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# The Dialects of Panslavic, Serbocroatian, and Croatian: Linguistic Taxonomies in Zagreb, 1836–1997

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**Abstract**

If linguistic nationalism presupposes a homogenous national language, then "dialect" taxonomies become interesting objects of study. This article examines three instances of linguistic nationalism published in Zagreb. The three texts, published in 1836, 1919, and 1995, come from (1) Ljudevit Gaj and Jan Kollár, (2) Dragutin Prohaska, and (3) Miro Kačić. The different texts propound three quite different taxonomies of "dialects" within the imagined national language. Changing strategies of dialect classification imply different understandings of the national language, reflecting in turn changing political circumstances. The Panslavism of 1836 gave way in 1919 to interwar Yugoslavism, or alternatively Serbo-Croatism, which in 1995 then gave way to Croatian particularist nationalism. The article ends with speculations about future linguistic taxonomies.

**Keywords**

Linguistic nationalism; national awakening; dialects, Panslavism; Serbo-Croat; Croatian; Zagreb

This article compares three different incarnations of linguistic nationalism, as articulated in three texts published in Zagreb. The first appeared in 1836, the second in 1919, and the third in 1995. Though all three discuss at length some vision of national language and/or national literature, the three texts imagine both the nation and its language in very different ways. Furthermore, all three texts also grant an important role to the "dialects" of the national language. This study analyzes linguistic nationalism by comparing the three dialect taxonomies. It suggests that dialect taxonomies illuminate linguistic nationalism; indeed, in the specific case of intellectuals based in Zagreb, studying dialect taxonomies may shed more light than studying the imagined "national languages" themselves. This study also provides a case study in social construction of linguistic nationalism, arguing that anachronistic nationalist tropes misrepresent the historical record.

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This study contributes to the intellectual history of linguistic nationalism. In the context of East-Central Europe, intellectual histories of linguistic nationalism tend to start with the thought of Johann Gottfried von Herder. Numerous scholars have discussed "Herder's equation of language with nation," (Kamusella 2009, 46, 49, 539) or alternatively "the Herderian equation of language and ethnicity" (Smith et al. 1998, 126; Curta 2001, 12). Indeed, the tendency to conflate nation and language, which George Schöpflin summarized as "the equation of language, nation and state" (Schöpflin 2000, 343), has often been formulated as an actual equation, complete with a mathematical symbol. "The nationalist discourse," according to Peter Auer, posits "the equation one (standard) language = one nation = one territory = one state" (Auer 2005, 11). Tomasz Kamusella has also summarized "the normative isomorphism of language, nation and state" with the "handy algebraic-like equation language = nation = state" (Kamusella 2022, 212, xiv, 66).

Several scholars have theorized about the historical processes that create "national languages" (Haugen 1966; Joseph 1987; Hroch 1994). Linguistic conflict, as Peter Burian once observed, arises primarily over the linguistic choices made in "office and school" (Burian 1970, 87), where the important issue is not the spoken vernacular, but the literary standard employed in textbooks, written examinations, reports, filing systems, and other forms of paperwork. Literary standards in turn arise from complex processes of standardization, codification, and elaboration.

Many prominent sociolinguists have linked these codification and standardization processes to the language/dialect dichotomy, arguing that such processes transform "dialects" into "languages." An influential textbook by Richard Hudson, for instance, proclaims that "whether some variety is called a language or a dialect depends on how much prestige one thinks it has, and for most people this . . . depends on whether it is used in formal writing" (Hudson 1996, 32). Einar Haugen, in a much-cited article, similarly declared that "a dialect may be defined as an undeveloped language. It is a language that no one has taken the trouble to develop into what is often referred to as a 'standard language.'" Haugen even devised a generalizable stage theory suggesting among other things that "selection of norm" and "codification of form" are "crucial features in taking the step from 'dialect' to 'language'" (Haugen 1966, 927, 933). Haugen's ideas, furthermore, have influenced nationalism scholars: John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith reprinted Haugen's article in an anthology devoted to nationalism (Haugen 2000).

Several nationalism theorists have also emphasized the importance of standardization and homogenization. Eric Hobsbawm, for example, emphasized that national languages arose from "attempts to devise a standardized idiom out of a multiplicity of actually spoken idioms," alluding to the "problems of standardizing and homogenizing national grammar and orthography" (Hobsbawm 1992, 61, 54). Ernst Gellner similarly insisted that national languages required a "standardized linguistic medium, transmitting information contained in manuals" (Gellner 1994, 41), while Benedict Anderson emphasized "stabilized print-languages" which "gave a new fixity to language" (Anderson 2006, 45–46). If national languages must be homogenized, however, linguistic diversity becomes a problem: are people with a nonstandard dialect still speaking the "national language"?

All three of the Zagreb texts emphasized the importance of "dialects" within their putative national languages. However, all three Zagreb texts, in defiance of Hudson and Haugen, imagined those "dialects" as written, rather than spoken, explicitly attributing to them extensive literary traditions. Insofar as the notion of "dialects" with literary traditions contradicts modern sociolinguistic theory, modern sociolinguistic theory proves irrelevant to understanding the linguistic ideologies produced in Zagreb.

Hudson and Haugen, of course, do not speak for all of sociolinguistics, and other linguistic schools define the language/dialect dichotomy in different ways. Raf van Rooy's outstanding historical survey of the "conceptual pair" ultimately identified seven "main interpretations" of the dichotomy, each associated with a defining criterion (van Rooy 2020, 147, 148). This very diversity of definitions, however, reflects a disciplinary confusion surrounding the language/dialect dichotomy, the extent of which may surprise nonlinguists.

A short survey of linguistic reference works documents a collective failure to define any objective difference between "languages" and "dialects." Circular logic in the 1960 *Dictionary of Linguistics*, for example, defined a dialect as "a specific form of a given language . . . showing sufficient differences from the standard or literary form of that language . . . to be considered a distinct entity, yet not sufficiently distinct from the other dialects to be regarded as a different language" (Pei and Gaynor 1960, 56). Mario Pei, one of the authors of the *Dictionary of Linguistics*, apparently recognizing the inadequacy of this definition, commented in the subsequent *Glossary of Linguistic Terminology* that "the distinction between language and dialect is often difficult to formulate" (Pei 1966, 67–68). In 1992, William Bright's *International Encyclopedia of Linguistics* concurred: "it has not been easy to define 'dialect' or to distinguish it from 'language'" (Bright 1992, 349). Other

reference works invoke singularly unhelpful criteria. Kirsten Malmkjær's 1991 *Linguistics Encyclopedia* defined a "dialect" as "any user-defined variety, that is, any variety associated with speakers of a given type, whether geographically or otherwise defined" (Malmkjær 1991, 93–94), while David Crystal's 1992 *Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Language and Languages* proposed "a language variety in which the use of grammar and vocabulary identifies the regional or social background of the user" (Crystal 1992, 101). Robert Trask's 1999 *Key Concepts in Language and Linguistics* defined it as "a more or less identifiable regional or social variety of a language" (Trask 1999, 75) while Howard Jackson's 2007 *Key Terms in Linguistics* suggested a "variety of language, including vocabulary and grammar, spoken in a defined geographical area" (Jackson 2007, 83). Both an isolate such as Basque and a language family such as Slavic satisfy such definitions. Are not Basque and Slavic more or less identifiable, in possession of vocabulary and grammar, and associated with certain speakers and/or an identifiable geographical region?

The difficulty of defining "a dialect," or distinguishing it from "a language," has not, however, noticeably prevented linguists from invoking the dichotomy. Hundreds of scholars have shirked the task of definition by invoking a famous epigram: "A language is a dialect with an army and a navy [*A shprakh iz a dialect mit an armey un flot*]" (Weinreich 1945, 13). Humor distracts reader and author alike from the use of problematic analytical terms: for many scholars, linguistic theory has, in a surprisingly literal sense, become a joke (Maxwell 2018b). Confusion in linguistics, however, offers historians an opportunity.

The history of nationalism suggests an alternate approach to the dichotomy. Insofar as "national languages" require standardization and codification, linguistic diversity threatens the national project. Nationalists tame the problem of linguistic diversity by invoking the word "dialect," as if it were a magic spell. While a "dialect" differs from the standard literary "language," the act of declaring any differences "merely dialectal" renders those differences unimportant, enabling the national language or its adherents to claim possession.

The language/dialect dichotomy, from the perspective of nationalism theory, thus articulates some vision of the national language, and, by extension, of the nation. In this reading, declarations that this or that variety "is" or "is not" a language are best analysed as value judgements supporting some national project, not as factual claims.

This article, therefore, expresses neither opinion nor curiosity about the "correct" linguistic classification, or about whether a particular variety ought

to be classified as "dialect" or a "language." Nor indeed does it express opinions about the accuracy of alternate terms, such as "subdialect," "language cluster," "polycentric language," and so on. Even a hypothetical perfect terminology would not be relevant to this study, because the usage of historical actors in Zagreb might not conform to it. This analysis takes an uncompromisingly agnostic attitude toward any and all pretentions to taxonomic accuracy.

It instead examines dialect taxonomies as windows into how historical actors imagined the national language. Constructing taxonomies of languages and dialects is not a progressive science in which each generation builds on the achievements of its predecessors. Instead, taxonomies are perpetually evolving in response to changing political circumstances. As such, they are interesting objects of study not for dialectologists, but for historians of nationalism.

This analysis investigates linguistic nationalism in Zagreb by comparing three texts published at intervals of roughly 80 years. All three come from educated intellectuals articulating some vision of the national language. The first text imagined a Pan-Slav language transcending the frontiers of the Habsburg monarchy. The second posited a Serbo-Croatian language within the Yugoslav context. The third and final text imagines a Croatian language separate and distinct from Serbian, though extending beyond the frontiers of the Croatian Republic. Change is dramatic, yet the narrative also finds continuity.

The analysis is cognizant of terminological nuance, so the narrative will as necessary provide the original text in the original spelling. This narrative pays particular attention to the term *narječje* ("dialect," also appearing as *naréčje*, plural *narječa*). This term has cognates in other Slavic languages and has served as puristic alternative to the word "dialect" since at least 1755 (van Rooy and Maxwell 2023). Some scholars have attempted to differentiate the *narječa* from the *dijalekt*; a recent article by Vuk Vukotić even proposed glossing *narječa* into English as "superdialect" (Vukotić 2022, 176). In this analysis, however, the two words usually function as synonyms.

A final terminological issue remains. Though its geographic scope is restricted to Zagreb, which since 1991 has served the Republic of Croatia as its capital city, this study cannot be understood solely or even primarily as a contribution to "Croatian" intellectual history. Intellectuals in Zagreb usually mentioned their "Croatian" loyalties, but often imagined their national "loyalties" in Panslav or Yugoslav terms, rather than as something exclusively "Croatian." Indeed, historical actors sometimes gave the adjective "Croatian" meanings that confound twenty-first century expectations. Avoiding anachronism is difficult, but scholars of taxonomic change must refrain from imposing

contemporary classificatory categories onto the past. This analysis, therefore, seeks wherever possible to avoid the analytical term "Croatian."

## Ljudevit Gaj's Slavic Language and Its Dialects

The first of the three texts, "O Slovstvenoj uzajemnosti medju koleni i naréčji slavenskimi [On Slavic Reciprocity between the Slavic Tribes and Dialects]," has a complicated provenance. It appeared in July 1836 over three issues of the influential journal *Danica Ilirska* (Kollár 1836), the literary supplement to a twice-weekly newspaper *Novine horvatzke*. Both journals were founded and edited by Ljudevit Gaj (1809–1872). The text itself, however, came from an article written by Jan Kollár (1793–1852), a Lutheran pastor then living in Budapest.

Ljudevit Gaj was born in Krapina, in Varaždin county. He studied law in Graz, Pest, and Leipzig. After graduating, he settled in Zagreb and pursued a successful career as a journalist (Coha 2009; Živančević and Frangeš 1975, 53). His timing was fortunate: Viennese elites thought a Slavic newspaper in Zagreb might counterbalance the blossom of Magyar nationalism (Suppan 1996, 123). Gaj also benefitted when Štefan Moyses was appointed the imperial censor in Zagreb, since Moyses generally sympathized with Slavic activism. Indeed, in 1863 he become the first chairman of the *Matica slovenská*, an important Slovak national institution.

Jan Kollár, a Lutheran pastor often remembered as "a poet of Panslavism" (Ginsburg 1942; Kirschbaum 1966) was born in the small town of Mošovce, now in the Slovak Republic, but then in northern Hungary. He was educated mostly at the Lutheran lyceum in Pozsony (today's Bratislava). He is best remembered for his *Sláwy dcera* [The Daughter of Sláwa], first published in 1824 and expanded in 1832, an epic poem in which the male narrator's love for the Slavic nation finds expression in the romantic/sexual love for the daughter of the eponymous Slavic goddess Sláwa (Kollár 1824, Kollár 1832). A literary sensation in its time, *Sláwy dcera* remains a canonical work in the Slovak and Czech literary traditions. Kollár also engaged in literary and folkloric activities typical of early nineteenth century patriots, such as collecting folk songs (Kollár 1835).

Kollár chose the slogan "Slavic Reciprocity" to articulate his national vision. His first essay on Reciprocity appeared in 1836 in the in the Banská Bystrica journal *Hronka: Podtatranská Zábavnice* (Kollár 1836). The essay attracted such attention that in 1837 Kollár expanded it into a German-language book, *Wechselseitigkeit zwischen den verschiedenen Stämmen und Mundarten der Slawischen Nation* [Reciprocity between the Different Tribes and Dialects

of the Slavic Nation] (Kollár 1837), subsequently translated into Russian (Kollár 1840), Serbian (Kollár 1845), Czech (Kollár 1853) and English (Kollár 2009). Gaj's translation, however, is based on the *Hronka* essay. In the *Hronika* essay, Kollár followed the orthographic conventions then current among Slovak Lutherans, which modern scholars variously characterize as "the Biblical language [*bibličtina*]," "Biblical Czech," "Old Czech," "Old Slovak," and "Czechoslovak" (Nábělková 2007, 62). Since those conventions were unfamiliar to the readership of *Danica Ilirska*, Gaj adapted the text for the readers of his Zagreb journal.

Gaj's edition, however, was more than transliteration: Gaj substituted vocabulary, adjusted syntax, and, in a few places, changed the text. Gaj's infidelities as translator, however, must be set against his genuine admiration for Kollár. Gaj met Kollár while studying in Pest and became an ardent disciple. *Danica Ilirska* often showed Kollár's influence. One article from 1835 praised him as a "highly-educated Slav," another from 1837 presented translations of his poetry (Jankovič 1997, 84-85). Kollár, for his part, mentioned "Gay the Croat, journalist" in the expanded version of *Slawy dcera* (Kollár 1832, canto 456).

"O Slovstvenoj uzajemnosti," like many instances of linguistic nationalism before and since, equated nation and language. It differed from twentieth-century linguistic nationalism, however, by positing a single Slavic nation speaking a single Slavic language. Kollár and Gaj posited a "many-tribed nation"; Gaj rendered Kollár's *mnohokmený národ slawský* as the *mnohokoléni narod*." They both characterized the divisions between, for instance, Russians and Poles as merely "tribal" and "dialectal." Gaj, following Kollár, specifically recognized four main tribes, corresponding to four "main, living, educated and literary dialects, namely, Russian, Illyrian, Polish and Czech [*sada živuća izobraženia, i knjige izdavauća narěčja, to jest rusko, ilirsko, poljsko i česko*; the final category in Kollar's original appears as *československé*]. These four "dialects" were in turn divided into "subdialects [*podnaréčja*]," with for example "little Russian [*maloruski*]" assigned to Russian, and Croatian to Illyrian (Kollár 1836a, 114; 1836b 41).

Under Kollár's slogan of "reciprocity," Gaj urged Slavs of all "tribes" to study all the "dialects" of their national language, and thus create a "general Slavic literature [*obće slavensko slovstvo (literaturu)*, from Kollár's *wšeslawskú literaturu*]" (Kollár 1836a, 114; 1836b, 42). When Slavic savants started reading books written in other dialects, they would reap the spiritual reward of serving "our entire nation [*naš cěli narod*]." They would also benefit financially from an expanded book market (Kollár 1836a, 118; 1836b, 47).

Gaj and Kollár additionally foresaw linguistic advantages to reciprocity. Slavs could borrow "purely Slavic [*čisto slavjanski*]" words or phrases from other dialects, thus avoiding Latinisms, Germanisms, Italianisms, and so forth. They criticized efforts at particularist purism, for example, to Russify or Polonize: "wherever there is anything Slavic, all of it is ours [*Gděgod što slavjanskog ima, to je sve naše*]" (Kollár 1836a, 119). At the same time, however, they denied that reciprocity required "universalization or forced mixing of all Slavic dialects to one primary form, as a written language [*universalizaranju i nasilnom směšanju svih slavjanskih naréčjah u jednu glavnu réč, kao pismeni jezik*]." The individual dialects, Gaj and Kollár believed, had grown so distinct, in both philology and distinctive literature, "that one could not expect from frail self-love and human vanity, that any main tribe [*glavno koléno*] will sacrifice its independence and particularity" (Kollár 1836a, 114). Each "dialect," in short, would retain its own literary traditions.

Kollár and Gaj's vision of a single Slavic nation speaking a single Slavic language is best described a "Panslav" national concept, but the term causes misunderstanding. Jan Herkel, the Slovak lawyer who originally coined the term "Panslavism," defined it as "the *unity in literature* among all Slavs [italics in original]," and sought to homogenize Slavic orthography and grammar (Herkel 1826, 4). Nineteenth-century Slavophobes, however, assumed "Panslavism" meant political unification with Russia, which, in the Habsburg context, implied sedition and treason. Habsburg Slavs responded by explicitly distinguishing the literary Panslavism they supported from a "political Panslavism" they rejected. Samuel Hoitsy, for example, insisted in 1843 that "the political Pan-Slavism has no friends among us," even though "there are friends of the literary Panslavism in Hungary" (Hoitsy 1843, 97, 99). In 1861, the prolific journalist Daniel Lichard similarly defended both "literary reciprocity" and "Pan-Slavism" while denouncing "political Pan-Slavism" (Lichard 1861, 5, 7).

Contemporary scholarship, however, usually follows the Slavophobic definition and equates "Panslavism" with political aspirations. Reference works define Panslavism as "the principle or advocacy of political unification for the Slavic peoples" (Atkin, Bidiss, and Tallett 2011, 312) or as "the movement of aspiration for the union of all Slavs or Slavonic peoples in one political organization" (Simpson 1991, 1265). Even modern scholars who differentiate "literary" Panslavism from "political Panslavism" in theory tend to conflate them in practice. Hugo Hantsch, for instance, conceded that Pan-Slavism originally "had no political, but only a literary, meaning," yet subsequently argued that since "Pan-Slavism could reach its goal only if the Austro-

Hungarian monarchy fell to pieces . . . the actions of Pan-Slavs, therefore, had to be hostile to the monarchy" (Hentsch 1965, 24–25). Such definitions clearly do not apply to Kollár and Gaj, who unambiguously insisted that reciprocity "does not consist of politically unifying all Slavs … Slavic reciprocity can still exist when one nation is divided under many scepters" (Kollar 1836a, 114).

Perhaps the central problem, however, is that the Panslavism espoused by Kollár and Gaj pursued literary or linguistic goals without challenging state structures, a form of nationalism that many scholars apparently refuse to contemplate. Many scholars define nationalism as the quest for a state, and struggle to interpret dreams of literary or linguistic unity as "nationalism" (Maxwell and Turner 2020). Nevertheless, Kollár and Gaj invoked the "nation" when calling for Slavic linguistic unity, so it is difficult to avoid viewing them as "nationalists" in some sense.

Since "O Slovstvenoj uzajemnosti" fundamentally remains Kollár's text, the Panslavism it articulates was not indigenous to Zagreb. Gaj nevertheless expressed similar ideas in his own single-authored works. In an 1835 article in *Danica*, for example, Gaj marveled "how great our nation – the biggest nation in Europe – the Slavic nation" was, before using "a linguistic method" to "divide the Slavic language [*jezik*] into its main dialects [*glavna naréčja*]." Switching from linguistic to ethnographic taxonomy, Gaj, citing Dobrovský and Kopitar, posited Illyrian-Russian and Czech-Polish "branches [*sverži, grane*]," each divided into two "tribes [*koljeno*]." The Illyrian *koljeno*, according to Gaj, subsumed as subcategories Slovenes, Croats, Slavonians, Dalmatians, Bosnians, Montenegrins and Serbs (Gaj 1835b, 234-235). In a German-language manuscript dated to 1830/31, furthermore, Gaj proclaimed the existence of "only one south-Slav dialect which divides into three subdialects, namely, Wendish, Serbian and Croatian" (Stančić 1830, 290).

Gaj's influential spelling primer from 1830, the *Kratka osnova Horvatsko-slavenskoga pravopisaňa / Kurzer Entwurf einer kroatisch-slavischen Orthographie* (Gaj 1830) also invoked Kollár's taxonomy. It not only divided the "the Slavic language" into "four main dialects" (Gaj 1830, 21, 22/23) but appealed to "our brave brothers in Styria and Carniola" to put aside the "false patriotism" of Slovene particularism and work so "that the great Slavic language with all its varieties will coalesce" (Gaj 1830, 22/23). Gaj also proposed spelling reforms designed to facilitate communication with Slavs in Bohemia and Poland:

> The educated Bohemian and Pole feels Pan-Slavism (i.e. the inner desire to bring all Slavic brothers to linguistic-literary unity) too deeply for us to abandon hope that a Croatian book, written with this rational orthography, can be read in Bohemia and Poland, etc. (Gaj 1830, 22/23).

Gaj finally demonstrated his Panslavism by calling for an orthography that demonstrated "the kinship of our dialect with other Slavic dialects [*rodbinztva nashega narechja z drugimi Szlovenzkoga narechji*]" specifically Polish, Czech and Lusatian (Gaj 1835a, 42, 48).

Gaj occasionally contested Kollár's pan-Slav vision, but only half-heartedly. Kollár's original text criticized Czechs who only speak and understand Czech, and then analogously criticized particularist-minded Russians, Poles, "etc.," without specifically mentioning Illyrians (Kollar 1836b). Gaj added a passage criticizing "Illyrians who deeply understand and speak only the Illyrian language (dialect) [*jezik (naréčje)*]" (Gaj 1836b, 114). While Kollár consistently classified Illyrian as a "dialect" of the Slavic language, Gaj apparently felt some temptation to bestow upon it the status of a full-fledged "language."

Gaj also elaborated Kollár's vision of the Illyrian dialect. Kollár's original text divided the Illyrian dialect into Croatian and Windic subdialects [*chorwatský* and *windický*], but in Gaj's translation the Illyrian dialect subsumes "Serbian, Croatian, Carniolan and Bulgarian [*u ilirskom do serbskog, horvatskog, krajnskog i bugarskog*]" (Kollár 1836a; 1836b). Kollár neglected Bulgarian, but Gaj insisted on acknowledging Bulgarian subdialectal distinctiveness. Nevertheless, both Gaj and Kollár evidently agreed on classifying Croatian as a "subdialect" of the Illyrian "dialect" of the Slavic language, apparently restricting Croatian to the administrative district immediately surrounding Zagreb, a territory known in German as *Provinzialkroatien*, "Provincial Croatia."

Gaj and Kollár's Panslav concept of a single Slavic language fell within the main stream of Slavic thinking during the 1830s. Imbro Tkalac recalled in his autobiography that when he read Kollár's *Wechselseitigkeit*, he "found expressed therein what I myself thought, but did not know how to express," began viewing "every Slav as a brother, regardless of which branch or tribe he may came from," and "from then on set my gaze on the whole of Slavdom" (Tkalac 1894, 235–236, 239). In the introduction to his 1836 grammar of the "Illyrian dialect," Věkoslav Babukić not only praised Gaj, but attributed to Gaj's example his own desire to attempt a "Slavic Grammar of the Illyrian dialect [*naréčje*]." Babukić consistently posited a South-Slavic linguistic collective larger than Croatian, writing variously of the "Illyrian *naréčje*" and the "*naréčja* of Southern Slavs" (Babukić 1836, v, vii). Babukić also listed

grammars of other "Slavic dialects [*slavjanskih narěčjah*]," including the "Polish dialect" and the "Czech dialect" (Babukić 1836, iii, iv).

Count Janko Drašković (1770–1856), a patriotic reformer from one of Croatia's oldest noble families, showed even more clearly the influence of Gaj and Kollár. In his 1838 popular history *Ein Wort an Iliriens hochherzige Töchter* [A Word to Illyria's High-Born Daughters], a work whose content is better described by its title in Czech translation, *Starši dějepis a nejnowější literární obnowa národu ilirského* [*The Ancient History and Modern Literary Revival of the Illyrian Nation*] (Drašković 1845). Drašković not only posited "four main dialects of the Slavic Collective or Primary Tribes," but explicitly linked them to distinct literatures: "In recent times, the *Slavs* have grouped their various subdialects or language varieties [*Unterdialekte oder Sparch-Varietäten*] into *four* main dialects, and the same number of written or literary languages." Like Gaj and Kollár, Drašković listed the four main dialects as Czechoslovak, Polish, Russian and Illyrian. Drašković then divided Illyrian into "Austrian, Hungarian, Croatian-Slavonian, Serbian, Montenegrin and Turkish parts," claiming specifically that the Illyrian dialect was spoken in "Goriza, Carinthia, Carniola, Istria, Styria, in 8 Hungarian counties, then in Dalmatia, Croatia, Slavonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Turkish-Croatia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Bulgaria and parts of Albania and Macedonia" (Drašković 1845, 20–21, 34). After summarizing Kollár's ideal of Slavic reciprocity, Drašković then explained how "Illyrian literature" contributed to "the progress of Slavic literature" (Drašković 1845, 34).

The Panslavic idea, admittedly, did not enjoy universal support among Southern Slavs. The influential Serbian philologist and folklorist Vuk Karadžić (1787–1864) preferred to imagine a Serbian nation speaking a Serbian language, even if he imagined both in expansive terms. In the famous essay "*Srbi svi i svuda* [Serbs all and everywhere]," originally written in 1836 but first published in 1849, Karadžić argued that Serbian nationality extended to all South Slavs, even if only the Orthodox actually "called themselves Serbs," since Serbian Muslims called themselves "*Turci* [Turks]" and Serbian Catholics called themselves either "after the places where they live, e.g. Slavonians, Bosnians, Dalmatians, Dubrovnikers, etc.," or used "a name God knows, *Illyrians*." Insisting that the Serbian nation contained "five million souls which speak the same language" (Karadžić 1849, 2). Karadžić contrasted this "one nation [*jedan narod*]" with "Russians and Poles and Czechs and all other Slavic nations [*narodi*]" (Karadžić 1849, 7).

Karadžić influentially addressed the internal linguistic diversity of this greater Serbian language with reference to selected isoglosses. The Old Church

Slavonic letter ѣ (yat) has variously transformed into the vowels *e*, *i* and *ije* in different South Slav regions. To use one of Karadžić's examples, the modern forms of the Old Church Slavonic word дѣти ["children"] are variously pronounced as *dete*, *dite*, or *dijete* (Karadžić 1849, 7). The yat isogloss supposedly defines the Ekavian, Ikavaian, and Ijekavian "dialects." South Slavs also use different words for "what," namely *kaj*, *ča*, *što* or *šta*, though scholars often group the variants *što* and *šta* into a single category. Scholars came to define dialects on the basis what might be called "the *kaj* – *štalšto* – *ča* isogloss": those who prefer *kaj* are *kajkavci* [singular *kajkavec*] speaking *kajkavština*, those who say *ča* are *Čakavci* speaking *čakavština*, and so forth. English-language texts often refer to Kajkavian, Štokavian, and Čakavian. Similar terms had previously appeared in Jernej Kopitar's 1811 dictionary (Kopitar 1811, 203) and in Karadžić's 1818 dictionary (Karadžić 1818, 302), though not as part of a formal dialect taxonomy.

The dialect taxonomies defined by these isoglosses quickly became confused. In *Srbi svi i svuda*, for instance, Karadžić conflated the yat isogloss and the *kaj* – *štalšto* – *ča* isoglosses by referring to "*čakavci* (who say *dite*)," and "štokavci (who say *dijete*)" (Karadžić 1849, 2). He also mapped the tripartite *kaj* – *štalšto* – *ča* dialects onto the geographical division between Carinthians, Serbs, and Croats in a passage that implicitly acknowledged the separate language-hood only of Bulgarian.

> southern Slavs with the exception of Bulgarians divide into three: the first are the Serbs, who say *što* or *šta* (and who following the example of *Čakavcima* or *Kekavcima* [sic] can be called *Štokavci*), and at the end of words have *o* instead of *l*; the second group are the *Croats*, who instead of *što* or *šta* say *ča* (and thus are called *Čakavci*) and at the end of words do not change *l* to *o*, and otherwise differ very little from Serbs; the third group are the *Slovenes*, or as we call them the *Kranjci*, who instead of *što* say *kaj* (for which we reason we also call them *Kekavcima* [sic]) (Karadžić 1849, 23).

Overall, however, Karadžić judged all these isoglosses insignificant. Since "anyone can see that these differences, when we discuss the differences between languages and nations, are very small," he specifically concluded that Serbs and Croats "are one nation with two different names" (Karadžić 1849, 19).

In his implicit linguistic taxonomy, Karadžić described the isogloss-based subcategories of his greater Serbian language not as *narječja* but as *govori* [singular *govor*]. He referred not only to the "Čakavian *govor*" (Karadžić 1849,

20) but also to the *govori* of individual regions, for example, the "Syrmian *govor*" and the *govor* of Dubrovnik (Karadžić 1849, 18–19). Strikingly, however, Karadžić once followed Kollár and Gaj by using the word *narječje* in the Panslav fashion. Addressing those Serbs who "say that they are *Croats*, I would say that this name actually belongs only to *Čakavci* ... whose language [*jezik*] differs little from Serbian, but which is closer to Serbian than to any other Slavic dialect [*narječje*]" (Karadžić 1849, 7).

Belief in the essential unity of Southern Slavs also informed Karadžić's efforts at standardization and codification. Of the ten scholars who gathered in Vienna on March 28, 1850, to discuss the standardization of South Slavic, Karadžić was the most prestigious. The resulting Vienna Literary Agreement [*Bečki književni dogovor*], a turning point in the history of South Slavic, opened with the declaration that "*one* nation needs to have *one* literature." The participants declared "that they do not wish to mix dialects to create a new one which does not exist in the nation, but that it is better to choose one of the national dialects [*narodnijeh narječja*] which will be the literary language [*književni jezik*]" ("Književni dogovor," 1850, 215).

The specific dialect chosen in Vienna has attracted diverse scholarly descriptions, sometimes defined through the *kaj – štalšto – ča* isoglosses, sometimes through the yat isoglosses, sometimes through administrative regions, and sometimes through some combination thereof. Dževad Jahić wrote that the assembled literati "proclaimed southern Ijekavian [*južno ijekavsko*] the dialectal basis of the literary language" (Jahić 1999, 40). Branko Franolić that they "decided to choose the *što-ije* dialect as a common literary language" (Franolić 1984, 34), and Robert Greenberg of the "Eastern Herzegovina-type dialect adopted in the 1850 literary agreement" (Greenberg 2004, 28). Snježana Kordić posited "east Herzegovnian Ijekavian [*istočnohercegovački ijekavski*]" (Kordić 2010, 36). Marc Greenberg "Štokavian … in its Ijekavian variety" (Greenberg 2010, 377), Anida Sokol "the *ijekavian* dialect" (Sokol 2015, 90) and Adnan Ajšić "neo-Štokavian" (Ajšić 2021, 6). Tomasz Kamusella described the chosen dialect as "Štokavian-based" (Kamusella 2009, 230). Vuk Vukotić as "a variety of Štokavian" (Vukotić 2022, 180), and Višnja Jovanović as both "Štokavian" and as something "today recognizable under the term Eastern Herzegovinian" (Jovanović 2023, 52). The Vienna Literary Agreement itself, however, described its choice as the "southern dialect [*južno narječje*]," chosen firstly because "most of the nation" supposedly spoke it already, and secondly because it was supposedly closest to Old Church Slavonic ("Književni dogovor" 1850, 215).

On April 3, 1850, a few days after the Vienna meeting, Gaj published the text of the agreement declaration in *Narodne Novine*. Gaj's implicit acceptance of a literary standard justified not in Panslavic terms but with reference to South Slavic particularism foreshadowed subsequent trends in South Slavic linguistic classification. The next section shows that Zagreb literati had abandoned Panslavism by the end of the First World War, and espoused instead quite different dialect taxonomies.

## Dragutin Prohaska's Serbo-Croatian Language and Its Dialects

The second text is a 1919 school textbook written by literary historian Dragutin Prohaska (1881–1964). Born in Osijek, Prohaska received his secondary education in Zagreb and then studied Slavic and Germanic literature at the University of Vienna. After completing his doctoral dissertation in 1905 (Ćavar 2003, 282), he returned to Zagreb and taught at the Royal Gymnasium. He compiled several textbooks and course readers (Nikčević 2003) and wrote literary criticism for a variety of scholarly and literary journals. Prohaska's 1919 textbook, *Pregled Hrvatske i Srpske knjizevnosti* [Overview of Croatian and Serbian Literature, hereafter the *Pregled*], should not be confused with his better known *Pregled savremene hrvatsko-srpske književnosti* [Overview of Contemporary Croato-Serbian literature] from 1921 (Prohaska 1921b), which will not be discussed here.

Prohaska was primarily concerned with literary life and showed little interest in politics, but his engagement with Slavic literature reflected patriotic sentiments. On October 9, 1917, introducing a performance of Ivo Vojnović's 1895 play *Ekvinocij* [Equinox] in Zagreb's national theatre (Vojnović 1895). Prohaska spoke to a large and enthusiastic audience about "The Tragedy of the Yugoslav Mother." Framing the Dubrovnik writer's work in a Yugoslav context helped transform the performance into what Andrew Wachtel called "an unofficial national holiday" (Wachtel 1998, 64). A contemporary account published in Paris reported that "Zagreb glorified its dead and its living, victims of the war, of prisons, and internment camps" (Ibrovac 1917, 649-50).

In 1920, after the establishment of Yugoslav rule in Zagreb, Prohaska accepted a teaching post in Prague at the University of Economics. He contributed to journals with a comparative Slavic focus, notably *Slovanský přehled* and *Slavia* (Marijanović 2004, 305-308) and edited a collection of essays about Czechoslovakia's first President, T. G. Masaryk. Though Prohaska preferred an academic post in Czechoslovakia to a career in Zagreb, he still maintained ties to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia: the Yugoslav embassy apparently employed him as an educational attaché [*prosvetni referent*], a post which involved

greeting Yugoslav exchange students and writing reports for the Yugoslav ministry of education (Sobe 2006, 93).

In many respects, therefore, Prohaska's attitude toward the Slavic world resembled that of Kollár and Gaj. Like his predecessors, his primary interests were literary rather than political; broadly Slavic rather than local or provincial. Prohaska, furthermore, was familiar with the ideals of both Kollár and Gaj. In 1909, he wrote an article commemorating the centenary of Gaj's birth (Prohaska 1909), mentioned "the Czech Kolár [sic]" in a 1914 essay (Prohaska 1914, 363, 386) and in *Pregled* summarized "*slavenski uzajamnost*" (Prohaska 1919, 127).

Prohaska acknowledged that previous generations of Slavs had imagined Slavdom as a single linguistic entity. In a 1911 work on Bosnian literature, Prohaska wrote of sixteenth-century Slavs that they "spoke not of 'a' but of 'the' Slavic [*slavische oder slovinische*] language," resting on

> the vague assumption that all Slavs were a nation. Nobody had any knowledge of the differences between the individual Slavic languages [*Sprachen*]. They considered differences as dialectal [*dialektische*] phenomena, or as 'corrupt' divergences from their own language (Prohaska 1911).

Prohaska also acknowledged Panslavic sentiment in more recent times, analyzing Fyodor Dostoyevsky as "a Panslavic man" (Prohaska 1921a).

Nevertheless, Prohaska's own classification of Slavic, as articulated before the First World War, rejected linguistic Panslavism, even if he did situate South Slavs within a greater Slavic whole. In a 1914 article on the "Slavic Cultural Programme," for instance, he proclaimed South Slavs "spiritually very rich – a branch with many twigs," warning that "false foundations lead the Slavs away from Slavdom" (Prohaska 1914, 149). The bulk of the article, however, referred to "South-slavness [*Südslawenthum*]" or "South-Slavic national character," explicitly detached from other Slavs. When Prohaska claimed that "the South Slavs as a whole gave European culture something of themselves," he posited not Slavdom, but a South Slavic ethnographic and linguistic unit (Prohaska 1914, 145).

Prohaska's *Pregled*, intended for use in Yugoslav schools, focused primarily on literature, rather than linguistic taxonomy. It consists mostly of short biographies of important South Slavic literary figures, often grouped into schools or movements. Prohaska usually classified literary works in terms of a Croatian/Serbian binary, speaking for example of "Croatian books" (Prohaska 1919, 84), "Serbian journals" (Prohaska 1919, 189), a "Croatian dictionary"

(Prohaska 1919, 67), or "Serbian folk songs" (Prohaska 1919, 121). Prohaska attributed the Croatian/Serbian dichotomy to various non-linguistic causes: "Croats and Serbs lived apart from each other in the past, divided by church and state, so their social life was different, and this led to different literatures. … Both literatures developed side by side, often not knowing of the other" (Prohaska 1919, 1). However, he also intermittently acknowledged further regional differences. A section on "The Croatian Catholic Reformation," for example, contained subsections on "Dalmatia and Dubrovnik," "Croatia," "Bosnia," and "Slavonia and Hungary" (Prohaska 1919, 66).

Prohaska's vision of separate Croatian and Serbian literatures attracted some criticism from contemporaries. Literary critic Antun Barac (1894–1955), a future professor of literature at Zagreb University, argued in 1919 that the "problem of literary unity is not just a problem of literary history … but bears a relationship to the national problem generally" (Barac 1919, 145). Barac lamented that "we do not have a unified Yugoslav literature, instead three individual literatures exist: Serbian, Croatian, and Slovene." He attributed such divisions to mistaken thinking: "the justification for separate Slovene, Croatian, and Serbian nationalism rests on signs which are not important, but incidental, accidental" (Barac 1919, 145).

Prohaska's taxonomy also differed from Yugoslavia's 1921 constitution, which in section 1, paragraph 4, declared: "The administrative language of the Kingdom is Serbian-Croatian-Slovene [*Službeni jezik Kraljevnie je srpsko-hrvatsko-slovenački*]," a formula which, following Karadžić and Barac, was intended to include all South Slavs apart from Bulgarians. Prohaska, by contrast, ignored Slovene literature entirely, discussing only literary works characterizable as "Croatian" or "Serbian." If Barac espoused Yugoslavism, what Prohaska articulated might better described as "Serbo-Croatism."

When Prohaska classified literary works as either "Croatian" or Serbian," however, he disassociated his literary and linguistic taxonomies. In the seventeenth century, he wrote, "the Serbian book was still written in the Church Slavonic language [*jezik*], in the eighteenth century, in Russian-Slavic, around the end of the eighteenth century in the national language [*jezik narodni*]" (Prohaska 1919, 102). Evidently, books written in many different languages could still be "Serbian."

Prohaska addressed linguistic classification, as distinct from the classification of literature, in the *Pregled*'s short introduction. There he proclaimed that "Croatian and Serbian literature is a *single whole*, since Croats and Serbs are *one nation* with the same origin and language [*Hrvatska je i srpska književnost* jedna cjelina*, jer su Hrvati i Srbi jedan narod istoga podrijetla i jezika*]"

(Prohaska 1919, 1). Though this passage appears an unambiguous declaration of Serbo-Croatism, some scholars have questioned its sincerity. Observing that Prohaska confronted "the royalist obligation of Serbo-Croat racial and tribal unity," for example, Stanislav Marijanović suggested that Prohaska merely feigned enthusiasm for "the ideological and conceptual unification on the basis of integral Yugoslavism in Karađorđević's Serb-Croat-Slovene state" (Marijanović 2003, 328).

The text of the *Pregled*, as distinguished from the introduction, indeed reveals some ambiguities in Prohaska's linguistic taxonomy. Analysis poses challenges, since Prohaska often used the word "language [*jezik*]" without invoking any linguistic taxonomy. Discussing the sixteenth century, for instance, he wrote that Franjo "Frankopan's language [*jezik*] was neither novel nor pure" (Prohaska 1919, 61). He also claimed that nineteenth-century journalist and writer Janko Jurković tried to "highlight moral ideas and teaching, and use a language [*jezik*] that was as resolute and national as possible" (Prohaska 1919, 159). Such passages evidently refer to prose style. When referring to "language" in the sense of a linguistic taxonomy, however, Prohaska wrote mostly about "the national language [*narodni jezik*]" (Prohaska 1919, 12, 14, 49, 64, 125, 128), a term whose precise referent is inescapably ambiguous. He avoided terms such as "Serbo-Croat," "Croato-Serbian," and "Yugoslav." Even in the introduction, he proposed no single glottonym for the unitary language of "Croats and Serbs."

Yet while Prohaska was coy about the "national language," he was explicit when invoking his preferred taxonomy of its constituent "dialects." He never referred to a "Croatian dialect" or a "Serbian dialect." He occasionally alluded to smaller regional dialects, positing for example a "dialect [*narječja*]" for Dubrovnik, or for Bosnia (Prohaska 1919, 151). Most commonly, however, Prohaska imagined "dialects" in terms of the *kaj – štalšto – ča* distinction popularized by Karadžić, which Prohaska understood quite differently from Karadžić. Karadžić had used the *kaj – štalšto – ča* distinction to describe spoken variants, but Prohaska used it to define distinct literary traditions. He described Gaj's journal *Danica*, for instance, as written "in the old orthography and the Kajkavian dialect [*starim pravopisom i kajkavskim narječjem*]" (Prohaska 1919, 125). When Gaj formed an "Illyrian Club" to study the folk songs of Vuk Karadžić with the "young Serbs" Božidar Petranović and Mojsije Baltić, the three studied, according to Prohaska, not "Serbian" songs but songs in "Štokavština and Cyrillic" (Prohaska 1919, 123). Prohaska also linked dialects to orthography when describing medieval Croatian books written "in diverse dialects and diverse orthographies" (Prohaska 1919, 102). Most strikingly,

Prohaska invoked the tripartite *kaj – šta/što – ča* taxonomy to analyze a text that, by his own reckoning, failed to conform to it. Pavao Ritter Vitezović's sixteenth-century manuscript dictionary, according to Prohaksa, was "drawn from the Štokavian, Kajkavian, and Čakavian dialects [*izbran iz štokavskog, kajkavskog i čakavskog narječja*]" (Prohaska 1919, 75).

Prohaska not only imposed the *kaj – šta/što – ča* dialect taxonomy on texts it did not explain, he also imposed his own linguistic ideas onto the historical actors whose thought he summarized. Prohaska characterized Gaj as the "leader of the Illyrians" and Drašković as the "rational leader of Illyrianism" (Prohaska 1919, 129) but, when discussing the Illyrians as a whole, wrote of their "realization that they are not only Dalmatians, Croatians, Bosnians, Dubrovnikers, Carinthians, Styrians, and Carniolans, but that they are all together one *Illyrian* nation [*spoznanja, da oni nijesu tek Dalmaticni, Hrvati, Bošnjaci, Dubrovčani, Korutanci, Štajeri i Kranjci, nego da su svi zajedno jedan narod* ilirski]" (Prohaska 1919, 122). In fact, as noted above, both Gaj and Drašković had imagined the nation in explicitly Panslav terms.

When considering the subdivisions of South Slavic / Illyrian, furthermore, Drašković had ignored the *kaj – šta/što – ča* isoglosses and focused on administrative districts. Drašković had somewhat inconsistently defended "the value of the Croatian and Slovene dialect [*der kroatischen und windischen Mundart*]" in the singular, and then immediately afterwards praised the "treasures of these dialects [*Sprachschatze deiser Dialekte*]" and "the latter dialects [*Mundarten*]" in the plural (Drašković 1838, 44). Yet whether Drašković believed in a singular Croatian-Slovene dialect or plural Croatian and Slovene dialects, his taxonomy remains difficult to reconcile with Prohaska's claim that Drašković chose to "write in the štokavski dialect [*pisati štokavskim narječem*]" because it was "strongest in our nation and literature" (Prohaska 1919, 125). While Prohaska perfunctorily acknowledged "the notion of Slavic romantics that Slavs are one nation," he evidently refused to take Panslav ideas seriously. He pretended that nineteenth-century Panslavs expressed both national and linguistic Yugoslavism.

Notions of a Yugoslav or Serbo-Croatian "national language," divided primarily into Serbian and Croatian subcomponents, outlasted the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. During the Second World war, the Croatian fascist Ustaše promoted a distinctive Croatian nation and language (Samardžija 2008; 1993) but the Independent State of Croatia proved ephemeral. In December 1954, with Tito firmly in power, various Yugoslav linguists met in Novi Sad to sign the Novi Sad Agreement [*Novosadski dogovor*]. The first of its ten "conclusions" proclaimed that "the national language of Serbs, Croats and

Montenegrins is one language [*Narodni jezik Srba, Hrvata i Crnogoraca jedan je jezik*]." The second conclusion promptly snubbed Montenegrin sensibilities by declaring that "when naming the language it is necessary to refer to both of its component parts" (Novosadski dogovor 1954) a phrase that, as Robert Greenberg explains, meant "both 'Serb' and 'Croat'" (Greenberg 2004, 30-31; 172-174). The preamble referred to "the Serbocroatian language [*srpskohrvatski jezik*]." The Novi Sad Agreement further posited "two main centres, Belgrade and Zagreb," each associated with a particular "pronunciation [*izgovor*]," which conclusion four specified as Ijekavian and Ekavian. Since the Novi Sad Agreement ignored Slovene and Macedonian, it also articulated Serbo-Croatism rather than Yugoslavism properly speaking.

Neither Serbo-Croatism nor Yugoslavism survived the collapse of Communism. Much like Gaj's Panslavism, Prohaska's Serbo-Croatism disappeared as intellectuals transferred their loyalty to its component parts. The next section shows that Zagreb literati espoused quite different taxonomies in the 1990s.

## Miro Kačić's Croatian Language and Its Dialects

The third and final text, the 1995 *Hrvatski i srpski: zablude i krivotvorine* [*Croatian and Serbian: Delusions and Distractions*] argued vigorously for a distinctive Croatian language. Its author, Miro Kačić (1946–2001), was born on the island of Brač in central Dalmatia. He completed his undergraduate degree at the University of Zagreb, and in 1977 relocated to France to teach Croatian as a foreign language. He pursued graduate studies at the University of Provence, completing his master's degree in 1979. After completing his doctorate in 1988, he accepted a position at the University of Zadar.

Shortly after Kačić returned to Dalmatia, Communist Yugoslavia collapsed, and the conflict known in Croatian historiography as the "Homeland War" began. In 1991, forces of the Serbian Krajina Republic seized Zadar airport and destroyed the bridge at Maslenica, cutting Dalmatia off from the rest of Croatia. Kačić briefly experienced life in besieged Zadar before moving to Zagreb to work for the Ministry of Education in 1992 (Šimunović 2002; Raffaelli 2001). A 1993 offensive recaptured Zadar airport and restored a land route to Zagreb, but the Croatian state did not fully secure Zadar's hinterland until 1995, the year Kačić published *Zablude i krivotvorine*.

In 1997, two years after *Zablude i krivotvorine* first appeared, the Zagreb press "Novi Most" published English and German translations (Kačić 1997a; Kačić 1997b). In 2000, furthermore, a Parisian press published a French edition (Kačić 2000). The English edition often obscures passages that invoke the language-dialect dichotomy; close examination revealed it to be less faithful

to the original than the German edition. Both the 1997 English and German translations, furthermore, added an additional chapter called "Why Croatian Can Never Be Croato-Serbian." All quotations below nevertheless come from the English translation, with Croatian text added as appropriate. Citations refer to both the English translation and Croatian original, except for passages from the chapter added in 1997.

*Zablude i krivotvorine* declared a unique Croatian language [*jezik*] while repeatedly and emphatically rejecting any concept of shared language-hood encompassing both Croats and Serbs. Kačić dismissed the terms *hrvatski ili srpski*, *sprsko-hrvatski*, and *hrvatske-sprki* as "absurd" (Kačić 1995, 66; Kačić 1997a, 71), proclaiming that "any terms supposed to convey the idea of their unity … are absurd," since "they can only denote an artificial mixed language" (Kačić 1995, 66; Kačić 1997a, 71–72). Kačić even revealed the source of his anxiety: "every nation has the natural right to its mother tongue [*materinji jezik*]," Kačić argued, and "the name Serbo-Croatian would imply that Croats did not have a language of their own" (Kačić 1995, 71; Kačić 1997a, 71–72).

Kačić was not the first linguist to reject Serbo-Croatian linguistic unity. Some Croatian intellectuals had agitated for a distinct "Croatian language" in Socialist Yugoslavia. On March 17, 1967, during a period of relative liberalization, the Zagreb newspaper *Telegram* published a "Deklaracija o nazivu i položaju hrvatskog književnog jezika [Declaration on the Name and Position of the Croatian Literary Language]," signed by several leading figures in Croatian letters. The Deklaracija complained that "the Croatian language is being pushed out and brought into unequal position" ("Deklaracija" 1967). The 1967 declaration later influenced Pavle Ivić, a prominent linguist from Belgrade, whose 1971 *Srpski narod i njegov jezik* [The Serbian Nation and its Language] expressed an equivalent Serbian linguistic particularism (Ivić 1986).

The 1960s also witnessed a new trend in linguistic subclassification: when Serbian and Croatian were imagined as subcategories of a putative Serbo-Croatian language, the term "*varijante* [variants]" increasingly supplanted the terms *narečja* and *govor*. The term *narečja* was increasingly associated with isogloss-defined varieties, and particularly with the *kaj – štalšto – ča* isoglosses. The term *varijante* was popularized by the Zagreb journal *Jezik: časopis za kulturu hrvatskoga književnog jezika* [Language: Journal for the Culture of the Croatian Literary Language], founded in 1952. During the 1960s, several contributors to *Jezik* began using the term *varijante* (Hraste 1965; Katičić 1965; Finka 1966) and several international scholars followed

their lead during the final decades of Yugoslavia's existence (Schmaus 1972, 7; Lukić 1971, 1; Partridge 1988, 14; Magner 1991, ix).

Despite his reputation as a Croatian purist, for example, Dalibor Brozović (1927–2009), a Sarajevo-born Croatian linguist, esperantist, and politician (Matasović 2010, 3) eschewed the rhetoric of "dialects" to speak of "variants [*varijante*]" in his 1966 essay "*O problemima varijanata* [On the Problems with Variants] (Brozović 1969). Brozović posited "two variants of the Croato-Serbian standard language, the first is called the Eastern, Belgrade, or Serbian, and the second is called Western, Zagrebian, or Croatian, therefore, finally, both of them are called by names with real justification" (Brozović 1969, 3–4). Elsewhere in the same work, Brozović rejected the unitary "Croato-Serbian standard language" while still positing "two standard languages on the basis of one linguistic unitary language [*dva standardna jezika na podlozi jednog lingvističkog jedinstvenog jezika*]" (Brozović 1969, 6). Brozović's uncertainty about the status of Croatian within Serbo-Croatian persisted even when he sat in the parliament of independent Croatia. In a 1992 essay published in English, he argued that under Yugoslav rule "the Croatian variant has been suppressed by all possible means." Nevertheless, he characterized Serbo-Croat as a "pluricentric language" (Brozović 1992), not as two separate languages.

The terminology of "*varijante*" allowed Croatian scholars to emphasize Croatian particularism while accommodating official Serbo-Croatism. Kačić thus vigorously rejected the "two variants" terminology, insisting instead that "the literary language with its two 'variants' actually represent the two literary idioms [*književna jezika*] determined by two distinct linguistic histories" (Kačić 1995, 66; Kačić 1997a, 68). While "it is possible to speak of Split, Dubrovnik, or Zagreb variants of the Croatian literary language," he wrote, speaking of Serbian and Croatian variants would be incorrect: "of which language are they variants? It seems that it does not exist, there are only two different South Slavic languages each with a different historical development" (Kačić 1995, 65; Kačić 1997a, 67).

When proclaiming a distinct Croatian language, Kačić, no less than Gaj or Prohaska, confronted the problem of internal diversity. Like his predecessors, Kačić invoked the language/dialect dichotomy to acknowledge diversity while proclaiming an essential unity: "The development of the Croatian language was sporadically heterogeneous, but the awareness of its common basis has always been present" (Kačić 1995, 16; Kačić 1997a, 16). By invoking the "awareness" of historical actors, of course, Kačić appealed to the authority of savants who, for the most part, had not espoused a distinctive "Croatian language." Kačić broke with his predecessors not by unifying into a single

Croatian collective linguistic varieties previously seen as distinct, but by detaching Croatian from what was previously seen as a larger whole. Prohaska, for example, had included Serbian in his concept of the national language. Karadžić and Barac had also included Slovene. Gaj, Tkalac, Babukić, and Drašković had included Czech, Polish, and Russian.

Kačić imagined the "dialects" of Croatian in terms of the *kaj – štalšto – ča* isoglosses. Even during the general illiteracy of the Middle Ages, according to Kačić, "the Croats spoke Kajkavian, Čakavian and West Štokavian dialects" (Kačić 1995, 63; Kačić 1997a, 66). Since then, the three dialects defined literary traditions that supposedly constituted Croatian literature: "the basis of the Croatian literary idiom [*književni izraz*] is provided by the Kajkavian, Čakavian, and Štokavian dialects … Croatian writing and literature are three-dialectal [*trojnarječna*]." Kačić presented this three-dialectal basis [*trojnarječnost*] as Croatian exceptionalism: "Croatian literature was written in all three dialects. The centennial development of the Croatian language does not correspond to the development of other Slavic languages" (Kačić 1995, 66; Kačić 1997a, 69). Elsewhere, he made a similar argument using a novel terminology of "systems," writing that "the 'heterogenity' which used to be attributed to the Croato-Serbian linguistic system is characteristic of the Croatian system only. The Serbian system is based on a single (Štokavian) dialect. The Croatian system, on the other hand, consists of three dialects with a number of local variants" (Kačić 1995, 139; Kačić 1997a 141).

Yet even as Kačić defined dialects through the *kaj – štalšto – ča* isoglosses, he simultaneously downplayed their importance, since he claimed all three for the Croatian language. He argued, for example, that those "Croatian writers … who used Štokavian dialects and the Čakavian dialect" all used "a rather homogenous idiom [*prilično ujednačenim narječjem*]" (Kačić 1995, 35; Kačić 1997a, 37). Following the 1954 Novi Sad Agreement, Kačić implicitly placed greater importance on the yat isogloss, with which he distinguished Croats from Serbs, since he defined Serbian as "the Ijekavian type of Štokavian" (Kačić 1995, 137; Kačić 1997a, 139). Kačić even claimed that Vuk Karadžić's 1818 Serbian dictionary had actually been written in Croatian. Since Karadžić had supposedly "based his reform on a single dialect [*narječje*]: the neo-Štokavian Herzegovinian" (Kačić 1995, 36; Kačić 1997a, 38–39). Kačić concluded that "Vuk, actually, adopted a Croatian literary idiom as the Serbian literary language" (Kačić 1995, 25; Kačić 1997a, 27). Amazingly, Serbian writer Miloslav Samardžić concurred, writing in 1995 that Karadžić's "correspondence and articles reveal his adaptation to Croatian demands, until complete relaxation" (Samardžić 1995, 192, see also 207, 209).

Kačić's extra chapter from 1997 proposed a somewhat different taxonomy, which treated Serbian not as a separate language but as a subcategory of Croatian. He defined "the Croatian metasystem" as "a group of three dialects: Čakavian, Kajkavian, and Štokavian" (Kačić 1997a, 155). Most of this metasystem was purely Croatian: "there are two dialects which are unquestionably only Croatian and do not exist in Serbian: Čakavian and Kajkavian. It is equally certain that the Ikavian type of Štokavian also belongs to Croatian only" (Kačić 1997a, 155). Kačić then drew a Venn diagram (Figure 1) illustrating the putative Croatian metasystem, which entirely encompasses Serbian. Kačić explained that "the theory of linguistic diasystem clearly shows that Serbian is a part of Croatian … the relationship becomes clear from the diagram and cannot be interpreted in any other way." Since classifying Serbian as a subset of Croatian would imply that both were the same language, however, Kačić then rejected his own taxonomy: "To be sure, this is pushing to the point of absurdity because if we observe other characteristics of these dialectal systems, we shall notice the profound differences between Serbian and Croatian dialects, which obviously do not belong to the same set" (Kačić 1997a, 155).

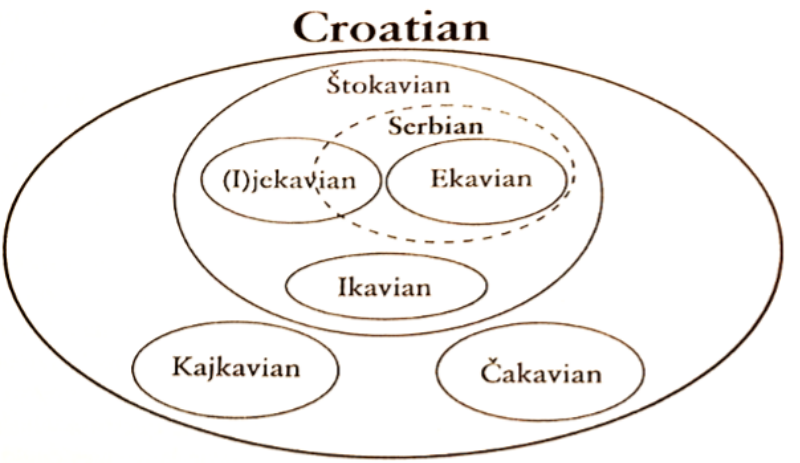


*Figure 1: Miro Kačić's Venn Diagram of Croatian Dialects*

Kačić, like Prohaska, justified his classifications with reference to the past and, like Prohaska, imposed his own linguistic taxonomy onto historical actors. By translating the title of Bartul Kašić's 1604 *Institutiones linguae illyricae* as "*Gramatika hrvatskog jezika*" (Prohaska 1919, 66). Prohaska had

conflated "Illyrian" with "Croatian." Kačić similarly claimed that historical figures who used "the terms *slovinski* (*slovin*) or *Ilirski* (*Illyrian*) intended them as synonyms for Croatian" (Kačić 1995, 82; Kačić 1997a, 89). According to Kačić, furthermore, "Ljudevit Gaj and his followers favored the adoption of the language of Ragusan Štokavian writers as a literary *koiné* which could lead to Croatian linguistic and national unity" (Kačić 1995, 35; Kačić 1997a, 37). The linguistic and national unity Gaj and Drašković hoped to create would more accurately described in Panslav terms.

Kačić's arguments generally failed to persuade other linguists. Even a generally sympathetic obituary obliquely criticized him as "a defender of the Croatian language, even if his linguistic patriotism was stronger than his linguistic arguments" (Šimunović 2001, 404). Parisian linguist Paul-Louis Thomas less diplomatically dismissed the book as a "festival of errors, imprecisions, and deceits of every sort" (Thomas 2001, 571).

Kačić's work nevertheless found great favour with Croatian government officials. In 1996, shortly after its publication, Kačić was appointed director of the Institut za hrvatski jezik i jezikoslovlje [Institute of Croatian Language and Linguistics, hereafter IHJJ], a post he held until his death in 2001 (Young 2007, 184–185). The IHJJ played a central role in Croatian language planning, publishing what sociolinguists Keith Langston and Anita Peti-Stantić called a series of "normative handbooks and dictionaries" (Langston and Peti-Stantić 2014, 170). The IHJJ also maintains an online style guide offering advice on matters such as the correct plural for "CD" (Jezični savjetnik n.d.).

## Zagreb Savants and Dialect Taxonomies

None of the three texts analyzed above represent the universal consensus of their respective eras, either of linguists or of the population at large. No text ever could, since no such consensuses have ever existed. In Zagreb as elsewhere, linguistic classification and taxonomy have always been the subject of perpetual contestation (Maxwell 2015).

Yet if Gaj, Prohaska, and Kačić attracted their share of critics, they also enjoyed significant public support in their own time: all three texts reflect a strong current of opinion in their respective eras. Despite various attempts to "efface Panslavism" from the historical record (Maxwell 2018a), belief in a single Slavic language was widespread in Gaj and Kollár's day. Similarly, Prohaska's Yugoslavism (or, alternatively, his Serbo-Croatism) once enjoyed widespread popularity, even if many scholars now frame Yugoslavism as "caught between reality and illusion" (Gajević 1985), "impossible" (Cvetković-Sander 2012), a "failed idea" (Djokić 2003), or simply a "failure" (Lampe 1994). Kačić's

Croatian particularism, meanwhile, currently enjoys state sponsorship since "the new Croatian," in the judgement of one non-Croatian scholar, is viewed as "a political necessity" in the newly independent state (Alexander 2006, 415).

The three texts thus illustrate how dramatically taxonomies can change in eighty years. Consider how Zagreb intellectuals have re-imagined the linguistic category "Croatian." In 1836, Gaj imagined "Croatian" as a subdialect of the Illyrian dialect of the Slavic language, restricted to the province around Zagreb. In 1919, Prohaska imagined "Croatian" as a sub-component of a "Croato-Serbian" language, and expanded it beyond Provincial Croatia to other South-Slavic territories. By 1995, Kačić imagined "Croatian" as an independent language extending beyond the frontiers of the Croatian Republic. Since one generation's crank opinion can subsequently become a hegemonic orthodoxy, debates over linguistic classification, apparently, can change people's minds. While a full account of changing attitudes would require a lengthier analysis, documenting the simple fact of transformation nevertheless remains worthwhile, particularly given the widespread practice of projecting contemporary taxonomies onto historical actors.

The "dialect" taxonomies propounded by Zagreb intellectuals have changed as dramatically as notions of the "national language." The dialects (and subdialects) posited by Gaj and Kollár corresponded either to ethnographic collectives (Little Russians, Bulgarians), or to administrative units, whether current (Russia, Bohemia) or historical (Polish, Lusatia). By contrast, Prohaska and Kačić both imagined their "dialects" primarily in terms of linguistic features: Prohaska relied on the *kaj – šta/što – ča* isogloss, Kačić primarily emphasized the yat isogloss. Karadžić had referred to these isoglosses to discuss differences in spoken pronunciation, and had brought them to scholarly attention only to dismiss their significance. Prohaska used them to classify literary traditions. Though Kačić's confusion makes his attitude difficult to summarize, he linked his taxonomy so strongly to Croatian national ownership that he claimed Karadžić's literary output for the Croatian language.

This study has not discussed the linguistic evidence presented by the respective authors. Nevertheless, most of the linguistic facts that accompany linguistic taxonomies illustrate the irrelevance of such facts. Kačić, for example, adduced the vowel shifts between Croatian *burza* and Serbian *berza* and Croatian *tanjur* and Serbian *tanjir* to demonstrate that Serbian and Croatian have "two phonetic traditions" (Kačić 1995, 123; 1997a, 126). The 1837 edition of Kollár's reciprocity adduced similar vowel shifts between Russian

/ Serbian *pepel* and Czech / Polish *popel*; Russian / Serbian *Bog*, Czech *Bůh*, and Ruthenian *Bih* as evidence of the essential unity between all Slavs (Kollár 1836, 20). Since vowel shifts, and by extension other phonetic information, have been adduced in support of both difference and unity, they themselves provide no guidance for the construction of taxonomies. Indeed, it seems that linguists present linguistic data primarily in the hope that obscure technical jargon will overwhelm potential critics, or alternatively, that a parade of erudition will establish their scholarly credentials.

Even though taxonomies have changed, elements of continuity remain equally striking. All authors associated the "language" with the "nation," even as they imagined nation and language in such strikingly different ways. All the taxonomies considered above posited various "dialects" subsumed within the national language. Furthermore, Gaj's *naréčje* (or *narechje*), Prohaska's *narečje*, and Kačić's *narečje*, and for that matter Karadžić's *govori*, the Novi Sad Agreement's *izgovori*, and Brozović's *varijante*, analogously facilitated national claims: these subordinate categories acknowledge difference, but subsume that difference within the confines of some "national language," variously imagined. Perhaps most strikingly, Gaj, Prohaska, and Kačić all associated their subordinate *naréčje*/*narečje* with distinct literary traditions.

If taxonomic dialects (*naréčje*, *dijalekti*, *govori*, *varijante*) exist primarily to be subsumed into a broader "national language," then a taxonomy of dialects justifies claims to national possession. A taxonomy of spoken dialects subsumed within a literary standard clearly claims that dialect for the standard, but more importantly a taxonomy of written dialects stakes a national claim over a literary heritage. Scholars in Zagreb, certainly, have associated historic texts with particular "dialects" in order to claim national ownership and establish national tradition. Perhaps, then, Gaj, Prohaska, and Kačić propounded different dialect taxonomies because they imagined different nations.

Gaj, like Tkalac and Drašković, staked a claim to the entire Slavic world and all its literature. Confronted with the vitality of the Magyar national movement and cultural awakening in Germany, Gaj apparently lacked confidence that Provincial Croatia could stand alone against external threats of assimilation. Like other Slavs of his generation, Gaj thus sought allies in other Habsburg Slavic circles. Bohemia, Poland, and Russia boasted impressive literary histories, so Gaj combined them into a Pan-Slavic whole whose collective splendor justified the rejection of Magyarization and Germanization. Panslavism, in this reading, was a strategy to defend Slavic linguistic distinctiveness.

Despite his broad Slavic sympathies, Prohaska felt confident in South Slavic particularism, and no equivalent need to claim Czech or Russian literature as his own. Nevertheless, he imagined a single nation for both Croats and Serbs and subdivided the "national language" and its literature into dual Croatian and Serbian sub-components. Prohaska's vision of Serbo-Croatism also abandoned the glottonym "Illyrian" and expanded the scope of "Croatian" beyond the frontiers of Provincial Croatia.

Kačić's taxonomy, meanwhile, reflected vigorous Croatian particularist nationalism. His taxonomy vehemently disassociated Croats from Serbs while intermittently claiming Serbian as a subcategory of Croatian. The contradiction between his 1995 and 1997 taxonomies, perhaps, reflects the confusion and uncertainty felt during a war that both questioned and determined Croatia's geographic boundaries, and thus its legitimate claims.

Continual change in taxonomic fashions invites speculations about the future. What sort of language, with which dialects, might savants in Zagreb imagine after another eighty years have passed? The future cannot be known, but stasis nevertheless probably remains the most dangerous prediction. The once hegemonic belief in a "Slavic language" collapsed, and the once hegemonic belief in a "Serbo-Croatian language" collapsed. There seems no reason to assume that the current hegemonic belief in a "Croatian language" will endure indefinitely.

Pan-Slavism, Yugoslavism, or Serbo-Croatianism might conceivably make a comeback, but since the 1830s the primary theme has been fragmentation. If fragmentation continues, the future may witness claims to Slavonian or Dalmatian language-hood. Slavonian and Dalmatian have long featured in linguistic taxonomies. Prohaska propounded a Serb-Croat binary, but Gaj, recall, had subdivided the Illyrian tribe into Slovenes, Croats, Slavonians, Dalmatians, Bosnians, Montenegrins, and Serbs (Gaj 1835b, 234-35). Separate republics now claim to represent Serbs, Croats, Bosnians, and Montenegrins (Greenberg 2004, 88-108, 135-158). Why should Slavonians and Dalmatians not follow their lead? Some readers, associating "Zagreb" with Croatian nationalism, may have wondered about the relevance of a Slovak thinker like Jan Kollár to intellectual life in Zagreb. Future generations, perhaps, will similarly question the relevance to Zagreb's intellectual life of a Slavonian like Prohaska, or a Dalmatian like Kačić.

Whatever taxonomies future generations of Zagreb linguists eventually propound, dialects will presumably continue to play a central role, since future nationalists will still have to confront linguistic heterogeneity. A dialect taxonomy offers nationalists a powerful tool for assimilating linguistic

differences, since classifying linguistic difference as "dialectal" deprives differences of their divisiveness. Taxonomies of literary or written dialects, furthermore, facilitate claims to prestigious literary heritages, under the reasoning "this literature belongs to dialect *x*, and dialect *x* belongs to my nation." Insofar as dialect taxonomies exist to facilitate national claims, however, they ought to be interrogated and problematized as such.

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