

Ideologies about the Serbo-Croatian language

Separateness vs. Togetherness

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1 Introduction

This paper is partly based on research originally conducted for the conference “Ideology in grammar” organized by Imke Mendoza and Barbara Sonnenhauser in Salzburg in April 2014, at which both Tilman Berger and I gave keynote lectures. (Tilman’s was entitled “How to discuss morphology ideologically?” and concerned with Czech purism, cf. Berger, 2014.) However, my lecture “Serbo-Croatian and the ideology of separateness” concentrated on only one side of the debate, whereas this paper now looks at both sides.

In the context of this paper, the term *ideology* is understood in a more political sense than the discipline-internal “language ideologies” described e.g. by Kroskrity (2004), as a set of general beliefs that guide perception, description, and research on language by providing pre-assembled hypotheses. As such, this is not a bad thing. However, a follower of an ideology can be tempted to overlook facts if they contradict the ideology, or even to create (and believe in) counterfactual evidence to support it. As we will see, some specialists in Serbo-Croatian linguistics have indeed fallen for this temptation. Among (socio-)linguistic ideologies, one can distinguish between those that stress (and often exaggerate) the commonalities between language varieties, which I will call *ideologies of togetherness*, and those that stress (and often exaggerate) the differences between language varieties, which I will call *ideologies of separateness*. I prefer these slightly laborious terms over political terms like *unionism* vs. *separatism* because linguistic ideologies are independent of the political situation (e.g. there nowadays is no point in Croatian ‘separatism’ because Croatia is an independent country, but the linguistic ‘ideology of separateness’ still prevails).

After giving a brief introduction to the current state of the Serbo-Croatian language question (section 2), I will first discuss the ideologies of togetherness (section 3) and then the ideologies of separateness, which arose as a reaction to them (section 4).

2 The Serbo-Croatian Language Question

I have already shown in Bunčić (2008a: 92-94) that texts written in the national varieties of Serbo-Croatian are as similar to each other as texts in the national varieties of English, German, or Portuguese, whereas closely related but separate languages like Czech and Slovak, Bulgarian and Macedonian, Swedish and Norwegian, or German and Luxembourgish show significantly more differences. The crucial point is that in texts written in, say, Standard Croatian of Croatia and Standard Serbian of Serbia the vast majority of the words is identical, whereas even in closely related languages around 50% or more of the words in a parallel text will be different (even if the translator has been explicitly asked to leave words unchanged wherever this is possible, according to Ammon’s (1995: 6, 9-11) proposal). This is why, in sociolinguistic terms, Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, and Montenegrin are classified as varieties

of a single pluricentric language, whereas Czech and Slovak or Bulgarian and Macedonian are treated as separate ausbau languages.

While this is a purely synchronic classification, there are diachronic reasons for this difference. When the standard varieties of Czech and Slovak were developed, their codifiers chose different dialects: Jan Hus, Josef Jungmann and others based the Czech standard variety on the Central Bohemian dialects (Svejkovský, 1984: 323), whereas Ľudovít Štúr and others based the Slovak standard variety on the Central Slovak dialects. By contrast, all the standard varieties of German are based on the Saxon chancery language as used in the Luther Bible, with only relatively minor influences from the local (Austrian, Swiss, Lower German, etc.) dialects on the respective national varieties (mainly in the form of a few interdialectal loanwords and distinctive accents in pronunciation). Similarly, all the standard varieties of English are ultimately based on the dialects spoken in and around London during the Middle English period. This is also the situation in Serbo-Croatian. The dialect continuum under the roof of the Serbo-Croatian standard varieties encompasses three or four major dialect groups (*nar(j)ečja*: Štokavian, Kajkavian, Čakavian, and, controversially, Torlak), of which the largest one, Štokavian, is further subdivided into Old-Štokavian and Neo-Štokavian on the one hand and into Ekavian, Ijekavian, and Ikavian dialects on the other hand. However, all the standard varieties are based on only one subgroup, the Neo-Štokavian-Ijekavian group, because both Ljudevit Gaj (for “Illyrian”/Croatian) and Vuk Karadžić (for Serbian) chose this dialect group as the basis for their standardization projects.

While the original basis for all the Serbo-Croatian standard varieties were the Neo-Štokavian-Ijekavian dialects (also called the East Herzegovinian dialects), Serbia in the course of the 19th century adopted the “Ekavian pronunciation” (“ekavski izgovor”). That is, the basis of the standard variety was still Vuk Karadžić’s codification, but a single variant was changed, namely the reflex of Proto-Slavic **ě* was turned from *ije/je* to *e*, based on the Ekavian dialects spoken in Serbia. Other features of the Šumadija-Vojvodina dialects spoken in Serbia (e.g. the loss of [x], the instr./loc. pl. in *-i* rather than *-ima*, or the 3pl ending *-du*, cf. Neweklowsky, 2002: 445) were not adopted. Moreover, the standard varieties of Serbian used in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Croatia still have *ije/je* for **ě*. Consequently, the distinction between Ekavian and Ijekavian separates the Serbian standard variety of Serbia from the other Serbian standard varieties, not Serbian from Bosnian, Croatian, and Montenegrin.

A heatedly debated question is what happened to the Serbo-Croatian language around 1991, when Yugoslavia broke apart. Some linguists (e.g. Radovanović, 2003; Rehder, 1998) have come to the conclusion that the language also broke apart, splitting into two (Serbian and Croatian), three (plus Bosnian) or four (plus Montenegrin) different languages – just like Latin split up into Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Romanian, etc. Others suppose that nothing happened to the language itself – either because the Serbo-Croatian language never really existed (e.g. Auburger, 1999) or because it continues to exist as a language “linguistically” (e.g. Kordić, 2010), although its standard varieties have come to be regarded as languages “politically” (e.g. Thomas, 1994; Bugarski, 2000; Alexander, 2003).

3 Ideologies of Togetherness

3.1 The Illyrian Movement

When building a standard language, the first function it has to fulfil is the unifying function (cf. Garvin & Mathiot, 1960: 785f.). Consequently, ideological approaches to Serbo-Croatian linguistic unity have a long tradition. One of the oldest headwords for this is *Illyrian*. Iovine (1984) has shown that it goes back to 17th/18th-century concepts of a language for South Slavs of all religious denominations. As such, the term *Illyrian language* was used by Croatian Glagoljaši, Orthodox Serbs, and Bulgarian Catholics alike to refer to the Church Slavonic

language, whose varieties were converging considerably due to the influence of Meletij Smotryč'kyj's 1619 grammar and the norms of Russian Church Slavonic. However, *Illyrian* could also signify the popular language (cf. “jezik slaveno-ilirički izgovora bosanskoga” [“Slaveno-Illyrian language of Bosnian pronunciation”], Iovine, 1984: 108) or the Slaveno-Serbian literary variety (cf. “Illiričesko-slaveno-Serbskij jazyk” [“Illyrian-Slaveno-Serbian language”], *ibid.* 104), so that contemporaries distinguished between “literary Illyrian” and “vulgar Illyrian” (*ibid.* 117). Thus, the Illyrian Movement of the 1830s and 1840s did not really advocate anything new when they advanced the Neo-Štokavian(-Ijekavian) dialect as the basis for a common “Illyrian” language.

It has often been stated that the Illyrian Movement, though originally aiming at all South Slavs (Lehfeldt, 2014: 1460), was ultimately successful only among the Croats (e.g. Thomas, 1988: 18), by uniting all the literary traditions of Croatia-Slavonia-Dalmatia, whereas the Slovenes and the Serbs kept their own literary standards, and the inclusion of speakers of South-East Slavic dialects was a preposterous idea anyway. This is only partially true, however. Ljudevit Gaj's choice of a Štokavian-Ijekavian dialect basis in 1836, and thus essentially of the same dialect that Vuk Karadžić had been advocating as the basis for the new Serbian standard since 1814, had the inevitable consequence that the modern Croatian and Serbian (and Bosnian and Montenegrin) standard varieties effectively share the same grammar and phonology, so that differences between the varieties are restricted to the lexicon (and to limited areas of pragmatics and orthography).

Furthermore, an element of the Illyrian language reform that is often only treated in a different context was very successful: the *Gajica* (i.e. the Latin alphabet with ⟨č⟩, ⟨š⟩, ⟨ž⟩, etc.). Its adoption for Slovenian in 1847 was “the sole victory of the Illyrian Movement in the formation of the Slovene literary language” (Herrity, 2014: 1437), and its introduction to Serbian had a lasting effect: While, according to the data of the National Library of Serbia collected in Bunčić (2020), only 1.7 % of the Serbian books printed in Serbia from 1800 to 1913 were in the Latin alphabet, in the interwar period (1919-1940) the share of the Latin alphabet rose to 10.8 %, and during Socialist Yugoslavia (1946-1991) with a share of 55.4 % more Serbian books were printed in the Latin alphabet than in Cyrillic, reaching the annual maximum of 65 % in 1988. During the nationalist conflicts of the 1990s, the percentage of Latin decreased again but has since then been relatively stable between 40 % and 50 %. Moreover, in the linguistic landscape the percentage of the Latin alphabet on Serbian-language signs in Serbia nowadays is 62 %, and in the Republika Srpska even 76 % (Pejović, 2019: 57; both numbers are averages across small, middle, and big towns and across main streets and side streets, based on an analysis of a total of 5,225 signs). Not even the Bosnian War and the Bosniaks' struggle for an independent linguistic identity seriously challenged the Illyrian *Gajica*: A reintroduction of the Arabic script is, in spite of a few attempts (cf. Schlund, 2020: 392-393), out of the question, and more low-threshold approaches at an orthographic ‘Islamization’ within the Latin alphabet, e.g. by replacing some of the Illyrian graphemes with Turkish alternatives (which might result in spellings like ⟨Saravevo⟩ or ⟨Višegrad⟩), were never even proposed.

3.2 ‘Serbo-Croatism’

When the use of the ethnonym and glottonym *Illyrian* was prohibited by the Austro-Hungarian authorities in 1843, the movement for linguistic convergence was not over. A visible sign of this is the Vienna Agreement of 1850, in which some Serbian and Croatian intellectuals (and the Slovene Franz Miklosich) agreed on a few common guidelines for a Serbo-Croatian standard language. Most telling about the authors' mindset is the first sentence, in which they state as an obvious fact “that one nation needs to have one literacy” (“da *jedan* narod treba *jednu* književnost da ima”, Kukuljević et al., 1850; Commission, 1853: V). Note that the widely circulated argument that the authors of the agreement could not agree on what to call their common language (e.g. Greenberg, 2004: 27; Gröschel, 2009: 11) is false. They were

together in Vienna because most of them were tasked by the government with creating a political-juridical terminology for the South Slavs of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In the forewords to this terminology, which was published in 1853 (containing the Vienna Agreement on pp. V–VIII), Dimitrija Demeter used the terms “hrvatsko-srbsko narječje” (“Croato-Serbian dialect”, Commission, 1853: III) and “jugoslavenski jezik” (“Yugoslav language”, *ibid.* IV), and Božidar Petranović even wrote about a “срб-рватски народъ” (“Serb-Croat nation”, *ibid.* XI) as a matter of course.

This movement was directed at a mutual understanding across the boundaries of religious denominations, based on the belief that Serbs and Croats are “one nation” in the sense of the mid-19th century. The idea that “Serbo-Croatism”, as Auburger (1999) claims, was (or is) an ideology aimed against the Croats and their right of linguistic self-determination is, as Gröschel (2009: 81) aptly states, a “conspiracy theory” (“Verschwörungstheorie”). Much of the practical work on creating a Croatian standard variety based on principles laid out by Vuk Karadžić was in fact carried out by the so-called “Croatian Vukovites” (“hrvatski vukovci”) in the latter half of the 19th century (cf. Lehfeldt, 2014: 1462-1463).

3.3 ‘Yugoslavism’

During the catastrophe of the First World War, which had been started by Austria-Hungary’s declaration of war against Serbia, many Croats, Serbs, and Slovenes understandably longed for peaceful cooperation. Most prominently, Croatian nationalist Ante Trumbić demands a common state for Croats, Serbs, and Slovenes. As a result, in July 1917 the representatives of these peoples signed the Corfu Declaration, which stated “that this our three-named nation is one and the same in blood, in language, in the common vital interests of its national condition and of the general development of its moral and material life” (“да је овај наш троимени народ један и исти, по крви, по језику, по заједничким животним интересима свога националног опстанка и свестраног развитка свога моралног и материјалног живота”, Trumbić & Pašić, [1917] 2010-2018). Note that this “three-named nation” includes not only Croats and Serbs but also Slovenes. When the desired Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was established after the war, the natural consequence of this ideology was the definition of its official language in article 3 of the constitution of 1921 as “српско-хрватско-словеначки” (“Serbo-Croato-Slovenian”). Needless to say, this was pure ideology, since there is no doubt that Slovenian of course was and remains a separate language, but this definition provided the government with a legitimation for communicating in Serbian even with its Slovenian subjects.

The centralism of interwar Yugoslavia led to increased resistance against Serbian hegemony among Croats and Slovenes, and during the Second World War, the fascist Independent State of Croatia was established, which fortified the ethnic and linguistic differences between Croats and Serbs with a racist ideology. However, the national self-consciousness of the various peoples of Yugoslavia was also used by Tito’s Communists, who granted them self-determination. Consequently, the post-war Yugoslavia at first had four official languages: Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, and Macedonian.¹

Then, however, a new tendency towards linguistic unity set in again, which culminated in the Novi Sad Agreement of 1954. It states that “The popular language of the Serbs, Croats, and Montenegrins is one language” (“Narodni jezik Srba, Hrvata i Crnogoraca jedan je prominent difference between the standard varieties of Serbia and Croatia as well as the two alphabets, declaring that both “pronunciations” and both alphabets “have equal rights”

¹ These languages were not explicitly named in the federal constitution; instead, article 65 of the constitution of 1946 simply stated that federal laws would be published “in the languages of the people’s republics” (“на језицима народних република”, FNRJ [1946] 2007-2020), and the constitutions of the constituent republics mentioned Serbian and Croatian separately (cf. Gröschel, 2009: 346).



Figure 1. Clipping of the title page of *Oslobođenje* of 21 April 1952 (from *Oslobođenje*, 2018: 11)

“ravnopravna su”, Andrić et al., [1954] 2007-2016). Thus, for the first time Serbo-Croatian is essentially defined as a pluricentric language (although the sociolinguistic terminology to describe this would only be developed in the 1960s, cf. Ammon, 1995: 42-49). And during the following decades, by acknowledging the existence of two other varieties (the ones used in Bosnia-Herzegovina and in Montenegro) under the term *književnojezični* (or *-čki*) *izraz* ‘standard-language expression’ and by exploring the differences linguistically, the official definition of Serbo-Croatian came closer to reality than all the approaches before that had described it either as one monolithic language or as two completely separate languages. *jezik*). However, rather than glossing over the differences between Serbian and Croatian, the agreement mentions the Ijekavian vs. Ekavian “pronunciation” (“izgovor”) as the most prominent difference between the standard varieties of Serbia and Croatia as well as the two alphabets, declaring that both “pronunciations” and both alphabets “have equal rights” (“ravnopravna su”, Andrić et al., [1954] 2007-2016). Thus, for the first time Serbo-Croatian is essentially defined as a pluricentric language (although the sociolinguistic terminology to describe this would only be developed in the 1960s, cf. Ammon, 1995: 42-49). And during the following decades, by acknowledging the existence of two other varieties (the ones used in Bosnia-Herzegovina and in Montenegro) under the term *književnojezični* (or *čki*) *izraz* ‘standard-language expression’ and by exploring the differences linguistically, the official definition of Serbo-Croatian came closer to reality than all the approaches before that had described it either as one monolithic language or as two completely separate languages.

Nonetheless, the urge to counter nationalist tendencies continued to influence the way language was described and used. Thus, the authorities tried to avoid calling the two main varieties *Serbian* and *Croatian*: In the agreement itself, they are merely referred to by their centres, Belgrade vs. Zagreb; in the following years they would also be called *istočna vari-*

janta ‘Eastern variety’ vs. *zapadna varijanta* ‘Western variety’ or even *srpskohrvatska varijanta* ‘Serbo-Croatian variety’ vs. *hrvatskosrpska varijanta* ‘Croato-Serbian variant’, and the language as a whole came to be officially referred to as *srpskohrvatski odnosno hrvatskosrpski jezik* ‘Serbo-Croatian or Croato-Serbian language’. Only towards the end of the 1960s would Croatian linguists succeed in rechristening their standard variety *hrvatski književni jezik* ‘Croatian literary language’. A prominent consequence of the “equal rights” ideology stipulated in the Novi Sad Agreement was the official script policy of the constituent republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since its population included both Serbs and Croats (and, from 1969/1971, *Muslimani* ‘Muslims’, with a capital M, as a third nation, cf. Gröschel, 2009: 183–184), the Bosnian authorities were especially careful to give both scripts equal rights. Consequently, periodicals like the newspaper *Oslobođenje* at first seem to have printed every article in the alphabet preferred by the author (fig. 1) but were then for many years printed in Cyrillic and Latin on strictly alternating pages (and with the script of the title pages also alternating daily, see fig. 2). Another example is the school orthography for Bosnia and Herzegovina (Marković et al., 1972), in which the chapters were printed in alternating scripts (cf. Bunčić, 2016: 231f.). Note that this alternating policy, while at first glance looking similar to the present-day Bosnian trilingualism, concerned only the script, not lexical or other variation between the standard varieties, since according to the official definition Bosnia and Herzegovina had its own interethnic regional standard variety, the *bosansko-hercegovački književnojezični izraz* ‘Bosnian-Herzegovinian standard-language expression’.



Figure 2. Clippings of the title pages of *Oslobođenje* of 9 February 1984 and 21 May 1985 (from *Oslobođenje*, 2018: 53, 54)

3.4 After the Breakup of Yugoslavia: ‘Naški’

The wars of the 1990s created an atmosphere in which at least in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina the official position that Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian were separate languages was politically enforced, so that the mere use of the name of the common language, *Serbo-Croatian*, made someone a dissident. One such dissident is Snježana Kordić, who for many years has been fighting bravely for the notion that Serbo-Croatian (still) is a single pluricentric language and that Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin and Serbian are national varieties of this language. This view is also expressed by the thousands of signees of the *Deklaracija o zajedničkom jeziku* ‘Declaration on the common language’ (Abazović et al. 2017), although it does not specify a common name for the language, which is often colloquially referred to as *naški* ‘our language’.

There is no doubt that the sociolinguistic model of pluricentric languages corresponds better to reality than the sociolinguistic model of ausbau languages. However, the arguments provided in this intellectual struggle are not always based on empirical facts. Thus, Kordić

(2010: 78f.) approvingly quotes several Western linguists who claim that the differences between the Serbo-Croatian standard varieties are significantly smaller than the differences between the standard varieties of other pluricentric languages. Among them is Paul-Louis Thomas (2003: 314), who refers to the use of simple past vs. present progressive in British and American English and to the second-person pronouns in European and Latin American Spanish. However, while these are indeed grammatical differences that one might or might not evaluate as more important than the Serbian preference for the *da* construction instead of the infinitive, this claim on the basis of exactly one variant in each of the languages does not take other variants (especially lexical ones) into account or provide a way to balance variation on different language levels. As I have shown in Bunčić (2008a: 92-94), the differences between the Serbo-Croatian standard varieties are unequivocally too small to justify treating them as separate languages, but they are nonetheless considerable. Thus, for example, the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights among 525 translations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides only one English and one Spanish version, and indeed if one reads the English version one can hardly find any words or expressions that are distinctly British or American (apart from a few purely orthographic variants like *colour* in article 2; OHCHR, 1996-2021). Conversely, the differences between the Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin, and Serbian translations begin with the very first word of the title, ‘universal’, which is *opća* in the Bosnian and Croatian version but *opšta* in Serbian (and, for some reasons, *univerzalna* in Montenegrin, though *opšta* would of course have been an option here as well).

Gröschel (2003: 180f.; also cited by Kordić, 2010: 79) makes an even more far-reaching claim:

Zieht man das Engl. zum Vergleich heran, so sind sogar die Strukturkontraste zwischen *White English* und *Black English* in Großstädten im Norden der USA, wobei beide Sprachformen nur als Subvarianten der Variante *Amerikanisches Englisch* einzustufen sind, größer als diejenigen zwischen Kroat., Bosn(iak). und Serb.

(“If we draw on English for comparison, the structural contrasts even between *White English* and *Black English* in the major cities in the north of the USA, which have to be classified as mere subvarieties of the variety *American English*, are greater than the ones between Croatian, Bosnian/Bosniak, and Serbian.”)

However, here he mixes up standard and non-standard varieties: “Black English”, nowadays usually referred as *African American Vernacular English (AAVE)*, is not a standard variety of English at all. The fact that non-standard varieties (e.g. dialects) often differ from each other much more than standard varieties do, to the extent that dialects of the same language can sometimes be mutually incomprehensible, has nothing to do with the question of pluricentric languages. If we took non-standard varieties into account, then we would have to evaluate the differences between, say, Čakavian and Torlak dialects. This does not contribute to an assessment of the Serbo-Croatian language situation, because speakers of Čakavian and Torlak have standard varieties at their disposal that are so close to each other that they can communicate with each other without difficulty.

4 Ideologies of Separateness

While for the development of the idea of togetherness we had to dig deep into history, this is not necessary for separateness, because the experience that people in the village on the other side of the river speak a bit differently from the people in one’s own village is straightforward and does not need ideological support. Consequently, ideologies of separateness only developed as a response to notions of togetherness. The most prominent outburst of such an ideology was the language policy of the fascist Independent State of Croatia (1941-1945). The government used the means of a totalitarian dictatorship to impose its racist ideology on language:

Nikada u hrvatskoj povijesti politika nije tako duboko i opsežno iskorištavala državne i represivne mehanizme za nametanje i kontrolu jezične upotrebe (Kapetanović, 2018: 91).

(“Never in Croatian history have politicians exploited governmental and repressive mechanisms so profoundly and extensively to impose and control language use.”)

However, the ideological character of this language policy is so obvious and would require so many pages to do it justice that there is no point in treating it here. Instead, I would like to draw your attention to four elements of ideology that have been put forward since the 1970s.

4.1 Silić’s Tridialectal “Language as a Standard”

Every linguist knows Saussure’s distinction between *langue* and *parole*. On the basis of this, Eugenio Coseriu (1952) in an early paper (written in Montevideo, before he came to Tübingen University in 1963) developed his distinction between *sistema*, *norma* and *habla*. While *habla* corresponds to Saussure’s *parole*, *sistema* is described as a set of functional oppositions and rules of combination. For example, English orthography includes a set of grapheme-phoneme correspondences, which allow a phoneme chain like /ˈspi:k/ to be spelled as ⟨speak⟩, ⟨speek⟩, ⟨speke⟩, ⟨speac⟩, ⟨spique⟩, etc. (but e.g. *⟨spece⟩, *⟨spik⟩, *⟨speack⟩ are impossible due to the combination rules included in the *sistema*). In contrast to this, the *norma*, which takes up an intermediate position between Saussure’s *langue* and *parole* (Coseriu, 1952: 41f.), provides a choice from the options provided by the *sistema*: in this case, ⟨speak⟩ (ruling out the systematically correct spellings ⟨speek⟩, ⟨speke⟩, etc. as non-normative; but note the normative spelling of the noun ⟨speech⟩). By way of exception, the *norma* can also include elements that deviate from the *sistema* (as e.g. in ⟨debt⟩ for /ˈdet/ or ⟨Thames⟩ for /ˈtɛmz/).

Appropriating Coseriu’s terminology, Josip Silić (1996; cf. also Bunčić, 2008b: 237) proposed to distinguish between *jezik kao sustav* ‘a language as a system’ and *jezik kao standard* ‘a language as a standard’ and argues that this means that Croatian has a “tridialectal” standard variety:

Tako je podloga hrvatskoga jezika kao sustava jedan od štokavskih organskih idioma, a podloga hrvatskoga jezika kao standarda i taj štokavski organski idiom i drugi (kulturno-povijesno uvjetovani) organski idiomi (u prvom redu kajkavski i čakavski) (Silić, 1996: 189).

(“Thus the basis of the Croatian language as a system is one of the Štokavian organic idioms, but the basis of the Croatian language as a standard are both this Štokavian organic idiom and other [...] organic idioms (first of all, Kajkavian and Čakavian).”)

This is an obvious attempt to find a systematic specificity (rather than random specific variants, especially words) for Croatian. Such a systematic specificity is hard to find because the specifically Croatian dialects, Kajkavian and Štokavian, are not the basis of the Croatian standard variety. If this were different, if, for example, Standard Croatian was based on a Čakavian dialect, then the differences between Standard Croatian and any Štokavian standard variety would indeed be so numerous that sociolinguists would classify this Standard Croatian as a separate ausbau language. However, there are fewer Kajkavisms in the Croatian standard variety than Anglicisms. Yet Silić includes Kajkavian in the basis of Croatian “as a standard”, whereas he does not include English. This is a typical example of ideology in linguistic theory, which in this case aims at representing Croatian as systematically more different from Serbian than it actually is.

4.2 Brozović’s Central South Slavic “Diasystem”

The term *diasystem* was originally introduced by Uriel Weinreich (1954) for a graphical representation of constants and variables across dialects. Coseriu ([1973] 1988: 283) transferred

the term from a mere instrument of dialectological analysis to a sociolinguistic notion, denoting the entirety of the diatopic, diastratic and diaphasic varieties of a language. Since each variety is a *langue* in Saussure's sense and therefore a linguistic system, a diasystem in Coseriu's sense is a system of systems, describing the variation within a language along its various axes of variation.

Dalibor Brozović (1970: 14), referring to Coseriu, redefined *diasystem* as any abstract set of varieties, which can apply not only on the level of a language but also on higher levels up to a whole genetic family of languages. This way he solved the problem that, especially when talking about grammar, it very often makes sense to include all the varieties of Serbo-Croatian at once because many specifics of grammar are exactly the same for Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin and Serbian. So instead of calling the entirety of all the Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin and Serbian varieties a *langue*, he calls them a *diasystem*, which in his interpretation does not say anything about its linguistic status – although in Coseriu's sense a diasystem encompasses only varieties belonging to the same language. However, all the South Slavic languages from Slovenian to Bulgarian form a single dialect continuum, in which the only linguistic criterion for singling out only the “Central South Slavic” dialects is the fact that their speakers switch to Standard Serbo-Croatian in formal situations. In other words, one would not speak of the “Central South Slavic diasystem” if it was not a single language. Consequently, Brozović's rechristening of *langue* as “diasystem” and *Serbo-Croatian* as “Central South Slavic” is another example of ideology in linguistic theory, which aims at reserving the term *langue* for a lower level of abstraction (a single national variety) and avoiding it on the level of language in the traditional sense.

4.3 Babić's “Language Level”

This leads to the question of what *langue* means. Brozović (2002: 3) argued in a later paper:

Isto je tako nemoguće nijekati da ono što su u kabinetskom smislu varijante standardne novoštokavštine funkcionira za nacionalne kolektive koji se njima služe, posve jednako kao što za sve druge iste takve kolektive funkcioniraju njihovi standardni jezici, pa zato za narode na srednjojužnoslavenskome prostoru to i jesu njihovi standardni jezici.

(“Similarly it is impossible to deny that that which in the scientific sense are varieties of Standard New Štokavian fulfils exactly the same functions for the national communities using them as do standard languages for all other similar communities, and therefore for the peoples on the Central South Slavic area these are their standard languages.”)

This of course is a *non sequitur*: From the fact that something has the same function as something else it does not follow that the two are identical. (For example, *but* and *however* clearly fulfil the same function in a sentence, but they are still two different words.) Stjepan Babić, however, argued as early as 1970:

Ako i govorimo o hs. [= hrvatskosrpskom] standardnom jeziku, što je po mojem mišljenju neopravdano jer takva jezika nema, onda valja naglasiti da je to nekonkretan jezik, i da mu je na hijerarhijskoj ljestvici mjesto za stupanj više nego što ga imaju slavenski standardni jezici. Dakle tzv. hrvatskosrpski standardni jezik na istoj je razini na kojoj bi bio i čehoslovački standardni jezik ili bugarskomakedonski standardni jezik, kad bi tko baratao takvim pojmovima (Babić, 1970: 135).

(“Even if we speak of a Croato-Serbian standard language, which in my view is unjustified because there is no such language, it has to be stressed that this is a non-concrete language and that hierarchically it is on a higher level than the Slavic standard languages. Therefore, the so-called Croato-Serbian standard language is on the same level as a Czecho-Slovak or Bulgaro-Macedonian language would be if anybody made use of such a notion.”)

This is a very limited view of the existence of variation in languages. The existence of several different standard varieties does not preclude the “concrete” existence of the language as a

whole (cf. e.g. English, German, Arabic). The claim that the varieties of Serbo-Croatian are just as far apart as Czech and Slovak or Bulgarian and Macedonian is simply not true. Clearly, this is another example of linguistic ideology, although in this case it is not even based in any linguistic theory.

4.4 Marojević's "Serbs all and everywhere"

When scholars like Dobrović, Kopitar, Miklosich and Šafařík began to study Serbo-Croatian texts, they considered all Štokavian dialects to be genetically Serbian, based on the Romantic identification of language and nation propagated by Herder (1787: e.g. 18). In the same spirit, Vuk Karadžić ([1836] 1849) in his famous and much disputed treatise "Srbi svi i svuda" ("Serbs all and everywhere") called all the speakers of Štokavian dialects *Serbs*, which entailed the identification of Bosnian Muslims as 'Muslim Serbs' (or "zakona Turskoga" ["of Turkish religion"], *ibid.* 2),² of Štokavian Croats as "Serbs of Roman confession" ("Srbi zakona Rimskoga", *ibid.* 3), of Čakavian speakers as the only 'real' Croats (*ibid.* 7), and of Kajkavians as 'actually' (i.e. linguogenetically) being Slovenians (*ibid.*). Needless to say, by the end of the 20th century, modern (socio-)linguistics had long overcome this misconception from the Romantic period.

Serbian nationalists like the linguist Radmilo Marojević (1991), however, take Vuk's writings at face value and claim that all the Bosniaks, Montenegrins and the majority of the Croats are actually Serbs. In their *Slovo o srpskom jeziku* (Bojić et al., 1998), they define:

Са етничким границама српскога народа подударају се језичке границе српског језика (штокавског наречја).

("The ethnic borders of the Serbian people are identical to the linguistic borders of the Serbian language (the Štokavian dialect).")

Такозвани хрватски књижевни језик јесте загребачка варијанта српског књижевног језика. [...] С обзиром на несклад између формалног имена и стварне припадности, такозвани 'босански књижевни језик' јесте сарајевска варијанта српског књижевног језика.

("The so-called Croatian standard language is the Zagreb variant of the Serbian standard language. [...] With respect to the incongruity between its formal name and its actual affiliation, the so-called 'Bosnian standard language' can only be regarded as the Sarajevo variant of the Serbian standard language.")

In contrast to Vuk, these Serbian nationalists have an obvious political aim, namely the reconquest of Croatian, Bosnian, and Montenegrin territories for a Greater Serbia. What their ideology does not take into account, however, is that, in contrast to linguistic facts, ethnicity is a purely subjective category. Since in the *Slovo o srpskom jeziku* there is an 'objective' ethnicity that seems to exist even if people do not consider themselves to be a part of this ethnicity, we can only conclude that *ethnicity* here is a euphemism for *race*. These writings therefore have to be classified as a racist ideology that pretends to be based on the writings of Vuk Karadžić and thus abuses Vuk's reputation.

5 Conclusion

Political convictions are a necessity. Support for the self-determination of a nation or for the peaceful cooperation between nations is equally honourable. However, as we have seen, it is not advisable to let such convictions guide one's research. While this paper might at first

² In the 19th century, a few Bosnian Muslims indeed self-identified as Serbs (as mentioned by Vuk, [1836] 1849: 8) or Croats of Muslim faith, although primarily they had a strong 'Bosniak' identity (cf. Malcolm, 1996: 152). Apart from that, the Serbo-Croatian-speaking Muslims were in the 19th century also often identified simply as "Turks" (cf. Gröschel, 2009: 178f.; Vuk, [1836] 1849: 2).

glance read like an accusation against all the linguists who have made mistakes under the influence of the ideology they adhered to, this was not my intention. Instead, it is meant as a warning against a trap that we as sociolinguists, who are by definition interested in the social and political role of language, are especially inclined to fall into.

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