Anita Peti-Stantić, *Jezik naš i/ili njihov: Vježbe iz poredbene povijesti južnoslavenskih standardizacijskih procesa.* Zagreb, Croatia: Srednja Europa, 2008. 495 pp.

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This book examines one of the most complex linguistic and cultural problems in the Slavic world, the case of literary languages in former Yugoslavia. The large amount of relevant scholarship devoted to this field has for many years attempted to answer one question: how many literary (standard) languages are there? This question entails several other questions concerning the existence or non-existence of this or that language, literariness and linguistic intelligibility, language and nationhood, and so on. As a result, there are, especially in the Croatian and Serbian literature, an enormous number of books that focused their study on this particular issue. When confronted with a work entitled *Language, Ours and/or Theirs*, one expects a similar dispute marshalling one or another sort of argumentation to demonstrate either that a Serbo-Croatian language does or does not exist. This is, however, not the case, as the book in question has a completely different nature.

Although the monograph takes for granted that there *are* distinct literary languages, Croatian and Serbian (even though there exists *at the same time* a "dialect continuum" enabling unbroken communication between individuals speaking the two languages), the argumentation is not determined by this issue. It rather offers an in-depth insight into the sociolinguistic reality of more or less conscious codification processes applied to Croatian, Serbian, and Slovenian (the latter is however not relevant to the Serbo-Croatian conflict). It tries to exemplify how consciousness of the existence of a particular language–both as a tool of communication for a community and as a tool for defining (and thus establishing) a community (in virtue of that language, and its symbolic power), was emerging in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. We stress that this period is important insofar as it preceded the

National Revival in the 19th century and thus the final codification of literary languages, Croatian, Serbian, and Slovenian. Therefore, the issue of *identity* and *otherness*, constructed *in* language and *by* language, is taken into consideration. The book also highlights the problem of spoken vs. written codes and repercussions of this dualism for the idea of language. It, further, deals with some important historical figures—a few of them unjustly forgotten—who influenced the standardization processes in the cultures in question.

It has to be said that the monograph is very complex both in terms of the variety of problems and in terms of the variety of types of data taken into consideration. In this review I am only concentrating on some of the aspects and, at the end, I summarize them and try to give a conclusion with some additional remarks.

The author, in the introduction and in the first chapter, seeks to establish a new (sub)discipline, *comparative historical standardology* or *comparative historical sociolinguistics* that would be able to reject a traditional, separatist (i.e., exclusively linguistic) approach. Accordingly, Peti-Stantić questions another traditional dualism, namely the *internal* versus *external* history of language. As a matter of fact this is not a new approach in Croatian philology, since there is already a firm tradition, though not called *sociolinguistic*, of such a multidimensional history of language; see for instance studies by Milan Rešetar, Eduard Hercigonja, Josip Vončina, Zlatko Vince, Josip Bratulić, and many others. It is of course a right decision since dealing exclusively with the language-internal sphere, without taking into consideration the external circumstances in which the language "lived", makes an analysis incomplete.

The second chapter is entirely devoted to definitions, and a sociolinguistic approach is specified with all the relevant terminology and references. A highly instructive distinction, that between *language community* and *literary language community*, is proposed.[1] All this, alongside additional clarifications concerning nation-building processes (taken from theoretical works by historians and anthropologists, such as Anderson or Hobsbawm), helps us to grasp how one can speak of *one dialect* and *multiple literary languages* based on this dialect.

[1] The former concerns the level of communications or linguistic base, the latter traditions of literacy or the cultural-civilizational superstructure.

Moreover, social and political factors lead to another important and relevant distinction: *literary* versus *standard language* (the former refers to all pre-standard periods, i.e., periods before, the 19th century when national identity was at last implemented, the latter concerns the 19th and 20th centuries).

In the last portions of this chapter, some texts related to the proposed comparison are discussed. According to the author, in order to discover the history of a language it is important not only to deal with belles lettres and with the linguistic literature itself, i.e., grammars and lexicography, but also with multi-functionality of stylistic expression: liturgical texts, chronicles, legal texts, deeds of donations, wills and oaths, and many other sorts of text written in vernaculars. Peti-Stantić does not limit herself exclusively to texts that explicitly define the social role of a language (and thus the attitudes to the vernacular of the region in question) but also takes up texts that do not mention a language but which, solely by their presence, validate and popularize among interlocutors this or that language. All the genres mentioned are to some extent taken into consideration in the further chapters of the book.

In the third chapter, entitled "Time and Space" basic differences between the status of language in *Slavia Romana* and *Slavia Orthodoxa* are described in a multidimensional approach. The first problem confronted is of theoretical nature: the synchronic versus diachronic dualism that underlies a great deal of linguistic study. Following Jakobson's works, the author rejects that attitude (as does, for instance, cognitive linguistics, albeit for different reasons) and states that synchrony, too, cannot be taken as static and non-processual.

Secondly, the problem of the duality of spoken and written languages in the *Slavia Romana* and *Slavia Orthodoxa* regions is introduced. While in the former area Latin as a liturgical and literary language was felt by the speakers concerned to be *no one's* (it was from ancient Rome), in the latter Church Slavic was *everyone's* (it was Slavic, close to the Slavic vernaculars) (135–36). This, alongside other socio-political and cultural circumstances, will give rise to two essentially different codifications: one in the Croatian (and Slovenian) case, and the other in the Serbian case. As a matter of fact, after having read this chapter I was expecting that this topic would become the most important topic of the book or at least that it would be developed to some extent.

The third problem in this chapter concerns the policy of the Roman Catholic Church and that of the autocephalous Serbian Orthodox Church. Since the first was conducting missionary work in order to convert non-Catholics and thus was searching for a convenient language, the second aimed at preservation of Serbianness, Orthodoxy, and Serbian language. As a result, and as a response to the Protestant glorification of the vernaculars, within the Catholic Church the štokavian dialect-called either Illyrian or *slovinski*.[2] In the following discussion the issue of the name of the language is emphasized both from the perspective of Papal non-Slavic envoys in the Balkans and from the perspective of the natives. Within the realm of the Serbian Church the situation was completely different because of the very status of Church Slavic in the Serbian redaction (and the marginalization of vernaculars). That situation started to change only in the course of the 18th century, when a hybrid of Russian Church Slavic was introduced.

In chapter four, "Liturgical Texts", prayer books and sermons are taken into consideration. Their status, as the author says, is important as they preserve, in written form, vernaculars of the regions they come from. Moreover, they represent a "bridge between the language of a *common people* and language of *high literature*" (165). From the Croatian side both the štokavian and kajkavian traditions are elaborated (as well as the interdialect of the Ozalj Circle), from the Slovenian side we read traditions of Matija Kastelec and Janez Svetokriški. It is strange that there are no Serbian sermons in this chapter although they were present in Serbian medieval culture and played an important role in Serbian baroque literature. Gavril Stefanović Venclović for instance used the Serbian vernacular in sermons while utilizing the hybrid of Russian Slavonic and Serbian for other sorts of literature. This is a very relevant sociolinguistic problem, one that is mentioned many times in the book.

In the fifth chapter the school system in the South Slavic areas is elaborated. The author justly states that "education, i.e., an intellectual superstructure, is a fundamental precondition for the development of a literary language" (451), it is so in terms of spreading both the ability

[2] The former was adopted by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and was assigned to serve as a tool for Catholicization.

to *use* a multifunctional language and the *consciousness* of that language that, as a result, influences national consciousness and identity. I have no doubt that education should be always taken into account when dealing with literary languages. Here, unlike in the previous chapter, plenty of information about the distinction between the *Slavia Romana* (Croatia, Slovenia) and *Slavia Orthodoxa* (Serbia) is introduced. The author shows how different the two systems were: whereas the former was under the control of the Papal authority, the latter was traditionally directed, again, toward the preservation of habitual values of Orthodoxy. Only in the 18th century are firm changes introduced both in terms of a new liturgical and literary language (Russian Church Slavonic) and in terms of establishing a state-controlled educational system.

In chapter six another important issue concerning literary language is elaborated, namely copying activity by scribes and printers and their publishing houses. Some instances are taken into consideration (Dubrovnik activity, Protestant publishers in Urach, printers in Zagreb and in Cetinje, in Venice, in Goražde). Peti-Stantić deals in detail with one of the most controversial problems in Croatian-Serbian relations, namely the case of the language of Dubrovnik (288–93). Referring only to a selection of writings on this topic, the author—following her own interpretation of Ivić's works—concludes that the very term *lingua seruiana* that was utilized for Dubrovnik's idiom (and was taken by many Serbian linguists as a firm argument that the language is in fact Serbian), should not be understood in national terms, but rather in terms of the Cyrillic script.[3]

In chapter seven, the most extensive, the author deals with ideas of a cultural-linguistic nature which appeared before the 19th century and which influenced the consciousness of language as literary language that was chosen to develop an imaginary of the South Slavic communities. The ideas *of* language and expressed *by* language are here perceived as driving force, for standardization. Any idea of a

[3] As far as the dispute itself is concerned, Peti-Stantić is very delicate and her argumentation is rational and reasonable. This is unfortunately not the case for many linguists from both sides in their discussions as they often, in order to prove that the language is either Croatian or Serbian, use one-sided premises and in many instances aggressive discourse.

more or less defined community (ethnic, ecclesial, national, or class community) creates the need for a language for this community. This seems to be a trivial thesis, elaborated in many studies, but very few of them have spoken of an imaginary created by symbolic power *encoded* into language. I see in this book an attempt not only to open up a historical-linguistic study to external circumstances (this is, as I said, nothing new in Croatian studies) but also rather to show that these circumstances existed because they were parallel to the creation of the imaginary of the community (the imaginary is in fact responsible for co-creation of these circumstances).

In this chapter some less known figures are also taken into consideration (Vinko Pribojević and Markantun de Dominis), and one very well known one, Juraj Križanić. The author observes that they represent similar ideas leading towards a unified language and culture, and thus they could be interpreted as representing a logical line of one concept. Further, the Protestant circles in the Slovenian and Croatian areas are taken into account (it is justly underlined that Protestantism in fact influenced linguistic consciousness also in the Catholic ideology). At the end the situation in 18th-century Serbia is treated, where there is a struggle between two languages (Russian-Slavonic and Serbian vernacular) that will eventually lead to the rejection of the former and the standardization of the latter.

The last chapter provides a list of all linguistic literature—grammars, lexicons, dictionaries—published (or in manuscripts) from the 16th Century up to the 1830's.

The book represents an extensive study of the history of languages in the former Yugoslav lands. Yet this is neither a history of literary languages, nor a history of vernaculars, but rather a history of circumstances in which languages showed up and vernaculars existed. This is a history of ideas represented in texts written in various kinds of codes. This in turn leads to a study of the very idea (the imagination) of the language which serves as a tool for the social (and thus national) homogenization. The author turns from language to discourse about the language. And it is important to remember this because without such a discourse, and without any consciousness that such

discourse existed, it is impossible to *imagine* any community, and thus any literary language.[4]

Another advantage of the book is that it shows how complex the problem of the codification of languages is, in particular for languages without strict linguistic borders. Since the standardization of literary languages is so multifaceted, all these circumstances have to be taken into consideration, as must also *language use*. Only in practical use does a language become a language, and only in virtue of such practice can a multifunctional standard be disseminated and thus accepted as a universal tool of communication. The variety of data and the variety of problems are thus an advantage of the book.

On the other hand, however, I have an impression—perhaps too intuitive—that the chapters, although interrelated in many respects, are *not* sufficiently unified in one aim, and thus represent rather more or less elaborated *images* of what the codification of the languages is and how it should be analyzed. Maybe my impression results from the fact that many topics are started and then left aside (e.g., the very idea of spoken and written language, the problem of names of languages, the problem of boundaries,[5] while others are too lengthily described as if they belonged to a different book (biographies and adventures of historical figures, hermeneutic interpretations of some texts relevant to a different kind of study, the problem of the status of language in Dubrovnik when scribes and printers are concerned, etc.).[6]

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[4] The benefit of the book is that it is not a separatist study of linguistic reality in the region where one vernacular, the štokavian dialect, gave rise to multiple literary languages. This has to be emphasized since a great deal of recent Croatian scholarship has to be emphasized since a great deal of recent Croatian scholarship has tended either to ignore perspectives from the Serbian areas or to discredit them.

[5] This seems to be much more complicated than that of East and West. Indeed, the problem concerning borders (not only the border between *Slavia Romana* and *Slavia Orthodoxa*) comes back again in some instances, for example, when dealing with the Dubrovnik case.

[6] One could ask why the Dubrovnik case is chosen for such an analysis as similar problems (provoking similar conflicts) are to be found in Bosnia and in the štokavian parts of Dalmatia (as a matter of fact the author refers to both regions when dealing with the writings of the Bosnian Franciscans and with Kačić-Miošić). Of course, any study has the right to be selective, but it should tell the reader why such or such selection has been made.

The beginning of the book, including introduction, seems to open up the problem both of diglossia and of borders but in the next chapters these disappear to some extent. In this respect it has to be mentioned that Dante's manifesto on the Italian language *De vulgari eloquentia*, claimed to have shown the way for "all linguistic standardizations in the Western world" (109), is not complete if one does not take into consideration that he himself and many of his contemporaries used two languages with different stylistic capacity. This in turn resulted in the very term *poet* in *Vita Nuova* referring exclusively to those writing in Latin, not in Italian (Italian "poets" are called *rimatore* or *dicitore per rima*[7]). Inability to understand this issue may influence many other simplifications. It is for instance hard to imagine that, as Milan Moguš's thesis is reaffirmed here, the language used by Fran Krsto Frankopan "grew up from the vernacular which was in use in his estates" (353) and, thus, was indeed a language spoken by people living in his estates. As if there were no difference between social strata (as a matter of fact, the dualism language of nobility versus language of the common people is another sociolinguistic-historical problem still open).

Finally, I would like to point out that the very term *sociolinguistics* is here, as in a great deal of Croatian practice, used in a specific sense, referring not to the study of *languages of social groups* but to the study of external circumstances that accompanied the emergence of literary languages and the conceptions that underlie that emergence. This is, of course, an equally relevant sort of sociolinguistic study. One could, however, imagine that linguistic research on social groups historically might be an excellent supplement for what we still do *not* know about the languages of the region. This would in turn lead to a more complete knowledge of the literary and non-literary codes, as well as the styles and genres, that preceded the formation of the standard language and its ability to function in the modern world.[8] It could also, on purely theoretical and methodological level, help to re-establish a natural unity between history of language and history of literature.

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[7] See Jacob Burckhardt's book *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860). In Polish translation: Burckhardt 1965: 318.

[8] One could ask why approaches to standardization do not generally take into account the development of genres

This book is, undoubtedly, an important step forward towards such a multidisciplinary approach.

Reference

Burckhardt, Jacob. (1965 [1860]) *Kultura odrodzenia we Włoszech. Próba ujęcia*. Tr. Maria Kreczowska. Warsaw: Czytelnik.

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