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## Lexicography and Ethnicity (Dictionary Needs of Croatian Ethnics/Immigrants in the US)\*

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The paper defines communication needs of ethnic-immigrant groups as special bilingual-communication needs, with an important role reserved for dictionaries. Available general-purpose dictionaries can only partly meet these needs. Special difficulties arise in the case of Croatian ethnics/immigrants in the US, when two linguistic systems with marked lexical polarization are confronted or overlap (British:American and Croatian:Serbian). Other major aspects of bilingual dictionaries designed for an ethnic-immigrant group are the intercultural and the interstructural transfer of meaning, illustrated by specific English-Croatian and Croatian-English entries. The specific position of Croatian dialectal and regional items in such dictionaries is emphasized and analyzed. Finally, the paper stresses the need for unconventional dictionary genres for the Croatian ethnic-immigrant group in the US ('civilization', 'orientation', 'situation' dictionaries; dictionaries for ethnic women, returnees etc.).

### 1.

Without attempting to define or redefine ethnicity, most of us are likely to agree that language (more specifically linguistic affiliation) is a major ingredient of what we intuitively describe as ethnicity.

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In its turn — and equally intuitively perceived — the major ingredient of a language's substance are its words, most obviously (but also most efficiently) presented in a dictionary.

The deduction offering itself — ethnicity may be expressed through language, itself expressible through dictionaries — can be telescoped to read: ethnicity as expressed through dictionaries.

For whatever it is worth, a hypothetical link has been established between ethnicity and lexicography. At first glance, it is a tenuous link between two very disparate entities: ethnicity perceived primarily as a state of mind and lexicography as a professional activity (though, God knows, impossible without a very definite state of mind). However, both ethnicity and lexicography, interacting with language as they do, are not free of language's own wider interaction with society.

This societal aspect, taken for granted by even a casual observer of ethnicity, is less obvious with lexicography. But if dictionaries are viewed as communication aids for individuals, and sets of individuals, the societal aspect of lexicography becomes clearer.

The idea of dictionaries for social groups is no news in lexicography. Even a rough classification of dictionaries into general and special contains, among special, the so-called dictionaries of social dialects (of slang in general and of special slangs /drug culture, underworld, homosexual, jazz musicians, teenagers, military etc./). Social-dialect dictionaries, however, are as a rule monolingual and as such are largely irrelevant to basic dictionary needs of linguistically defined ethnic groups. What such groups need most is, clearly, a bilingual dictionary for communication with — typically — the dominant ethnic group.

The great majority of available bilingual dictionaries are best termed general-purpose bilingual dictionaries (though I know of none that actually calls itself so). As such, they are designed — or merely expected — to serve vaguely defined communities of users, with national or supranational upper limits and such lower limits as are commercially feasible, or simply acceptable for some political, cultural, religious or (conceivably) sentimental, nostalgic effort.

As general-purpose dictionaries they are, however, ill-equipped to fill any but the general needs for bilingual communication. As soon as they are applied to special bilingual

communication needs, they are certain to reveal functional inadequacies. Some of these inadequacies are inherent in the structure of a bilingual dictionary, others may be extraneous to it; yet others simply stress the fact that special needs call for special dictionaries.

## 2.

An important, usually overlooked, inherent inadequacy of the typical general-purpose bilingual dictionary is its largely unconscious *unilateral orientation* — toward the domestic user. A Yugoslav-produced English-Croatian/Serbian or Croatian/Serbian-English dictionary is thus primarily intended for the Yugoslav user, though it can be utilized with much the same benefit by a native speaker of English. None the less, important differences of emphasis — both cultural and structural — can be predicted and do occur when a bilingual dictionary is compiled by a native, as opposed to a non-native, speaker. This is further complicated by the direction and degree of these differences being dependent upon whether the source or target language (more simply: the left or the right half of dictionary text) is involved.

This aspect of inadequacy may be illustrated with the following instance of a cross-cultural and cross-structural problem in bilingual lexicography. The entry *republički* in a Croatian/Serbian-English dictionary will probably be glossed by a Yugoslav lexicographer as *republican* in the first place (though the dangers of superficial similarity here are such that they ought to tempt any lexicographer worth his salt into some post-entry comment). Next, depending on the lexicographer's caliber, cross-structural considerations may take over, resulting in glosses like *of a republic*, *republic's* (this one, it is hoped, with a usage label) and *republic-* (with the hyphen indicating an attributive function). Some marking for the alternative use of upper-case R with all the three glosses is certainly useful. Lastly, hitting the cross-cultural trail, a competent lexicographer will remember that a Yugoslav *republika* is constitutionally invested with prerogatives of statehood, so that the derived adjective *republički* fully merits the cross-cultural gloss *state-* (the use of hyphen makes this gloss cross-structural as well). In view of this last gloss's specialized meaning, restricted to Yugoslav conditions, the careful lexicographer will set it off with a semicolon and precede it by an explanatory label (*Yug.* or *SFRJ*). Collocating *republički* with a noun (in the phraseological section of the entry) will also help to elicit more specific glosses such as

*State-of-Croatia Scientific Award for Republička nagrada za znanstveni rad.*

A non-native, say American, lexicographer faced with the same task will probably follow much the same path, with perhaps less emphasis on the cross-structural glosses (unless he has been exposed to some contrastive-analysis thinking). His cross-cultural contribution may, however, be more abundant. In his effort to make all Yugoslav implications of the adjective *republički* clearer to the American user (surely his primary task), he might make use of the term *constituent republic* — the common rendition of the Yugoslav *republika* in English-speaking countries — and produce the hyphenated attributive group *constituent-republic*. Further cross-structural thinking will, naturally, produce the nominal groups *of a constituent republic* and *constituent republic's* (now with no stylistic label necessary with this last gloss).

A combined approach, aimed at producing a bilingual dictionary with equal emphasis on the needs of native and non-native users — that is on both the left-hand and the right-hand sides of the text — is theoretically possible but a tall order. The parallel presence of two approaches, with their different emphases, would call for a heavy use of explanatory comment within the entry and require above-average skill in utilizing such a dictionary.

### 3.

A second major inadequacy of a general-purpose bilingual dictionary for inter-ethnic group communication, which should be pointed out here is not inherent in dictionary structure, but has to do specifically with certain properties of the languages paired. Both English and Croatian/Serbian are known for important lexical polarization around two major standards: the national standards of American English and British English, and the subnational standards of Croatian and Serbian. The stress is on two *major* standards because only they have so far found generally accepted lexicographic expression, both in the English-speaking and the Croatian/Serbian-speaking areas.

The problem here is what happens with this lexical duality — troublesome enough in lexicographic and certain extralinguistic terms — when it meets its twin (and equal) between the covers of a bilingual dictionary. In our case: what happens when American English and British English are paired off with the Croatian standard of Serbo-Croatian or

with its Serbian standard? The answer is supplied by the following simple matrix in which A stands for American English, B for British English, C for the Croatian standard of Serbo-Croatian and S for its Serbian standard:

		TARGET LANGUAGE (Right-hand dictionary text)			
		A	B	C	S
SOURCE	A	—	(—)	+	+
LANGUAGE	B	(—)	—	+	+
(Left-hand	C	+	+	—	(—)
dictionary text)	S	+	+	(—)	—

With minus signs marking the pairings of identical language standards, and parenthesized minus signs those of closely related standards, eight out of the possible sixteen combinations must be disregarded as being monolingual. To be sure, only four of these (AA, BB, CC and SS) are truly monolingual, the remaining four (AB, BA, CS and SC) are differential, but none the less outside the bilingual scope and as such of no interest for this analysis. I will, therefore, consider only the eight possible truly bilingual pairings: AC, AS, BC, BS, CA, CB, SA and SB. In full, and with actual dictionaries to illustrate them, here they are:

- 1) American-Croatian (Bogadek, 1950)
- 2) American-Serbian (Benson, 1978)
- 3) British-Croatian (Drvodelić, 1978; Filipović ed., 1980)\*
- 4) British-Serbian (Ristić-Simić, 1975)\*
- 5) Croatian-American (Bogadek, 1950)
- 6) Croatian-British (Drvodelić, 1978)
- 7) Serbian-American (Benson, 1977)
- 8) Serbian-British (Grujić, 1980)

(\*These two most crowded fields are represented only by the largest and best-known works.)

Now dictionary needs of Croatian ethnics in the United States must, for obvious reasons, be presumed served best by dictionaries pairing Croatian and American. Next in order of usefulness should be those with Croatian and British halves, followed, in order of diminishing linguistic proximity, by Serbian and American and, lastly, by Serbian and British.

Thus reordered, the eight bilingual pairings from the list are (in a decreasing order of anticipated usefulness): 1/5, 3/6, 2/7 and 4/8. Admittedly, this is a purely formal ordering, not taking into account such factors as the quality of dictionaries involved. So, for instance, both dictionaries from the top-ranked groups (1 and 5) are hopelessly antiquated and of very low linguistic merit. Top ranking should, therefore, go to 3 and 6, especially in view of their effort (though with varying success and uneven consistence) to include information about American English. Also, 2 and 7 may function better than their rank indicates thanks to their admission of some Croatian material. The 4/8 group remains the least satisfactory

To recapitulate, we (a) simply do not have any Croatian-American dictionaries, and (b) our best substitution is general-purpose Croatian-British dictionaries with just a nodding acquaintance with American English. For want of more suitable, ethnic-oriented dictionaries, these latter are, I suspect, occasionally used among Croatian ethnics in the United States.

#### 4.

For this unsatisfactory situation to be improved, dictionaries specifically designed to meet communication and acculturation needs of Croatian ethnics should be produced.

To do this, potential lexicographers and dictionary publishers must have comprehensive, up-to-date and objective knowledge of these needs. This information is the responsibility of specialized US and Yugoslav agencies and can be supplied by them. Prospective dictionary writers and publishers must next develop an unambiguous attitude toward the needs in question. They must ask themselves whether they:

- (a) want to aid Croatian ethnics in the United States in preserving their linguistic and cultural entity;
- (b) want to aid these ethnics in becoming fully assimilated;
- (c) are after a compromise solution of assimilation coupled with preservation of cultural-linguistic entity.

Once these issues of strategy have been decided, the lexicographer is almost on home ground where he can break his task down into two familiar compartments: entry selection and treatment of entries. I said 'almost' because the dictionary proposed has, I suspect, very few precedents to go by, so that the issue of its **format** must come first.

#### 4.a

Is it to be a straight bilingual dictionary, or a combination of dictionary and orientation guide? Does one go the whole hog and, aiming at the lowest common denominator, decide on a dictionary-cum-orientation-guide-cum-immigrant-almanac type of reference work? Is the dictionary to be divided into three such separate compartments? Or should the emphasis stay on the straight part, with orientation-guide and almanac parts attached as addenda? Or will these two be broken down into entries and lexicon-type articles, and alphabetically inserted into the dictionary body? Should perhaps just the titles of these articles be so alphabetized, directing the user to articles themselves in a special appendix? Taking yet another tack, should one not envisage a straight bilingual Croatian-American dictionary, including only encapsulable cross-cultural information, while a companion volume entitled, say, *Living in the United States* treats this information more extensively — also accommodating other useful information for the Croatian immigrant/ethnic? (Compiling this volume goes beyond regular lexicographic tasks and would probably require a team of specialists to do it.) Why not, after all, envisage a three-volume reference work made up of a bilingual two-way dictionary, of a Croatian-to-American Phrase Book and an Orientation Guide? Or a four-volume reference mini-library, with a Pictorial Dictionary added covering all typical existential situations relevant to an immigrant and an ethnic?

#### 4.b

Now for **entry selection**. How does one go about it? Are the same frequency-level criteria applicable to a general bilingual dictionary valid here? Or does one try to envisage and lexically cover primarily the situations most important for the immigrant, or the ethnic ghetto dweller — such as reading store signs and traffic directions, understanding English on basic documents, reading simple news items in papers, and the like? Does one — one probably does — omit entries valid only for a European, notably British, situation: *baronet*, *back-bencher*, *high tea*, *petrol*, *trade union*, while making sure that *opposum*, *maple syrup*, *first paper*, *green card*, *gas* and *labor union* are included? Does one plan a series of bilingual dictionaries along frequency lines: a basic dictionary of up to 3,500 entries, an intermediate of up to

6,000 words and an advanced one including 12,000 items (beyond which frequency level monolingual American dictionaries should probably take over)? All entries should be provided with a simple and clear American pronunciation transcription as an indispensable feature. This will also help to de-Briticize the pronunciation of those Croatian immigrants who might have been exposed to British English in the Yugoslav school system or foreign-language schools, where British English still retains a largely unchallenged monopoly.

There are also major-entry-selection issues involving the Croatian side of a Croatian-English dictionary for immigrants/ethnics in the United States. An obvious early decision to be made is the inclusion or omission of such items as *kara* ('car'), *lodati* ('load') and similar typical immigrant-talk items. If the decision is for inclusion, one is still left with the dilemma of whether to cross-reference such items to standard-Croatian forms (*auto*, *kola* and *tovariti*, *krcati*), or to treat them as entries in their own right and provide them with English glosses.

Another important Croatian-side issue has to do with the treatment of Croatian dialect words. These items are largely omitted from Yugoslav-published bilingual dictionaries, very orthodox in their insistence on the standard form of Croatian with its heavily monodialectal (štokavian-ijekavian) lexical base. This approach would, however, be unproductive with too many Croatian ethnics whose modest levels of education in the old country have left them fairly innocent of standard Croatian and largely dependent on various dialectal forms of the language. As potential users of a Croatian-English dictionary designed for their benefit, they must not be punished by making the lexicographic information (i.e. the English gloss) obtainable only through the standard-Croatian item. An important methodological consideration here is how to avoid the purely local-dialect words (probably by replacing them whenever possible by the regionally recognized forms or supra-regional koine items).

#### 4.c

Finally, the **treatment of entries themselves**. Surely, the emphasis will have to be on the American aspects and usage. So, the entry *penny*, for instance, will dispense with its British meaning, but will list (as *US inf*) the meaning of *cent*. The idiom *penny wise and pound foolish* will not be supplied in the entry's phraseological section, but *penny ante*



will. *Public school* will only be glossed as *državna škola* (and the British meaning *ekskluzivni internat* will be omitted). *Faculty* will only be translated as *nastavno osoblje*, and not as *fakultet* (in its British meaning). And so on. The cross-cultural aspect will also have to be stressed. Thus *celery* will be glossed as *američki celer* accompanied by the following comment in parentheses (*kome se jede peteljka lista — ne korijen; celer iz starog kraja je 'celeriac' ili 'root celery'*). *Department of Interior* will be translated as *Američko savezno ministarstvo ruda i prirodnih bogatstava* and, anticipating the puzzlement of the Croatian immigrant user, there will be this comment in parentheses: (*za 'Američko savezno ministarstvo unutrašnjih poslova' v. Department of Justice*).

## 5.

More issues offer themselves but can only be listed here to indicate the potential directions of lexicographic efforts aimed at Croatian ethnics in the United States. For instance:

- (1) specialized dictionaries for first, second and third-generation Croatian immigrants/ethnics;
- (2) a dictionary for the Croatian immigrant woman;
- (3) a dictionary — phrase book — orientation book, for Croatian immigrants visiting the old country after a long absence;
- (4) a dictionary for Croatian immigrants' children intending to study in Croatia (emphasizing a general-science and high-school subjects vocabulary).

Writing and publishing these, as well as the more general-purpose dictionary for Croatian immigrants/ethnics in the United States (with its supporting volumes), is a challenging but worthy effort. It is to be hoped that the governmental agencies involved, immigrants' own institutions and able lexicographers can get together and launch some such project before too long.

LEKSIKOGRAFIJA I ETNICITET  
(Rječničke potrebe hrvatskih etnika/iseljenika u SAD)

Autor shvaća komunikacijske potrebe etničkih/iseljeničkih skupina kao potrebe naročite dvojezične komunikacije, gdje rječnik zauzima važno mjesto. Postojeći dvojezični rječnici opće namjene mogu tek djelomično odgovoriti na te potrebe. Posebne teškoće nastaju — kad je riječ o hrvatskim etnicima/iseljenicima u SAD — ukrštavanjem odn. preklapanjem dvaju jezičnih sustava s izrazitom leksičkom polarizacijom (britansko:američkom i hrvatsko:srpskom). Daljnji važni aspekti dvojezičnog rječnika namijenjenog nekoj etničko-iseljeničkoj skupini su interkulturalni i interstrukturni prijenos značenja, što se ilustrira englesko-hrvatskim i hrvatsko-engleskim natuknicama. Naglašava se i razmatra specifično mjesto hrvatske dijalektalne i regionalne građe u takvim rječnicima. Na kraju se ističe potreba za nekonvencionalnim rječničkim rodovima za hrvatsku etničko-iseljeničku skupinu u SAD ('civilizacijski', 'orijentacijski', 'situacijski' rječnici; rječnici za žene, povratnike i dr.).