Linguistic emancipation within the Serbian mental map: The implementation of the Montenegrin and Macedonian standard languages

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Abstract

This paper explores the striking similarity in the hesitant implementation of the new Macedonian and Montenegrin standards, which has taken unusually long in both cases. As will be shown, a comparative look at the two standardisation processes reveals parallels of language politics in Macedonia after 1944 and Montenegro after 2006. In both cases the implementation of the new standard is hesitant, slow, and shows policy shifts. A key conclusion of this paper is that this normative vacuum is possible because Serbian, as the traditional H-variety, is omnipresent in both countries. This observation however implies an optimistic outlook for Montenegrin since Macedonian standardisation today can be assessed as a success story, despite continuous contestation from neighbouring countries. The paper focuses on both differences and commonalities of the standardisation process in these two Yugoslav successor states.

1. Introduction

In the following I would like to go beyond the context of the four post-Serbocroatian languages BCMS (Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin, and Serbian) and compare two languages of which only one is a successor language of Serbo-Croatian, but which are tied to one another by the common experience of two 20th century Yugoslav states.

My point of departure for comparing the Montenegrin and Macedonian cases is the online publication of the so-called "*Deklaracija o zajedničkom jeziku*" on March 30th, 2017 by the NGO "Krokodil" (cf. *jezicinacionalizmi.com/deklaracija/*). The discussion triggered by the publication revolves around the question of perceived dominance of Serbian within the pluricentric model; and the relationship with Serbian shows interesting parallels between Montenegrin and Macedonian.

This Declaration on the common language had about 200 initial signatories, among them prominent representatives of post-Yugoslav civil society, and by July 2017, 8500 people had signed it online –most of them from Serbia and Western Europe. Nevertheless, sustainability seems minimal, since it does not formulate

concrete political propositions. Its very first sentence provides a highly negative assessment of the Post-Yugoslav language situation, focussing on the "negative societal, cultural and economic consequences of the political manipulation of languages",[1] among them segregation in the educational system in multiethnic regions like Bosnia-Hercegovina. Linguistic support of nation-building is stigmatised and even blamed for the failure of the Yugoslav idea.

Anyone traveling by car through the former Yugoslav countries today will be quick to notice the widespread vandalism, especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina or Kosovo, of bilingual street signs, one language being covered up, giving those public road signs an ethnonational form. Is this vandalism justified by the declaration of a common language? Does it contribute to resolving the conflict around Cyrillic roadsigns in Vukovar or pacifying minority conflicts? Can the extensive segregation of the population in Bosnia-Herzegovina be halted if one blurs cultural differences rather than approving them? How can this be reconciled with the European standards on minority rights that took so long to negotiate (cf. Barkijević 2014)?

2. The "Declaration on the common language" of March 30, 2017

What is most precarious about this collective declaration on a common language is, in the end, its proximity to ultra-nationalist Serbian positions. The pamphlet "*Slovo o srpskom jeziku*"[2] published in 1998 takes a position that could have been heard already in the early 19th century, namely that the pluricentrism so central to Yugoslavian or BCMS (Bosnian-Croatian-Montenegrin-Serbian) is actually purely Serbian.[3] This ambivalence between Serbian-national and Yugoslav-synthetic positions runs through the culture model of the proto-Yugoslav movement of the 19th century (cf. Wachtel 1998: 52). The pluricentric model thus has an implicit reading that is often beyond foreign linguists, but is called to mind immediately in the communicative memory of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina as a result of the wars of the 1990s. In doing so, the declaration reiterates the traditional discourse of those who use linguistic criteria to delegitimise or even deny the existence of neighbour nations.

In the interwar period, Macedonia and Montenegro find themselves in the same position from Belgrade's perspective, that is, as non-existent. The dynamic of the Tito-Yugoslav period then led to both being given republic status, even if only the emergence of Macedonia was underlined by a concrete language policy. The present-day Republic of Macedonia is witness to the fact that the top-down Macedonian nation-building focused on language that since 1944 led to a situation where Macedonia is no longer part of the Serbian mental map.[4] An anecdotal but quite significant marker for the longue durée effect of such spatial images is the weather report in the Serbian media. Maps both on television and in print media continue to transport a Serbian mental map that includes Kosovo, Montenegro, and the Bosnian

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[1] "Suočeni s negativnim društvenim, kulturnim i ekonomskim posljedicama političkih manipulacija jezikom i aktualnih jezičnih politika u Bosni i Hercegovini, Crnoj Gori, Hrvatskoj i Srbiji, mi, doljepotpisani, donosimi […]."

[2] Published by the "Fond istine o Srbima", online version cf. *svevlad.org.rs/srbistika/slovo.html*.

[3] This prompts Bulić to ask already in the title of his response to the Declaration, if the common language should in fact be called Serbian (Bulić 2017).

[4] For the Macedonian part of this map, cf. Trifunovic (2015).

Republika Srpska, but not the Republic of Macedonia,[5] which shows how a consistent language policy can have a stabilising effect on foreign relations.

The quantitative evaluation of Croatian linguistic purism by Peti-Stantić and Langston (2013), in which the authors demonstrate a broad acceptance of puristic xenophobic substitutions in Croatian society, points in the same direction: the statement "*U nastavi treba upotrebljavati samo riječi, izraze i gramatičke konstrukcije koji neupitno pripadaju čistom hrvatskom jeziku*" met with 83.4% approval in 2000 and 85.5% approval in 2005 (Peti-Stantić & Langston 2013: 239). That said, these findings also show significant differences with regard to the use of duplicates such as *delegat* vs. *izaslanik*, *avion* vs. *zrakoplov* or *muzika* vs. *glazba* (258ff).

3.   The term standard language and the discussion on the status of the BCMS languages

The question of whether we should describe the successor languages of Serbo-Croatian as one or four languages after 1991 has long split the expert community:6 proponents of formal linguistics focusing on examining grammatical structures argue that we are still dealing here with only one language that is spoken in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro. Two quite prominent South Slavists have published grammars of the BC(M)S languages (Alexander 2006, Thomas & Osipov 2012). Proponents of sociolinguistics on the other hand, insist on the consideration of user attitudes and the symbolic value of language and argue for the existence of four languages.

The discussion on BCMS should thus not be conducted using the imprecise term "language", but with the term "standard language", which has very specific defining characteristics. This intersection of sociopolitical and, at the same time, linguistic criteria makes it clear that both sides in the "one or four languages" debate have legitimate arguments.

A standard language must have some sort of norm (a dictionary or grammar) and an elaborated vocabulary, that is, it must be able to express the totality of modern knowledge. It is important to note that these two criteria are a matter of degree, that is, they can be developed. A look at the Internet encyclopaedia Wikipedia reveals how vigorous some small and minority languages such as Sorbian or Breton or dialects such as Plattdeutsch are today; they are developing their polyvalence step by step and every year several hundred new Wikipedia articles emerge in these languages. Dictionaries for Bosnian and Montenegrin exist today that would have been unthinkable 25 years ago.

In addition, however, there is a very important non-linguistic criterion for the definition of a language as a standard language, namely, its so-called obligatoriness, i.e. the binding nature of the standard. The rules of a standard language must be collectively accepted, and this usually exists alone in the modern territorial national-state with its monopoly on education and violence. This criterion leads, ultimately, to

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[5] Recent statements by the Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić regretting Serbian recognition of the Republic of Macedonia under its constitutional name, however, continue a post-colonial discourse on Macedonia; cf. http://meta.mk/en/dacic-serbia-made-a-mistake-by-recognizing-macedonia-under-its-constitutional-name/

[6] The best description of the BCMS issue is still: Alexander 2002-2003; historically: Naylor 1980.

the fact that it is not linguists and language politicians, but rather politicians and statesmen who decide on the status of languages.

The argument raised by laypeople on the mutual intelligibility of languages does not really play a role in the scholarly discussion on the standard language. And when we turn to our comparison of Macedonian and Montenegrin in what follows, we will see that both cases challenge the existing models of standard languages, because both languages took at least one or two decades to implement the new standard while at the same time the traditional social practice of diglossic bilingualism (Serbian + local vernacular) came to dominate referential and communicative functions.

3.1 The 'Pluricentric' model

In the 1980s, German linguistics developed the model of pluricentricity to describe the situation in the German-speaking countries (FRG/GDR, Austria and Switzerland), each of which has its own national centres and normative institutions.[7] Anyone who has ever read a menu in a Viennese restaurant knows of the small, largely lexical differences.

Transferring this model to the former Yugoslavia is problematic in several respects. On the one hand, the cultural differences in Yugoslav pluricentricity since the Middle Ages (Roman Catholic vs. Byzantine Orthodox christianisation of Croatia and Serbia and/or islamisation of Bosnia) are much more significant than in the German-speaking countries. This aspect is often (over)emphasized as culturally determinant by nationalists (up to and including the dichotomy "Europe vs. Balkans"); for our purposes it remains peripheral.

Above all, however, the implicit but indispensable prerequisite for pluricentrism, namely the commitment to (or at least the acceptance of) the common language in the individual national centres, is not given in the Yugoslav case. Therefore, the German sociolinguist Ulrich Ammon, as one of the leading scholars of pluricentrism has developed the model further to include the case of "divided languages" (Ammon 2005: 1539).

It is only possible to speak of a form of Serbo-Croatian pluricentrism for the period from 1850 to 1967. The year 1850 is considered to be the birth of Serbian-Croatian linguistic convergence, long before Yugoslavism became a political project; in 1967 Serbocroatian ended in the Croatian Declaration, which must be seen in the context of the liberalisation and renationalisation tendencies of Tito's Yugoslavia. The current linguistic situation is the long-term result of Tito's renationalisation policy, as it emerged in the second half of the 1960s, and developed into a "one republic-one nation-one language" ideology.

Serbo-Croatian, like Yugoslavism, has lost much of its legitimacy at least since the 1980s. The Serbo-Croatian question, that is, the language question, was extremely politicised in the 1960s-1980s, but it was certainly not the central reason behind the collapse of the Yugoslav state. Here one might ask whether an even more proactive linguistic and cultural policy in monarchist and later socialist Yugoslavia (i.e. 1918-1941 and 1944-1991) including, for example, a radical planned language ("*yugoesperanto*") that would have demanded compromises from all speakers involved would have

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[7] Cf. the exhaustive descriptions of the pluricentric variance in the German-speaking world (A–CH–D) by Ammon, Bickel & Ebner 2004.

overcome the long-standing duality between Cyrillic and Latin, might have saved the Yugoslav idea. Do we not see similar tendencies in the present-day existential crisis of the European Union, that is, the lack of common, supranational cultural and linguistic symbols the routine use of which might one day develop into a form of EU-European patriotism?[8]

4. Unimplemented standards?

In what follows, I will combine findings discussed in my monograph (Voß 2004) on the Macedonian standard-dialect continuum with impressions from an ERASMUS+ funded Staff Training in Montenegro in October 2016. It is important from the very beginning to be aware of differences and commonalities of the two cases and in general their basic comparability. I will first describe the similarities (a) and then list the differences (b).

(a) My working thesis is the striking similarity in the hesitant implementation of the new Macedonian and Montenegrin standards, which took (or is taking) between 10 to 20 years in both cases. How can a language variety as a top-down mechanism be declared a sovereign and official national language without even existing as such, that is, without meeting the classical criteria for a standard language as formulated by the structuralist Prague School in the late 1920s of possessing a normative variety and an elaborated vocabulary? How can I go shopping, how can my children be instructed at school and what do I read in the newspapers, if the variety launched by politicians is not yet available?

The answer seems to be a phenomenon made possible by South Slavic intercomprehension, that is, semi-communication: non-reciprocal language use as performed on Macedonian television when music or film stars from Serbia speak Serbian and the moderator or locals from Skopje speak Macedonian. The same phenomenon can be observed in the language choice of Macedonians of the older generation when addressed in Macedonian somewhere in Western Europe or in Belgrade or Zagreb, where they automatically answer in Serbo-Croatian (cf. Tomić 1992: 442ff). It seems that the strict diglossia as developed in the two Yugoslav states between H-variety (Serbo-Croatian) and L-variety (Macedonian) has brought Macedonians to restrict their national language to the level of a vernacular, in-group code.

This brings us to the second similarity: Both in Macedonia and in Montenegro the codification arises from a situation of clear dominance of Serbian or Serbo-Croatian respectively, and the persistence of this linguistic condition ensures functioning communication beyond any political disruption. The concept of habitus as developed by Pierre Bourdieu (cf. 1979) can help to make this plausible: Habitus is the appearance and performance of a person, including his/her lifestyle, language and dress in the social field. We should bear in mind that generations of schoolchildren in Macedonia have since 1913 been socialised linguistically in Serbian, with brief interruptions during the Bulgarian occupation periods in the two World Wars, when this socialisation took place in Bulgarian. The "Y-ish Big Brother", as Joshua Fishman (1993: 338) described the dominant neighbouring and closely related language, leads

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[8] For a more detailed comparison of the European Union and Yugoslavia cf. Voß 2008.

in this case to stabilisation and allows for a slow and gradual implementation of the new standard.

(b) Three important differences between the case studies need to be mentioned. First, there are the different political contexts: While the "First Congress Phenomenon" (Fishman 1993) in the Macedonian case took place in the period of High Stalinism, where positions deviant from the Party line were marginalised and eliminated, Montenegrin codification is taking place in a post-Yugoslav and democratic context that allows for pluralistic discussion and the formation of a radical and a moderate camp, one in Cetinje and one in Nikšić, respectively.

Secondly, there are differences concerning the linguistic and dialectal distinction ("Abstand") to Serbian, and it is insufficient to describe this relationship in both cases simply as successful intercomprehension. Montenegrin dialects are part of the Štokavian continuum and pass over into Ijekavian Serbian without salient isoglosses. Macedonian dialects on the other hand are part of the "Balkansprachbund" and share analytic features in morphosyntax. The language has thus for more than 100 years belonged to the Bulgarian *mental map*.

This correlates with the political contexts. For Macedonians, Serbia was (between 1878 and 1912) no different than Greece and Bulgaria, that is, just another young nation developing irredentist claims legitimised by dialectology, folklore studies, and historiography which, during the partition of European Turkey in 1912/1913 conquered, along with Greece, the greatest part of the Ottoman region of Macedonia and coined the concept of "Old Serbia" to justify the internal colonisation of Vardar Macedonia in the interwar period (cf. Trifunović 2015). Since the 1920s, it was the Komintern that postulated national emancipation for Macedonia as an anti-Yugoslav reflex.

The success of the Macedonian language is due to the double alienation from Bulgaria as well as from Serbia circumscribed by the architect of literary Macedonian, Blaže Koneski, by equidistance of Macedonian from these two established South Slavic languages. There are, moreover, no considerable Bulgarian or Serbian minorities in the country that could be instrumentalized from outside. The Serbian minority in Macedonia –the result of the immigration of Yugoslav technocratic elites– is very small, residing only in Skopje and Kumanovo. Today the Macedonian standard is stable and is generally considered a success. This cannot be said of Montenegrin.

Montenegro was a sovereign state between the Berlin Congress (1878) and the end of World War I in 1918. That said, it was, and continues to be, influenced by the pro-Serbian orientation of large parts of its population. This is why in 1918 the National Assembly in Podgorica voted for unification with Serbia, the proud victor of World War I which became the core nation of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and in 1929 of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia[9]. These two aspects –the lacking linguistic distinctiveness to Serbian and a widespread national Serbian consciousness in the population– make for a much less comfortable point of departure for linguistic nation-building than in the Macedonian case. In the 1991 census, 9% of Montenegro's population reported Serbian nationality, in 2003 32%, in 2011 29%. Moreover,

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[9] On the Montenegrin "green" national movement before and after World War I cf. Banac (1984: 270-291).

identification with the Montenegrin nation is significantly higher than identification with the Montenegrin language. In 2003, 43% of the population declared itself Montenegrin by nationality, but only 22% by mother tongue. To compare these figures with Serbian (also from 2003), 32% identified as Serbian by nationality but 63% by mother tongue (cf. Kölhi 2012: 83-84). This indicates that the correlation between national and linguistic identity is weak and not 1:1, not unlike the situation in the Ukraine, where the spreading of Russian as mother tongue does not automatically equal a spreading of Russian nationality (cf. Bilaniuk 2005).

5. **Concepts of standardisation and purism**

In what follows, I will use two models in as a methodological tool. First, the phase model for language standardisation developed by Neustupný (1970) and Radovanović (1986) (who adds two final stages: evaluation and reconstruction) and applied to Macedonian by Victor Friedman (1998). We can see a clear asynchronicity in the implementation of Macedonian and Montenegrin:

Implementation and standardisation process				
Problem	Selection	Stability	Expansion	Differentiation
Process	Policy decisions	Codification	Elaboration • Pure implementation (acceptance) • Established implementation (expansion)	Cultivation
Macedonia	1942-44	1944-1950	1950s-1970s	1990s
Montenegro	2000s	2000s		

The second concept is the model of purism as defined by George Thomas (1991) in his overview of European purism. Based on three axes ("social" with the two poles "ethnographic" or "elitist", "temporal" with the poles "reformist" or "archaizing", and "perspective" with the poles "xenophobic" or "non-xenophobic"), Thomas develops a cubic model (i.e. oriented towards folklore texts).

Tito-Yugoslav Macedonian pretended to be "reformist" and "ethnographically inspired", conforming to the ideology of the Peoples' Republics; implicitly, it was anti-puristic as it reversed the puristic principles of Bulgarian.

In terms of intensity, Thomas differentiates between "mild", "moderate", and "extreme" purism –not only on the basis of quantity, but by categorising the targets and the preferred replacements of puristic movements (Thomas 1991, fig. 10, 11):

Intensity of purism		
	Targets	Preferred replacements
Intensity		
MILD	Loanwords from a single non-related source	Internationalisms, loanwords from related languages, calques
MODERATE	Loanwords from related languages/ internationalisms	Assimilated loans from related languages, calques conforming

		to native word-building rules, neologisms, dialectalisms
EXTREME	Calques (loan translations/ loan transfers)	Some calques, neologisms, dialectalisms, archaisms

Early Macedonian language policy can be classified as moderate or extreme, whereas after 1956 it has become mild. Purism is an oscillating phenomenon and always depends directly on the political context –this has become extremely obvious for Croatian, which during the Ustaša-regime, between 1941-1945, and the Tuđman-era of the 1990s has experienced extreme purism with a great many ludicrous and, on the whole, unsuccessful neologisms. For the Montenegrin case, it is much too early to say how intensive lexicological purism might become since terminological work and corpus planning have yet to be initiated.

In what follows, the comparison will be carried out on the basis of four categories: (a) history of pre-standardisation, (b) dates of codification, (c) monitoring of implementation, and (d) identity debates and discourses.

5.1 Macedonian

(a) History of pre-standardisation: The immediate context for Macedonian standardisation was Tito's *bratstvo i jedinstvo* ('brotherhood and unity') ideology, which was already being spread and implemented in the region by the communist partisans during World War II. Its linguistic component was the emancipation and codification of Macedonian vernacular (cf. Szobries 1999). Language policy in Aegean Macedonia after the Tito-Stalin-split in 1948 slipped out of Tito's control and became in the 1950s a dangerous antagonistic model for Skopje.

With the collapse of the "Democratic Army" in 1948-49, about 60,000 communist fighters fled from Greece to other countries. About 35,000 of them were Slavic-speakers. Moscow was able to instrumentalise these *Egejci* as an alternative Macedonian national experiment to destabilise Tito's Yugoslavia. The beginning of destalinisation in the Soviet Union in 1956 led to a Yugoslav-Soviet rapprochement, which meant the end of this anti-Yugoslav policy.

This exodus from Greece also marked the chance for Moscow to regain the prerogative to interpret Macedonianness and to blame so-called "Tito-fascism" for any failings. In 1952, partisan "People's Liberation Front" (NOF) was dissolved for being pro-Yugoslav and substituted by "ILINDEN".[10] This diasporic-Macedonian experiment combined a Bulgarian and Russian umbrella language with a Macedonian vernacular. Although this policy, centred in Bucharest, was terminated after the political thaw in 1956, it influenced the early stage of status planning in Skopje by the simple reproach of it being simply a Serbian variety. It resulted in a highly puristic attitude concerning Serbian loans that was given up completely in the course of the 1960s.

The idea of a Balkan federation under Tito's leadership was relevant until 1948 and Bulgaria promoted the Macedonian language and consciousness in Pirin-Macedonia. The 1948 Cominform conflict, immediately led to hardened fronts: Sofia

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[10] "Ilinden" refers to the day of St. Elias and is the most important *lieu de mémoire* of Macedonian nationalism. It commemorates the one and only anti-Ottoman uprising in 1903 in the city of Kruševo.

became, with Moscow's support, the most prominent mouthpiece for delegitimising Yugoslav Macedonia and its new standard language at any price, as can be seen in the Bulgarian boycott of the *obščeslavjanskij dialect atlas* in 1982, a prestigious project of the World Association of Slavicists which started in 1958 for the simple reason that Macedonia was allowed to participate.

On the other hand, Yugoslavia had managed to avoid its incorporation into the emerging Moscow-controlled Eastern bloc and received immediate support from the United States. Macedonia thus came to profit from the work of Harvard linguist Horace Lunt, who between 1948 and 1952 formulated the first normative Macedonian grammar in the US embassy in Belgrade. Thus, Macedonian was able to survive and even benefit from a radical political shift in world politics.

(b) Dates of codification: Between August 1944 and May 1945, the standardisation commission met four times (Friedman 1993). In the early 21st century, that is, in the first years of neo-nationalist and anti-Yugoslav revisionist VMRO government in Macedonia, the fact that Blaže Koneski, the most important actor in the codification process,[11] had argued for the complete adoption of the Serbian alphabet for Macedonian in these meetings was heavily criticized in the media. The result of Koneski's stance was a compromise that saw the borrowing of several Serbian graphemes and the introduction of several new Cyrillic Macedonian graphemes (ѓ, ќ, ѕ). Macedonian thus acquired an interdialectal basis and –in contrast to Bulgarian– included several Balkansprachbund features in its norm (like obligatory object reduplication or the differentiation of local deixis with the postponed article: *-ot, -ov- , -on*). Other salient features (and unique selling points in the South Slavic context) are the accent on the antepaenultima or the so-called Roman perfect (*има дојдено*).[12]

(c) Monitoring of the implementation: Since Koneski's monolingual Macedonian dictionary in three volumes was printed only from 1961 until 1966, a period in which taboos concerning Serbian lexical impact fell, it is worthwhile analysing the dictionary of Russian linguist Tolstoj from 1961 to get an impression of the situation in the 1950s. Tolstoj excerpted Macedonian poetry and fiction from 1945 to 1958, but, as a foreigner, he was not involved in Macedonian language planning and therefore offers a purely descriptive approach.

The comparison of the lexical stock in Koneski (1961-66) and Tolstoj (1961) reveals a lexicographic layer of ethnographic purism which –at least until 1948– cultivated Russian and Bulgarian elements, dialectalisms, neologisms, and Turkish loans. Koneski favoured Serbian loans for the lexical expansion of Macedonian. Some examples are calques from Turkish like шеќерпаре ('sugarmoney') or double imperative compounds like туримешај ('polenta') or јавнибодни ('a careless person'), молчитолчи ('a deceitful person') or плашидеца ('bogey man').

A second level of analysis are the metalinguistic debates which can be traced in the early scientific journals *Makedonski jazik* and *Literaturen zbor*, where examples

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[11] Language policy in Skopje since the 1950s was in the hands of Blaže Koneski and three others: Korubin, Dimitrovski and Stamatoski (later Vidoeski), who were able to adapt to new political circumstances over the decades.

[12] For a concise introduction, see Friedman (1985).

from everyday practice are described. These materials can be used as examples of the usage of early Macedonian standard. It turns out that most Macedonians perceived minimally nativised Serbian loans (in terms of phonology or suffixes) as sufficiently correct Standard Macedonian. This includes different continuations of Proto-Slavic nasals, of *jer*s and the elimination of exclusively Serbian suffixes in *-aj, -ara, -nja, -aja* and agentive nominal forms in *-aš* und *-lac*.

Phonetic adaptation:

Serbo-Croatian:	Macedonian:	
в<u>а</u>нредан	в<u>о</u>нреден	<*[ъ]
ванр<u>е</u>дан	вонр<u>е</u>ден	<*[ь]
рукомет	ракомет	<*nasal

Since this mechanism allows direct borrowing from Serbian, calques of the following types are rare (Serbian vs. Macedonian): проналазак vs. пронајдок ('invention'), запремнина vs. зафатнина ('space'), потражња vs. побарувачка ('request'), запосленост vs. вработеност ('appointment').

The journal "*Makedonski jazik*" took a clearly puristic position in the 1950s ("Да се води постојана борба на чистотата на нашиот јазик…"[13]), which stands in sharp contrast to later statements made by Koneski (1967: 83-84: "…ние сме далеку од оноj степен на јазичното «чистунство» што го гледаме на пример при оформувањето на чешкиот литературен јазик…"[14]).

In Voss 2004 I collected ca. 1000 synonymous word pairs that were discussed intensively by the protagonists of purism across three political phases: 1950-1956, 1960-1980s, and after 1991. A significant number of these were debated in the early and post-Yugoslav purism discussions. This indicates that they were an integral part of Macedonian *parole* for decades. The fact that some of them found entry into Koneski's dictionary 1961-66 (e.g. *одлука* ('decision'), *озбилно* ('serious'), *очигледен* ('obvious'), *стално* ('constantly'), *стварно* ('really'), *снажност* ('physical strength'), *осим* ('except') while others did not (e.g. nouns with salient vernacular suffixes typical for Serbian like *догаѓај* ('event'), *изузев* ('exception'), *обавеза* ('engagement'), *покушај* ('attempt'), *прилагоди* ('adapt') show the oscillating character of Macedonian purism. To sum up, the equidistance of Macedonian to Serbian and Bulgarian is not realised in the lexicon but has to be seen as the combination of a densely serbified vocabulary with a Balkan-Slavic morphosyntax.

(d) Identity debates and discourses: Korubin was for several decades editor of the linguistic advisory column *Jazično katče* of the state newspaper *Nova Makedonija* (collected in six volumes labeled *Jazikot naš denešen* between 1969 and 2001). He justified the alleged objectivity of language evolution and change. In his eyes, Serbian interference did not damage or threaten the Macedonian norm but served as a symbol

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[13] Engl. (my translation): "That we lead a constant fight for the purity of our language", cf. the editorial in the first volume of *Makedonski jazik* 1950/1: 1-2).
[14] Engl. (my translation): "[…] we are far from the degree of linguistic 'cleansing' that we see for example in the early stage of Czech literary language".

of modernity and a Yugoslav political reality where national identity was subordinated to supranational.

This position is mirrored in his biography. Korubin was convicted in the early 1950s for his translations of Stalin and was interned on *Goli Otok*, an uninhabited island in the northern Adriatic Sea that was the site of a political prison between 1949 and 1989. In the years that followed he argued repeatedly that criticising Serbian loans was a form of national deviation. He answered letters from the Australian diaspora complaining about too many Serbian loans in Macedonian since the 1960s by accusing the authors of being the "last of the Mohicans" to oppose progress in Socialist Yugoslavia (Korubin 1980: 315).

5.2 Montenegrin

(a) History of pre-standardisation: As mentioned above, in 1918, Montenegro became a nameless member in the *troimeni narod* ('people with three names') of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. The disappearance of Montenegro from the political map was compensated by the reputation of having been or being the "better Serbs". Linguistically, the people living within Montenegro's borders could easily be integrated into the vernacular model developed by Vuk Karadžić, since Vuk, who, like all Montenegrin dialect speakers spoke the Ijekavian variety himself, emancipated Ijekavian from the prestigious Ekavian of Belgrade and the Serbs of southern Hungary (Naylor 1980).

With the partisan ASNOM conferences in 1942 and 1943, Montenegro reappeared as one of the five constituent nations (*narodi*) of Tito's Yugoslavia, initially without linguistic consequences. In the Novi Sad agreement of 1954, which would neutralise fascist Croatian language policy and reconcile language planners[15], Montenegro is not mentioned beyond the first sentence, which merely states that *Narodni jezik Srba, Hrvata i Crnogoraca jedan je jezik[16].* It was only in 1971 that Montenegrin became a "subvariant" of Serbo-Croatian and a *standardnojezički izraz*.[17]

(b) Dates of codification: In 2006, the Montenegrin Parliament voted to leave the "State Union of Serbia and Montenegro" and declared Montenegrin the official language of the newly independent state. Two years previously, in March 2004, the Education Ministry had already changed the school subject of *Srpski jezik i književnost* into *Maternji jezik i književnost*.

In 2008-2009 a council of 13 scholars, the *Savjet za standardizaciju crnogorskog jezika*, worked out two different codification solutions, since the discussions were highly controversial. As can be read in the introduction of the new *Pravopis* (published in 2009, the Ministry appointed a small expert group to vote on one of these proposals. They favoured the version with the so-called "late jotation":[18] ć (<tj), đ (<dj), ś (<sj), ź (<zj), e.g.: *ćelohranitelj, ćelodnevni, ćenovnik, ćesnoća, ćenjkati se,*

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[15] Cf. the text of the Novi Sad Agreement in Greenberg (2004: 172-174): the keyword in this document is the *ravnopravnost* ('equality') of nations and languages.

[16] Engl. (my translation): 'The national language of Serbs, Croats and Montenegrins is one language'.

[17] Engl. (my translation): 'standard language expression'.

[18] A good insight in this political process is provided by Rajka Glušica, who was a member in the standardisation council (Glušica 2009, 2011, 2013).

beśediti[19] A second, revised edition of the Pravopis was printed in 2010 (as well as a *Gramatika*, cf. Čirgić, Pranjković & Silić 2010).

The group from Cetinje who favoured "late jotation" had better access to financial resources and to government support and continues to control the relevant Wikipedia-entries. It continues the line of Vojislav Nikčević (1993, 1997, 2001) whose books, written during the Milošević regime and a period of ultranational Serbian orientation towards Ekavian and the Cyrillic script, are characterized by three core elements: autochthonous myths of descent, phonetic and orthographic "late jotation" and use of Latin script. Surprisingly, accent patterns of the old-štokavian dialects (called *zetsko-lovćenski govor*) in southeastern Montenegro which are unique on the territory of former Yugoslavia, are not cultivated as salient non-Serbian features (cf. Kölhi 2012: 84).

As a result of the decision to favour "late jotation", the phonemes /ć/, /đ/, /ś/, and /ź/ have become part of the new Montenegrin norm. Two of them already exist in Serbian and two of them appear as new graphemes: in Latin as <ś> and <ź>, in Cyrillic as ć and з with a diacritic accent.[20]

Besides "late jotation", the new grammar has been criticised for its archaisms (e.g. *živimo u Crnu Goru*), extended jotation (*novijeg, novijeh*) and its similarity with Croatian grammar (two of the three authors of the *Gramatika*, Ivo Pranjković and Josip Silić, are Croatian).

The antagonism within the Codification Working Group continues and reveals various stages of institutionalisation: after the founding of a study program "Montenegrin language and South Slavic literatures" in Nikšić in 2008, the *Institut za crnogorski jezik i književnost* founded 2010 in Cetinje became an autonomous faculty for Montenegrin in 2014 with Adnan Čirgić as director. Both groups have their own publications: *Lingua montenegrina* in Cetinje, *Riječ* and *Zbornik radova Njegoševi dani* in Nikšić.[21]

(c) Monitoring of implementation: Since neither the media, the administration nor the public sphere make use of the new jotation forms, its implementation will only be realised, if at all, via the education system. Glušica wrote in 2010 that new textbooks were being prepared by the *Ministarstvo prosvjete* for secondary education system.

But to appease the pro-Serbian opposition, the law on education was changed, the amended article 11 now stating that teaching will be in the Montenegrin language and, "having in mind the common linguistic basis", also in Serbian. This formulation is ambiguous and allows the interpretation of Serbian and Montenegrin as one and the same language (cf. Kölhi 2012: 88).

The appearance of the first volume of the *Rječnik Crnogorskog Narodnog i Književnog Jezika*, published by the Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts in April 2016, resulted in much debate (cf. Steinacker 2016). As it was edited by the moderates

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[19] All these examples are taken from the 2009 Pravopis; cf. Glušica (2010: 41).

[20] The grapheme does not yet exist in Unicode.

[21] The name Njegoš here is highly symbolic, since the *Vladika* ('bishop') and poet Petar II Petrović Njegoš (*Gorski vijenac*, his opus magnum, dates back to 1847), Montenegro's most famous author, was himself inclined politically and religiously to Serbdom.

from Nikšić around Glušica and Bečanović, it met with critique from the Cetinje group, who were able to mobilise Muslim minority groups to declare the volume as being religiously discriminatory.

Mønnesland wrote in 2009 that in official language use, the Orthography of Croatian and Serbian *Matica* from 1960 (a result of the compromise of the 1954 *Novi Sad Agreemen*t mentioned above) was still valid –a status that in Croatia, for example, was came to an end already in 1967 with the *Deklaracija* of an independent Croatian. He argues further that the radical phase of Montenegrin linguistic nation-building is over, since Nikčević's standard model has not been realised. This assessment still holds true almost a decade later.

(d) Identity debates and discourses: The Cetinje group understands a Montengrin language without "late jotation" as proof of assimilation, of unification, of inferiority, and servility towards Serbian (cf. Glušica 2010: 40); a typical victimisation discourse comparable to discourses in Skopje since 1998. The compensation, and this is another similarity to today's Macedonia, are megalomaniacal myths of antiquity, facilitated by the rich Old Roman archeographic heritage in the region.

In 2012, Kölhi published his material gathered in interviews with students in Montenegro, discerning four types of linguistic identities: a strong/fundamental and a moderate/pragmatic stance towards Montenegrin or Serbian respectively. He gives three main factors for the adoption of a certain linguistic identity: nationality, family background, and schooling. His results mirror the general language situation, which is complicated and polarised. The new standard as codified in 2009 has not been accepted by all of its potential speakers, so that the ultimate nature and status of the Montenegrin language remains an unresolved issue (cf. Kölhi 2012: 104-105).

6. Conclusion

The comparison of Macedonian and Montenegrin seems to be surprising, since Macedonian as an East South Slavic variety with typical features of Balkan morphosyntax (loss of cases, loss of infinitive etc.) does not belong to the basic dialect of Serbo-Croatian, so-called Štokavian. Nevertheless, the comparability is guaranteed by the simple fact that both nations have been recognised as titular nations in Tito-Yugoslavia (decision taken on the communist partisans' AVNOJ-conferences in 1942 and 1943), after having been part of the Serbian nation and territory in the interwar period.

A closer look at the standardisation process reveals similarities of Macedonian after 1944 and Montenegrin after 2006: In both cases the implementation of the new standard is hesitating, slowly and shows policy shifts. This normative vacuum is possible because the traditional H-variety Serbian is omnipresent in both countries. This observation however implies an optimistic outlook for Montenegrin since the Macedonian standardisation today can be assessed a success story despite continuous contestation from the neighbouring countries.

A comparative look beyond the constellation of Bosnian-Croatian-Montenegrin-Serbian furthermore reveals the naivety of the initiators of the "Deklaracija o zajedničkom jeziku" from 2017, since it supports the position of the neighbouring "Big Brother" (Fishman 1993) and ignores the cultural and especially the communicative

memory of the language communities involved. Should we try to be more impartial when it comes to national symbol policy and the drawing of state borders in Southeast Europe?

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