



PRIKAZI KNJIGA – BOOK REVIEWS – BUCHBESPRECHUNGEN

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1. Introduction

This book of proceedings, one of two volumes, brings together thirteen articles presented at the international conference entitled Standard Languages and Sociolects, organized by the Croatian Applied Linguistics Society (CALs) and held at the Center for Advanced Academic Studies (CAAS), University of Zagreb and the University of Dubrovnik from 18 to 20 April 2013. The aim set for the conference was to discuss the status and corpus of contemporary standard languages and sociolects, with specific focus on their relationship with urban and traditional dialects. The foci are clearly reflected in the topics of the Volume and its organization. The volume contains articles that deal with standards, norms and varieties addressed from the viewpoints of overt and covert attitudes, policy, teaching, and translation practice.

The contributions address four groups of issues: stability and change at the intersection of the standard and other varieties; language policy and attitudes toward languages in relation to the status of L1 and L2; bilingualism and multilingualism and its verbal component; translation solutions reaffirming and/or establishing the norm.

What makes the Volume especially valuable is a focus on these research questions from the point of view of the contemporary Croatian and Slovenian sociolinguistic situations which are in turn related to the current situation in Europe. All of the papers illustrate tensions between attitudes, policy and practice, including issues such as official and personal views of the standard, dialect leveling, policies towards the standard as a teaching norm, multilingualism as a policy vs. actual for-



eign language learning and norms in translation.

In their insightful and extremely well-focused preface to the volume, the editors argue that the difference between ascribing values, policy and actual practice is analogous to the diversity-relativity conflict evident in the field of cultural policy.

2. Survey of chapters

The first strand, focusing on stability and change at the intersection of the standard and other varieties from a sociolinguistic and dialectological point of view, brings together three articles. In his paper *Dialect electrified or horse-drawn: Popular music as a form of (un)conscious language policy* Ivo Žanić discusses the role of local dialects and the standard in Croatian popular music lyrics. To provide a fuller introduction to the general issue, the author first focuses around the two opposing “dogmas” (p. 14) that have defined the relationship between the dialects and the standard languages in Croatian linguistics, one being the stand favouring the role of dialects in the formulation of the standard, and the other a gradual retreat of the dialects as a result of both the influence of English and the domination of the standard. The two theses, of the standard language being “permanently open” and “permanently closed”, are seen as irreconcilable and are put to the test. Žanić does this by discussing two opposing positions used to define and establish mutual relationships between dialects and standard language. His choice and treatment of the three words traditionally demonstrating the three main points of newly produced types of contacts among varieties and consequential normativist misunderstanding, *vritnjak*, *fešta* and *norijada*, vividly demonstrates a conceptual disorientation on both of these opposing sides, as a textbook case of the standard language’s “openness” and of its bottom-up “enrichment”. He argues both for the inadequacy of the traditional explanation in terms of normative categories, like ‘stylistically marked’ and for the advantages of approaching the issue from a sociolinguistic viewpoint, arguing that socio-economic developments have produced new relations and hierarchies of dialects, both between them, and in relation to the supposedly neutral, supraregional national standard. The analyses of the latter kind he proposes both provide a valuable description of the processes, and serve as well-founded accounts of these linguistic phenomena.

Finally, to illustrate the importance of introducing the category of speakers’ perception into any serious discussion about interactions between standard and non-standard varieties, Žanić analyses media interviews with two prominent Croatian front men whose bands play songs with lyrics largely written in their local dialect as important initiators and protagonists of new linguistic processes. By presenting



their self-reflexive view of their own discourse practices, Žanić readdresses the abovementioned dogmas on standard vs. dialect dichotomy by exemplifying the arguments they rest on, and strongly argues for a socially situated linguistics, where the etic dichotomies (standard – dialect; native–foreign; stylistically marked – unmarked) are reevaluated from an emic perspective.

Monika Kalin Golob's article *Sociolects and media Language: Modernity, attractiveness, democratisation and marketisation* focuses on the way in which varieties have been treated in Slovenia in light entertainment shows, informative programs and advertisements. Similar to Žanić, her analysis methodologically lets the evidence and conclusions follow 'from the horses' mouths' by presenting an analysis of light entertainment broadcasts on Slovene public television from the 1960s to the present, plus in-depth interviews with the editors of these programs. Examples from real language use in the media and the attitudes towards it voiced by the key participants in its implementation show that, despite the influence of external and internal standardizing pressures led by the deep-rootedness of the attitude about the 'correctness' of public language and the 'incorrectness' of personal speech, different varieties are increasingly (indeed at times even excessively) present in the media, as a result of democratization and marketization, not only in light entertainment programs, but also increasingly in the informative programs. The latter is ascribed to making them more watchable if they are less rigid, and imbuing them with a sense of dramatization increasingly desired by the viewing public. Kalin Golob thus uses her findings to call for a revision of the theoretical stance that sees the standard language as the foundation of media communication and expects non-standard deviations to occur only as stylemes. The formality or informality of the speaking situation, i.e. public or non-public circumstances as the defining element of language variation, the author argues, no longer plays the most decisive role in the selection of language variety in all texts and text genres.

In their article entitled *Dialects in and around small urban centres in the northern Čakavian area: The current situation* Silvana Vranić and Sanja Zubčić start from the observation that traditional rural dialectology has not had much success in dealing with the phenomenon of variability (i.e. the variation of a particular dialect) and present a longitudinal analysis of dialect change in small urban centers in the northern Croatian Adriatic area aimed at providing support for a number of observations recorded over their 6-year long period of study stemming from the period when these still had the status of dialect points. Their analysis of varieties spoken on the islands and towns of Mošćenice, Cres, Veli Lošinj, Mali Lošinj and Osor is well-supported by data on the historical developments which have influenced the changes, with special emphasis on the role of Italian influence during WW2 occu-

pation. These and other developments, presented in great detail for individual localities, are argued to have had a profound effect on the sociolinguistic situation. The authors provide concrete examples illustrating these, as well as the current state-of-affairs. Their analysis reveals tendencies that are in many respects similar to those in the “big” cities. The study is successful in showing that even these small urban centres exhibit the common characteristics of urban varieties, including dialect leveling by eliminating the dominant distinctive features (that are in a certain sense felt to be stigmatized) and by preserving some common traits. In this respect, they call for a reexamination of the traditional dialectal treatment of these varieties, which does not recognize their variability or hybrid structure.

The second strand of papers tackles issues of language policy (with regard to standards and multilingualism) and its relation to foreign language teaching. It opens with Nataša Pirih Svetina’s article *Teaching one or more standards? Teaching Slovene – what, where, and for whom?* which focuses on teaching Slovene as part of bilingual education in Slovene communities in Italy and Austria. The author aptly and insightfully relates the problem to the standing issue of the nature and definition of the standard/literary language, the attitudes towards it, and the related practice. The author poses theoretically important questions and offers a lexical, semantic, syntactic, and morphological analysis and comparisons of various teaching materials to demonstrate the coexistence of at least three varieties of standard Slovene found in the Slovene language teaching practice, two of which are geographically peripheral, originate from urban regional centers and are primarily used in the Slovene minority schooling systems in Italy and Austria, from where they influence the teaching practice of Slovene language in their respective geographical regions. The author aptly demonstrates that the Slovene language taught there differs from the Central Slovene standard and addresses a host of social, sociolinguistic and policy-related issues raised by the value ascribed to Central Slovene and the negative attitudes ascribed to the regional standards which she relates to some long-term consequences such as the speaker’s lack of self-confidence and spontaneity, as well as their negative attitude towards language contact. Finally, Pirih Svetina considers some possible solutions and necessary steps to rectify this by arguing for the priority of a ‘user-oriented’ approach in teaching Slovene, with openness and tolerance being the desired goals, rather than the achievement of the standard language as a value in itself.

Sanda Lucija Udier’s paper *Positioning the Croatian language by regulating Croatian as L2* is a very practically-minded study focusing on the positioning of the Croatian language in relation to other European and world languages. Starting from legal conditions as the paramount extralinguistic variable in this respect, the



author calls for the legal regulation of teaching Croatian language as a second language. Based on an overview of approaches to the stands of foreign learners towards it as L2, overlooked by native speakers but crucial to foreigners, especially in the light of EU accession and membership, the author thus sees the introduction of a national language strategy as a necessary prerequisite and argues these should be directed in two ways – by ensuring regulatory support for CL2 in Croatian society and the development of legal provisions implemented in all Croatian institutions. Her in-depth description and analysis of the current legal state-of-art sheds further valuable light on the issue and represents the added value of the paper. On the issue of regulatory support, she considers the state of affairs in this respect and finds a lack of provisions regulating the use of CL in the Law on Science and Higher Education. Similarly, whereas she acknowledges the activities done regarding the promotion of CL2 by analyzing the activities of different Croatian ministries in this respect, she paints these as offering partial solutions to the problem(s) she adequately broaches and exemplifies. The value of the contribution thus also lies in a number of recommendations the author makes, based on a thorough examination and description of the state of affairs and concerning the current Croatian language policy.

Milica Gačić and Kristina Cergol Kovačević deal with multilingualism as policy and actual (teaching, speaking) practice in Europe. In their paper, *Multilingualism – English as a lingua franca and other second and foreign languages in Europe*, they compare the current situation in Croatia and the rest of Europe regarding foreign language learning and the position of English as a lingua franca in such an environment with the aim of determining whether political decisions, in addition to an increasing official multilingualism within European institutions, coupled with ICT and audio-visual media present in the lives of the European citizens, have influenced personal multilingualism (the actual usage of the second and third languages) in a positive way regarding the passive and active usage of those languages by analyzing a variety of European documents and using Eurobarometer studies. By relying on the findings showing that Europeans still hold bilingualism and multilingualism in high esteem, Gačić and Cergol Kovačević illustrate that multilingualism has been embraced as a policy on the level of attitudes across Europe and record a rise of English as a Lingua Franca. This is also reflected in an increasing trend of multilingualism in Croatia. Starting from the stand that success of a political decision depends on its successful implementation in formal education as well as in its presence in the lives of the speakers (by exposure to foreign languages through the media), the authors present, analyze and discuss data from the EU and CE documents and other publications in the light of the M+2 Barcelona goal of teaching at

least two languages from a very early age. The authors' analysis and comparison of these to the results of language skills tests shows these steps to be invaluable in fostering a positive attitude, crucial in the implementation of any political notion, and suggest that ever greater numbers of bilingual and multilingual speakers are to be expected in the EU in the future if one takes proper steps in promoting this.

In line with modern language learning theories which consider learner attitudes and beliefs towards foreign language learning to be among the key factors for successful language acquisition (Horwitz 1988, Rifkin 2000), the paper *Attitudes of Croatian learners towards learning English, German and Spanish in a formal environment* by Nives Vidak, Sandra Didović Baranac and Daniela Falkoni-Mjehović looks into the attitudes and beliefs of secondary school students in Croatia towards learning English, German and Spanish in a formal environment. The results of the study confirm that Croatian students in general have a very positive attitude towards learning foreign languages but most likely due to its global popularity find English more enjoyable, easier to learn, speak and understand than the other two languages. Since it has been acknowledged that attitudes and beliefs are affected by the sociocultural context and therefore vary from one learning environment to another and from country to country (Dornyei, Csizer, and Nemeth 2006), this article makes a valuable contribution to the study of the specific situation in Croatia's learning environment. Due to this and similar research better understanding of the learning process can be achieved and more effective teaching forms can be found thus attributing to the achievement of the desired learning results.

Renata Šamo, Ida Ćurić and Alenka Mikulec's paper *A contribution to reconsidering the role of slang and colloquialisms in contemporary foreign language teaching* presents the study whose aim was to gain insight into the knowledge of Croatian university students of slang expressions and colloquialisms in the context of EFL reading, and their perceived use of them. The authors justify their research with the fact that slang and colloquialisms are socially important and consequently argue that due to the fact that learners around the globe are now exposed to the different styles and registers of English through various media, such items should be included in EFL classrooms. The study was based on the hypotheses that participants would score better on AE reading tasks than on British English reading tasks; that they would be more familiar with AE slang and colloquialisms; and that they would perceive that they use them more frequently in AE. Each hypothesis was confirmed, indicating that the AE variety prevails in this population, possibly because the participants were significantly more exposed to American English, since the self-reported exposure to American English and the number of films and serials in this variety was significantly higher than exposure to and the number of the



same materials in British English. However, the results have also pointed to the fact that students generally lack knowledge of slang and colloquial expressions. The value of this paper lies in the suggestion to reconsider the role of the slang and colloquial expressions in (E)FL teaching, especially due to its importance in popular media as part of young people's urban culture today.

The final paper in this strand *Half Thrust to Port: The potential of using The Mighty Ships series as a tool for the teaching of Maritime English vocabulary* written by Violeta Jurković addresses the importance of using authentic video materials in teaching Maritime English, a division of English for Specific Purposes. The author notes that although the role of documentaries and other authentic materials in the teaching of General English is recognized to have positive effects on overall language proficiency, student interest and motivation, in teaching Maritime English, however, video has merely been described as a useful resource for listening practice. Furthermore, to date, no research has been done with regard to the role of documentaries in ME classrooms. In her attempt to bridge that gap, the author analyses four episodes of the Discovery Channel documentary series *Mighty Ships*. The major criterion for the selection of episodes to be analysed was whether the content of each episode matched the course objectives of ME as defined by the 1995 International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch-keeping (STCW). The detailed analysis has shown that documentaries can be used for a variety of purposes in ME classroom, e.g. particular sections of the examined episodes are suitable for teaching, revising, or consolidating ME vocabulary in relation to a particular topic, but documentaries can also be used as tools to familiarize students with their future target community, i.e. the maritime industry. Apart from opening a new strand of research, this practically-minded paper also offers valuable guidelines that can be implemented in ME classrooms.

The next strand of papers in this book of proceedings deals with the verbal component of multilingual competence. In her paper entitled *Verbal fluency in late Croatian-English bilingual* Ivana Petrović presents a case study of two Croatian-English late bilingual speakers. Using qualitative and quantitative data from various sources (semistructured interviews, verbal fluency tasks, etc.) the author in her study focuses on semantic and phonemic verbal fluency in dominant and nondominant language and in bilingual and monolingual mode. The results indicate that both subjects produced considerably more exemplars for semantic fluency than for letter fluency. With regard to language modes, the subjects produced more items in Croatian monolingual mode than in English monolingual mode whereas in bilingual mode both of the subjects produced words primarily in Croatian.

In her interesting and well-focused paper *Matched guise technique revisited:*

The Zagreb case study Nada Županović Filipin studies the attitude of a representative sample of Zagreb high-school students towards the standard variety and urban varieties of Zagreb by applying a matched guise test. The results show that contrary to the expected results of the matched guise technique according to which members of a particular language community will rate speakers of the standard variety significantly higher in the dimension of social status, but much lower in the dimension of social solidarity, while the opposite will apply to speakers of the local variety, a part of the sample population in this study has rated the speaker of Standard Croatian much higher on solidarity than the speaker of the local variety, while both speakers were rated the same on status. The author thus throws a new light onto the matched guise technique as one of the most frequent sociolinguistic techniques used in empirical sociolinguistic research into attitudes towards urban speech by showing that in this area the matched guise technique achieves expected results only when used to examine smaller and linguistically homogenous environments, while results obtained in bigger and heterogeneous urban environments deviate from those expected due to the impact of certain sociolinguistic variables. In this particular case of Croatia's capital Zagreb whose speech community is marked by constant migration the results show that ratings of the speakers on solidarity differ significantly depending on the variety spoken by the respondents' parents.

The final strand in the book deals with norms in translation. The paper *From foot to meter: Rendering of culture-specific items in popular fiction translations from English to Croatian* by Snježana Veselica Majhut and Ivana Bašić investigates diachronic changes in norms with regard to the rendering of three groups of culture-specific items: units of measurement, titles and forms of address, and urban toponyms in a corpus of popular fiction texts translated from English into Croatian in two distinct periods of time (the early 1960s–1970s and the 2000s–2010s). Based on the results of their study the authors conclude that in translating the studied culture-specific items the convention in the early 1960s was to use exoticizing solutions, whereas the more recent convention, observed since the late 1970s, requires the use of assimilating solution types. Based on interviews conducted with translators and editors, the authors conclude that translators tend to retain cultural specificity when translating about distant and exotic cultures, whereas when translating from familiar cultures they give precedence to readability. The authors believe that this might have guided translators' decisions in the early 1960s, when translations from English were scarce and when, due to political and socio-cultural circumstances, English-speaking cultures were perceived as exotic. The study also points to some interesting conclusions on the operations of norms. The results, namely, indicate that before a predominant norm is established, a period of instabil-



ity can be observed, when inconsistency between different translation solutions is sometimes present even in a single text translated by one and the same translator.

In the final paper of the volume *Identifying translation-relevant information in legal texts* Alenka Kocbek observes that in translating legal texts it is essential to consider that legal language is embedded in a given legal system and that the translatability of legal texts directly depends on the relatedness of the legal systems involved in translation. The author therefore suggests that the source and the hypothetical target text established cultural patterns (referred to as *culturemes*) should be identified and compared with a view to determining overlappings and divergences. After that the prospective use of the text, i.e. the *skopos*, should be identified before drafting and finalizing the target text. The author particularly warns that, when drafting legal texts in lingua franca, nowadays mostly English, translators should be careful not to uncritically adhere to the norms and conventions of the Anglo-American legal culture which may be irrelevant to the legal transaction.

3. Concluding remarks

The common thread running through all papers presented in this volume are attitudes to languages and their varieties from the perspective of the Croatian and Slovenian context. As editors of this volume note, although a variety of discussions presented from different starting points is offered, they all seem to point to a single conclusion: while we are aware of a variety of languages and language varieties, coming to terms with this variety presents a problem since we have an inner need for a common system, be it a lingua franca, a teaching standard or a translation standard. By spanning theoretical approaches and practical implementations, this book of proceedings offers a valuable insight into a variety of issues in the fields of sociolinguistics, teaching and translation and promises to be a stimulating and engaging read especially to those interested in applied linguistics.

The book can be recommended for the following reasons: the well-focused and well-structured editors' introduction provides an excellent basis from which readers can assess the papers included; the volume as a whole presents a diverse and well-balanced assortment of research topics that those interested in applied linguistics will surely find inspiring and engaging, particularly since it combines different theoretical approaches and valuable practical guidelines that can be implemented in the teaching and translation practice.

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