian Language* was a work of heavy plagiarism of the Croatian *Grammar*, inciting Ridanovic to state that 'if everything plagiarized were to be taken out, the book would be reduced to fifty pages' (Ridanovic 2003: 34).

Czech and Slovak by the end of the 20th century

Unlike the breakup of Yugoslavia, where a single language (Serbo-Croatian) was split (first into two, Serbian and Croatian, Bosnian following suite, and Montenegro coming last, yet *after* the breakup – being 'codified' and made official in 2007) in order to create difference where there was none, Czech and Slovak already possessed valid linguistic difference, each corresponding to its nationality, thus a *discursive, artificial creation of difference* need not to have happened. *Some* differentiation, nevertheless, did take place, as 'the split of Czecho-Slovakia into the Czech and Slovak nation-states terminated the unique post-1968 tradition of "suprastandard" bilingualism. Apart from few publications, which attempted to preserve this tradition, the mass media, education, administration, and other fields of public life became exclusively monolingual, that is, Czechophone in the Czech Republic, and Slovakophone in Slovakia' (Kamusella 2009: 794). Additionally, movies were seen to have embarked on a policy of dubbing and subtitling, even though there was no practical reason for such an enterprise that, in addition to being pragmatically pointless, cost. While 'differential dictionaries' started being produced in former Yugoslavia (primarily in Croatia) with a clear goal of artificially separating the two new standards, thus representing a rather clear instance of division, the first ever volume of the Czech-Slovak dictionary was published in 2004 in Bratislava, with tangible linguistic use. It was not reciprocated in the Czech Republic (Kamusella 2009: 795). Differentiation was also to be found in the 'Czech thirst for ideologically-laden symbols in the form of national encyclopedias and dictionaries' (Kamusella 2009: 797), though this was an issue from the early 18th century to the 1970s.

A reason for the lack of extreme nationalist views on language in the Czech Republic is seen in the fact that the ‘ethnolinguistic continuity of the Czech nation has never been severed since the Czech nation emerged in the first half of the 19th century’ (Kamusella 2009: 797), as the officialdom of ‘Czechoslovakian’ was all there was – it was official, on paper, and not in practice. On the other hand, nationally minded Croat linguists by the end of the 20th century could claim that the entirety of the Yugoslav age presented a discontinuity of the Croatian language, as much as the Serbs could.

There are, nonetheless, ‘other explanations of the Czechs’ growing disinterest in reaffirming their national identity on ethnolinguistic grounds may be the ethnolinguistic homogeneity of their nation-state, achieved after the expulsion of the Sudeten Germans in the second half of the 1940s, and reaffirmed by the 1993 breakup of Czechoslovakia, mainly instigated by nationally-minded Slovak leaders. On the other hand, there are no sizeable Czech national minorities residing outside the republic, which would appeal to Prague for aid and other privileges on an ethnolinguistic basis, as it happens in the case of the sizeable Magyar and Polish minorities’ (Kamusella 2009: 799). This was not the case with former Yugoslavia, where Serb minorities in Croatia and Bosnia as a sizeable part of the population, so claims that local national minorities would ‘suffer’ due to linguistic issues could be made.

When it comes to the Slovak case, ‘the Slovaks were not politically frustrated at some discontinuity, but rather at their inability to establish the internationally recognized separateness of their ethnolinguistic continuity, which slowly coalesced into historical Hungary during the second half of the 19th century’, including that they ‘deemed the “closing” of this continuity in interwar and communist Czechoslovakia as unjust. Short-lived wartime independent Slovakia was very much dependent on German aid, and subjected to German supervision; hence, it did not really fulfill the Slovak national aspirations’ (Kamusella 2009: 798). With the breakup of Czechoslovakia in 1993, both Czech and Slovak received equal status, and with the 2004 EU ascension, both languages become official within the Union.

Conclusion

The cases of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia stand somewhat in opposition. Whilst the warring sides in Yugoslavia (Croats, Bosnians and Serbs) did speak (and still do) the same language (with geographical distinctions that are common for all polycentric standardized languages throughout the world), there was an artificial, discursive creation of difference led by linguist elites and heartily supported by political players. On the other hand, Czechoslovakia, with

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its two nationalities, Czech and Slovak, *did* boast two separate (though related) languages. It would have been more natural to suspect that existing differences between Czech and Slovak be easier to use as a stepping stone in the creation of two states, and that the unifying Serbo-Croatian language would serve as a source of unity, not differentiation. The difference is seen in the *instrumental use* of language by the elites, to use the phrase of Horkheimer and Adorno. Language was, for lack of better words, butchered by the nationalist linguist elites in the areas where Serbo-Croatian was spoken, which never happened in Czechoslovakia. In the Yugoslav case, language was thus discursively positioned as a key identity marker which was supposed to create division between the opposing sides; the more division there was seen to exist, the easier it would be to physically divide the newly formed states. In the words of Bugarski, ‘there was a search for the mystical substance of the nation, for its spirit, that is – as it is called today – its identity, which is allegedly hidden in language’ (Colovic 2009).

It is relatively clear that the main force of nationalist, divisive linguistics in the 1990s (and up to an extent, even before) was to be found among the work of Croat nationalist linguists. As Greenberg noticed, Croat nationalist linguists were ‘more prepared’, unlike their Serbian counterparts, whilst Bosniak nationalist linguists had to build almost from nothing. Following the above discussed cases (especially the Serbo-Croatian one) yields a lot of new information, as the reverberations of the Yugoslav split continued to produce nationalist ‘retro-linguistics’. If Bosnian language was ‘late to the fray’, one has to wonder about the discursive construction of the Montenegrin language, that happened after the Yugoslav breakup, yet followed similar nationalist discursive patterns (Nakazawa 2015; Glusica 2011). Serbian linguistic nationalism, that Greenberg deemed not overly competent during the 1990s, also continued to develop, perhaps culminating in the 2005 symposium on the Serbian language, where a row of assertive, untenable statements were made, supported by the state’s Ministry of Education; yet these are directions for further research and cannot fit into a single research article. In this article, we have presented the main hubs of linguistic policies within the former states of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, in regard to national tensions. Nevertheless, with local nationalisms in Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia still boasting significant strength, and with state-supported nationalist linguist work being produced continuously, this is a topic that will doubtlessly need to be closely scrutinized in the near future. As a relevant instance for further research, Montenegrin linguistic nationalism has developed in the meantime, yet *after* the breakup of Czechoslovakia, an issue that will need to be tackled in the social sciences.

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