Jim Hlavač: "Croatian interpreters and translators: profiles and reported behaviour in professional settings"

Jim Hlavač
Translation and Interpreting Studies, Faculty of Arts
Monash University
Melbourne, Australia
jim.hlavac@monash.edu

Abstract

This paper focuses on the profiles and reported behaviour of interpreters and translators for the Croatian language in professional settings in Australia and in Europe. This paper first describes the circumstances of translation and interpreting (hereafter: 'T&I') in predominantly Anglophone countries, as well as the norms (professional and ethical) that pertain to the interpreters and translators.

The sample of respondents consists of 31 interpreters and translators, of which 16 have accreditation for Croatian only, while fifteen have accreditation with Bosnian and/or Serbian, in addition to Croatian. Data were elicited on the following: reported behaviour in professional and non-professional situations; unanticipated differences in the language for which an assignment was accepted and its actual form; attitudes on assignments with unofficial or unclear designations; others' assumptions of respondents' native speaker competency and ethnicity; attitudes towards the distinctness of the three languages. Research results show that there are differences between the two groups in regard to verbal accommodation and readiness to consider interpreting or translation assignments with outdated or unofficial language designations.

Key words: interpretation, translation, translation norms, communicative accommodation, Croatian language

Introduction

This paper deals with interpreters and translators as a group of language experts who belong to a profession that has specific attributes. Translation an d interpreting practitioners have a professional relationship to language (in both its verbal and written form), but in a practical sense, they are exposed to daily examples of lay attitude towards language through oral and written texts provided to them by 'ordinary speakers' who are their clients, customers or fellow interlocutors. In most European countries, a diploma or degree with a specialisation in translation or interpreting (hereafter: T&I) is, while not a prerequisite, nonetheless a desirable attribute for future translators and interpreters to offer their services as professionals.[1] In many Anglophone countries, due to a paucity of T&I studies at university level, government authorities were required to create their own mechanisms to test the skill level of potential interpreters and translators who wished to work in the language services sector. As a result, governmental agencies or professional associations instigated testing and certification schedules. Examples of these are the *American Translators Association in the United States* (founded in 1959), the *Canadian Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters Council* (established in 1970), the *Australian National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters* (hereafter: 'NAATI', established in 1977) and the *New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters* (founded in 1985). Since the year 1910, there has been an association of professional interpreters and translators in the UK, the *Chartered Institute of Linguists*, which has offered a two-year graduate program as the preferred way to prepare for certification by way of examination. In Ireland there is the *Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association*, which also performs the testing and certification of future translators.

In Australia, interpreters and translators for the Croatian language gain accreditation (the Australian term that is equivalent to 'certification' or 'registration' in other countries) through successful completion of an examination under the authority of NAATI. NAATI recognised the

---

[1] European Commission (2012).

independence and distinctness of the Croatian language in the early 1980s and NAATI has conducted T&I testing for this language since then. Separate testing for the Serbian language has been conducted also since the early 1980s, and in 1993 testing was also introduced for the Bosnian language. The situation with regard to testing for these languages is similar to that in other Anglophone countries. In the US, the ATA in 2005 introduced special translation exams for the Croatian, in the near future or plans to introduce special tests for Bosnian and Serbian language.[2] In Canada, under the auspices of the provincial branch CCTIC times, there are tests for the following three languages: Croatian, Serbian and 'Serbo-Croatian'.[3] In the UK, CIoL offers separate testing for the following three languages: Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian.[4] A characteristic of T&I services in these Anglophone countries is that such a testing system is used to assess interpreters and translators who primarily service Croatian immigrants (and other categories such as business people, diplomats, government delegations, etc.) who reside in those countries and who do not have a functional knowledge of English. Such T&I services are required in hospitals, the courts, the police and welfare offices, and sometimes are described under the term 'community interpreting'[5] or 'public service interpreting'.[6] A characteristic of community interpreting is that the providers of such T&I services often are required to work with the speech and written texts of a wide range of Croatian-language speakers, as well as those of English-speakers, many of whom are B- or C-language-users of English.[7]

Translators and interpreters have to work with speakers and writers of different language varieties, dialects, speech, who many also display variation in their norms of behaviour. Thus, it can be said that their practices and attitudes reflect a fairly wide range of communicative situations which may include both newer as well as older immigrants from Croatian-speaking countries. It can also be assumed that the

---

[2] ATA (2016).
[3] ATIO (2016).
[4] NRPSI (2016).
[5] Hale (2007).
[6] Corsellis (2008).
[7] Cf. Kachru (1982).

majority of Croatian-language interpreters and translators are of Croatian origin or who identify as having Croatian ethnicity. In the context of Australia and other countries of Western Europe, their 'ethnic' identity is not 'local', but rather 'transposed' or 'migrant'.

At the same time, Croatian ethnicity is not a prerequisite for employment as a Croatian-language interpreter or translator, and amongst interpreters and translators for the Croatian language are those who have high-level proficiency in the Croatian literary language, but who may originate from countries neighbouring Croatia. There may, as well, be those who do not originate from the broader South Slav area and who have learnt Croatian as a foreign language. It is of interest to record if there is much 'cross-over' between these languages: a comparison of electronic directories in Australia (eg. AUSIT, NAATI) shows that the majority of interpreters and translators for the Croatian language are accredited exclusively for this language only. The same is true for interpreters and translators of the Bosnian and Serbian languages. There is a number of interpreters and translators with accreditation for Croatian who also possess accreditation for Bosnian and/or Serbian as well.

Interpreters and translators are language experts 'in the field', who, on the basis of their everyday experience and long-standing interactions with different groups of speakers and text-writers, are able to report first-hand on their own behaviour and attitudes. As such, this paper is a contribution to the study of the practices that interpreters and translators encounter and follow in a 'macro-occupational' sense.[8]

This paper is structured in the following way: Section 2 provides a brief description of 'translation norms' as a notion that can be applied to interpreters' and translators' practices. Section 3 gives a brief account of the (importance of the) role of translation and translators in the codification of Croatian. The following section focuses on translation with reference to Croatian and other, closely-related languages and is followed by Section 5 which gives a background to the methodology employed to gain the data sample on which this paper is based. The focus of the paper is the data sample presented in Section 6, which contains

---

[8] Cf. Katan (2009); Baibikov (2010); Dam & Zethsen (2010).

mainly quantitative data from 31 respondents, together with some further qualitative feedback from them, as well discussion. Findings from the data sample are collated and summarised in the conclusion.

Translation norms

In Translation Studies, the term 'norms' applies to the regularities of behaviour that T&Is exhibit in their approach to a text (written or spoken) and in their practice. 'Competence norms' refer to those options that are available to T&Is in a given context; 'performance norms' refer to the subset of options that T&Is select in real life.[9] As the term suggests, norms relate to the professional role that a T&I practitioner adopts to ensure that a T&I practitioner is able to work competently and accurately, and that a T&I practitioner acts in an appropriate way towards all parties and upholds ethical standards of the profession. As in other countries with a developed T&I infrastructure (i.e. training, testing and market sector), in Australia there is a professional code of ethics,[10] which recommends that practitioners should accept assignments only in languages which they are competent to perform in. At all levels of government and amongst major T&I agencies in Australia there is a policy of assigning only practitioners that have accreditation[11] in the required language. The workplace and ethical duties that practitioners have to themselves, their clients and the profession and the way that these guide their behaviour in interactions with others can be subsumed under a term congruent to Chesterman's definition[12] of professional norms, that could also be labelled 'occupational macro-pragmatics'. This is a term analogous to "*communities of practice*"[13] but different in that T&I practitioners often perform their work in isolation from other peers. These notions of norms will be applied in a macro-level sense to relate to the reported behaviour of the informants of this study.

---

[9] Toury (1980): 63.

[10] AUSIT (2012).

[11] Accreditation is the term used in Australia to refer to recognition of a test candidate's standard of performance that entitles him or her to seek professional employment translating – NAATI (2016).

[12] Chesterman (1993): 5-8.

[13] Lave & Wenger (1991).

Role of translation and translators in the codification of Croatian

Croatian has a feature common to almost all modern national languages in continental Europe that relates to the leading role that local translators played in the codification and standardisation of the national literary language. In the late Middle Ages, monasteries along Croatia's Adriatic coast were centres for the translation of religious and literary texts from Latin and Greek into the local language, resulting in the first (bilingual) Croatian dictionary written in 1595 and grammar in 1604. Further inland, the language of Bosnian and Herzegovinian Croats was, in equal measure to their Muslim co-habitants, influenced by Turkish, against which Franciscan monks fought religious battles with linguistic means by receiving papal support to widely translate religious texts into the local vernacular. In 1830, Ljudevit Gaj, a Croatian writer and translator from German and Hungarian published an orthography which codified the use of graphemes and diacritic symbols for Roman-script Croatian. The same graphemes have been adopted for Roman-script Bosnian, Montenegrin and Serbian. In the 19th century, translation from German, Hungarian, Venetian and Florentine Italian enriched Croatian literary expression and popular thought and translators functioned also as codifiers of standard expression. With the arrival of national romanticism in south-east Europe in the 19th century, lexicographers began to pursue strategies of purism and localisation through translated calques, or Czech or Russian models.[14] On the ground, asymmetrical multilingualism in Croatian-inhabited areas had facilitated widespread borrowing from German, Hungarian, Turkish and/or Italian, depending on the colonial power.

The Croat vernacular was subjected to strong Serbian linguistic influences after 1918 and then to a reactionary policy of Croatian purism during WWII which included differential dictionaries and even the practice of translation between Croatian and Serbian.[15] After 1945 words in Croatian that had been tarred with the brush of the Ustasha regime were officially proscribed. Reluctant moves towards linguistic unitarism

---

[14] Turk & Opašić (2008).
[15] Samardžija (1993).

with Serbian were followed by a popular revolt amongst intellectuals, writers, translators and linguists in defence of the Croatian literary standard in 1967. In 1971 the term 'Croatian literary language, known also as Croatian and Serbian' was instituted. With the demise of SFR Yugoslavia, 'Croatian' was declared the state language in Croatia and one of the official languages of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The nature of re-codification after 1991 has been exaggerated by some who focus on the re-emergence of retrograde purisms, while those words and forms identified as Serbian imports of recent vintage have fallen into disuse.[16]

Contemporary status of the Croatian language with reference to translation and interpretation from or into Croatian

While the status and distinctness of standard Croatian is now beyond dispute, it is also well- known that Croatian speakers can communicate without major problems with speakers of Bosnian, Montenegrin and Serbian. Such a mode of communication, which can be considered a form of *lingua receptiva*,[17] has been the subject of research in Croatia[18] and Bosnia and Herzegovina.[19] In relation to translation and inter-lingual transfer this has brought up also the subject of translation between Croatian and these three other languages. In January 2012 this led to discussions in Croatia on the translation and subtitling of Serbian films like *Žikina dinastija* ('Zhika's dynasty') on the Croatian television channel RTL. The Croatian Electronic Media Council warned RTL that: "*media service providers are obliged to provide programs in the Croatian language or translated into the Croatian language.*"[20] In an earlier similar instance, the Serbian film *Rane* ('Wounds') that screened in 1998 in Croatia was one of the first Serbian films to be shown in Croatian cinemas after the war in Croatia (1991-1995). It was subtitled

---

[16] For a fuller treatment of this topic, see Brozović (1978); Babić (1990); Katičić (1997); (2001); Auburger (1999); Škiljan (2000); Neweklowsky (2003); Bugarski & Hawkesworth (2004); Greenberg (2004); Kalogjera (2004); Badurina *et al.* (2009); Maštrović & Machala (2011).

[17] Rehbein *et al.* (2012).

[18] Eg. Heršak (2001); Langston & Peti-Stantić (2003).

[19] Tolimir-Hölzl (2009).

[20] Zajović (2012).

in Croatian. The topic of translation between Croatian, Bosnian, Montenegrin and Serbian, to some extent, become a trope or sub-theme for some media events in Croatia, such as the festival 'Days of Croatian Film' in April of 2012.

In the European Union, Croatian became the twenty-fourth official language of the EU with Croatia's accession in July 2013. There were some attempts in 2010 to push through an amendment to the draft resolution on the progress of Croatian accession to the EU, in particular, to find a:

> "… *suitable solution regarding the Croatian language that would not create a precedent for the later conclusion of a comprehensive agreement on the language of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, when these countries may become EU members.*"[21]

However, this proposal was rejected. But another decision was made that had as its point of reference not primarily the distinctness of the Croatian language, but the level of mutual comprehensibility with other languages. Hannes Swoboda, the EU commissioner who headed negotiations with Croatia, stated that:

> "*… the Commission should establish a working group of language experts to find an inexpensive solution that would respect the linguistic diversity, but on the other hand one that would not be too ostentatious so that each country would be given a separate interpreters' booth*."[22]

It remains to be seen how this may be implemented as Croatia's neighbouring countries appear to still be years away from accession to the EU. Otherwise, the EU, according to its statutes is obliged to accept a language as an official language of the EU if that language enjoys such a status in any country member of the EU.[23]

---

[21] de Prato (2010a).
[22] de Prato (2010b).
[23] Hlavac (2006); European Commission (2013).

Methodology

This paper is based on data responses from practising interpreters and translators. Around eighty potential respondents for this study were contacted by the author by email through the internet directories of *National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters* (NAATI) and the official website of the *Australian professional association for interpreters and translators* (AUSIT).[24] The author contacted also five peers in Zagreb, Vienna and Brussels. Of the eighty contacted persons, thirty-one interpreters and translators with accreditation (or certification, or formal recognition of their ability to interpret or translate) for Croatian accepted the invitation to complete an electronic survey with 20 questions. The reasonable size of the sample – 31 respondents – does not, however, allow the author to make claims that the respondents are representative of the entire number of Croatian-language interpreters and translators. The survey respondents were not asked to state their name and data was provided anonymously. Respondents were asked to nominate the language/s in which they self-describe as being a 'native speaker' or a 'speaker with advanced proficiency'. Respondents were free to interpret these concepts and apply them as they wanted. The aim of the survey was not to define or prescribe respondents self-reported language proficiency levels. Respondents also provided demographic data in the form of birthplace, places/countries resided in during before emigration (where relevant), and year of arrival in Australia (where relevant). A vast majority of the respondents define themselves as native speakers of Croatian, and this, together with the demographic data which recorded respondents' place of birth and areas resided in, indicate that it is likely that most of the respondents also co-identify ethnically as Croats, although this question was not asked. Table 1 contains information about the language or

---

[24] Approval to contact potential respondents and collect data was granted by the *Standing Committee on Ethics in Research Involving Humans* (SCERH), Monash University. Project Number 2007002093. The author and collector of the data is an Australia-based, Croatian-English interpreter and bi-directional translator with NAATI accreditation at the professional level.

languages that the respondents are accredited in.

Table 1
Number of respondents by occupation and number of languages for which the respondent has accreditation.

	Interpreters	Translators	Total
1 accreditation – for Croatian only	9	7	16
2 accreditations – for Croatian and one further language: Bosnian or Serbian	4	2	6
3 accreditations – for Croatian and also Bosnian and Serbian	4	5	9
Total	17 interpreters	14 translators	31 respondents

Data and analysis

As stated, this study is data-based and largely quantitative in focus. Figures provided in tables below are percentages. In some cases, respondents were able to provide more than one answer – in such cases the total of all columns can exceed 100%. In the tables respondents are grouped according to occupation ('I' = interpreter, 'T' = translator) and in the cited comments, respondents are also identified by way of number and language/s for which they have accreditation, ie. (T, 21, Cro.+Bos.) refers to a respondent who is a translator, who bears informant no. 21, and who has accreditation in both Croatian and Bosnian. This section contains responoses from the respondents that relate to the following:

- (Non-)Accommodation to the speech of an interlocutor who speaks Bosnian or Serbian language in non-professional, social contexts;
- Reported behaviour for instances when the language used by an interlocutor or language used in a text differs from the language agreed upon when the respondent accepted an assignment;
- Attitudes towards requests for interpreting and translation services for languages that bear an outdated or unofficial designation, or which have only just recently been codified;
- Attitudes of others toward the presumed ethnicity or native language of the   respondents;
- Respondents' attitudes toward the future development of all three

languages and feature of mutual comprehensibility remaining amongst speakers of all three languages.

Table 2 presents responses from the respondents about the reported incidence of (non-) accommodation to speakers of other languages.[25]

Table 2

Q1. When you are not interpreting or translating, but communicating with someone who speaks a language different from your own, how do you speak? Do you change your speech or expect the other person to change their speech in any way?

	1 accreditation		2 accreditations		3 accreditations		Total (%)
	I	T	I	T	I	T	
Yes. I adapt my speech to be similar to that of the person that I'm speaking to.	22	29	50	50	25	60	35
Yes. I avoid words or forms that are specific to my language only.	22	43	75	50	75	40	45
Yes. I expect the other person to also adapt his/her speech to be closer to mine.	11	14	0	0	25	0	10
No. I don't expect the other person to adapt his/her speech.	56	43	25	50	0	40	42
No. I don't adapt my speech.	44	43	25	50	0	40	35

Table 2 above shows that there is a fairly even percentage of those who claim to adapt their speech to that of their interlocutor and those who claim not to do this. Where accommodation does occur, it takes the form of avoidance of words or phrases that are characteristically Croatian, while around a third claim to accommodate in way that becomes similar or more congruent to that of the other interlocutor. While around 40% do not adapt their speech, there is an obvious contrast between those who believe that the other interlocutor should accommodate his/her speech (10%) and those who believe that s/he need not do this (35%). A majority of those with one accreditation only does not accommodate, while those with two or more accreditations are more likely to accommodate. There are no meaningful differences between interpreters and translators. These statistics are also congruent to those recorded in a comparative study of lay interpreters and users of interpreting services where the former groups were recorded to do this much more than the

---

[25] Cf. Giles *et al.* (1991).

users.[26]

A basic piece of information that should be supplied to all interpreters and translators is the language that is being sought for an assignment. Table 3 below sets out responses to the following question:

Table 3

Q2. You have been booked for a particular language but after you commence interpreting for the client, you realise that the client is speaking another language / You have accepted a translation job, but when you receive it and look at the language you realise that the language is different from the language for which you had accepted the job. What do you do?

	1 accreditation		2 accreditations		3 accreditations		Total (%)
	I	T	I	T	I	T	
Check with the client which language they want to use. Check with the client that s/he knows what language the text is in that s/he wishes to have translated.	44	86	50	50	0	60	45
Check with the client which language s/he wants me to use	0	0	25	0	25	0	6
Do nothing and interpret as normal. Do nothing and translate as normal.	33	14	0	25	25	20	22
Other	22	0	25	25	50	20	27

It is not unusual for interpreters and translators to find themselves in a situation in which they are confronted with a situation in which a speaker employs a language different from the one agreed upon, or for which a translator accepted an assignment. Table 3 above shows that around a half of respondents clarifies this by asking or contacting the client to check which language s/he requires. Around a fifth is doing nothing and interprets or translates as normal, while a similar number do other things.

(1) *I adapt to the language of the client.* (I, 15, Cro.+Ser.)
(2) *I lived in Serbia and then later in Bosnia, so it's no problem for me to change my speech to that of the client. I have often stayed in Croatia and I still closely follow Croatian media.* (I, 23, Cro.+Bos.+Ser.)
(3)   *I negotiate this with the client to see what the best way is for us to*

---

[26] Hlavac (2011).

understand each other well. (I, 22, Cro.+Bos.+Ser.)

(4) *I explain that I don't have accreditation for the language that they're speaking but if they accept that I speak my language then we can continue.* (I. 7, Cro.)

(5) *When I have received an assignment from an agency, I inform the agency that the document is not in Croatian. I then leave it to the agency to get back to me, particularly if it's an older document from the time when the official language was Serbo-Croatian, regardless of which republic it came from, then I don't have a problem. Only if it's written in Cyrillic which I don't read well, would I decline it.* (T, 21, Cro.+Bos.)

(6) *If it's urgent and the text is simple, then I accept it as I also know Serbian and Cyrillic.* (T, 12, Cro.)

(7) *In special circumstances, if asked by the employer and with consent by the client, such as urgent calls from Centrelink, emergency services, police, ambulance.* (I, 17. Cro.+Bos.)

(8) *Only from those other languages into English and only on a full disclosure basis*. (I. 6, Cro.)

Other respondents suggest that accreditation (and proficiency) in one language enables and allows them to work for other languages:

(9) *I have no problems whatsoever in accepting work interpreting in Bosnian or Serbian, if the person offering it is aware that I am not actually accredited in these languages.* (I. 2, Cro.)

These responses show that many interpreters and translators accommodate, i.e. adapt their language, to that of the client, or for interpreters and translators to check that the client allows the interpreter or translator to use the language for which the interpreter has been booked or for which the translator has accepted the assignment.

As alluded to above a number of terms were in official use in the time of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (hereafter: SFRY) and within its constituent socialist republics where an official policy of linguistic unitarism, at least amongst speakers of Croatian, Bosnian, Montenegrin and Serbian, was imposed. In the then Socialist Republic

of Croatia, the official name of the language was 'Croatian literary language also known as Croatian or Serbian'. In the then Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it was 'Serbo-Croatian or Croato-Serbian', while in the then Socialist Republics of Serbia and Montenegro it was 'Serbo-Croatian'. No successor state of the SFRY has such a designation for its official language/s now. The second term Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian is one which has some currency in some Western European countries, as a generic term used in university language courses or for community-based T&I services. The third term 'Yugoslav' is an inaccurate term used sometimes by outsiders who, by analogy to the name of the state, used its adjectival form as the name of the main language of the SFRY. The last term, 'Montenegrin' is one of the official languages of Montenegro, along with 'Serbian'. Montenegro's small population[27] means that this language is rarely specified as a language for which interpreting services are required.

Table 4
Q3. An agency says that a client wants an interpreter for 'Serbo-Croatian'. An agency wants a translator for work into or from 'Serbo-Croatian'. Would you accept this request?

	1 accreditation		2 accreditations		3 accreditations		Total (%)
	I	T	I	T	I	T	
Yes	33	28	25	25	75	80	42
Perhaps	11	44	50	25	25	20	28
No	56	28	25	50	0	0	30

Responses here show that slightly more than 40% of respondents would accept a request for an assignment with the designation 'Serbo-Croatian', while 30% would refuse such a request. Nearly 30% are undecided and would require perhaps further information before accepting or declining. There are large differences in the responses between those according to number of accreditations and occupation: interpreters with one accreditation are mostly against such a request while those with multiple accreditations are more likely to accept it.

---

[27] Montenegro has approx. 750,000 inhabitants, only half of whom designate their mother tongue as 'Montenegrin'.

While 'Serbo-Croatian' is now a disused and abandoned term, another hybrid term has replaced it, 'Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian', which is used as a makeshift solution for some institutions, such as the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY).[28]

Table 5

Q4. An agency says that a client wants an interpreter for 'Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian'. An agency wants a translator for work into or from 'Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian'. Would you accept this request?

	1 accreditation		2 accreditations		3 accreditations		Total (%)
	I	T	I	T	I	T	
Yes	11	14	50	0	50	30	27
Perhaps	33	29	25	50	25	30	32
No	56	57	25	50	0	40	38
No answer	0	0	0	0	25	0	3

The responses shown in Table 5 above also show mixed responses from the respondents. A relative majority would decline requests for interpretating or translation bearing the designation 'Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian', but almost a third would consider such a request. Just over a quarter would accept such an assignment and these tend to be respondents with two or more accreditations. Those with one accreditation, both interpreters and translators, tend to refuse such requests.

Table 6

Q5. An agency says that a client wants an interpreter for 'Yugoslav'. An agency wants a translator for work into or from 'Yugoslav'. Would you accept this request?

	1 accreditation		2 accreditations		3 accreditations		Total
	I	T	I	T	I	T	(%)
Yes	33	21	25	25	25	20	23
Perhaps	0	21	25	50	75	60	32
No	67	58	50	25	0	20	45

As far as requests for assignments under the designation 'Yugoslav' are concerned (a designation that was never an official term for any group's language, either in the SFRY or outside it, and usually a colloquial euphemism used only by some) negative reactions are more numerous

---

[28] Cf. Draženović-Carrieri (2002).

than positive ones. Those with one accreditation are most negative towards this designation, while amongst those with two or more accreditations there is more likely to be an indecisive reaction. Few obvious differences are apparent between the two groups. The last choice given to respondents was the designation 'Montenegrin' language, which has only recently been codified and (re-)standardised, with the publishing of orthography in 2009[29] and the publication of the first grammar in 2010.[30]

Table 7

Q6. An agency says that a client wants an interpreter for 'Montenegrin'. An agency wants a translator for work into or from 'Montenegrin'. Would you accept this request?

	1 accreditation		2 accreditations		3 accreditations		Total (%)
	I	T	I	T	I	T	
Yes	0	21	25	0	25	33	15
Perhaps	22	21	25	0	50	33	25
No	78	58	50	100	0	33	57
No answer	0	0	0	0	25	0	3

Perhaps due to the recent novelty of a Montenegrin standard, it seems that most respondents are not favourable to accepting requests for assignments under this designation. No respondents were born in Montenegro and none of them provided information to indicate that they had lived in Montenegro. Further information such as the context of an assignment, or further information supplied or presumed with a job can inform an interpreter or translator about the likely form of the language that they will be dealing with. For this reason, one of the translators added this to her responses above:

(10) *Quite often I ticked the 'perhaps' row because my final decision may depend on further information supplied to me by the employer or commissioner of the translation.* (T, 20, Cro.+Bos.)

Discussion so far has focussed on accreditation and negotiating situations in which other parties speak particular languages. However, accreditation and proficiency levels are not always synonymous with respondents' notions of their own proficiency and whether they see themselves as 'native-speakers' or as 'near-native-speakers' of the

---

[29] Crna Gora: Ministarstvo prosvjete i nauke (2009).
[30] Čirgić *et al.* (2010).

language/s for which they have accreditation. No definition of a 'native-speaker' was provided to respondents and no attempt was made to elicit linguistic or other data from respondents to speculate on their status as native- or near-native speakers of respective languages. The concept of the 'native speaker' is, in some people's lay terms, based on their ethnicity, for others it may be the first learnt language. But as Davies[31] reminds us, there are psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic aspects about 'native-speakerness' and also features such as assumed cultural and linguistic knowledge and group membership that can determine a speaker's notion of him- or herself as well as others' notions of him or her.[32] Table 14 below presents others' perceptions on respondents' 'native-speakerness'.

Table 8

Q 7. While interpreting or working as a translator, has a client or other party ever refused to work with you because they believe that you are not a native speaker or user of their language?

	1 accreditation		2 accreditations		3 accreditations		Total (%)
	I	T	I	T	I	T	
Yes	11	0	0	0	25	0	6
No	78	100	100	100	75	100	91
No answer	11	0	0	0	0	0	3

Table 8 shows that 91% of the thirty-one respondents do not report refusals from clients in relation to perceptions of their proficiency. For the most part, this is due to the circumstance that many of the respondents are, much of the time, interpreting into and from their 'native language'.

(11) *No. I clearly state I am Croatian and speak only Croatian.* (I. 1, Cro.)

One respondent mentions that attributes other than proficiency can be questioned:

(12) *No. They just sometimes questioned my ethnicity/religion.* (I. 23, Cro.+Bos.+Ser.)

Two respondents reply that they have not encountered refusals imply that some clients may register that they are not native-speakers of

---

[31] Davies (2003).
[32] Cf. Love & Umberto (2010).

one of their languages. This does not give rise to problems:

(13) *No. We show flexibility and mutual respect.* (I. 17, Cro.+Bos.)

(14) *No. Most of them did not mind. I make sure first that it's okay by them.* (I. 18, Cro.+Ser.)

And another respondent reminds us of an old truth:

(15) *A good translator/interpreter is not necessarily a native speaker*! (Inf. 5, Cro.)

Associated with, but not co-terminous to the concept of 'native-speaker' is that of ethnicity. Table 9 below records respondents' data on the incidence of others declining their services on the basis of the interpreter's or translator's (perceived) ethnicity.

Table 9

Q8. While interpreting or working as a translator, has a client or other party ever refused to work with you because they believe that you are of a different ethnicity to their own?

	1 accreditation		2 accreditations		3 accreditations		Total (%)
	I	T	I	T	I	T	
Yes	11	0	0	50	0	20	10
No	67	100	75	50	25	80	71
No answer	22	0	25	0	75	0	19

Table 8 above shows that over 70% of the respondents report that they have not experienced a rejection of their services on the basis of their ethnicity. Three respondents report this, while the remaining 19% provide no answer. From those who provide no answer there are comments to indicate that they have experienced situations where clients have questioned their ethnicity:

(16) *Once a client objected that I wasn't a real Bosnian but accepted my service.* (I. 21, Cro.+Bos+Ser.)

(17) *Yes, twice they questioned my ethnicity, but eventually they agreed and it went fine.* (I. 23, Cro.+Bos+Ser.)

One further respondent reports instances of refusal:

(18) *Occasionally a Croat would refuse my services because I'm not Croatian, even though I've lived in Croatia.* (I. 15, Cro.+Ser.)

One respondent reports the circumstances according to which clients can refuse services if they believe that they cannot feel comfortable with an

interpreter of a particular ethnicity:

(19) *Conflicts can occur if client had strong political issues due to ethnic conflicts.* (I. 18, Cro.+Ser.)

These examples appear to be rare and it appears that respondents are more likely to encounter the following:

(20) *No. I never hide my ethnicity. Clients never refuse me.* (I. 17, Cro.+Bos.)

(21) *I think that nationality doesn't have much to do with language.* (I. 5, Cro.)

(22) *Usually in the health care area of interpreting for clients from Serbia, Bosnia or Croatia, clients do not pose a great problem with accepting/refusing interpreters not of 'their' 'origin': they are usually very accommodating. Although, how they react to an interpreter not of their 'origin' is very individual.* (I. 19, Cro.+Ser.)

Lastly, as language experts with regular first-hand contact with a variety of texts and speakers, interpreters and translators are amenable respondents to elicit opinion on the current and future likelihood of mutual comprehensibility between Croatian and other languages. Table 10 below contains respondents' responses in relation to their views on the differences between each language.

Table 10

Q15. Do you think that in the future, the differences between Croatian and the other two languages, Bosnian and Serbian will continue to increase, decrease or stay as they are now?

	1 accreditation		2 accreditations		3 accreditations		Total
	I	T	I	T	I	T	(%)
Increase	56	57	50	50	50	40	52
Stay as they are now	44	29	50	50	50	60	45
Decrease	0	14	0	0	0	0	3

On the basis of the data presented above in Table 10, we can see that just over half of the respondents believe that the differences between Croatian, Bosnian and Serbian will continue to increase in the future, while just under a half is of the opinion that these differences will stay at the same level. There are few studies that quantify speakers' impressions about levels of mutual comprehensibility and future developments but these are congruent to those of Tolimir-Hölzl who states, on the basis of

speakers' perceptions and attitudes towards the three official languages of Bosnia-Herzegovina, that:

> "*… divergence is, in spite of the politically motivated pressures that have been laid to bear on language since the 1990s, quite minimal. But the potential to further these politically-motivated changes remains quite high.*"[33]

Findings and Conclusion

This sample is small, and as stated in section 4 above, cannot be considered representative of all interpreters and translators for the Croatian language in Australia or elsewhere. The detailed responses above, however, allow for some generalisations to be made. Accommodation in general social interactions occurs across all three groups but there are differences in the reported incidence of this across the three groups: respondents with three accreditations report the highest statistical frequencies of accommodation, usually through avoidance of forms specific to their primary language; other respondents do so also by converging their speech to be closer to that of their interlocutor, which is arguably a more effort-laden strategy. Those with accreditations in addition to their Croatian accreditation are most likely to do this.

When confronted with an interlocutor or client in an interpreting or translation assignment who unexpectedly uses another language, respondents with one accreditation are likely to check the interlocutor's language choice, while those with multiple accreditations are just as likely to do nothing, i.e. they are less likely to perceive the need for intervention or clarification. Where interpreters (and translators) with one or two accreditations accept work in languages for which they do not have accreditation, they do so due to specific or urgent requests from others. Among those who do not accept for languages for which they do not have accreditation respondents with three accreditations are less likely to nominate linguistic differences as an obstacle for this, they are more likely to nominate ethical reasons for this.

---

[33] Tolmir-Hölzl (2009): 223.

When respondents encounter texts in a language different from that for which an assignment had been accepted, most respondents firstly check with clients. Two-thirds of the respondents are reluctant to accept assignments for languages for which they do not have accreditation, firstly on ethical grounds, and secondly due to doubts of competence in the language variety sought. About half of the respondents are receptive to assignments that request interpretation or translation from or into an old and now disused designation, 'Serbo-Croatian'. Narrow to large majorities reject requests for translation from or into codes labelled 'Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian', 'Yugoslav' and 'Montenegrin' respectively.

Respondents with multiple respondents are generally more likely to accept requests for assignments with a non-standard designation. However, the differences between the respondents with multiple (two or three) accreditations and those with one are in some areas substantial, in others negligible.

Almost no informants report that clients have refused their services on the basis of not being a native speaker of the requested language. It is probably rare for a client to do this anyway; the informants' responses show, however, that where interpreters speak related languages, or converged varieties their linguistic skills are generally not questioned, even between language groups amongst which there have been recent armed conflicts. However, responses about clients' refusing to work with them on the basis of ethnicity are less clear: informants with one or two accreditations report that this has not occurred to them; those with three accreditations usually provide no response. This may suggest that for some clients, shared ethnicity is of more concern than shared 'native-speakerness', although it is hard to really separate these two notions as they are usually closely interwoven.[34]

These posited outlooks are based on respondents' responses (i.e. data was processed first which gave rise to these outlooks, rather than outlooks being posited first and the data was required to 'fit' them). The

---

[34] Cf. Gentile *et al.* (1996): 14.

outlooks seek to generalise the differences between groups of respondents on the basis of their general responses to acceptance of work in other languages, and accounts of the linguistic, professional and ethical features that guide their decisions. Some patterns are apparent: outlook (1) encompasses only single-accredited interpreters and translators who have a delineated view of the languages with restricting consequences on acceptance of assignments – about 15 respondents hold this view; outlook (2) views the languages as separate but interpretation and translation in 'other' languages as an inter-actionally acceptable strategy in certain situations and with conditions applied to the verification and liability of the performed translation – about 11 respondents hold this view; outlook (3) is almost a double or triple monolingual/native speaker view of the three languages and, unsurprisingly, is held by five respondents with two accreditations and five of the six respondents with three accreditations.

Interpreters and translators in the Croatian language now largely follow one of two paths: holding accreditation and working in one language only; holding multiple accreditations and accepting work in any of these languages. For both groups, acceptance of work outside accreditation is not common. With the continuing passage of time since the attainment of Croatian independence in 1991, and with the continued homogenisation of each of the speech communities of Croatian, Bosnian and Serbian (after a period of 'hyper-homogenisation' during the time of the wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina) it is generally less likely that T&I practitioners can competently and professionally service linguistically similar but distinct groups. (This contention holds, notwithstanding cross-border contacts and globalisation that are often thought to 'remove' differences between groups.) For interpreters and translators of the Croatian language, active proficiency in all aspects of the Croatian literary standard is an absolute pre-requisite. For those who work in other languages in addition to Croatian, active proficiency in the literary standards of the other languages is also axiomatic.

While accommodation between language varieties was and still remains a commonplace practice amongst different-language speakers, its incidence is loaded with the baggage of former, 'unloved' practices

and sometimes now enacted within unclear parameters. These events and changed practices have led to a re-alignment of the practices that Croatian interpreters and translators engage in construct for themselves, according to the socio-political situations they find themselves in. This paper posits that the changed practices that Croatian-language interpreters and translators now follow, even without explicit normative or belief statements from the interpreter or translator respondents of this sample, are indicative of a realignment of their application of 'translation policy' within Toury's notion of 'preliminary norms'.

Interpreters' and translators' practices are a reflection of the socio-political and (linguistic and legislative) regulatory features (and changes) in the source and/or target culture(s) which they work in. Thus, interpreting and translation 'norms' can be conceptualised as regulatory mechanisms that underpin not only textual, literary-theoretical or operational-environmental features of translation but, as this paper has shown, the concept of 'translation policy' can be extended to apply to the designation and form of codes that practitioners work with. This extension of norms to refer also to regularities of a reconfigured 'language policy' that interpreters and translators adhere to is an example of the dynamic, non-static nature of norms. Norms, reflecting the circumstances which determine them, may be re-shaped, over time and across different situations, according to changing macro-socio-political and ethno-political features of Croatian roots and hence are part of the community presented in this paper.

Bibliography

ATA (American Translators Association) (2012): *Online directories*. *http://www.atanet.org/onlinedirectories/individuals.php*, last access 14/2/2016.

ATIO (Association of Translators and Translators in Ontario) (2012): *Directory*. *http://search.atio.on.ca/search/index/1*, last access 14/2/2016.

Auburger, L. (1999): *Die kroatische Sprache und der Serbokroatismus* (Ulm).

AUSIT (Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators) (2012): 'Ausit Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct'. *http://ausit.org/AUSIT/Documents/Code_Of_Ethics_Full.pdf*, last access: 14/2/2016.

Badurina, L., **Pranjković**, I. & **Silić**, J. (eds.) (2009): *Jezični varijeteti i nacionalni identiteti* (Zagreb).

Baibikov, E. (2010): 'Revised translations, revised identities (Auto)biographical contextualization of translation', *Translation and Interpreting Studies* 5(1): 59-74.

Brozović, D. (1978): 'Hrvatski jezik, njegovo mjesto unutar južnoslavenskih i drugih slavenskih jezika, njegove povijesne mijene kao jezika hrvatske književnosti'. In: *Hrvatska književnost u evropskom kontekstu,* eds. A. Flaker & K. Pranjić (Zagreb): 9-83.

Chesterman, A. (1993): 'From 'Is' to 'Ought': Translation Laws, Norms and Strategies', *Target* 5(1): 1-20.

Corsellis, A. (2008): *Public service interpreting. The first steps* (Houndmills, Basingstoke).

Crna Gora, Ministarstvo Prosvjete i Nauke (2009): *Pravopis crnogorskoga jezika i rječnik crnogorskoga jezika* (Podgorica).

Čirgić, A., **Pranjković**, K. & **Silić**, S. (2010): *Gramatika crnogorskoga jezika*. (Podgorica).

Davies, A. (2003): *The native speaker: myth and reality* (Clevedon, UK).

Dam, H. & **Zethsen**, K. (2010): 'Translator status - helpers and opponents in the ongoing battle of an emerging profession', *Target* 22(2): 194-211.

De Prato, S. (2010a): 'Srpsko-hrvatski u EU?', *Večernji list,* 25/1/2010 *http://www.vecernji.hr/srpsko-hrvatski-u-eu-84474*, last access: 14/2/2016.

_____. (2010b) 'Srpsko-hrvatski jezik nije prošao, ali se o njemu i dalje razmišlja'. *Večernji list*, 27/01/2010 *http://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/srpsko-hrvatski-jezik-nije-prosao-ali-se-njemu-dalje-razmislja-clanak-87895*, last access: 14/02/2016.

Draženović-Carrieri, M. (2002): 'BCS – A practical approach'. In: *Lexical norm and national language. Lexicography and language policy in South Slavic languages after 1989,* ed. R. Lučić (München): 49-52.

European Commission – Directorate General for Translation (2012): *Studies on translation and multilingualism. The Status of the Translation Profession in the European Union* (Luxembourg).

European Commission (2013): 'Official EU languages', last update 16/11/2015. *http://ec.europa.eu/languages/policy/linguistic-diversity/official-languages-eu_en.htm*, last access: 14/2/2016.

Giles, H, **Coupland**, N. & **Coupland**, J. (1991): 'Accommodation Theory:

Communication, context and consequence'. In: *Contexts of accommodation: developments in applied sociolinguistics*, eds. H. Giles, N. Coupland & J. Coupland (Cambridge): 1-68.

Greenberg, R. (2008): *Language and Identity in the Balkans: Serbo-Croatian and Its Disintegration* (Oxford).

Hale, S. (2007): *Community Interpreting* (Basingstoke UK).

Heršak, E. (2001): 'Jezične strategije i društvo', *Revija za sociologiju* 32(3-4): 175-196.

Hlavac, J. (2006): 'Jezična politika i praksa u Europskoj Uniji', *Jezik* 53(3): 96-110.

_____. (2011): 'Sociolinguistic profiles of users and providers of lay and professional interpreting services: The experiences of a recently arrived Iraqi language community in Melbourne', *The International Journal for Translation & Interpreting Research* 3(2): 1-32.

Kachru, B. B. (ed.) (1982): *The Other Tongue: English across Cultures* (Urbana, Il.).

Katan, D. (2009): 'Occupation or profession. A survey of the translators' world'. *Translation and Interpreting Studies* 4(2): 187-209.

Katičić, R. (1995/96): 'Načela standardnosti hrvatskog jezika', *Jezik* 43: 175-182.

Langston, K. & **Peti-Stantić**, A. (2003) 'Attitudes towards linguistic purism in Croatia: Evaluating efforts at language reform'. In: *At war with words*, eds. M. Dedaić & D. Nelson (Berlin): 247-282.

Lave, J. & **Wenger**, E. (1991): *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (Cambridge).

Love, N. & **Umberto**, A. (2010): 'The native speaker and the mother tongue'. *Language Sciences* 32: 589-593.

NAATI (National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters) (2016) *https://www.naati.com.au/home_page.html*, last access 14/2/2016.

NRPSI (National Register of Public Service Interpreters) (2016). *http://www.nrpsi.co.uk*, last access: 14/2/2016

Rehbein, J., **Ten Thije**, J. & **Verschik**, A. (2012) 'Lingua receptiva (LaRa) – remarks on the quintessence of receptive multilingualism', *International Journal of Bilingualism* 16(3): 248-264.

Samardžija, M. (1999): *Norme i normiranje hrvatskoga standardnoga jezika*

(Zagreb).

Škiljan, Dubravko, (2000): 'From Croato-Serbian to Croatian: Croatian linguistic identity', *Multilingua* 19(1-2): 3-20.

Tolimir-Hölzl, N. (2009): *Bosnien und Herzegowina. Sprachliche Divergenz auf dem Prüfstand* (München).

Toury, G. (2004): 'The nature and role of norms in translation'. In: *The Translation Studies Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. L. Venuti (New York & London): 205-218.

Turk, M. & **Opašić**, M. (2008): 'Linguistic borrowing and purism in the Croatian language', *Suvremena lingvistika / Contemporary Linguistics* 65: 73-88.

Zajović, M. (2012): 'Ko nas bre prevodi? Vijeće zna da je zakon loš, ali ga ipak provodi', *Večernji list*, 27/1/2012. *http://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/ko-nas-bre-prevodi-vijece-zna-da-je-zakon-los-ali-ga-ipak-provodi-clanak-370505*, last access: 14/2/2016.

Sažetak

Ovaj se rad bavi uzusom tumača i prevoditelja za hrvatski jezik izvan Republike Hrvatske. U radu se najprije opisuju okolnosti prevođenja u većinom anglofonim zemljama, kao i norme kojih se tumači i prevoditelji pridržavaju zbog profesionalnih i etičkih razloga. Od posebnog je interesa položaj hrvatskog kao samostalnog jezika kada su posrijedi prevoditeljske usluge u stranim zemljama i način na koji se tumači i prevoditelji pozicioniraju prema sada opće prihvaćenoj posebnosti hrvatskog jezika i okolnostima prevoditeljskog tržišta. Ispitivanje je provedeno na trideset i jednom tumaču i prevoditelju, od kojih šesnaest ima akreditaciju samo za hrvatski jezik, dok petnaest uz hrvatski ima još i akreditaciju za bošnjački i/ili srpski jezik. Rezultati ispitivanja pokazuju kako između onih sa samo jednom akreditacijom i onih s dvije ili tri akreditacije postoje razlike u vezi s komunikativnom akomodacijom i spremnošću za prihvaćanje prevoditeljskih zadataka koji nose zastarjele i neslužbene nazive za jezik. No, kod gotovo svih ispitanika postoje slične norme vezane uz provjeru jezika govora ili teksta koji odstupa od dogovorenog jezika i neprihvaćanja ponude za jezik za koji ispitanik nema akreditaciju. Tumači i prevoditelji za hrvatski jezik predstavljaju zanimljivu skupinu za istraživanje srastanja stručnih i laičkih stajališta prema hrvatskom jeziku, pogotovo sada kada je postao dvadeset i četvrtim službenim jezikom Europske unije.