

Reviews

Senahid Halilović (chief of the project), Mehmed Kardaš, Amela Ljevo-Ovčina, and Emira Mešanović-Meša. *Bosanskohercegovački lingvistički atlas I: Fonetika* [Bosnian-Herzegovinian linguistic atlas I: Phonetics]. Sarajevo: Slavistički komitet, 2020. 428 pp. ISBN 978-9958-648-28-1. Available at: https://slavisticki-komitet.ba/Bosanskohercegovački_lingvisticki_atlas.pdf.

Reviewed by Ronelle Alexander

Dialectology, in the broadest sense, studies language variation. Although the term “dialect” can have several referents, it most often denotes traditional rural speech, as unaffected as possible by interference from the standard language or other contact elements. Linguists normally record this speech in situ, either by immersing themselves in the local speech through extensive residence (and then writing a full grammar of this local speech system), or by visiting a number of different areas and then comparing the results along different parameters. The most consistent and reliable way to undertake the latter is first to draw up a network of locations that is presumed to give a relatively thorough geographical coverage, then to make a detailed outline of the desired data (usually as a list of words which contain the desired phonemes or morphemes), and finally to record (to the extent possible) comparable data in each locale. The fact that the data outline is commonly called a questionnaire conjures up the unfortunate image of interrogation. Although there is sometimes no other way to elicit the desired item than by asking a direct question, much of the work can be done by simply directing conversation towards topics in which the desired forms might reasonably be uttered.

The resulting data can be mined for studies analyzing specific questions, but such data are most frequently presented to the public en masse in the form of a dialect atlas. This is a comprehensive volume containing a large number of maps, usually with some sort of commentary. Each map is devoted to one of the data items, and each of the relevant responses is displayed on the map at the geographical point where it was recorded. Although it takes a great amount of work to collate the data and construct these maps, the result is highly satisfying, allowing the reader to visualize dialectal differentiation in a vivid and direct manner.

In Slavic countries, the socialist period was particularly productive in terms of dialect atlases, largely due to the extensive support provided by socialist governments (for the correspondingly extensive amount of work such an enterprise requires); and this resulted in the publication of atlases for most of the Slavic languages, though of various formats and with a varying extent of coverage. A notable lacuna was the language formerly called Serbo-Croatian. Although Serbo-Croatian dialectology was a vibrant, active, and highly respected discipline throughout Yugoslavia's lifetime (and especially during the socialist period), conditions were not conducive to the production of an atlas which would cover the full range of what is now called BC(M)S. The difficulties were both practical and theoretical: not only was scholarly collaboration across the country hampered by the lack of inter-republic coordination and the increasing decentralization of the federation, but dialectologists themselves were strongly influenced by the interwar "deans" of dialectology, Aleksandar Belić in Serbia and Stjepan Ivšić in Croatia, both of whom disdained questionnaire work as excessively mechanical and artificial, and insisted their students instead gather data by the immersion method.

There may be (or may have been) some justification for this point of view, but most dialectologists are sufficiently adept at fieldwork to make the data collection more natural than mechanical, and they also develop the intuition needed to distinguish "authentic" responses from "artificial" ones. However, it is indeed important to note that both methods are necessary to obtain maximal information about dialects. The immersion method, which allows the writing of a comprehensive grammar of the dialect, not only provides cultural context, but also descriptions of syntax (and indeed of all linguistic data beyond the level of what can be illustrated by single-word examples). Still, when it comes to the nuts and bolts of language (phonology, morphology, and the lexicon), there is nothing more impressive than a solidly constructed dialect atlas, and nothing quite so satisfying as the visual and intellectual pleasure of a well-drawn dialect map.

It is a joy, then, to hear of the publication of volume 1 (*Fonetika*) of the *Bosanskohercegovački lingvistički atlas*, available online in PDF format. The data, representing 230 villages, are drawn largely from material gathered between 1975 and 1986, some published then and the rest retained in archives. Six more villages were investigated in 2016–17, four for the first time and two as a follow-up. In his foreword, the director of the project, Senahid Halilović, acknowledges the "significant changes in the dialectal situation due to population movements" occasioned by the wars of succession but asserts that the two sets of data are sufficiently comparable to allow for the preparation of a linguistic atlas. It is highly doubtful that the very precise and close-grained variation displayed on the maps now being presented, maps admittedly drawn from pre-war data, is a truthful representation of the current post-migration situation (nor does Halilović make such a claim; all he says is that the

small amount of new information gathered in 2016–17 is “comparable”). What is important is that the data are consistent.

The metadata preceding the actual maps is thorough. First, there are three different listings of the sites investigated (each ordered differently), followed by two lists of personnel responsible for the data: one list identifies authorship of the data (who did the actual investigation and recording of data), and the other identifies authorship of individual maps (who was responsible for collating the data and creating the map). Second, there is a full description of the transcription system used, which takes care to note that it is consistent with the transcription system used in those European atlases in which Bosnian material is represented. Finally, there is a full list of the lexemes on the questionnaire (with translation into English, French, German, and Russian). There is also an extensive appendix, a 32-page alphabetical list containing every single form listed on any map (in phonetic transcription) with reference to the map which displays it, and English, French, German, and Russian summaries of Halilović's foreword.

It is the maps themselves, of course, which constitute the core of any atlas. These are introduced by a map delineating boundaries of the four basic dialect groups (East Bosnian, East Herzegovinian, Western, and Posavian). The fact that the latter group includes only two of the 230 villages investigated is a sad reminder of the costs of the breakup, as the major part of this historically very important dialect group lies to the north of the Sava, in the Slavonian section of Croatia; consequently, it is now under the purview of Croatian dialectologists and not “available” to those in Bosnia.

However, these Bosnian dialectologists have done a masterful job with their own material. The introductory section includes two more maps, on which are plotted all 230 of the investigated points, with the numbers and abbreviated names of each rendered in one of three colors. This same color scheme, with green representing Bosniak villages (100 in all), red representing Serbian villages (80 in all), and blue representing Croatian villages (50 in all), is carried through on all the maps (and does appear, by the way, to represent the pre-war distribution of ethnicity). Each of the 181 maps is devoted to a particular questionnaire item, with 63 of them devoted to vocalic phenomena and 118 to consonantal phenomena. The presentation of each map covers two pages: the first gives a list of all the responses to the relevant question, followed by linguistic and etymological commentary, and the second contains the map itself. A further feature of each map page is the presence of four pie charts to the left, intended to give a bird's-eye view of the distribution of the several reflexes. The first depicts the overall distribution, and each of the subsequent three depicts the distribution within the set of villages ascribed to each of the three ethnicities.

At first glance, it may seem excessive to pay such detailed attention to ethnic differentiation. Such differentiation, however, is a fact of life in post-Dayton

Bosnia. Furthermore, even in the prewar period, when it was assumed that everyone spoke something akin to Serbo-Croatian, it was well known that such differences existed in dialectal speech. Of course, these differences were at that point marked as characteristic of the speech of Muslims, Catholics, or Orthodox, and not (as they are herein) as characteristic of the speech of Bosniaks, Croats, or Serbs, respectively.

The maps themselves are excellently drawn, making a vast amount of information clearly accessible to the reader. One feature is curious, however: while all maps define the several types of responses to the question being depicted and mark each village on the map with the relevant symbol, only some provide a further level of graphic information. This further level consists in the colored shading (usually yellow) of the area of one particular response, which functions to set this area clearly off from the remainder (a very few instances use two or even three different colors). There is no reasoning given, nor any that could be intuited, as to why only some maps are constructed this way, so it remains a head-scratcher. All the maps are valuable, though, with or without the added value of what amounts to the drawing of an isogloss.

For instance, the map on pp. 164–65 is intended to show which localities preserve the palatal *L* in *ulje* ‘oil’ and which turn it into *j* (*uje*); but it also lets us see that a large proportion of all places in Bosnia say neither one but use a different vocabulary item, *zejtin* (which came in through Turkish). The map on pp. 202–03 gives us data to test the old stereotype about the word for ‘coffee’, which is that Muslim Bosniaks say *kahva*, Croats say *kava*, and Serbs *kafa*. In fact, there is a significant correlation between ethnic identification and choice of ‘coffee’ words, but it is far from being 100%.

In sum, this first atlas to appear within the larger “central South Slavic” region is a very welcome addition to scholarship, and the compilers are to be congratulated. One awaits further volumes with great anticipation.

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