

Language attitudes in the Republika Srpska: Eliciting some truth from behind the propaganda

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most important standardisation phenomena in the recent past has been the creation and implementation of three new official standard languages in Bosnia and Herzegovina, one of the former republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia in the early 1990s has engendered the birth of ‘Bosnian’, ‘Croatian’ and ‘Serbian’ out of ‘Serbo-Croatian’, the former Yugoslavian official language.

This chapter investigates current standard language dynamics in the Republika Srpska, one of the two constituent entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina with an almost mono-ethnic Serbian population (the other one, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, is predominantly Bosniac (Muslim) and Croatian). Building on a verbal guise experiment in which unlabelled samples of Croatian, Serbian, and Bosnian speech were evaluated, Bosnian Serbian conceptualisations of on-going processes of convergence and divergence were investigated, focusing especially on the question to what extent these private conceptualisations endorse the nationalistic Bosnian Serbian media propaganda, which promulgates a split of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In order to grasp the importance of these issues, however, we will first present an overview of the political and linguistic history of former Yugoslavia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in the next section.

¹ Dedicated to the memory of Kristina ‘Tina’ Mirnić (1973–2012), linguist and dear friend.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Former Yugoslavia

The history of present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina embodies the exceptionally complex history of the region formerly known as Yugoslavia: both have been characterised by repeated processes of ethnic and linguistic convergence and divergence, and by multifaceted identity issues.

In medieval times, the main players in the region, Croatia and Serbia, existed as separate principalities and monarchies. While there is no consensus on the question whether Serbs and Croats represent distinct ethnicities (see Malcolm 1996 for an overview of the different opinions), the area is characterised by early religious divergence: Serbia adopted Orthodox Christianity in 1217, whereas Croatia was (and continues to be) mainly Catholic. In the 16th century, contemporary Serbia and present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina became part of the Ottoman Empire, which introduced Islam into the region, the religion of a large proportion of the Bosnian population (see below).

In the 19th century, following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, discernible tendencies towards unification and pan-Slavism could be noted in order to resist Austro-Hungarian rule. The eventual demise of the Austro-Hungarian Empire resulted in the creation of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later called ‘Yugoslavia’) in 1918.

After World War II, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia consisted of six republics – Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia – and the two autonomous provinces Vojvodina (with a large proportion of Hungarian inhabitants) and Kosovo (with a high Albanian speaking population). Initially, the country was politically communist, with strong ties to the Soviet Union, but this unity ended in 1948 with the schism between Yugoslavian leader Josip Broz ‘Tito’ and Stalin (Banac 1988). Ten years after Tito’s death in 1980, amidst severe economic crisis, Croatia, Slovenia and Macedonia declared their independence from Yugoslavia, and in 1992 Bosnia followed, which eventually culminated in a large-scale armed conflict (for more on the history of Yugoslavia, see Sundhaussen 1993). Being situated in-between Croatia and Serbia, multi-ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina was the principal victim of a war which ended with the Dayton Agreement in 1995 (see Malcolm 1996).

Yugoslavia's 19th century struggle for independence coincided with the creation of a common language: in 1850, linguists from Serbia and Croatia signed the Vienna Literary Agreement (see Greenberg 2004 for the original document, see also Gröschel 2009). This common language was based on one of the dialects of Croatia, which was at the same time the main dialect in Serbia, namely *Neo-Štokavian*. While this variety did not have a name initially, it later became known as 'Serbo-Croatian'. The following years saw the publication of works of codification.

In spite of this codification, slight differences have always been observed between the Western (Croatian) and the Eastern (Serbian) variant of Serbo-Croatian (Brozović 1992; Clyne 1992, 2004 e.g. propose that Serbo-Croatian is a polycentric language such as English or German). These differences are mainly lexical, and they can be found in recurrently published word lists (Gröschel 2009: 48; Pranjković 2001; Okuka 1998). Although there are divergent high frequency suffixes such as *-irati* (Western variant) vs. *-isati* (Eastern variant) which boost an impression of divergence, the number of divergent lexemes such as *kruh* (Western variant) vs. *hljeb* (Eastern variant) for 'bread' has always been relatively small.

Factors which enhance the divergence between the Croatian and Serbian varieties of Serbo-Croatian are the different scripts (Latin for Croatian and Latin and Cyrillic for Serbian), and the purist tendencies in Croatia, which surface in a marked preference for Slavic lexemes, whereas Serbia is more tolerant of etymologically foreign words. A more recent differentiation is a Croatian sensitivity towards linguistic gender awareness, from which Serbia consciously diverges by exclusively using the generic masculine (in Serbia, the new gender awareness is dubbed 'Croatian').

The demise of Yugoslavia in 1995 eventually culminated in the implementation of separate Croatian and Serbian standards.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina (henceforward BH), the focus of this study, is one of the republics which emerged as an independent entity after the Yugoslav Federation had dissolved. Interestingly, the ethnic mixture in BH is even more diversified than in the rest of former Yugoslavia; a pre-war census in 1991 (Lampe 1996: 330) revealed that BH consisted of 31.4% Serbs, 43.7% Muslims, 17.3% Croats, 5.5% Yugoslavs and 2.1% others.

The label ‘Muslim’ in this overview may seem surprising:

The Slav Moslems of Bosnia are the only nation, certainly in Europe and possibly in the world, who are nominally identified by their religion and not their language or ethnicity. Most are Slavs (Croats and Serbs) or more accurately in Bosnia’s case, Catholic or Orthodox Christians, who were converted during the five centuries of Ottoman rule in Bosnia [...]. (Glenny 1996: 139)

From this quote, it can readily be inferred that religion is the basic ethnic criterion in BH: Serbs and Croats are primarily identified via their Orthodox and Catholic religion, while the third main ‘nation’², i.e. the Muslim population, today is referred to and refers to itself as ‘Bosniac’. This multi-ethnic composition has never engendered much discord – ‘every second inhabitant in Bosnia and Herzegovina has at least one relative of the ‘other’ nationality’ (Calic 1995: 157, translation from German) – but since the war, the country has been steeped in pronounced nationalism because Bosniacs, Serbs and Croats profile their own identity along the aforementioned religious lines.

After the Dayton peace agreement in 1995, BH has been divided into two entities (see the map in Figure 1): the Republika Srpska with a large majority of (Orthodox) Serbs, and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is mainly Bosniac (Muslim) and Croat (Catholic). Each of the three ethnicities has acquired equal political and representational rights in the government of BH, but this essentially democratic principle has led to a fragmentation of society, because there is a tendency in each of the three ethnicities to put ethnicity before political conviction. This fragmentation has become a great hindrance for the unification of BH so eagerly desired by the international community as a guarantee for peace and stability in the region.

The geographical position of BH in-between its former sister republics is mirrored linguistically in a system in which the lexical East-West differences cited above have always co-existed (albeit sometimes with a slight differentiation in meaning or usage). This system was dubbed ‘Bosnian-Herzegovinian Expression’ (Cvetković-Sander 2005) – to indicate that it was not a different language or language variety – and it did not differentiate between the language of Serbs, Croats and Bosniacs within BH; neither was it codified.

² The term ‘nation’ for *nacija* in this context must not be confused with its international meaning, but rather more in the Soviet understanding of the term, which should be interpreted more in the sense of ‘ethnicity’. In 1971 the Muslim population gained this particular status within Yugoslavia.



Figure 1: Map of Bosnia and Herzegovina

After the end of the Bosnian war in 1995, Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats started to orient themselves towards their respective neighbour countries, adopting and appropriating their changes. Serbian remained largely unchanged, apart from a sudden strong dominance of the Cyrillic script in the Republika Srpska. Croatian, however, underwent massive top-down changes (mainly in the lexicon) to delimit it from Serbian. In addition, Bosniac linguists started to develop their own standard (e.g. Halilović 1991, 1996; Jahić 1990, 1991, 1999a, b, c; Jahić, Halilović and Palić 2000; Isaković 1992, 1995), which is characterised by a slight movement towards the Croatian variant and an obvious orientalisation (particularly through the revitalisation of Turkisms; see Okuka 1998; Greenberg 2004). Top-down changes in Bosnian Croatian and Bosniac have had two decades to percolate into actual usage, mainly via education. The few available attitude studies suggest that the new changes in Bosnian are regarded as ‘old-fashioned’ and ‘dialectal’ (Tolimir-Hölzl 2009).

On top of this increasing linguistic divergence, a much more outspoken threat to the unity of BH is recurrent speculation in the Republika Srpska about a sepa-

ration from BH. The (populist) press is clearly paying lip service to these nationalist ambitions. Even a cursory glance at some recent headlines reveals that separation is a desired goal. The following quotes cite Milorad Dodik, the president of the Republika Srpska, in one of the most widely read regional daily papers, *Glas Srpske* ‘Voice of the Srpska’:

Bošnjacima nikada neće pripasti cijela BiH

‘B and H will never totally belong to the Bosniacs’ (26.04.2012)

BuX ће се природно распасту

‘B and H will dissolve naturally’ (27.04.2012)

BiH se ne može graditi na silu

‘B and H cannot be built by force’ (29.04.2012)

The fact that these statements were recorded in one week’s time is not incidental: the frequency of such inflammatory quotes is very high. Yet, the apparent distrust of Bosniacs and Croats (and the common state of BH) which is propounded in the nationalistic Serbian media propaganda need not be equated with the deeper attitudes of the post-war generation of young Bosnian Serbs, which appear to be more ambiguous and less explicitly divergent. Interviews in Tolimir-Hölzl (2009; 2011), for instance, suggest that young adults in the Republika Srpska are not very self-confident as new ‘Bosnians’, and that they are much more concerned about new conflicts in their region than that they covet the separation of the Republika Srpska. In addition, they regard the top-down changes imposed on Bosnian Croatian and Bosnian as a linguistic (and also political) divergence actively promoted by the *other* parties: recall that Bosnian Serbian was not significantly re-planned or re-codified after the war (the main diverging factor being an increase in the usage of the Cyrillic script).

A geo-cultural factor which further nuances any overly nationalistic pro-Serbian propaganda in the Republika Srpska is the fact that the geographical distance of Banja Luka (the de facto capital of the Bosnian Serbs) to Zagreb (the capital of the nation Croatia) is *conceptually* shorter than that to other urban centres such as Belgrade and Sarajevo, due to better travelling connections (as e.g. by the *autoput* ‘motorway’ to Zagreb). The many trips to Zagreb advertised by local travel agencies in Banja Luka also clearly suggest the existence of a clientele which does not regard the former sister republic of Croatia as foreign or hostile.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to investigate Bosnian Serbian conceptualisations of political and linguistic convergence and divergence processes in BH, a verbal guise experiment (see Garrett 2005; 2010) was carried out in which students of the University of Banja Luka rated speech produced by Bosniac, Croatian and Serbian inhabitants from Banja Luka (the capital of the Republika Srpska, which is almost mono-ethnically Serbian), by Bosniac, Croatian and Serbian inhabitants from Sarajevo (the capital of BH in which Bosniacs represent the majority), and by Bosniac and Croatian inhabitants of Mostar (which is the cultural centre for the Bosnian Croats). In addition, I included speech produced in Zagreb and Belgrade, the capitals of resp. Croatia and Serbia.

This experiment was conducted in order to answer five research questions:

1. A question which precedes any indirect attitudinal investigation on the basis of non-labelled stimuli is whether listener-judges are able to identify the social or regional groups indexed by the linguistic variation manipulated in the experiment. Will our informants be able to tell Serbs, Croatians, and Bosniacs apart on the basis of their speech?
2. The major empirical question in this investigation is to what extent the nationalistic propaganda propounded in the media converges with the more private attitudes of young adults in the Republika Srpska. How deeply rooted is linguistic ‘nationalism’?
3. Is there evidence that young Bosnian Serbs do not covet the political and linguistic divergence propounded by their leaders? And do these anti-divergence sentiments – if they exist – surface in a desire for pan-Bosnian convergence?
4. On a methodological note: does the standardised scale set that is used in most attitudinal research suffice to uncover Bosnian attitudes? In view of the fact that Bosnian Serbs regard the recent changes imposed on Bosnian as ‘old-fashioned’, ‘dialectal’ and ‘rural’, the latter two traits were also elicited as potential prestige indicators.
5. What is the difference between directly and indirectly elicited attitudes? Do directly offered, conscious evaluations reflect a more nationalistic attitude?

DESIGN

Experimental speakers and samples

Ten male and ten female speakers who were between 20 to 25 years of age were asked to record 40 comparable speech samples. Experimental speakers were selected in three cities in BH: Sarajevo, the predominantly Bosniac capital of the state; Mostar, the cultural and political capital of the Bosnian Croats; Banja Luka, the *de facto* capital of the Republika Srpska. In addition, speakers from the capitals of the neighbouring countries, Zagreb in Croatia and Belgrade in Serbia, were chosen as exoglossic reference points.

As far as the contents of the speech samples was concerned, neutral topics were chosen which did not cue the speakers' ethnic or regional background. All speakers were asked, first, to talk about Michael Jackson and, secondly, to recount the fairy tale of the Little Red Riding Hood. A total of 40 samples (which were 30 to 60 seconds long) were included in the experiment.

Table 1: Distribution of experimental speakers over cities and (self-reported) ethnicities³

Speakers	<u>Cities</u>				
	Banja Luka	Mostar	Sarajevo	Belgrade (Serbia)	Zagreb (Croatia)
Serbian	1m, 1f		1m, 1f	1m, 1f	
Croatian	1m, 1f	1m, 1f	1m, 1f		1m, 1f
Bosniac	1m, 1f	1m, 1f	1m, 1f		

Listener-judges

Listener-judges in this study were 102 students (63 female, 39 male) from different faculties of the University of Banja Luka. They had a mean age of 21.25 (ranging between 18 and 38), and were natives of Banja Luka or had resided there since at least their early childhood. The experiment was carried out in groups of approximately 30 students.

³ Since we found no significant effect of speaker gender, we will disregard the male-female distinction in all further discussions.

It may sound strange from the point of view of standard experimental procedure, but I deliberately chose not to ask respondents the sensitive question about their ethnic background, although it is certain that the absolute majority of them were Serbs. The fact that there are no accurate statistical data to back up this claim is due to the extreme reluctance among post-war Bosnians to identify themselves in ethnic terms⁴. Neither did we receive any relevant data from the University of Banja Luka, which emphatically does *not* regard ethnicity as an admission criterion (and does not elicit it from prospective students, accordingly). On the basis of census data and recent estimates by the Office of the High Representative – the international institution responsible for the implementation of the Dayton Agreement –, however, we know that Banja Luka is predominantly Serbian, and in view of the fact that almost all Bosnian students reside at their parent's home during their studies (for economical and financial reasons), we may safely conclude that our experimental sample consists for the most part of young Serbs.

Experimental scales

In a first questionnaire, experimental samples were evaluated on bi-polar semantic differentials in the form of antonymous adjective pairs complemented with a 5-point scale (such as 'beautiful 1 2 3 4 5 ugly'). I included 7 bi-polar pairs pertaining to the language in the samples (with *beautiful*, *attractive*, *logical*, *likeable*, *intelligent*, *pure* and *clear* as positive poles), and 4 bi-polar pairs pertaining to speaker personality (with *pleasant*, *intelligent*, *educated* and *likeable* as positive poles). On two additional yes/no items it was elicited whether the speaker spoke dialect or standard according to the respondents, and whether the speaker sounded urban or rural according to the respondents.

A second questionnaire consisted of questions pertaining to the speakers' perceived ethnic and linguistic identity. The students were first asked to indicate whether the speaker spoke Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, and then whether the speaker's ethnicity was Serbian, Croatian, or Bosniac. This task was carried out

⁴ In October 2013, the first general post-war census was finally carried out after it had been postponed several times as a result of wide-spread objections against ethnic (self-)labelling. In order to escape the latter, some intellectuals convinced Bosnians to always mark 'other' in terms of ethnicity or language (<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/27/us-bosnia-censusidUSBRE98Q0DT20130927>).

twice per speaker, first on the basis of the Red Riding Hood sample, then on the basis of the Michael Jackson sample.

In a third questionnaire, *direct* attitudes towards the labels of the different groups included in the experiment – towards people from Sarajevo, people from Banja Luka, people from Mostar, and towards Bosnian Croats, Bosnian Serbs and Bosniacs – were elicited on the basis of the same speaker scales as in the previous experiment (*viz. pleasant, intelligent, educated and likeable*).

RESULTS

Can listener-judges determine ethnicity on the basis of the variation manipulated in the experiment?

In general, listener-judges tended to recognise ethnicity fairly well: 74% of the Serbians were recognised as such, as well as 62.9% of the Bosniacs, and 71.2% of the Croats.

A closer look at the data, however, reveals a cause for concern. The data in Figure 2 suggest that ethnic identification was partly determined by respondents' knowledge about the ethnic composition of the assumed city of origin of the

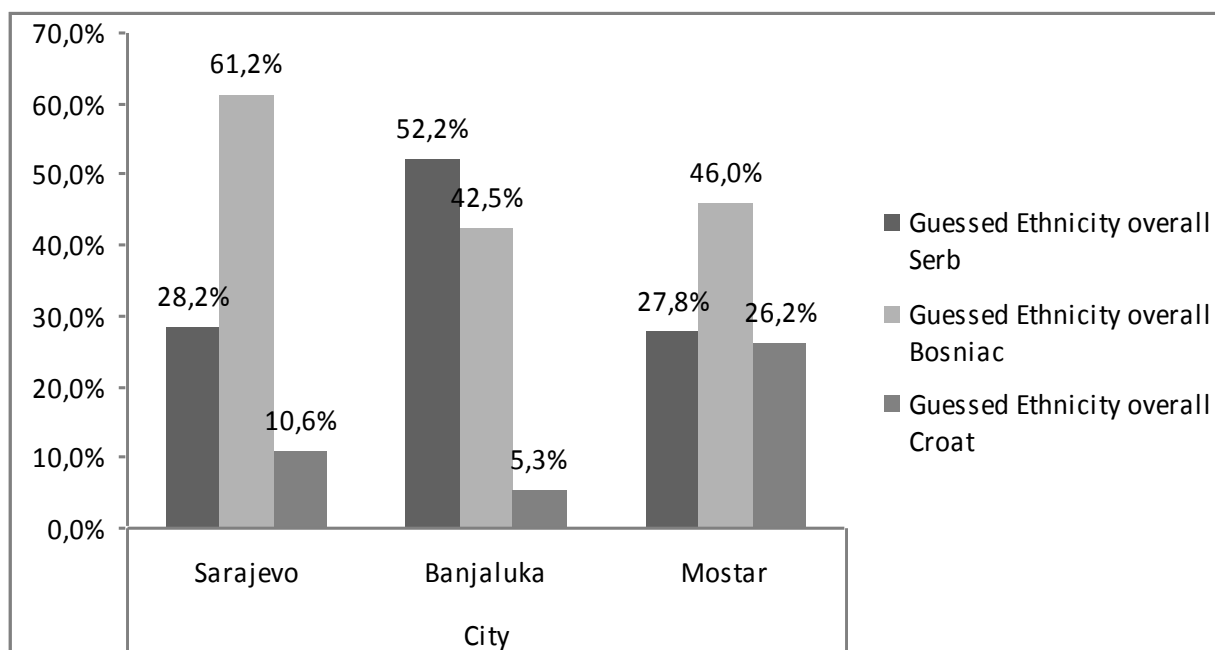


Figure 2: Ethnicity attributed to the speakers from the three cities

speakers, which respondents must have guessed in a number of cases.⁵ More particularly, samples were more frequently classified as produced by Serbian speakers when they were recognised as coming from Banja Luka (the city in which Serbs represent the statistically dominant ethnicity) than when they were recognised as coming from Sarajevo, where Serbs represent a minority. Conversely, speech samples were more frequently classified as produced by Bosniac speakers when speakers were hypothesised to come from Sarajevo, the town in which Bosniacs represent the dominant ethnicity.

It is interesting to notice that the speakers from Mostar – the town in which Croats are statistically and culturally dominant – were classified as Croats more frequently than the speakers from Sarajevo and Banja Luka. Yet, classification of the Mostar speech samples as Croatian was far from dominant. There are a number of potential explanations for this, but the most plausible is that the Mostar accent is less identifiable than Sarajevo-flavoured speech: Sarajevo is the official capital of BH, and it certainly is the media capital. While many listener-judges were unable, therefore, to recognise Mostar speech, all Mostar voices sounded decidedly Bosnian. The fact that Bosniacs represent the dominant ethnicity within the whole of BH may explain why Bosniac ethnicity was attributed most frequently to the Mostar speakers.

How deeply rooted is linguistic nationalism in the conceptualisations of young Bosnian Serbs?

In order to answer this question, the scores on the semantic differentials in the first questionnaire were coded from 1 (for the most negative rating) to 5 (for the most positive). Figure 3 diagrams mean scores per individual attribute as a function of (self-reported) speaker ethnicity. Interestingly, there are no marked differences between the attribute scores (all are in the 2.5 to 3.2 range), and the ratings on all attributes vary in the same way for all ethnicities (albeit with a small deviance for Croat on *likeable* and *intelligent*).

⁵ In view of the fact that a Bosnian speaker's city of origin is not typically thought of as a direct identity determinant, we did not explicitly elicit this information, as a result of which the previous suggestion cannot be corroborated statistically.

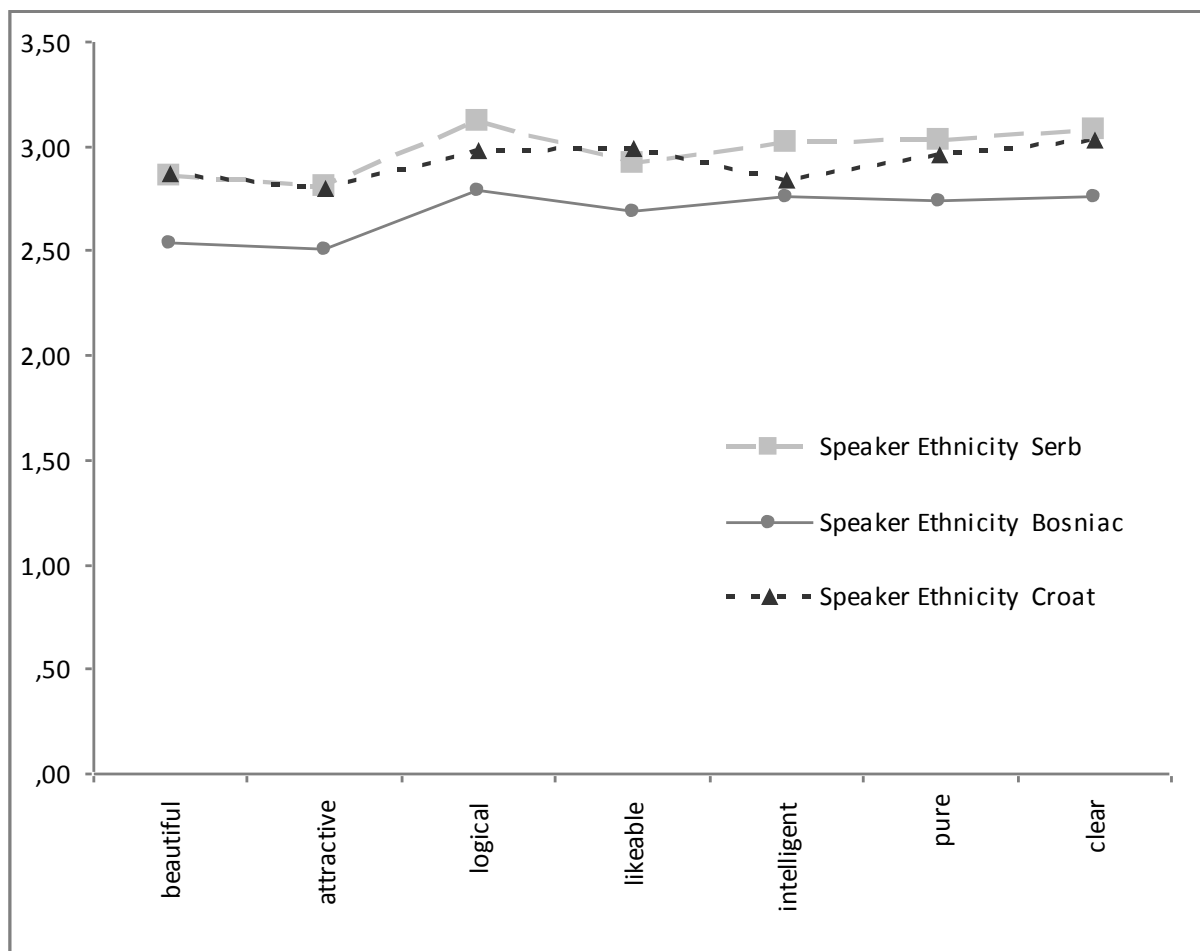


Figure 3: Mean scores per individual attribute as a function of speaker ethnicity

It is astonishing to see how similar the attitude profiles are for ethnicities and for language varieties (or rather: languages) whose divergence has been consciously planned since the dissolution of the Yugoslav Federation. No matter how many top-down changes the Croatian language planners have imposed on the standard language to delimit it from Serbian, Croatian and Serbian elicit almost identical conceptualisations in the mind of young Bosnian Serbs.

A very similar picture emerges from the data in Figure 4, which presents mean scores per individual attribute as a function of speaker city. We again see a small bandwidth of attribute scores (ranging globally between 2.5 and 3.5) and very similar attitude profiles for all five cities (with small deviations on *likeable* and *intelligent*). Interestingly, it is exoglossic Croatian and Serbian (from respectively Zagreb and Belgrade) which elicit the highest scores in absolute terms, while Bosniac-dominated Sarajevo is evaluated somewhat more critically.

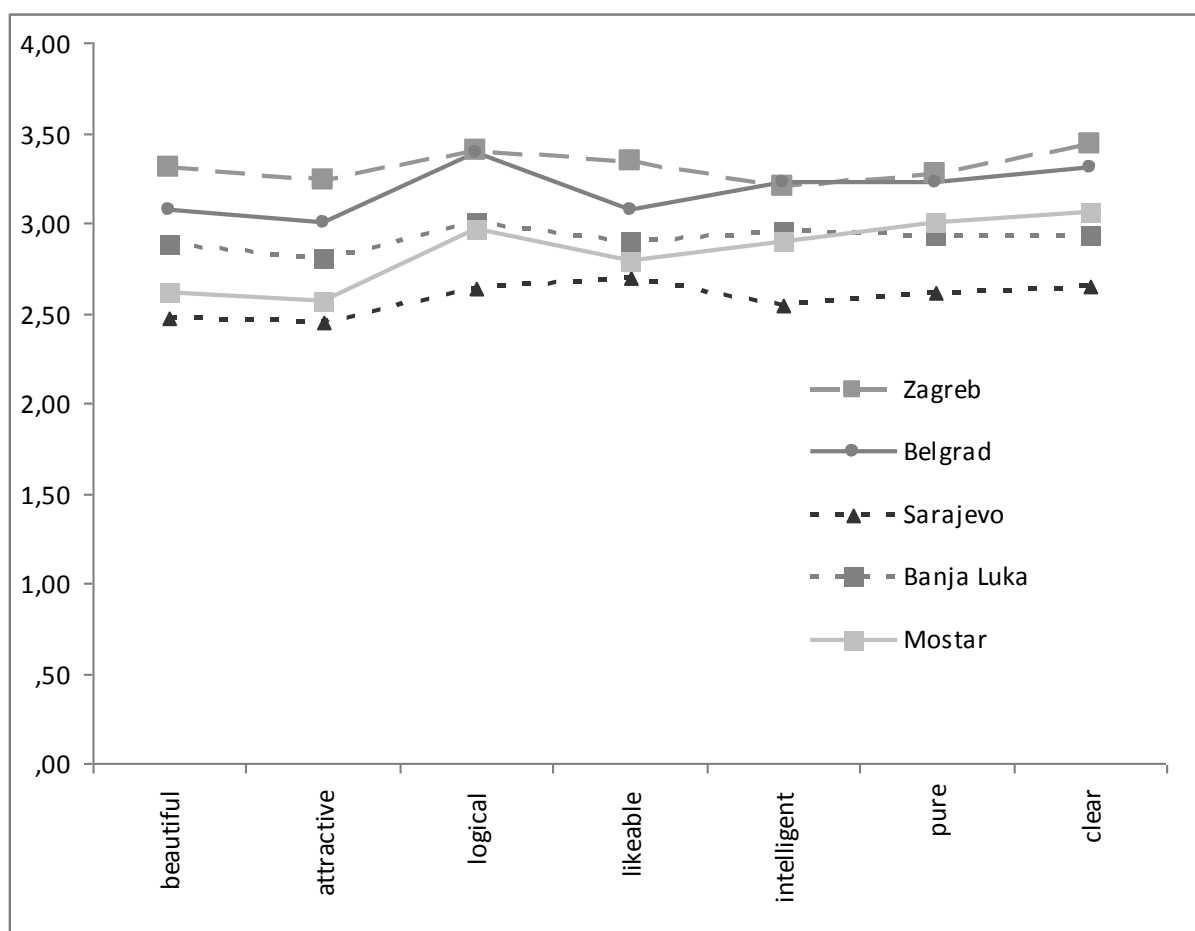


Figure 4: Mean scores per individual attribute as a function of speaker city

The fact that attitude profiles for the three ethnicities and five cities in our investigation are so similar allows us to aggregate attitude scores across the seven attribute scales. Figure 5 diagrams the global attitudes of the respondents aggregated both as a function of speaker ethnicity and as a function of speaker city. It confirms that it is non-Bosniacs and non-Bosnian speech which elicit the more positive attitudes: in terms of statistical significance (computed on the basis of a Kruskal-Wallis Test with grouped Bonferroni correction), there is no difference between the very positive appreciation for Belgrade and Zagreb speakers and speech, both of whom are rated significantly more positively than Banja Luka and Mostar speakers and speech (whose appreciation does not differ significantly). Sarajevo speakers and speech are significantly downgraded with respect to the other regions. A second conclusion is that Bosniac speakers and speech elicit significantly less favourable attitudes than Serbian and Croatian speakers and speech.

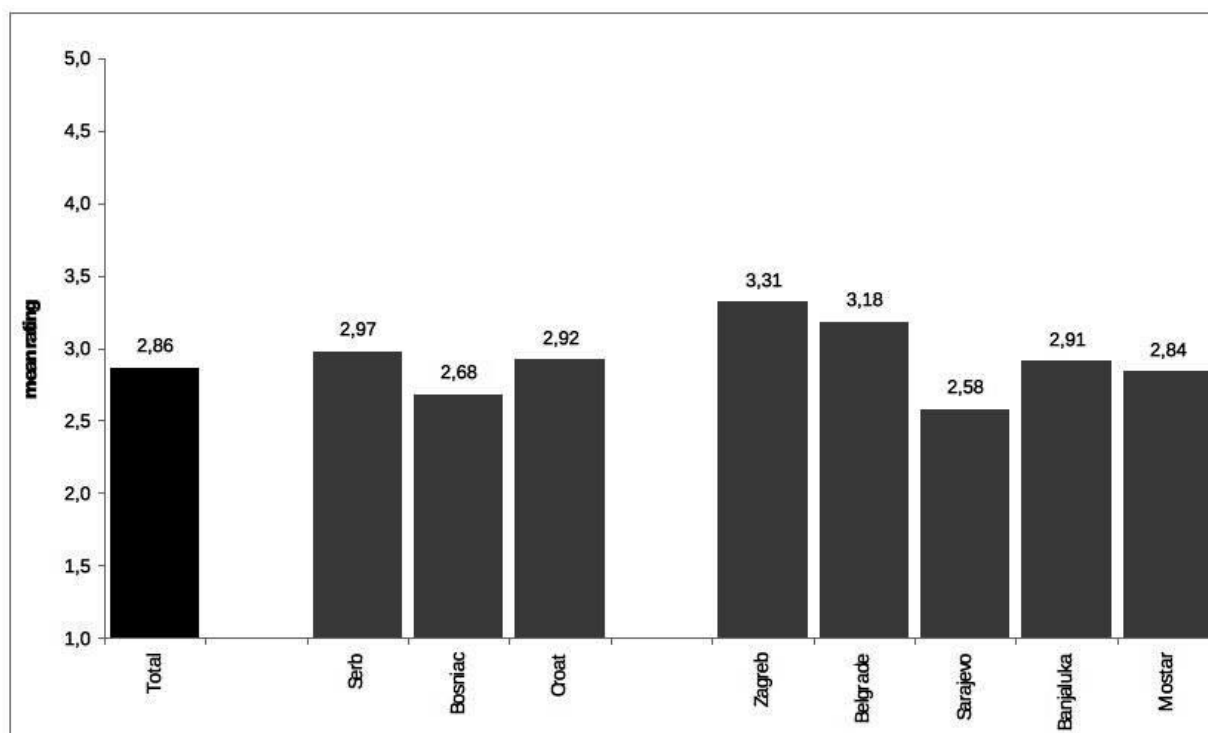


Figure 5: Global attitudes as a function of speaker ethnicity, and as a function of speaker city

These initial findings have two important repercussions. They confirm the general view that the norm centre for Bosnian Serbian and Bosnian Croatian lies *outside* BH (which converges with the idea that Bosnian Serbs and Croats have oriented themselves to Serbia and Croatia for the post-war standardisation of their own varieties). More importantly, these data do not support the nationalistic propaganda propounded in the popular press: while young Bosnian Serbs clearly have no high regard for their Bosniac neighbours and their speech, they have no higher regard for the Serbian mother republic than for their Croatian neighbours. Also revealing in this respect is that the Banja Luka respondents do not evaluate speakers from their own town more favourably than speakers from Mostar (with its Croatian majority and Bosniac minority, see Table 1). While there is no evidence, therefore, that the Bosnian Serbs value their cohabitation with the Bosniacs, there certainly is no evidence either that there is a primary orientation towards Serbia. The data in Figure 5 suggest that Croatia is just as fine for young Bosnian Serbs as Serbia.

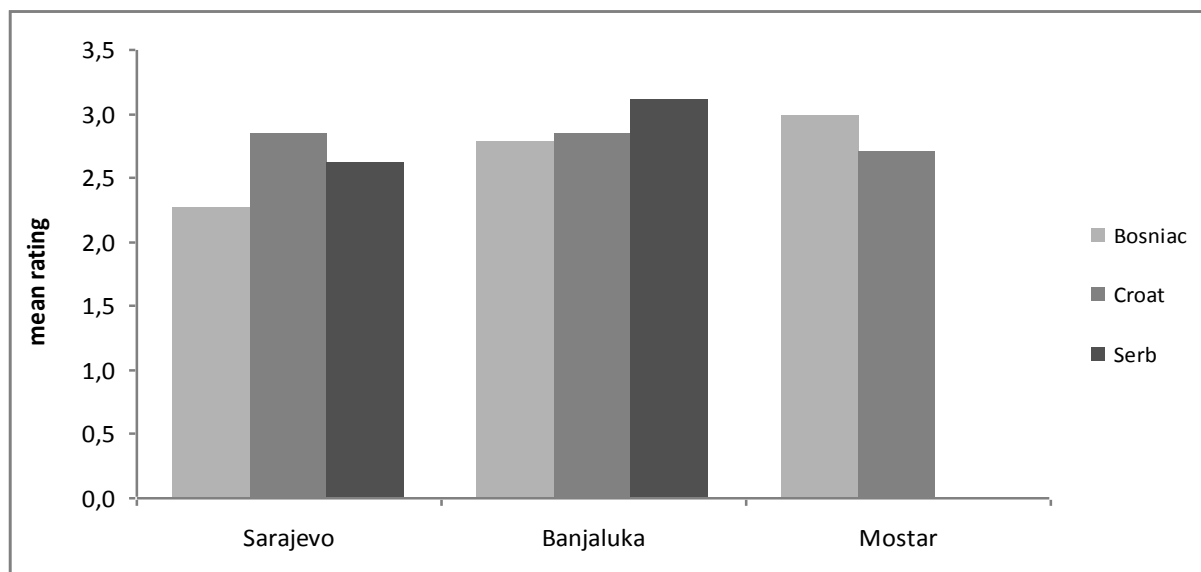


Figure 6: Global attitudes as a function of speaker ethnicity in each of the three cities

Figure 6 diagrams global attitudes as a function of speaker ethnicity within speaker city. It will be noticed, crucially, that the dominant ethnicity in Mostar (Croat) and Sarajevo (Bosniac) seem to be *downgraded* with respect to the non-dominant ethnicities. Whereas Bosniacs/Bosnian received the lowest global ratings in Figure 3, we see here that they were significantly better rated than Croats/Croatian when speakers came from Mostar, i.e. the Bosnian town in which Bosniacs are a minority. With regard to Croats/Croatian, we saw in Figure 4 that they received the highest global scores when the speakers were from outside BH (Zagreb); here we see that the Croatian speakers from Mostar, the city with the culturally vital Croatian majority, were significantly *downgraded* in comparison with the Bosniac speakers, while the Croatian speakers from Sarajevo, with a Bosniac majority, were significantly *upgraded* in comparison with the Bosnian speakers.

The fact that the speaker's city of origin partially confounds his or her ethnicity (cf. above) warrants some caution and necessitates a larger-scale replication, but these marked reversals of evaluation may well reflect *disapproval* of the divergent forces in BH: Croats are highly valued in general, but not as enforcers of a (linguistic) divergence which may lead to a new conflict. In the same way, Bosniacs are *downgraded* not only generally, but in particular as the protagonists of the top-down standardisation of Bosnian in the Bosniac capital of Sarajevo. If this interpretation is correct, our data do not reveal a great love on the part of the Bosnian Serbs for the nation of BH, but rather a deep fear of new

conflicts and instability. Unnecessary to say that there is no support either for a subconscious endorsement of the nationalistic propaganda in the Bosnian Serbian media.

Dialect and Urbanity as ranking factors – a regression analysis

While the previous data are highly revealing with respect to present-day language dynamics in the former Yugoslavian territory, we do not know yet what motivates the attitudinal ranking of the varieties and their speakers. The traditional attribute set adapted from previous attitudinal investigations clearly does not distinguish our stimuli in terms of traditional prestige or solidarity considerations.

Therefore it was also elicited whether respondents regarded the experimental stimuli as *dialectal* (recall that previous studies revealed that the new changes in Bosnian were dubbed ‘old-fashioned’ and ‘dialectal’). Crucially, the perception of a stimulus as dialectal does not seem to lead to overall stigmatisation: the mean attitude score for speakers judged to sound dialectal (2.9) was not significantly different, according to a Mann-Whitney U test, from that of speakers regarded as standard (2.8). Much more revealing is the attribution of a rural vs. an urban background: speakers who were credited as being urban were rated more positively on all attributes (the difference between the global attitude towards speakers attributed an urban background (3.11) and the global attitude towards speakers perceived to have a rural background (2.54) is statistically significant in a Mann-Whitney U test).

In order to assess the statistical significance and effect size of the different factors as determinants of the global attitude scores, a linear stepwise forward regression (which automatically excluded insignificant predictors) was carried out. The dependent variable was the global attitude score, which was continuous and normally distributed. Independent variables were speaker city, speaker ethnicity, attributed standardness, and attributed urbanity. Independent variables were only weakly correlated, so there were no interdependencies between them.

The regression data in Table 2 show that the most important determinant of attitudinal differences is Urbanity (the more frequently classified as urban, the better the evaluation), while the next most important factors Speaker City = Sarajevo and Speaker Ethnicity = Bosniac lead to significantly *lower* attitude scores. It should be recalled, however, that the latter need not reflect any global disapproval of Bosniacs and Bosnian: in addition to the fact that both were up-

graded in Mostar, the negative effects may also index a disapproval of the new Bosnian standard as ‘oldfashioned’ and ‘rural’.

Table 2: Linear stepwise forward regression on the factors which determine global attitudes

Factor	B	Std Error	Beta	T	P
Urbanity	0,481	0,098	0,270	4,925	0,000
Speaker City: Sarajevo	-0,288	0,089	-0,178	-3,255	0,001
Speaker Ethnicity: Bosniac	-0,188	0,075	-0,129	-2,512	0,012

Could we have asked directly?

How essential is it to access language attitudes in BH ‘indirectly’, via unlabeled speech samples? Figure 7 demonstrates that a direct evaluation of labelled ethnicities and cities quite generally yields more positive attitudes, without, however, changing much in the ranking revealed by the indirect evaluations. The sole exception to the latter – the fact that the Banja Luka respondents prefer their own (variety), but only when asked directly – justifies the use of indirect measures, because the latter reveal a Bosnian Serbian auto-perception which is much more modest than the nationalistic media propaganda suggests.

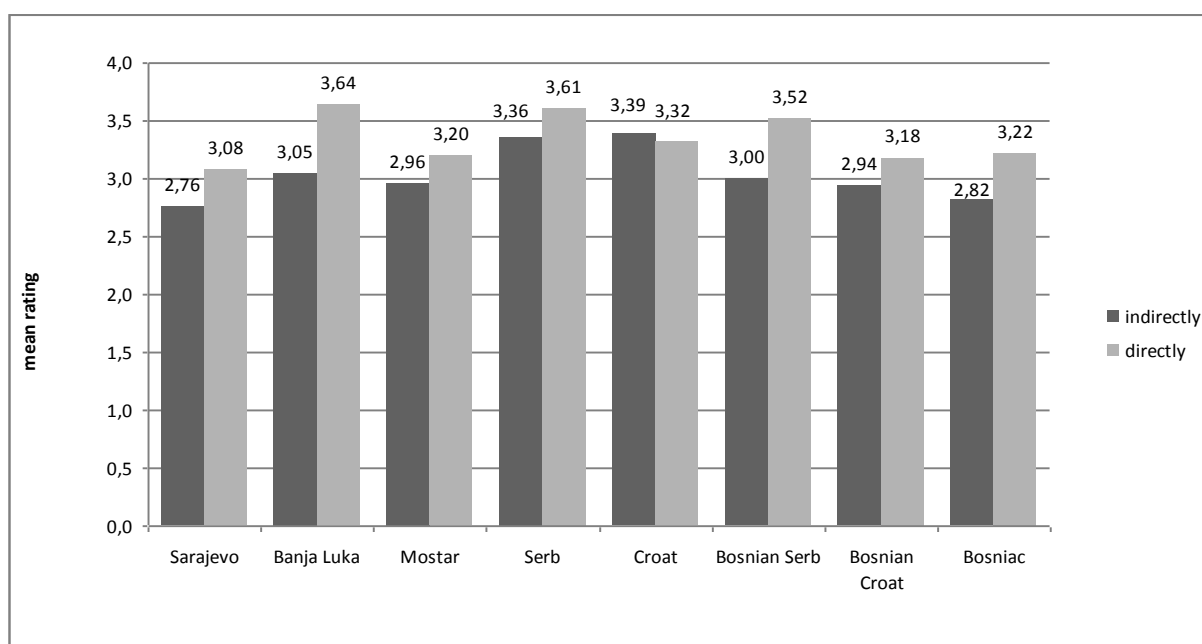


Figure 7: Direct and indirect attitudes as a function of speaker ethnicity and as a function of speaker city

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has reported (language) attitudes of 102 Bosnian Serbian students from Banja Luka to unlabeled speech stimuli produced by ethnically diverse speakers from the Bosnian cities Banja Luka, Mostar, and Sarajevo, and the Croatian and Serbian capitals Zagreb and Belgrade. Let us first review the findings in relation to the research questions formulated above.

1. How well can young Bosnian Serbs infer speaker ethnicity from unlabeled speech samples?

While global ethnicity could be inferred fairly well from speech, a possible confound was the speaker's city of origin (a variable which was not, unfortunately, explicitly elicited in this investigation): in cases where listener-judges were able to identify the speaker's city of origin, ethnicity attributions may have been co-determined by the listener-judges' knowledge of the ethnic composition of that city (Figure 2). As a consequence, a univocal answer cannot be given at this point.

2. Do the private attitudes of young Bosnian Serbs reflect the separatist inclinations propounded in the nationalistic media propaganda?

The evidence suggests that they do not. Young Bosnian Serbs have no higher regard for the Serbian mother state (and its language) than for Croats and Croatian. Furthermore, in contrast to the general upgrading of exoglossic Zagreb Croatian (Figures 4 and 5), the significant downgrading of endoglossic Croatian from the 'Croatian capital' of Mostar (compared to Bosnian; Figure 6) suggests that young Bosnian Serbs are weary of, and negative towards, the divergent language planning imposed on Croatian by their Croatian compatriots. Since Bosnian is upgraded relative to Croatian in speakers from Mostar, one might argue along the same line with regard to the result for the speakers from the 'Bosniac capital' of Sarajevo: the significant downgrading of Bosnian relative to Serbian and Croatian (Figure 6) may be taken to reflect negativity on the part of Bosnian Serbian students towards the divergent language planning which their Bosniac compatriots impose on Bosnian.

3. Do the anti-divergent sentiments in Bosnian Serbian conceptualisations correlate with a desire for intra-Bosnian convergence?

There is no evidence that Bosnian Serbs have a high regard for their new mother nation. Speakers and speech from the non-Bosnian capitals Belgrade and

Zagreb are invariably upgraded, while Bosniacs and Bosnian are systematically downgraded. If anything, the data reflect a lack of Bosnian Serbian self-confidence and a deep-seated fear of new conflict in the region.

4. Does the traditional attribute/scale set typically used in attitude research suffice to access Bosnian Serbian attitudes?

Traditional prestige indicators (as elicited on the scaled measures) do not account well for the ranking differences observed in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Neither does the degree of standardness attributed. The best predictor of hierarchical differences – as confirmed in the regression – is the extent to which speakers and speech are regarded as ‘urban’.

5. Direct or indirect attitude measures?

While direct and indirect attitude measurements reveal almost the same ranking of speakers and their speech, the fact that the Banja Luka respondents prefer their own ethnicity and speech in directly accessed attitudes is indicative of how sensitive these measures are to propaganda, and how pivotal it is to access deeper evaluations (which reveal a different picture).

This study has provided some access into current linguistic and political dynamics in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a country with an unusually polarised ethnic heterogeneity which is still recovering from a traumatising war. All the data collected suggest that in the private conceptualisations of Bosnian Serbs, avoidance of new conflict is the subconscious driving force of language evaluation. These anti-war values strongly contrast with the (highly divergent) pro-Serbian rhetoric of the public ideologies propounded in the media.

This investigation is the first to probe private and public attitudes and ideologies in former Yugoslavia, but the study is subject to a number of limitations. The first and most important of these is the absence of explicit elicitation of the experimental speakers’ city of origin, which confounded ethnic identifications to some extent: the identification of a speaker as a Bosniac, a Croat, or a Serbian clearly correlated with listener-judges’ ability to recognise the Banja Luka and Sarajevo accents, and their assumptions about the ethnic composition of these cities. This partial confounding of speaker ethnicity with speaker city raises concern about some of the perceptual data, and it is crucial for any follow-up study to elicit these variables independently.

A second limitation which has to be corrected is the restriction in the present study to Bosnian Serbian listener-judges. It is pivotal to find out to what extent Bosniacs and Croats share the sentiments of the Serbs. Even after these questions will have been answered, former Yugoslavia will continue to be an unusually rich area for attitudinal and ideological investigation.

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