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Infeasibility of a lexicographic amalgamation of Croatian and Serbian in a bilingual dictionary

1. Introduction

This paper deals with the consequences of joining the Croatian and Serbian languages into one Serbo-Croatian-Dutch/Dutch-Serbo-Croatian dictionary. The starting point for this analysis will be my own lexicographic project in process, which is an extensive Croatian-Dutch dictionary (see 6.1.). In this paper I will put forward the reasons why it is necessary to treat these languages as two separate lexicographic norms. By the term *lexicographic norm* I am referring to the metalanguage of a dictionary functioning within a single lexicographic system, according to the language norm of idiom described in the concerned dictionary. The use of the term *Serbo-Croatian* is rather broad and divergent. In Serbia, and especially in Croatia, this term has lost almost all its meaning in last decade. However, it is still used sporadically to refer to a language system in the central South-Slavic linguistic area with common phonological, prosodic, morphological and syntactic features. Outside the South-Slavic territory the term is still in unofficial use as a name for the standard language of the central part of the former Yugoslavia. As a mother tongue, the language was usually referred to with this name by Bosnians. Nowadays, however, it is mostly used by Bosnian emigrants and refugees. In this article I will use the term *Serbo-Croatian* either as a name for the central South-Slavic language system or, in a historical sense, as an official name for the Serbian language in dictionaries. The term *Serbocroatian*, without a hyphen, I will use to refer to the hypothetical product of joining the Serbian and Croatian lexical forms in (part of) one dictionary.

2. Explanation

In 1996, after I applied for a subsidy for my project to the only committee in the Netherlands that was specialised in lexicography, I received the following answer: "The Committee has come to the conclusion that no positive decision can be taken at this moment in regard to the infrastructural support of an exclusively Croatian project. If you hold to your view that the Serbian and Croatian languages should be kept in two separate dictionaries, to our regret the Committee cannot support you in the production of your project." I also received a similar answer from another authoritative institution. So I concluded that the problem was not only of a political nature, but also a financial one: if they were to support my Croatian dictionary, then they would have to do the same for a Serbian one, if such a request were made. Approximately seventy-five percent of the vocabulary in the Croatian language corresponds to the same percentage in the Serbian language and the non-common lexical units are in most cases mutually understandable. Further in a grammatical sense the difference between these two languages is minimal. The question therefore that needs to be addressed is whether or not the entire corpus can be treated within one project. Why then, should we not make one Serbocroatian dictionary?

3. The naming of the language

3.1. The period in which the constructed language names (Serbo-Croatian, Croato-Serbian, Croatian or Serbian) were in use in the South Slavonic area corresponds to

those years during which the state of Yugoslavia existed (although these names were sporadically used even before this period¹). In Yugoslavia the constructed names were imposed for political reasons. This was another way to emphasise the unity of the different nations in Yugoslavia.

This phenomenon is not limited to the situation in Yugoslavia. For example when Norway belonged to Denmark, the term Danish-Norwegian was in use, and before Pakistan gained its independence from India the language of these two countries was called Hindustani. After the split, Urdu and Hindi were officially recognised as separate languages.

3.2. In fact, Serbo-Croatian was never really treated as a single language in dictionaries. All the existing dictionaries were based on the eastern (Serbian) or western (Croatian) language norm. In most cases of "srpskohrvatski" (*Serbo-Croatian*) bilingual dictionaries the language had features which were typical for the "eastern variant" (Serbian): In some cases a form typical for the western variant (Croatian) would refer to the Serbian headword. But this was not done systematically. Similarly, the Serbian form would at times refer to the Croatian version in the Croatian editions where the language was called "Hrvatskosrpski" (*Croatianserbian*) or "hrvatski ili srpski" (*Croatian or Serbian*).

In Sweden this problem of 'naming the language' was recognised back in 1985 and as a result two different dictionaries were published by the same group of authors: Swedish-Croatian and Swedish-Serbo-Croatian. In 1990 "Norsk-serbisk/kroatisk ordbok" (Universitetsforlaget, Oslo) came out in Norway. There too, Serbian and Croatian languages are treated separately. Next to the Norwegian headword there is a Serbian translation written in Cyrillic. After that an asterix follows, and the Croatian translation is written in the Latin alphabet. This is actually a trilingual dictionary.

After the collapse of Yugoslavia the production of handbooks prescribing rules for different national languages was considerably increased. In Croatia and Serbia almost all the titles were changed that had a composed language name. There were no composed language names in the new editions. By the same token, in the editions which came out abroad the old titles were changed, and in principle no composed language names were in use. Not only dictionaries but also textbooks and grammar books acquired new titles.

3.3. In spite of the correspondences between the two standard languages Serbian and Croatian in the grammatical and lexical system, no common language norm was established. Even when an official common language norm was proposed the distinction between Serbian and Croatian was retained in terms of the western and the eastern variant of Serbo-Croatian.

According to Brozović "... the standard Serbo-Croatian [...] in its classic form (Vuk-Daničić-Maretić) was always in fact a sort of abstraction. It served as a basis, an example, and the common denominator for both variants, but not one of these functions proved sufficient for either variant. Even though some linguists attempted to keep it alive, this 'classical Serbo-Croatian' [...] was never fully realised. Therefore in contrast to the variants, the Serbo-Croatian standard language, to put it in linguistic terms, was always 'langue', never 'parole', not only in the spoken, but also in the written form." (Brozović 1965:4).

3.4. The name "Serbo-Croatian" suggest that we are dealing with two languages: Serbian and Croatian. This was the case until several years ago. More precisely, when it

¹ Especially by the followers of Vuk Karadžić, the famous reformer and codifier of the standard Serbian language.

comes to the question of Serbo-Croatian dialects, these two standard languages were the only languages that were officially recognised as such. Now the situation is different. Another language, namely Bosnian, has emerged as the third standard language in the Serbo-Croatian linguistic area. In order to fully represent the vocabulary of the Serbo-Croatian standard languages, Bosnian words and expressions should also be included. This implies that apart from Serbian and Croatian, a third norm must be taken into account. In spite of this fact, from this point forward I will concentrate only on Serbian and Croatian, especially in my statistical data, since there is at this point in time not enough material to compare the Bosnian language.

4. Statistics

4.1.a) In order to get a clearer sense of the quantity and the types of relevant differences between the Serbian and Croatian languages I have examined a thousand Serbian and a thousand Dutch headwords from a "J. Novaković-Lopušina: *Basiswoordenboek Servokroatisch-Nederlands en Nederlands-Servokroatisch*" (elementary Serbo-Croatian-Dutch/Dutch-Serbo-Croatian dictionary). In the preface it is stated that the dictionary offers the eastern variant of Serbo-Croatian, that is, its Serbian version. The entire corpus of this dictionary encompasses 5.500 headwords. Since the headwords are illustrated with examples, the entry itself has also been taken into consideration. All the cases in which the Croatian form would differ from the Serbian were registered and further divided in spelling, phonology, morphonology, syntax and semantics according to the differences.

Here follows an illustration of most prevalent differences:

Spelling:

Due to its long tradition in Cyrillic writing, the Serbian language, in contrast to Croatian, uses phonetic spelling for foreign names: *Nju Jork* – *New York*, *Šekspir* – *Shakespeare*, *Reno* – *Renault*

The future tense, which in the Serbo-Croatian language consists of an infinitive and an auxiliary verb, in the examples of Serbian, becomes joined into one word. In the Croatian language the two words are retained: *radiću* – *radit ću*

Phonology:

About 40% of all the differences between Croatian and Serbian rest on the sound differences of one particular type: *dijete-dete*, *djeca-deca*, *utjecaj-uticaj*. These can be traced on all levels.

The following sound differences occur regularly under certain circumstances:

| Serbian | Croatian |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| <i>varvarin</i> | <i>barbarin</i> |
| <i>okean</i> | <i>ocean</i> |
| <i>hemija.</i> | <i>kemija</i> |
| <i>farisej</i> | <i>farizej</i> |
| <i>kijati</i> | <i>kihati</i> |
| <i>diplomatiija</i> | <i>diplomacija</i> |
| <i>ćutati</i> | <i>šutiti</i> |

vo
duvan

vol
duhan

Morpho(no)logy:

Most of the systematic differences (approximately 30% of all the differences) occur in prefixes and suffixes, derivations of verbs and in gender.

Syntax:

The frequent sentence structures (which turn up in examples of usage) differ in Serbian and Croatian. For example, the relative and interrogative pronoun *who* is in Serbian *ko*, but in Croatian *tko* and the interrogative pronoun *what* is in Serbian *šta*, but in Croatian *što*. After verbs such as *to wish, to want, to be able to, to have to, to allow, to go...* the Croatian language uses a dependent infinitive (as most West European languages); in this case Serbian prefers a construction which consists of a conjunction and the present form of the verb - which is typical for Balkan languages (e.g. *I want to sing* translates into Croatian as *hoću pjevati*, and in Serbian *hoću da pevam*).

Semantics:

Approximately 10% of all the differences are of a semantic nature. A part of these belongs to the category of 'false friends': *odojče* - in Serbian means *baby/suckling* and in Croatian *piggy*. *Brijač* is translated in Serbian as *rasor*, and in Croatian as *barber*. There are also words, that do not have the same range of application: e.g. *predstava* in Serbian means *performance* and *idea*, and in Croatian it refers only to *performance (show)*.

There is another group of differences (which accounts for 20% of all the differences) based on the (loan)words which have a different form but the same meaning. (E.g. *umjetno/veštačko* 'artificial', *odgoj/vaspitanje* 'upbringing'/childrearing', *vlak/voz* 'train', *kat/sprat* 'floor/'story').

Lexical differences occur at all language levels. They can be primarily traced in the following linguistic domains: scientific, culinary, administrative, and anatomical terminology, terminology concerning craft/trade and flora/fauna, slang, children's language and everyday speech.

4.1.b) There are no strict rules that regulate the transformation of a Croatian word into a Serbian one, or vice versa. Nevertheless, particular correspondences appear frequently. I will now list some examples and exceptions:

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------|---------------|------------------------------------|-----|---------------------|---------|---------------------|
| - (i)je- (K) | often becomes | -e- (S) | but | utjecaj | becomes | uticaj |
| | | | | siječanj | becomes | januar |
| | | | | uvijen | remains | uvijen |
| - irati (K) | often becomes | -isati or -ovati (S) | but | telefonirati | remains | telefonirati |
| - ista (S) | often becomes | -ist (K) | but | sportista | becomes | sportaš |
| - telj (K) | often becomes | -lac (S) | but | roditelj | remains | roditelj |
| sa- (S) | often becomes | su- (K) | but | saveznik | remains | saveznik |

4.2. The relationship between Serbian and Croatian is often compared to the relationship between Dutch and Flemish. From a total of 200.000 headwords from the

Dutch *Van Dale* dictionary, 7.000 words or meanings are marked as Southern Dutch, which is 3 to 4%. More concise dictionaries give fewer words with this label (Claes 1986:146).

| | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|---------|
| <i>Tweedelige WP</i> | 3.500 from 100.000 | (3,5 %) |
| <i>Verschueren</i> | 800 from 100.000 | (0,8 %) |
| <i>Koenen</i> | 700 from 80.000 | (0,8 %) |
| <i>Kramers</i> | 400 from 70.000 | (0,5 %) |

The WP dictionary of J.J. Bakker followed the suggestion of Flemish linguist J. L. Pauwels and next to the already existing label for the Flemish vocabulary introduced a label for the typically Northern Dutch words. According to G. Geerts, "what in principle holds for all the labelled words, also holds for the words labelled as 'Belgian'. The compilers of the dictionary did not include this vocabulary in the standard language" (Geerts 1986:161). Although these examples are taken from monolingual dictionaries, they could be applied to a bilingual one as well.

4.3. The same holds for Croatian and Serbian. Both languages should be treated on an equal basis, hence, not as a variant of the other. Out of 1.000 headwords in the *Basiswoordenboek* (Novaković-Lopušina 1994) 218 do not correspond to Croatian forms. Therefore, they should be labelled as 'Serbian'. This implies that 218 Croatian equivalents should be included, labelled as 'Croatian'. Accordingly, 436 out of 1.218 headwords should be labelled, that is 35.7% of the corpus. Out of 1.000 headwords in the Dutch-Serbo-Croatian volume (Novaković-Lopušina 1993), there are 1.031 forms which are different in Croatian: 292 in the translations, and 739 in the examples of word usage.

This percentage is deduced on the basis of a corpus existing of 5.500 headwords. If we are thinking of making one Serbocroatian dictionary with a common size of 40.000 headwords including three standard languages (also Bosnian), then, apart from synonyms, examples of usage and phraseology, it would also contain a greater number of derivations, culture-bound words and terminology. Taking into consideration the specificities of each of the three standard languages, the percentage of differences would inevitably be augmented.

5. Comparative research

In order to demonstrate the relationship between Croatian and Serbian in dictionaries, I examined the language situations which could be compared in some way. I also looked at the lexicographic presentation of these relationships. The relationship between Serbian and Croatian has been compared to Dutch and Flemish (see 4.2.), British English and American English, Castilian Spanish and versions of Spanish spoken in Latin America, Portuguese and Brazilian and German and Austrian. Although this comparison is possible on some levels, this does not apply to lexicography. There are more reasons for this as I will now explain.

Normative language:

Compiling a dictionary is a complicated process. All the data need to be presented systematically and consistently. For this reason, all comments, notes and examples should be processed according to a single norm. In some languages exceptions from the norm are regarded as variants of the single normative language (English, Spanish, Portuguese). In that respect, bilingual editions of dictionaries are not titled as 'English/American – Dutch/Flemish', 'Spanish/Argentinean – English/Australian', 'Portuguese/Brazilian – German/Austrian' etc. The language in which the standard

variants are presented is thus the normative language. Serbo-Croatian is not a standard language with a single norm. It is rather a language system realised in three standard languages with different lexical norms. The overlapping part of the vocabulary cannot be treated as a norm: it does not suffice for the presentation of comments, examples of usage, descriptions of meaning and phraseology.

Bi-directionality:

For this part of my research I looked closely at several *Van Dale* dictionaries. These dictionaries are not bi-directional. They are targeted towards the Dutch users. That is why the comments and descriptions are in Dutch in both cases (Dutch as the source and the target language). In the editions where a language that has a variant is the target language, the variant is much less represented. Conversely, when the language with the variant is the source language, the variant acquires more attention. In the instructions on how to use the English-Dutch dictionary, the following is said about the treatment of Southern Dutch words:

"In regard to its productive function, the Dutch-English volume included a greater number of Belgian words than the English-Dutch volume. In the latter volume the Belgian words only had a function of understanding".

In the instructions for the use of the Spanish-Dutch dictionary the following is said about the expressions from South America: "in those cases where words and expressions are used in place of the Spanish standard variant, they are treated extensively. The intention was not to give a full account of all the Americanisms. This was a way of providing an important tool for a better understanding of contemporary Latin-American literature". Two such words, marked with a label, are given as examples. In the Dutch-Spanish dictionary these two words are not included. According to *Van Dale*, the target language only has a function of understanding, and for this reason the presentation of the doublets from the variant is not necessary. An exception is made in a Dutch-English dictionary, which reports the following in the preface: "Even though an attempt has been made to give an equal treatment to the two prominent poles of the English speaking world, British English and American English, we are aware that in the case of American English we did not quite succeed" (Van Dale, 1986²). No matter how closely the American expressions were treated, the emphasis was nevertheless placed on British English. For headwords written according to American spelling, one is referred to the British variant. Furthermore, the non-idiomatic examples of usage are only in British English.

On the basis of the above discussion, we can conclude that the variants of one language and the language itself cannot be treated equally. If this is the case in dictionaries which are not bi-directional, like *Van Dale* with his 100.000 entries, then we must conclude that equal treatment is practically impossible in a bi-directional dictionary with 40.000 entries (like mine will have).

Inflection:

In a dictionary which deals with a highly inflected language, there are more forms and data than in a dictionary dealing with a non-inflected, or minimally inflected language. The words which have the same meaning in both variants of the target language but belong to different inflection-categories have different endings, also in the same examples of usage. This means that in the dictionary in question extra information should be given in order to make the presentation of the entries clear.

Verb aspect:

When it is possible two verb aspects are given in the translation for each verb. This means that for each Dutch verb, two Croatian verbs appear in the translation. If Serbian,

and possibly Bosnian, forms were to be added, this would cause a confusing cluster of forms.

6. Possible solutions for an amalgamation

6.1. Since I will take the lexicographic system of my dictionary as a starting point for my presentation of solutions, I have to say something here about its structure:

The dictionary should encompass *circa* 40.000 entries. In the first place it is aimed at translators, but at the same time it will offer clearly arranged information regarding grammar, through a small number of intelligible examples accessible to a user with an average education.

The aim of this dictionary is to be as user-friendly as possible to both Dutch-speaking and Croatian-speaking individuals. For this reason, the dictionary will include detailed grammatical information, not only beside the headwords but also beside the equivalents in translation. To ensure the multi-purpose function of the dictionary, expressions from colloquial language, literary words and technical terms will be included. The headwords which do not belong etymologically and/or culturally to standard Croatian, but are widely represented in the Croatian language usage, will be included in the dictionary, supplied with an adequate label and with a reference to their equivalent in the standard language. Neologisms, archaisms and words that have recently come into use again and seem to have reasonable vitality, will also receive a place in the corpus of this dictionary. The range of the corpus and the selection criteria will be comprehensive enough to meet the needs of political, economic, juridical, scientific and cultural fields. In addition, special attention will be given to administrative terminology, which has been affected by the recent political changes.

Accents will be noted in both languages only in the canonical form (nominative, infinitive). Where in the Croatian entries the accent shifts depending on the form used (i.e. the plural, the genitive singular or the first person singular present forms), this will also be noted.

6.2. Here follow some solutions that are available for the joining of the Serbo-Croatian languages into one bilingual dictionary:

Taking into consideration different forms and giving them equal treatment:

This would not cause a problem in the Serbo-Croatian volume. Nevertheless, the dictionary would be considerably broader, because approximately 30% of the entries would have to be included more than once. To avoid the privileging of one language over another, the translations would need to be given for the Croatian as well as the Serbian and Bosnian headwords, and examples of usage:

ćelija¹ *f cel/f/m (-len) | foto~ - focecel; kaluerska ~ S - klostercel; luaka ~ K/ ludaka ~ S - isoloocel; **partijska** ~ - partijcel; **pustinja**ka ~ - kluizenaarswoning *f (-en)*, hermitāge *fr, f (-s)*; **samostanska** ~ K - klostercel; **zatvorska** ~ - gevangeniscel*

ćelija² *f biol BS (K ostanica) cel/f/m (-len) | modana ~ - hersencel; **nervna** ~ - zenuwcel; ~ **raka** - kancercel*

švajcār|ac *m S Zwitser m (-s) ...kinja *f S Zwiterse f (-n)**

švajcarska *f geog S Zwiterland n,sg*

švajcarski *adj S Zwiters | kao ~ sir - vol gaten; kao ~ sat - zeer stipt*

švicār|ac m K Zwłser m (-s) ...ka f K Zwłserse f (-n)

švčarska f geog K Zwłserland n,sg

švčarski adj K Zwłsers | kao ~ sir - vol gaten; kao ~ sat - zeer stipt

stepen m^G S grā|ad m (-den); (znak) teken " □; fig (nivo) niveā|fr [ni'vo] n (-s) | akademski ~ - academische graad; gram: drugi ~ - tweede graad van vergelijking; ~ razvitka - ontwikkelingsniveau; geog: ~ širine/dužine - breedte-/lengtegraad; | deset ~i ispod nule - tien graden onder nul; ugao od 30□(~i) - hoek van 30□(graden); na najvišem ~u - op het hoogste niveau; opekotine prvog ~a - eerstegraads verbrandingen; Beograd le|ina 20,5□(~i) isto|he du|ine - Belgrado ligt op 20.5□(graden) oosterlengte

stup|anj (pl -njevi) m K grā|ad m (-den); (znak) teken " □; fig (razina) niveā|fr [ni'vo] n (-s) | akademski ~anj - academische graad; gram: drugi ~anj - tweede graad van vergelijking; ~anj razvoja - ontwikkelingsniveau; geog: ~anj širine/dužine - breedte-/lengtegraad; | deset ~njeva ispod nule - tien graden onder nul; kut od 30□(~njeva) - hoek van 30□(graden); na najvišem ~nju - op het hoogste niveau; opekline prvog ~nja - eerstegraads verbrandingen; Zagreb le|ina 16□(~njeva) isto|he du|ine - Zagreb ligt op 16□(graden) oosterlengte

In the Dutch-Serbocroatian volume this would result in very long and dense entries. Because this would put pressure on space economy, a complicated code-system would have to be developed for the presentation of inflection, accentuation and verb aspect.

In my approach the data in question is placed next to the form it refers to. This means that the application of the code-system is not necessary. This simplifies the search process. Regardless of the advantage of my approach, if the same system were to be applied in the one Serbocroatian dictionary, the result would be a kind of a trilingual dictionary instead of a bilingual one.

aānwenden wendde aan, h. aangewend, vt (gebruiken) rābīti i K, upotrēbīti^{2/4} S, upotrijēbīti^{3/24} KB; (toepassen) primēnīti^{3/3} S, primijēnīti^{3/13} KB, kōristīti i || zījn invloed ~ - upotrebīti/upotrijebīti svoj uticaj S/utjecaj BK; verkeerde middelen ~ - primenīti/primijenīti pogrešna sredstva

grāad m (grāden) 1. stepen^{m5} S / stup|anj^{ma2} K, (teken) znak " □; fig: n|vo^{m4} S / razina^f K || bij nul graden - na nula stepeni / pri nula stupnjeva; geog: op 100 □(graden) oosterlengte - na sto stepeni / stupnjeva (100 □)isto|he du|ine; een hoek van 45 □(graden) - kut K / ugao S od 45 □ (stepeni / stupnjeva); in de hoogste ~ - na najvišem nivou/na najvišoj razini; u najvećoj meri/mjeri 2. (rang) t|ila^f, □□^{m1} | een ~ halen - ste|titulu || de ~ van doctor - doktorska titula 3. (verwantschap) koleno/koljeno " || familielid in de tweede ~ - ro|ak u drugom kolenu/koljenu

Cross-references:

There are no strict rules that regulate the transformation of a Croatian word into a Serbian one, or vice versa so that some patterns of transfer are not always applicable. In the Serbocroatian-Dutch volume the headwords, which according to the patterns of transfer display a systematic difference (see 4.1.b), could be marked with the reverse code. The headwords which differ according to another criteria, could be referred to by means of the corresponding entry in the corpus where the other variant is described in full.

stanica f 1. S a) (K coll □postaja) station n (-s) | autobuska ~ (S) - busstation (K □kolodvor); benzinska ~ - benz|nestation; meteorološka ~ - meteorologisch s.; policijska ~ - pol|ieburc|fr [...byro] n (-s); radio~ - rādiozender m (-s); |elezni|ka² ~ - tre|nstation b) (K coll □stajalište) halte f/m (-n/-s) | autobuska^{s11} ~ - bushalte; tramvajska ~ - tramhalte [trēm...] 2. K biol (S □|lija²) cel f/m (-len) | mo|dana ~ - hersencel; ~ raka - kanker cel; živčana ~ - zēduwcel

In the Dutch-Serbocroatian volume, two code-systems should be applied: one would secure the transfer to the other variants, the other code-system would regulate the grammatical data. Since three variants are at stake, this system would not be user-friendly and the patterns of transfer would not be applicable on all levels. Equal treatment could be sustained by the naming of all forms in alphabetical order, which may have a negative effect on the overall clarity.

graad *m* (*graden*) 1. *stepen*^{m5} *S* / *stupanj*^{ma2} *K*, (*teken*) znak " □; *fig*: *nivo*^{m4} *S* / *razina*^f *K* || **bijnul graden** - na nula stepeni / pri nula stupnjeva; *geog*: **op 100 (graden) oosterlengte** - na sto stepeni / stupnjeva (100 □isto □ne du □ne; **een hoek van 45 (graden)** - kut *K* / ugao *S* od 45 □ (stepeni / stupnjeva); **in de hoogste** ~ - na najvišem nivou/na najvišoj razini; u najvećoj mjeri² 2. (*rang*) titula^f, □□^{m1} | **een** ~ **halen** - ste □ titulu || **de** ~ **van doctor** - doktorska titula 3. (*verwantschap*) koljeno²ⁿ || **familielid in de tweede** ~ - ro □ak u drugom koljenu²

There is a greater chance of gaps and inconsistencies emerging in a two-code system, than in a no-code or single-code system. Furthermore, some of the forms included would not be fully described.

Setting up a normative language:

This is a usual way to present variants. The variants in the Serbocroatian-Dutch volume would be grammatically defined, labelled, and referred to by means of the headword belonging to the normative language. In that particular entry the meaning of the word would be defined.

ćelija *f* 1. *cel* *f/m* (-*len*) | **foto**~ - fo □ocel; **lu □ □ka** ~ - iso □ □ □cel; **partijska** ~ - partijcel; **pustinja □ka** ~ - kluzenaarswoning *f* (-*en*), hermitage *fr*, *f* (-*s*); **samostanska** ~ - klo □ □stercel; **zatvorska** ~ - gevangeniscel 2. *S biol*: *cel* *f/m* (-*len*) □ **stanica** 1

In the Dutch-Serbocroatian volume, the normative language should be placed first, followed by the variant (which should be properly marked). Nevertheless, the examples of usage should only stay in the normative language, as was the case in Serbocroatian-Dutch volume

graad *m* (*graden*) 1. *K* *stupanj* (*pl -nji/-njevi*) *m*; *S* *stepen* *m*; (*teken*) znak " □; *fig*: *razina* *f* || **bijnul graden** - pri nula stupnjeva; *geog*: **op 100 (graden) oosterlengte** - na sto stupnjeva (100 □isto □ne du □ne; **een hoek van 45 (graden)** - kut od 45 □ (stupnjeva); **in de hoogste** ~ - na najvišoj razini; u najvećoj mjeri 2. (*rang*) titula^f, □□ (*pl -ovi*) *m* | **een** ~ **halen** - ste □ titulu || **de** ~ **van doctor** - doktorska titula 3. (*verwantschap*) koljeno *n* || **familielid in de tweede** ~ - ro □ak u drugom koljenu

This is the manner in which most of the Serbo-Croatian/Croato-Serbian dictionaries are written. When a variant of a language is systematically used it takes on the function of language. In all three Serbo-Croatian standard languages many words are used which belong to the other two languages. In such cases the words are often marked in respect to style or region. It is practically impossible to present the complicated relations between the three languages and their functional styles without choosing one lexicographic norm, which includes the choosing of one normative language. The emerging question here is which of the three variants should be the normative one?

Separate dictionaries:

Whichever variant we choose to take on the function of normative language in a bilingual dictionary, this would not have great repercussions for the normative language itself. In a way comparable to the already existing Serbo-Croatian dictionaries, it would

have a negative effect on the other two variants. But in contrast to the not quite successful attempts to treat all variants equally, in the approach that I am proposing, the variants/languages would be treated in depth. One lexicographic norm would be taken as a point of departure in determining the vocabulary. This would give a better overview of the diversity of registers and styles in the standard language, and the current sociolinguistic situation would be taken into account. Moreover, the entire Serbo-Croatian vocabulary would not decrease markedly, due to its broad distribution.

7. Consequences

The conclusion I believe can now be drawn that the lexicographic treatment of Serbian and Croatian as variants of the same language would have the following consequences:

User-friendliness:

The aim of the dictionary in question is to present relevant grammatical, semantic and contextual elements of each headword and its translation in a clear manner. The equivalents of the same headword in Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian can differ at times. In respect to this, when data are added concerning different categories (style, etymology, usage, meaning, orthography etc.), the intended clarity is considerably reduced. Due to the equal treatment, the examples of usage with different forms in Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian would have to appear more than once in the same entry.

Precision:

If a complete account were to be given of all Serbo-Croatian standard languages in one bilingual dictionary, four relationships would have to be taken in the consideration. (Serbo-Croatian-Dutch, Serbian-Dutch, Croatian-Dutch and Bosnian-Dutch). Due to the large number of references, different comments and descriptions, the risk of being inconsistent and making mistakes and omitting relevant data would be increased.

Sociolinguistic and political reasons:

For the last few years, Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian have been officially three separate languages in three independent states. With respect to this, the title 'Serbo-Croatian' would trigger not only a contradictory message, but it could evoke conflicting emotions. Even with a different title, the mixing of Serbo-Croatian languages in the same dictionary could be perceived as a provocative socio-political gesture.

Realisation:

The making of such Serbo-Croatian-Dutch dictionary would take a long time due to the amount of data that should be taken into account. The co-operation of more experts would be needed than for the realisation of separate dictionaries. In short, it would become a very expensive project.

8. Conclusion

On the basis of the material presented here I suggest an alternative approach to the production of bilingual dictionaries for the Serbo-Croatian speaking area, which is one lexicographic system, following two (or more) different language norms. When one dictionary, or a segment of it, is produced for one of the standard languages, it is not difficult to adapt it for other standard languages. The execution of this task requires the same lexicographic system and single lexicographic software. The editors would have to adapt to the other norm only that part of the corpus which differs or is not included in the data processed by the compiler. In this way the result is actually two – or more –

dictionaries for the price of one, plus an additional cost for each editor. But these costs should not be too great.

On the basis of these 'pre-processed' separate data-bases, in the way I have just suggested, it should be quite easy to make a single digitalized dictionary including all possible variations/languages, which will be of special interest for publishers outside the Serbo-Croatian linguistic area. In addition to the already existing separate databases, the production of such a dictionary will require some extra collaboration of the compiler with an expert in computerised database publishing. Due to developments in technology it is only in this way that the Croatian and the Serbian languages can be peacefully, equitably and harmlessly united in a single language community.

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