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RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Dr Ivan Šreter Contest for New Croatian Words by the *Jezik* journal: purpose, results and similarities with contests in the United States and Germany

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Objective: To show the results of the Dr Ivan Šreter Contest for New Croatian Words for the best new Croatian word and compare it with similar contests in the United States of America and Germany.

Methods: Descriptive review of the words from the 2020 contest conducted by the *Jezik* journal since 1992 and sponsored by the Dr Ivan Šreter Foundation.

Results: The paper explains the best words from the 2020 contest in detail and provides an overview of all the best words chosen so far. Croatian, German, and American contests are compared based on their selection and inclusion criteria of the words. The best new words are not imposed on speakers but are proposed as an alternative to foreign origin words, or as names for new terms.

Conclusion: The competition encourages Croatian speakers to have a creative attitude toward their own language.

Introduction

The Croatian neologism contest boasts a relatively short history – it had a modest launch in 1992, with the academician Prof Stjepan Babić publishing a call in the *Jezik* journal and inviting its readership to send in suggestions for the best and worst new Croatian words. The contest has since been regularly organized by *Jezik*, currently the longest-running linguistics journal in Croatia (founded in 1952) and one of the most prestigious ones (https://hrcak.srce.hr/jezik). Since 2006, the contest has enjoyed financial and moral support from the Dr Ivan Šreter Foundation; consequently, in honor of Dr Ivan Šreter, the best-new-word award was named the Dr Ivan Šreter Award (Babić, 2007). While 29 years might seem like a long time to some, the Germans have been announcing neologisms only for the last 50 years, while the American version of the contest is just 31 years old.

Due to its dedication to fostering Croatian language culture, *Jezik* has become a symbol of Croatian resistance to the Greater Serbian unitarian language policy (Ham, 2020a). Most notable Croatian linguists have published in *Jezik*. For the first 17 years of its running, the journal's editor was the renowned Croatian linguist Ljudevit Jonke (Ham, 2007). Stjepan Babić was the editor for 34 years, and the torch has now been passed to yours truly, Sanda Ham. Academician Stjepan Babić was one of the most highly regarded and reputed Croatian linguists, always at the frontline of Croatian language advocacy (Članovi Akademije, n.d.). He passed away on 27 August 2021.

Croatia, Germany, and the United States are not the only countries running the best neologism contests. Similar contests are held in Poland, Sweden, France, and England (Muhvić-Dimanovski & Skelin Horvat, 2008). *Jezik* regularly publishes articles regarding the contest and new Croatian words (https://hrcak.srce.hr/jezik; see: Ham, 2019; 2021).

German and American word of the year contests

Rather than holding contests, Germans pick their words of the year from public speeches and written sources. These are normally high-frequency, commonly used words of unknown authorship. In Germany, words of the year are selected by the German Language Society: *Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprache – GfdS* (https://gfds.de/). Founded in 1947, the society succeeded the older *Allgemeine Deutsche Sprachverein*, which was founded back in 1885 and which launched the first contest. Since 1971, Germans have been announcing words of the year in three categories: word of the year, youth word of the year (slang), and English word of the year. They also choose sentences of the year and hold an "un-word" of the year contest for the "worst" word, running since 1991. There is no award; selected words are simply published publicly (Wort des Jahres, n.d.). The German Language Society receives funding from the German government and has a similar role as the now-abolished Council for Standard Croatian Language Norm in Croatia – fostering the language, advocating a systematic approach to its standardization, and preserving its recognizability against the backdrop of globalization processes.

The aforementioned Council for Standard Croatian Language Norm was established in 2005 by Dragan Primorac, a minister from the Croatian Democratic Union (*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica*; HDZ), and inexplicably abolished by Minister Željko Jovanović of the Social Democratic Party (*Socijaldemokratska partija*; SDP) in 2012. The ruthless abolition was met with disapproval and resistance by the Croatian public. In the end, politics once again trounced the voice of culture and science and Croatia lost the only state body that advocated for the Croatian language (for the formation and abolition of the Council, its goals, and full documentation on its works, see Vijeće za normu hrvatskoga standardnog jezika, 2013). Croatia does have a Croatian Philological Society (*Hrvatsko filološko društvo*; HFD) (O Društvu, 2010), founded in 1950, but it operates only as a journal publisher (*Jezik* being one of the published journals). However, HFD takes no part in the *Jezik* contest and cannot advocate for the Croatian language in the same manner as the abolished Council. More precisely, the HFD operates exclusively as a publisher, whereas the Language Council handled normative and theoretical issues concerning the Croatian standard language.

The American word of the year contest resembles the one in Germany. The American Dialect Society, founded in 1889, has been running the contest for 31 years, since 1990. New words are chosen in ten categories – Political, Digital, Slang/Informal, Most Useful, Most Likely to Succeed, Most Creative, Euphemism, WTF Word, Hashtag, Emoji (Words of the Year, n.d.). Unlike the state-funded German society, the founding of the American Society comes mostly from membership fees.

The Dr Ivan Šreter contest for new Croatian words by the Jezik journal

The German and Croatian word of the year contests share a tangible connection – namely, Babić's call for entries in the best and worst word categories in Croatia was inspired by the German linguist Horst Dieter Schlosser, who, in 1991, called on Germans to choose the worst new German word. However, rather than selecting existing words, Croatia runs a neologism contest. New words are proposed by their respective authors, whose identities are explicitly known. The inceptor of the contest, Prof Babić, once dubbed them *tvorbenjaci* (word-creators) (Babić, 1995, p. 79).

In the Croatian contest, three best new words are crowned with a Dr Ivan Šreter Award. The public award ceremony is held in Pakrac or Lipik, in honor of Dr Ivan Šreter – he was born and raised in Pakrac, but his life and work were tied to Lipik. The contest

> *"…does not aim to declare a single best new word; rather, the aim is to encourage fans of the Croatian language to keep seeking out new words and, consequently, foster their creative talents, promote the use of neologisms, suppress unnecessary and unacceptable foreign words, develop a good Croatian language sense, and, by and large, generate a broader interest in the Croatian literary language and foster the native language culture"* (Babić, 1993, p. 128).

Contest entries are appraised by a committee of eight to ten linguists, writers, and eminent representatives from several fields – physics, engineering, and medicine. As *Jezik* does not enjoy constant support from state institutions, the continued running of the journal and the contest depends on revenues from reader subscriptions. Prior to 2007, the creators of the three best neologisms would either be awarded a book or have their name publicized in *Jezik*, but since 2007, they receive a monetary prize.

The public award ceremony takes place during Croatian Language Days and one of the aims of the contest is to preserve the memory of the signing of the Declaration on the Name and Status of the Croatian Language (Ham, 2020a, p. 112–13).

The contest and the 1967 Declaration on the Name and Status of the Croatian Literary Language

On 28 February 1997, the representatives in Croatian parliament passed the decree on establishing the "Croatian Language Days" - a week-long celebration of Croatian language to be held annually between 11 and 17 March (Odluka o proglašenju spomen-tjedna Dani hrvatskoga jezika, 1997). The dates were selected to celebrate the anniversary of the Declaration on the Name and Status of the Croatian Literary Language, which was com-

piled and signed between 11 and 17 March 1967. The Declaration was a turning point for Croatian linguistics – it symbolized the refusal of Croatian linguists, writers, and cultural and scientific institutions to take part in the fabrication of the artificial and politically imposed "Serbo-Croatian" language (Ham, 2020a). The declaration was Croatia's response to the unitarian Novi Sad Agreement, signed in 1954.

In 1960, the Agreement resulted in the Novi Sad orthography (Katičić, 2008). This was an attempt at fundamentally transmogrifying the Croatian orthographic standard. The unitarian Novi Sad Agreement was a vehicle for foisting the Serbian language on the Croatian people and promulgating its use in the public sphere. Under the guise of the "federation" language, Serbian became the language of diplomacy and the army (Jonke, 1971, pp. 251–384). The 1967 Declaration called for the freedom of the public use of Croatian in Croatia. However, as the contemporary unitarian politics resented seeing the Croatian national identity separated from the artificial, unitary Yugoslav one, the participants in the proceedings surrounding the Declaration were publicly criticized in an attempt to smother their demands (Bašić, 2017). The best new Croatian word contest is held in memory of these critical days, a homage which culminates in the announcement of the winning words.

The annual contest is run by *Jezik* and announced on the journal's website (Ham, 2020b). The competition is open from January 1 to December 22 of the current year. December 22 is a symbolic date – it is Ivan Šreter's birthday.

The contest and Ivan Šreter

The best new Croatian word award is named after the Croatian language martyr and victim of the Homeland War (Perković Paloš, 2020), Dr Ivan Šreter. Although held by the *Jezik* journal, the contest enjoys moral and financial support by the Dr Ivan Šreter Foundation, founded by friends of the late Šreter (Babić, 2007, pp. 32–33).

Dr Ivan Šreter was a victim of the Yugoslav communist regime. Initially, he was removed from his position of chief physician at the Lipik Hospital for using the Croatian word for *umirovljeni časnik* (retired officer) instead of the Serbian term *penzionisani oficir* in the medical record of a former Yugoslav People's Army officer he was treating in Lipik and was subsequently accused of insulting and disparaging "socialist, patriotic, and national feelings of the people". In the end, he was sentenced to prison. The original record of the incident – the resolution of the disciplinary procedure against Šreter for his work in the Lipik hospital – was published in *Jezik* (Ham, 2008). The document clearly shows that it was, in the literal sense, dangerous to use Croatian. Losing one's job and reputation for using Croatian words was a real threat (Erceg, 2020). During the Yugoslav regime, Croatian words were banned (such as the ban on using the Croatian adjective *umirovljeni* instead of the Serbian *penzionisani*, "retired"), and this doubly applied to military terms (one could not use the Croatian military rank časnik, only the Yugoslav *oficir* [officer]).

Ivan Šreter and Croatian military terminology

Croatian military terminology has a long history. However, in Yugoslavia, it was forbidden as being nationalistic and "anti-people". The 19th-century Croatian lexicographer Bogoslav Šulek (1870–1912) is widely regarded as the creator of Croatian military terminology. He translated military rulebooks from Hungarian into Croatian. Thus, the Croatian army acquired its own army code, *Naredbenik za kraljevsko hrvatsko-ugarsko domobranstvo* (Rules of the Royal Croatian-Hungarian Home Guard). The first booklet was published in 1870, with twenty more to follow; the last one seems to have been printed in 1912. In the four decades, Šulek's booklets were reprinted and their title changed, from *Naredbenik* to *Službovnik*: *Službovnik za kraljevsko ugarsko domobranstvo* (Service Code of the Royal Hungarian Home Guard). The rulebooks contained the official Croatian Home Guard terminology. Šulek's *Naredbenici* and *Službovnici* series were the basis for Tóth's Dictionary of Military Terminology (Tóth, Schweitzer, Pandić, & Spicer, 1900). Contemporary Croatian military terminology is largely based on Šulek's terms (Vince, 1990, pp. 563–568; Samardžija, 2008, pp. 84–86).

Ivan Šreter made use of the same terminology when he called a Yugoslav officer *časnik* instead of *oficir* – the terminology that suffered decades of persecution and ridicule (Vince, 1990, pp. 566–568; Ham, 2016).

Disputes over Croatian military terms

Home Guard military terms were also ridiculed in "Croatian God Mars", a book by Croatian writer Miroslav Krleža (Krleža, Miroslav, 2021). As Krleža's criticism of various topics, mostly expressed through his prose, prevailed due to his reputation, one may wonder whether Krleža's jeers at Home Guard terminology were the reason behind the decades of its neglect. The linguistic justification of Krleža's critique should also be questioned.

In the chapter on *The Home Guard and Foreign Word Interpreter* of his highly appraised work, "Croatian God Mars" (where he depicts the bleak fate of Croatian home guard soldiers in World War One), Krleža ironically dismissed *Službovnik* (translated from Hungarian by Šulek) as "one of the most wondrous Croatian books", calling himself the first person "to give it the time of day." In giving the Officer's Code "the time of day", Krleža drew a connection between Croatia's ill fortune during its time in Austria-Hungary and the Croatian linguistic stylization in the most pernicious sense possible:

> *"...'tis an anthem to the Hungarian, Deákian Home Guard 'infantry', written in the language and spelling of the seventies [of the 19th century] and dressed up by a more recent, highly refined style favored by a number of our linguists, the Settlement advocates, unionists, and academic purists, who on a whim resolved to call this masterpiece "a rulebook for the team and the superior officers." And when they "twist and turn in an unfolded line," then "the boys shall cover their peers in the first row, so that those who are closest in the pivot step a little to the side... Jumping backwards in twists and turns" of this Hungarian syntax, which also teems with the same kind of Hungarian barbarisms and Germanisms (these being, in turn, a caricature of the Mariatheresian Baroque curial and court Galicianisms)"* (Krleža, 1985, pp. 344–345).

In the post-World War II Yugoslav era, interlinking and identifying a particular brand of politics with a certain linguistic style was a common affair; Croats were thus condemned for allegedly using the Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*; NDH) *Croatian* language as a means of stripping them of their right to use an *inherently Croatian* Croatian (Bašić, 2021). More specifically, between 1941 and 1945, the NDH (Gitman, 2011) pursued a state-sponsored language policy – the language laws. The policy is, to this day, shrouded in various deliberate, politically driven misconceptions; not so long ago, the policy of the Independent State of Croatia was painted as monstrous and superfluous, even as it was fully obfuscated. The linguist M. Samardžija's works on the language policy and language of the Independent State of Croatia (Samardžija, 2008) refuted these misconceptions, shining a light on the linguistics of the period between 1940 and 1945 in Croatian history. Samardžija's research also contributed to clarifying several misconceptions about the Croatian language of the time, especially those related to rumors spread and fueled by Yugoslav authorities and the linguists of the Greater Serbia regime, like Pavle Ivić (for more information on Pavle Ivić's disastrous role in demonizing the Croatian language in the Independent State of Croatia, see: Samardžija, 2008, p. 79). The most widespread misconception is that the NDH was a fertile ground for novel, unnecessary, and largely grotesque words. Similarly, Yugoslavia was obsessed with inventing fictious NDH-era "neologisms" for satirical reasons, such as *međunožno guralo* (between-legs pusher – literal translation for bicycle) or *okolotrbušni pandalodržač* (stomach-surround trouser-holder – literal translation for belt). Samardžija's data show this to be a gross misrepresentation, as only 23 new words were coined in the NDH (*međunožno guralo* and *okolotrbušni pandalodržač* were, naturally, not among them). These included, for example, *putničar* (tourists) and *putničarstvo* (tourism), *izostavnik* (apostrophe – still in use today), *prvoborac* ("appropriated" by the partisan authorities as the title of Partisans who joined the movement at the beginning of World War II), and *slikokaz* (cinema) (Samardžija, 2008).

The renowned Croatian linguist Z. Vince reflected on Krleža's criticism. He tried to soften Krleža's blow to the Croatian language by expounding that the development of Croatian military terminology had to grapple with various obstacles, claiming that

> *"... given a longer history, Croatian military terminology would have probably filtered out and discarded any grotesque words in time, so we would not be inclined to smirk at what was left, as we are now, from today's perspective"* (Vince, 1990, p. 568).

Šreter's ill fortune

On 20 January 1987, Šreter was sentenced to 50 days in prison for using a couple of Croatian words, regardless of what linguists had to say about it. He thus became one of the Croatian language martyrs, alongside other Croats who were tried for using Croatian. Smiljana Rendić (1971) served two years in prison for publishing a journal article on the Croatian language (Erceg, 2020); in 1974, Josip Šćurić was sentenced for casually claiming not to be able to read handwritten Cyrillic. His sentence was annulled in the appeals process (Vuković, 1996).

Apparently, the Greater Serbian appetite could not be satiated by Šreter's prison sentence. On 28 October 1984, writer Goran Babić published an article entitled "Language to Death" in a well-known Croatian weekly, the *Nedjeljna Dalmacija*. This was a call for a lynching, rather, for Šreter's death for using Croatian:

> *"as this medico is obviously beyond help – from word or fire poker alike, the only cure for him is black earth and a green mound."*

And that is exactly what happened. On 18 August 1991, insurgent Serbs (Perković Paloš, 2020) kidnapped, imprisoned, tortured, and murdered Dr Šreter. His body has never been found (Degoricija, 2008, p. 165–167; Babić, 2008b).

The Dr Ivan Šreter Foundation was founded by Šreter's friends and now provides support for the *Jezik* contest. For this reason, the best new Croatian word award is named after Dr Šreter and sponsored by the Šreter Foundation. The ceremony is attended by the winners, Committee members, members of the Šreter Foundation, mayors of both cities, doctors from the Lipik hospital, and other distinguished guests from Pakrac, Lipik, Zagreb, and Osijek. The award ceremony has become an annual media event – for at least a month leading up to the occasion, newspapers, portals, radio, and television shows cover the Croatian language and its new words.

The process of selection of the best new Croatian words

New Croatian words are selected by the Committee comprising of members of *Jezik*'s Editorial Board and other writers and experts from certain fields who are not members of the Editorial Board. The Committee's first president was Stjepan Babić and the current president is Sanda Ham. The current members are Nataša Bašić, Igor Čatić, Mario Grčević, Hrvoje Hitrec, Zvonimir Jakobović, Mile Mamić and Dubravka Smajić. Some of the former members are Jasna Horvat, Lana Hudeček, Damir Kalogjera, Vladimir Loknar, Milica Mihaljević and Slobodan Novak. The best Croatian words are not grouped in multiple categories, as is the case in Germany or the US; there is only one, general "best word" category. Rather than being selected from contest entries, the worst word (if chosen at all) is a word already in public use. However, the selection of the worst word has been abandoned. Since the creator of the word is personally identifiable, singling out one "worst" word would be offensive to its creator, particularly because nobody wants to send in a new word only for it to be declared "bad".

The Croatian contest looks for replacements for unnecessary foreign words, primarily related to the surge of new Anglicisms. Beyond the categorical and stylistic classification, the German and American contests focus on words that best reflect the year's social climate and highlight words for new concepts and social movements. These contests are highly socially and politically involved. The Croatian contests does not have any political overtones. For example, the three best new Croatian words in 2018 were *zapozorje* (backstage), *oznak* (brand) and *bilješkinja* as a replacement for *javna bilježnica* (feminine form of public notary). These words have no political connotations and do not comment on societal affairs. Unfortunately, some still look at linguistic creativity and neologisms and see nationalist

politics, instead of the language culture. Such individuals are well-known advocates of the common Bosnian-Montenegrin-Croatian-Serbian language (Kordić, 2010) or political activists who, under the guise of linguistics, fight against the autonomy of the Croatian language (Kapović, 2010).

Overview of Croatian neologisms between 1992 and 2020

Table 1 contains the best and worst Croatian neologisms. The worst words were not selected from contest entries but were already in public use. They were announced only twice, in 1992 and 1993. No new words were chosen between 1995 and 2005.

The best new Croatian words in 2020

In 2020, our contestants were inspired by the same concepts and developments that informed the American and German contests. In a world ravaged by the COVID-19 pandemic, the disease-related words were front and center in each country. However, in Croatia, the aim of the contest is to provide Croatian words to replace internationalisms. In contrast, Germans and Americans favor international words.

Table 2 shows shortlisted words in the most recent, 2020 contest. Among the 19 shortlisted words, three were selected as the best.

A lot of the entries were words that aimed to replace foreign words and phrases related to the epidemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, including half of all shortlisted words. Although not shortlisted, one of the entries was *krunski virus* (coronavirus).

Društvostaj

We received various suggestions for "lockdown". Except for the two shortlisted coinages – *društvostaj* and *obustavka* – other suggestions included *zabravlje, zaključje, zaborava, zaključaj, lokotiranje, obustaj, opključavanje, podključje, zabrtva. Društvostaj* is a straightforward and transparent word that clearly means "social stagnation". It is a compound word, compositionally related to the words *lovostaj* (closed season), *suncostaj* (solstice), and *vodostaj,* (water level), which are in current use.

Older Croatian dictionaries contain compound words such as *suncostaj* with the feminine *-a* suffix, of the e-type:

> *"The word suncostaja, "solstice", which is found in Belostenac, was first adopted, with the same meaning, by Mažuranić and Užarević, and then by Šulek, who then used it as a model for new words: vodostaja, "water level" (Ger. Stillstand), sudostaja, "stay of proceedings" (Ger. Rechtsstillstand), neprestaja "permanence" (Ger. Permanenz), bilostaja "cardiac arrest" (Ger. Pulsstillstand)"* (Vince, 1990, p. 548).

It is worth noting here that Belostenc's dictionary *Gazophylacium seu Latino-Illyricorum onomatum aerarium* (Gazophilatium or a Treasury of Latin-Croatian Words) was published in 1740; Ivan Mažuranić and Jakov Užarević published their *Deutsch-illirisches Wörterbuch* (or *Němačko-ilirski slovar*) in 1842, and Šulek's *Deutsch-kroatisches Wörterbuch* (*Němačko-hrvatski rěčnik*) was published in 1860.

Table 1. The best and worst new Croatian words selected in previous competitions

Year	The best new Croatian words*	The worst new Croatian words
1992	New words were yet to be announced – the contest was newly launched this year.	HRD – abbreviation for Croatian dinar
1993	1. *suosnik* – coaxial cable 2. *strojevina* – hardware 3. *udomitelj* – foster parent (the word was in common use)	HRK – abbreviation for Croatian kuna AIDS BUG – the name of a computer magazine
1994	1. *velezgodinjak* – jackpot 2. *osobnica* – ID card 3. *ocjeđivač* – dish-drying rack (the word was in common use)	No new words were chosen.
2006	1. *uspornik* – speed bump 2. *smećnjak* – dumpster 3. *raskružje* – roundabout	No new words were chosen.
2007	1. *naplatnica* – toll booth 2. *opuštaonica* – wellness 3. *borkinja* – female fighter	No new words were chosen.
2008	1. *proširnica* – stent 2. *daljinac* – remote control 3. *pretjecajnik* – overtaking/passing lane	No new words were chosen.
2009	*osobnik* – PIN No words were awarded due to the influx of invalid entries, but the best word was still announced.	No new words were chosen.
2010	1. *ispraznica* – empty phrase 2. *osjećajnik* – emoji 3. *parkomat* – parking meter 4. *sviđalica* – Facebook like	No new words were chosen.
2011	1. *zatipak* – typo 2. *nekapnica* – pour spout 3. *dodirnik* – touch screen	No new words were chosen.
2012	The best words were not announced due to anonymous letters of shameful content that were sent to the Jezik Editorial Board.	No new words were chosen.
2013	*sebić* – selfie *vitičnik* – @ Only these two words were considered and highlighted, but the winner was not announced nor awarded due to slim pickings as well as the fact that the words failed to get the required number of votes to win the prize.	No new words were chosen.
2014	*odmrljivač* – stain remover Due to the dearth of entries and participants, the best word was not announced, only highlighted.	No new words were chosen.
2015	1. *alkomjer* – breathalyzer Only one best word was announced.	No new words were chosen.
2016	1. *istovrijednik* – equivalent 2. *podzemnica* – subway 3. *zaslonik* – tablet	No new words were chosen.
2017	Due to weak entries, the best words were not announced.	No new words were chosen.
2018	1. *zapozorje* – backstage 2. *oznak* – brand 3. *bilješkinja* – female notary public	No new words were chosen.
2019	Due to weak entries, the best words were not announced.	No new words were chosen.
2020	1. *dišnik* – ventilator 2. *kihobran* – sneeze protector 3. *rukozborac* – a signer, a person who speaks the sign language	No new words were chosen.

* The numbers next to the words indicate: 1. first place, 2. second place, and 3. third place. Words with no numbers did not receive a prize, only an honorable mention.

Table 2. Words shortlisted for the 2020 Croatian word of the year

Words chosen for the contest	Word that is replaced
dišnik, disajnik*	*respirator*
društvostaj, obustavka	lockdown
kartičnik	*etui za kartice* (card wallet)
*kihobran**	sneeze protector
kockomat	slot machine
novosnik	newsletter
obnovnik	regenerator
prebrisač, prebrisnik	*korektor* (correction fluid)
preklikati	*screenshotati* (to screenshot)
*rukozborac**	a signer, person who uses sign language
samoosama	*samoizolacija* (self-isolation)
subolesti	*komorbiditeti* (comorbidities)
suncozor	*solarna ploča* (solar panel)
šekspiriti se	to put on airs as if one were a great writer (poet, playwright, etc.), especially if this is unjustified, such as bragging (naturally, without a leg to stand on) to be William Shakespeare's equal
velepošast	*pandemija* (pandemic)
zabranjenica	*tabu* (taboo)

*Award-winning words.

Samoosama

Several new words were suggested to replace *samoizolacija* (self-isolation), and two will be highlighted here: *samoosama* and *samobiv. Samoosama* is preferred in the morphological sense – it neatly follows the Croatian word formation system and is also more transparent than *samobiv*. It is a compound word featuring a pronoun as the first component, formed on the model of *sam-o-osama*:

> *"The pronoun sam (self) is connected by the conjunction -o- and signals that the second part of the compound refers to itself: samodisciplina, samohvala, samoizdaja, samoironija, samoizgradnja, samokritika, samoobmana, samoobrana, samoodgoj, samoodržanje, samoopredjeljenje, samosakaćenje, samoponižavanje, samopožrtvovanje, samopromatranje, samospoznaja, samosvijest, samosavladavanje, samoubojica, samoubojstvo, samozaštita (self-discipline, self-praise, self-betrayal, self-irony, illegal construction, self-criticism, self-deception, self-defense, self-education, self-preservation, self-determination, self-mutilation, self-humiliation, self-sacrifice, self-observation, self-realization, self-awareness, self-control, suicide victim, suicide, self-protection)"* (Babić, 2002, p. 372).

The common Croatian synonym is *karantena* (quarantine), but this was, for no good reason, pushed aside for *samoizolacija* (self-isolation).

Subolesti

The frequent mention of comorbidities (*komorbiditeti*) prompted the creation of a new word, *subolest* (in Croatian, *su* means "with"). This word is more transparent and straightforward than *komorbiditeti*, which is, according to the general thesaurus available at the

Croatian Language Portal, a medical term: simultaneous occurrence of two or more illnesses or conditions (Komorbidìtēt, n.d.). We may as well discard this word *subolesti* (literal translation for co-illnesses). Interestingly, two contemporary Croatian monolingual dictionaries (Šonje, 2000; Jojić, 2015), do not contain the word *komorbiditet*. Jojić (2015) gives *morbiditet* as a synonym for *pobola* (morbidity), while Anić and Goldstein (1999) takes it as a synonym of *obolijevanje* (to fall ill). Klaić has *morbiditet* under the entry for *morbidno*, "morbid", which has multiple meanings, including "a diseased state" (Klaić, 1985). None of the above dictionaries make a mention of *komorbiditet*. This suggests that *komorbiditet* is not a part of the common lexicon; it came into common usage during the last year, due to extralinguistic reasons. We are, of course, aware that *komorbiditet* is a technical term, but for general purposes, *subolest* is more transparent.

Velepošast

Velepošast was proposed as a synonym for *pandemija* (pandemic). Older Croatian words for "epidemic" include *pošast, pošalina, pošlica*. The illustrious Croatian lexicographer Bogoslav Šulek already recorded *pošast* and *pošlica* in 1874, in his *Rječnik znanstvenoga nazivlja* (Dictionary of Scientific Terminology) (Šulek, 1874). In contemporary use, *pošast* has a broad meaning and may describe any rapidly spreading, bad or cataclysmic large-scale event, and *pošalina* and *pošlica* are used in vernaculars.

Daljinska nastava

Daljinska nastava was submitted as a translation of "distance learning", also known as the educational (mis)adventures during the COVID-19 era. According to its creator:

> *"In my opinion, this phrase has a broader meaning than online nastava (online education), i.e., it may also be applied to the forms of teaching that do not use the Internet. In fact, since this has also been referred to as online nastava, the term daljinska nastava seems even more appropriate. I also propose replacing the expression online predavanje (online lecture) with daljinsko predavanje (distance lecture)" (from the contest documentation).*

The proposal is excellent; unfortunately, we may only give a nod to it here. It cannot be considered for the award as the proposer has personal connections with the Committee. However, we are free to communicate the word to the public. Let us recall that this was also the case with *sebić* (selfie) and *odmrljivač* (stain remover) – these were good suggestions that could not be taken into consideration for the prize for the same reason.

Kartičnik

Kartičnik is a necessary word and a good name for the card wallet; more precisely, the card has become so ubiquitous that we now have special wallets just for cards – so we may as well call them *kartičnici*. The word *kartica* (diminutive from *karta* [card]) is mistakenly thought to be of English origin; it is a Greek word that entered Croatian through Latin and has become well-established. Its localization is apparent from the many meanings of the word (postcard, ticket, playing card); the same is true of *kartica* (calling card, credit card, advertising card, cards of various retail chains).

Kockomat

Kockomat was formed on the model of *automat* (vending machine), *mljekomat* (milk vending machine), *parkomat* (parking meter), *redomat* (queue management system), *svjećomat* (candle vending machine). In 2010, *parkomat* was voted the third best word in our contest, as a substitute for the phrase *automat za naplatu parkiranja*.

Novosnik

Novosnik is a morphologically sound word: someone who or something that brings news. The word's creator explained it as follows:

> *"A substitute for 'newsletter'. We get a whole bunch of them almost every day, especially as correspondence is now mostly electronic; newsletters tell us news, primarily business news. So, if we get our vijesti (news) from vjesnik (a newspaper), we may as well get our novosti (news) from novosnik (newsletter). The word seems convenient and is not awkward – we could be sending, getting our news from, communicating through a novosnik..."*

Alemko Gluhak wrote about the word "newsletter" in *Jezik* in 2000:

> *"We already have a borrowed word – bilten (whether this is a direct borrowed word from French or an indirect borrow from French via German is not important). There is absolutely no reason to replace a local borrowed word with a new one. So much has been written on unnecessary borrowed words, foreign words of various kinds... To describe the newsletter of this and that bank, we already have words like glasnik, vjesnik, and glasilo, as well as other options, such as obavijesti, vijesti, novosti, and so on"* (Gluhak, 2000, p. 200).

Novosnik could replace "newsletter", a common, but unnecessary foreign word. Based on the above, the word has not yet been considered.

Obnovnik

The word *obnovnik* is morphologically and semantically straightforward – something that regenerates; we could, for example, be using *obnovnik za kosu* instead of *regenerator za kosu* (hair conditioner).

In contemporary thesauruses, *regenerator* is defined as *obnovitelj* (restorer), *preporoditelj* (regenerator), while the verb form *regenerirati* (to regenerate) is defined as *pomladiti, pomlađivati, obnoviti, obnavljati; obnavljati tkivo ili dijelove organizma: regenerirati oštećene stanice, oštećeno tkivo* (to rejuvenate, restore, renew; regenerate tissue or parts of the body: regenerate damaged cells, damaged tissue) (Šonje, 2000, p. 1066). One of the meanings given in *Vrh* (Jojić, 2015) and on the Croatian Language Portal (Regenèrātor, n.d.) is "a product that is applied to the hair before rinsing to make the hair soft, shiny, and easy to comb."

Prebrisač

Prebrisač was suggested to replace *korektor* (correction fluid). The word's creator defined it as "the white substance applied to correct errors in text." The word *korektor*, of course,

has several meanings, including "proofreader" and "something that helps correct or corrects [vision correction, concealer, correction fluid]" (Kòrektor, n.d.). *Prebrisač* refers to the latter meaning (correction fluid).

Preklikati

The word *screenshotati* (to screenshot) is not orthographically integrated in Croatian. It is common in speech, especially in computer jargon. Its morphology has been adapted, as it is formed from the English "screenshot" and the Croatian suffix -ati. The English word "screenshot" is a compound word, combining the nouns "screen" and "shot", having the meaning of "photograph" or "recording". In computer terminology, the compound word "screenshot" refers to a captured image of a display on the television, cell phone, or computer screen. Instead of the English "screenshot", we are better off using the phrase *snimka zaslona* in standard Croatian (Screenshot, n.d.).

As stressed in the quote, the borrowed word refers to "shooting" and capturing the screen; however, *preklikati* describes the action taken to produce a screenshot, as we literally click on the screen (with the mouse) to capture it.

Suncozor

Suncozor was modelled on *dalekozor* (telescope, binoculars) or *sitnozor* (microscope). These compound words describe devices we use to observe distant or very small objects; *suncozor* turns this around, as this is a device that "looks toward" the sun, not a device we use to look at the sun. After all, a solar panel that faces away from the sun cannot serve its purpose.

Šekspiriti se

Šekspiriti se is an evocative word with a sardonic meaning. The creators interpreted their new word as follows:

> *"to put on airs as if one were a great writer (poet, playwright, etc.), especially if this is unjustified, such as bragging (naturally, without a leg to stand on) to be William Shakespeare's equal; we formed the verb šekspiriti se by building on and alluding to the verb šepiriti se (to strut)."*

The contestants, Denis and Anita Peričić, are already known to the Croatian public as the creators of the award-winning words in 2016, for *istovrijednik*, "equivalent" (Ham, 2017).

Zabranjenica

Zabranjenica is a would-be Croatian word for *tabu*. Its architect did not provide an explanation, so its usage is not completely clear; "taboo topic" and "taboo word" would, we assume, be *tema zabranjenica* or *riječ zabranjenica*.

The three best new Croatian words in 2020

Three words received the award – *dišnik* for "ventilator", *kihobran* for "sneeze protector", and *rukozborac* for "signer".

The first place for *dišnik* went to its two creators, Drago Štambuk and Karlo Kulaš; the second place went to Marin Perić for *kihobran*; and *rukozborac* by Ana Mihovilić came in third.

Dȉšnīk

Drago Štambuk has already been acknowledged for his successful word formation efforts (Štambuk, 2009; 2019). His award-winning innovations in the Šreter contest are *proširnica* (stent), *oznak* (brand) and now *dišnik*. In addition to these three words, Drago Štambuk is also credited with many other Croatian terms in the field of medicine; I shall only cite *kopnica* (AIDS) and *ritmodajnik* (pacemaker). One of Štambuk's greatest achievements is his hard-fought success in getting the Croatian dialects declared as a Croatian cultural asset in 2019 (Editorial Board, 2020).

Independently, Karlo Kulaš sent in the same word, so we pronounced two winners. Beyond *dišnik*, Drago Štambuk also proposed *disajnik* as its synonym, as well as *krunski virus* (coronavirus). Alongside *dišnik*, Karlo Kulaš suggested four more words: *kipilo* (electric kettle), *odmirisalica* (hood), *opključavanje* (lockdown), *poistovjetiv* (relatable).

Dišnik is a well-formed substitute for *respirator*. It is a noun formed by suffixation from an adjectival stem – the adjective *dišni*, "respiratory" and suffix *-ik*. The creators did not mark the accent, but since the suffix *-ik* is always long (*-īk*) and the adjective from which the noun is derived has a long rising accent (*dȉšni*), *dišnik* should be accented as *dȉšnīk*.

Similar words, *dušnik* (windpipe) and *dušnica* (trachea) have a different meaning. Creator Drago Štambuk described *dišnik* as:

> *"Thus, as a life-saving device for patients with coronavirus (and my knowledge of its use, as a doctor) that breathes for the patient with damaged lungs, it is self-evident to me to call 'ventilator' dišnik or disajnik – a device that breaths for a person. Inhalation and exhalation are parts of the breathing process – dišnik and disajnik are equally suitable Croatian substitutes for respirator (ventilator). However, the word dišnik should not be confused with dušnik (trachea). The difference is small, a single letter; but in application, it is as great and essential as the distance between life and death. In short, dišnik is a device that takes on the role of the trachea and assists breathing in the treatment of severe lung damage" (from the contest documentation).*

Dišnik is a new word for *respirator*. However, Dišnik has been attested as a name of a settlement. The 19th century Academy's thesaurus contains the entry: "DIŠNIK, m. a village in the Bjelovar sub-county, Croatia" (Akademijin rječnik, 1884–1886, p. 416). Dišnik was also recorded in the Thesaurus of Croatian Towns (Bašić, 2016, p. 89), with a short falling accent: Dȉšnīk. Dišnik is also recorded in the Dictionary of Croatian Settlements, but without an accent (Grčević, 2008).

A Google search (accessed February 28, 2021) returned 10,400 hits for Dišnik, but none for *dišnik;* the toponym and general noun are not semantically related, so *dȉšnīk* cannot be taken as an existing word.

Kȉhobrān

Kihobran was coined by Marin Perić. His neologism is a borrowed translation from "sneeze protector" in English. In the last year, the synonymous phrase *zaštitni vizir za lice (za usta i nos)* (face shield) has become a common name for the device that protects from droplet transmission.

Kihobran is a compound word evidently formed as an analogy with *kišobran* (umbrella): *kišobran* shields from rain (raindrops), *kihobran* provides a shield against sneezing (droplets produced by sneezing). Various compounds formed in this way derive their meaning in a similar fashion – an object that defends against the first noun in the compounds: *blatobran* (mudguard), *burobran* (wind fence), *gromobran* (lightning rod), *ledobran* (ice shield), *windshield* (wind fence), *padobran* (parachute), *suncobran* (parasol), and *vodobran* (skirting board). Beyond this, such compound words may also refer to a person or place:

> *"kišobran (umbrella) → a device for protection against rain*
>
> *grudobran (parapet) → a barrier that protects the chest/breast*
>
> *domobran (home guard; Croatian soldier) → a person who defends their home (country)*
>
> *mostobran (bridgehead) → a place from which troops defend a bridge"* (Babić, 2002, p. 343).

Grudobran is semantically related to *bokobran* (boat fender), *prsobran* (parapet). Like *mostobran, lukobran, kolobran, zidobran* (breakwater, guard post, wall guard) also describe places. In 2013, we received a word formed on the same model – *cestobran* for "traffic barrier".

The compound words *kišobran* is thought to be a neologism from the first half of the 19th century. Its first confirmed usage was in Mažuranić and Užarević's *Němačko-ilirski slovar (Deutsch-illirisches Wörterbuch)* in 1842. Compound words with *-bran* as the second element first appear in Šulek (1860), as his neologisms. Vince (1990, p. 548) writes:

> *"Patterned on kolobran, Šulek gives: domobran (Landesverteidiger), lukobran (Haferdamm), vjetrobran (Windschirm), vodobran (Wasserschutz), zidobran (Gewahrungspfahl)."*

It is evident that Croatian makes heavy use of compound words like *kihobran*, and these words are well accepted and in long-term use.

The creator of *kihobran* did not suggest the accent, but the noun fits neatly into the existing system – a short falling accent on the first syllable and a long last syllable: *kȉhobr*ān (the same as *kȉšobr*ān).

Rukozbórac

Ms Ana Mihovilić won the third place for *rukozborac* (signer, sign language user). She suggested two words, a noun and a verb: *rukozboriti* (to sign), *rukozborac*, alongside a definition: to speak/use sign language for the deaf; a person who speaks sign language for the deaf.

Croatian already has words for these concepts – *znakovati* (to sign) and *znakovatelj* (a signer). This makes *rukozborac* and *rukozboriti* completely new words rather than substitutes for existing words. It should be noted that, although an entry in *Jezik*'s contest, *rukozborac* is by no means meant to be a rival word to *znakovatelj*. We have no intention of trying to impose it on speakers – especially in the jargon, as *znakovatelj* has been gaining ground there recently. *Rukozborac* is an expressive but stylistically marked word and may become part of the general language; however, *znakovatelj* is a technical term. Technical terms in the field of Croatian sign language are just being formed and a lot of effort is made to make the terminology more systematic and widely used.

Regarding sign language, it must be noted that research in this field is still lacking. However, there has been an attempt to provide a systematic description of the grammar of Croatian sign language since 2003 (Pribanić & Milković, 2008).

The 2015 Croatian Sign Language and Other Communication Systems of Deaf and Deafblind People in the Republic of Croatia Act, Article 5, states:

> *"(1) Croatian sign language is the original language of the deaf and deafblind community in the Republic of Croatia and an autonomous language system with its own grammatical rules and is fully independent of the language of hearing people.*
>
> *(2) Signs or words of a sign language are formed by simultaneously broadcasting linguistic information using several sources, such as hand, arm, torso, head and face movement, and linguistic signals thus produced are tailored to a mode of visuospatial communication"* (Zakon o hrvatskom znakovnom jeziku, 2015).

The abundance of unnecessary borrowed words *emitiranje, lingvistika, informacija, producirano, signal, vizuospacijalni, modalitet, komunikacija* (broadcasting, linguistics, information, produced, signal, visuospatial, mode, communication) in the legal definition under item (2) aside, the Act, alarmingly, does not provide terms for "signing" or "a person using the sign language". In technical usage, *znakovanje* and *znakovatelj* fill this gap. *Znakovanje* is used in scientific and research papers; however, it is often italicized, indicating that the term has not been fully accepted (Kavčić, 2012; 2020). Nevertheless, *znakovanje* is a necessary, well-formed Croatian word; consequently, *znakovatelj* is an appropriate word for a person who signs (*znakovati*). In the sign language community, *znakovatelj* is on an equal footing with *govornik* (speaker) in the hearing community – *izvorni znakovatelj* (native signer) is gaining ground by analogy with the common collocation *izvorni govornik* (native speaker). Other words and phrases in use are *majčinsko znakovanje* (mother's signing), *manualno brbljanje* (manual babbling) (Kuvačić, 2017), *prevoditelj znakovnoga jezika* (sign language translator), *tumač znakovnoga jezika* (sign language interpreter), *govornik/znakovatelj* (sign language speaker/signer), *manualna komunikacija* (manual communication), *izvorni znakovni jezik* (native sign language), and *čujući* (the hearing) (Bradarić-Jončić, 2000). The Croatian Sign Language Act makes frequent use of *ručna abeceda* (hand alphabet) and *dvoručna abeceda* (two-handed alphabet) and these phrases provide grounds for the word *rukozborac.*

It should be noted that none of these words and collocations have been included in any of the Croatian dictionaries. For example, no dictionary has an entry for *znakovati* or *znako-*

vatelj. However, *znakovati* and *znakovatelj* have some currency and are not recent inventions, as they have been gaining ground as technical terms.

Rukozborac is a compound word, formally akin to *trbuhozborac*, (ventriloquist). *Trbuhozborac* appears in every contemporary thesaurus with the same basic meaning – "a person who speaks without moving their lips, so the sound appears to come from their stomach." For now, *rukozborac* may be defined as: "a person who speaks the sign language of the deaf, a signer." The Academy's dictionary lists several meanings of the verb *zboriti*, "to speak", but also notes that "in figures of speech, body parts can also speak" (Akademijin rječnik, 1884–1886, p. 673). Modern dictionaries provide a more modest definition of *zboriti*, but ascribe to it an expressive meaning.

In contrast to *trbuhozborac*, the form of *rukozborac* is attested in Croatian. According to Babić:

> *"The most fertile type of compounding follows the pattern. + o + verb + -(a)c. Noun stems are mostly monosyllabic, less often two-syllable; verbs are exclusively monosyllabic, producing four-syllable or five-syllable compounds… bogomŕzac, častoljúbac, čovjekoljúbac, čovjekomŕzac, čudotvórac, domoródac, drvodjélac, drvorézac (more commonly, rezbar), gostoprímac, kamenorézac, maslinogójac, mirotvórac, najmodávac, najmoprímac, nalogodávac, naredbodávac, narodoljúbac, pečatońezac, poljodjélac, poslodávac, posloprímac, rodoljúbac, slavoljúbac, slovorézac, stihotvórac, stihoklépac, štrajkolómac, trbuhozbórac, vatrogásac, vinomŕzac, vlastodŕžac, vlastoljúbac, zajmodávac, zajmoprímac, ženomŕzac…"* (Babić, 2002, p. 85).

By analogy, the compounding of noun *ruk(a)* + interfix *-o-* + verb *zbor(iti)* + suffix *-ac* results in a common suffixed compound *ruk+o+zbor+ac*. A peculiar novelty is the first element, the noun *ruka*, "hand".

When it comes to the accent, we may adopt the accent pattern of formatively related nouns, especially *trbuhozborac.* Two modern dictionaries (Šonje, 2000, p. 1269; Hrvatski jezični portal, n.d.; Babić, 2002, p. 85) mark a long rising accent on the fourth syllable in *trbuhozborac*, in front of the suffix *-ac*: *trbuhozbórac*. Alongside *trbuhozbórac*, Jojić (2015) also gives *trbuhòzbōrac*, with a short rising accent on the interfix and a long syllable preceding the suffix. Stjepan Babić has this to say about the fluctuating accent:

> *"The accent of such compound words varies between the short ascending on the interfix and the long ascending on the syllable in front of the suffix, but the latter is preferred. It is seldom short-falling on the syllable preceding the suffix"* (Babić, 2002, p. 84).

Preference should be given to the more common accent in *trbuhozbórac,* and, accordingly, *rukozbórac* as well.

Also, since there are female sign language translators and in keeping with the spirit of gender equality, the word *znakovateljica* should also be included in dictionaries, alongside *znakovatelj* i *znakovati*. In keeping with the word formation system, the feminine form *rukozborac* would then be *rukozborica* (Babić, 1981). Mile Mamić, a Committee member, proposed the derivatives: *rukozborac, rukozborica, rukozborstvo,* and *rukozborenje*.

Finally, it should be noted that the Croatian Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing as well as Dodir, the Croatian Association of Deafblind People, both use *znakovatelj* as a neutral term, so *rukozborac* should not be construed as its substitute. The opinion of the Croatian Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, submitted as a part of the contest documentation, is:

> *"When we refer to people who use sign language (people with hearing impairments and hearing people alike), we use the phrase: korisnik znakovnog jezika, (sign language user.) We may also use the word znakovatelj, although rarely, when translating works from foreign languages, but this is a literal translation of the English word 'signer'. It also represents sign language users. It is important to note that sign language is not a universal language and the language in use in the Republic of Croatia is the Croatian Sign Language. According to the Croatian Sign Language Act (NN 85/15), this is one of the modes of communication used by deaf people in the Republic of Croatia" (from the contest documentation).*

Discussion

Neologism contests are not a novel phenomenon specific for Croatia but are held all over the world. Words-of-the-year may be words that are already in use or completely new inventions; in any case, provoking interest in language always has one goal – to raise language culture to a new level and raise awareness about different linguistic options. They enrich the language, but also foster the language skills of individuals and entire language communities alike. There is a growing awareness that every new concept needs a name in our own language, and that this is good, desirable, and worthy of public praise and award.

Neologisms in Germany and the US

As already mentioned, Germans and Americans do not hold contests nor announce calls for entries but rather select words that have gained frequent use in the public discourse that year. In other words, they *elect existing* words rather than *hold a contest and select new* words, as is the case in Croatia.

Neologisms in German

In 2018, the German word of the year was *Heißzeit* (hot age), denoting an age of climate change and global warming (the antonym is *Eiszeit* [ice age]). *Brexit-Chaos*, which also made the cut, is self-explanatory. For their English word of the year, Germans chose words that largely reflect American and European striving toward (linguistic) gender equality and the application of gender theory – *Gendersternchen*, *Gender-Sternchen*, *Genderstern* and *Gender Star*. This denotes an asterisk (*) that serves to include male, female, and non-binary identities into gendered language. It is placed between the noun stem and the feminine suffix (Kolleg*innen) or between the male and feminine suffixes (*Verkäufer*in*). To ensure that the utterance is grammatically and syntactically accurate (correct), both pronouns and articles are gendered, for example, *jede*r Leser*in*. Croatian does not make such use of the asterisk – we do not write *svak*i čitatelj*ica* (every reader), but one may

encounter the phrase spelled as: *svaki/a čitatelj/ica.* Although this typographic style also seems to draw inspiration from the quest for gender equality in language (and is equally disruptive to communication), its first use in Croatian hails back a century, albeit normative rules discouraged its use (Guberina & Krstić, 1940, p. 72).

In 2019, the German word of the year was *Respektrente.* The word refers to an increase of the minimum pension to show respect to the poorest pensioners, or a "respect pension". The second German word of the year was *Rollerchaos*, a word for a traffic jam caused by electric scooters in many German states (Respektrente ist Wort des Jahres, 2019).

New American words

In 2018, the American word of the year was "tender-age camp/shelter/facility", a euphemism for separating children of asylum seekers from their parents and detaining them in shelters. The political word of the year was "the wall", with "nationalist" coming in second. Of course, "the wall" was the wall along the Mexican border and "nationalist" referred to the Trump administration and his supporters (Tender-age shelter is 2018 American Dialect Society word of the year, 2019).

In 2019, Americans chose the word Trumpschmerz (wordplay on the German *weltschmerz* [world pain]) to mark the "suffering" caused by posts made by the Trump administration (Nominations for Words of the Year 2019 and Words of the Decade 2010-2019, 2020).

Comparing Croatian, German, and American new words

Rather than choosing words that provide new lexical value to their language, Germans and Americans primarily focus on social concepts and societal affairs that marked the year – words are chosen only to name them. Without any knowledge of German and American reality, their words of the year are largely indecipherable. Whether these words can survive and remain intelligible in the changing social climate remains to be seen. On the other hand, Croatia also had to deal with its own *rollerchaos* this year. Electric scooters are taking over cities. However, in Croatia, the focus is on the word itself, and we still do not have a name for "a traffic jam caused by scooters."

The Croatian contest is a quest for new words that would provide lexical value, regardless of the social or general concepts described by these words. In truth, we have had two successful entries for social constructs (which were neologisms) so far – *udomitelj* (refugee host; foster parent, a person who welcomes other people into their home and provides them with shelter) and *bocar* (canner, a person who collects discarded plastic bottles to sell them).

Udomitelj appeared during the Homeland War (Perković Paloš, 2020), as refugees from areas under fire and occupied regions used to be relocated (given shelter) to parts of Croatia that were unaffected by war. *Udomitelj* was already a commonly used word and was not a contest entry. It was first used in the *Vjesnik* daily, on 28 February 1992, on page 8. Today, *udomitelj* is a legal term for a person who is the guardian of children deprived of parental care. In general use, the word may also be applied to someone who has adopted an animal, such as a cat or dog, from a shelter.

Bocar, a reflection of poverty in Croatia, is a word that describes a person who searches through waste looking for plastic bottles to sell. In short, before 2020, only one such socially and/or politically motivated word drew any notice. However, in 2020, our word creators also became preoccupied with societal issues – naturally, the culprit was the COVID-19 pandemic that brought the whole world to its knees in 2020.

To put this into context, the best new Croatian word contest in 2020 received 244 entries from 166 creators. 19 words were shortlisted; out of the 19, eight words were attempts at replacing pandemic-related borrowed words. By comparison, that same year, the American Linguistic Society chose "Covid" as the US word of the year; "Before Times" came in third, denoting the time before covid; "pandemic" was in the fifth spot and "social distancing" in the sixth. In Germany, the word of the year was *Corona-Pandemic*, and *Lockdown* came in second.

Conclusion

Every day, we witness the wealth and diversity of the Croatian vocabulary. New words are constantly cropping up and coming into use; however, if we fail to draw attention to them, they stay in the shadows. This creates an illusion of a lexical standstill.

Every day, one may encounter a new word even outside the *Jezik* contest – *susramlje,* "second-hand embarrassment," has become a common fixture in the political jargon and is frequently heard in the Parliament; *obaloutvrda* (levee – this specifically refers to the Drava River embankment near Osijek), *igračkar* (toymaker), *kartodrapac* (ticket collector, literally: ticket tearer), *izbornica* (an ironic word for a monetary bonus received before an election, similar to a Christmas or Easter bonus).

When they are appropriately formed, neologisms do not "stick out"; they follow well-established, fertile word formation models (Babić, 2008a). This is true for many of our contest entries, for example: *uspornik, zatipak, proširnica, borkinja, alkomjer, osjećajnik, ispraznica, sebić, bilješkinja, istovrijednik, dišnik, kihobran,* and *rukozborac.*

New words are not mandatory and their usage is not imposed; they only indicate the will of native speakers to replace borrowed words with native Croatian lexemes and adopt an active attitude toward their language. These neologisms may catch on, but data on their use is difficult to gather – this requires human and financial resources that the journal simply cannot spare.

Nevertheless, we can confidently claim several words that have gained a more widespread usage. *Uspornik* (speed bump) is one such word. The phrase *ležeći policajac* (sleeping policeman) is both wordy and offensive to the members of the police. For example, the sentence *Smanjite brzinu kada prelazite preko ležećeg policajca* (Please reduce your speed when driving over a sleeping policeman) is much more polite and neutral if we replace *ležeći policajac* with *uspornik: Smanjite brzinu kada prelazite preko uspornika* (Please reduce your speed when driving over a speed bump).

Borkinja (female fighter) is used daily in martial arts-related sports reports in Croatia. Nowadays, nobody says žena borac (literally "female fighter"), as was the case before the introduction of *borkinja*.

Zatipak (typo, and its derivatives) is the only word with accurate quantitative usage data. More specifically, Šandor Dembitz, the word's creator, is also the creator of Hašek (a Croatian spell checker application, see Dembitz, 2019), so he has access to data on the frequency of word use. According to his data on *zatipak* and related words:

> *"According to Hascheck's word frequency data, (*http://hascheck.tel.fer.hr/*) the stem and derivatives of the verbs zatipkati, zatipnuti, zatipkavati (make a typo); adjectives zatipkan, zatipnut, zatipkovni (zatipkovna pogrješka, "typo"); nouns zatipkavanje, zatipkanost (stupanj zatipkanosti, "number of typos") were used 1,585 times. Its prolific use should not be attributed solely to the neologism's creator; according to Hascheck's records (the system records the first appearance of a form), since April 2012, 15 additional users have participated in creating and using the derivatives: 12 from Croatia and one from France (Université de Rennes 1), the United States, and Slovenia, respectively. Wikipedia* (Zatipak, 2017) *and Wiktionary* (Zatipak, 2013) *articles provide further legitimacy to the neologism. The articles provide a dictionary entry with examples of use (Wikipedia) and a list of translations into a number of world languages (Wiktionary). More could not be expected in two years since the word was made public"* (Dembitz, 2014, 3rd cover).

There is always a need for new words – we name new concepts as they enter our daily lives, and their names become our new words. We can simply borrow words or we can make our own. If we want new Croatian words, we need to raise awareness about their necessity as well as provide an incentive for introducing new Croatian words into Croatian and replacing foreign words:

> *"...purism is not an effort to expel any and all foreign words from the Croatian standard language, but rather to avoid unnecessary and unacceptable foreign words in stylistically neutral language." For this reason, our mission is not purging words from our language; after all, what has been used once cannot be purged. Rather, our efforts are geared toward discovering our own words to replace unacceptable foreign words, especially if these are of recent origin, and make our native words the preferred option. Well-adapted and attested foreign words with a long history of usage do not need replacing. This is especially true of words from Greek and Latin. In the first place, these are not true foreign words; today, they are nobody's words, they are a common good – even Croatian. Secondly, there are thousands of such words in Croatian, so finding good replacements for them would prove very difficult; even if this were possible, it would be biting off more than native speakers could chew – rather than feeling nourished, they would feel suffocated. Third, they are usually well-adjusted to the Croatian standard, both phonetically and semantically, so there is no real need to look for their replacements"* (Babić, 1995, p. 80).

Linguistic purism, defined above by Babić, is not an exclusively Croatian phenomenon. In the 19th century, the movement spread across Europe, as well as Croatia (Kovačec, 2006); it has remained prominent in both Europe and Croatia.

Purism is most pronounced and most easily recognizable at the lexical level – there is an urge to protect the native lexicon from unnecessary foreign words and replacing these with native neologisms. This is especially important for Croats and the Croatian language.

In Croatia, the attitude toward the native language and words is very emotionally charged. The emotional relationship between Croats and their language should not be linked with any political ideology, especially right-wing, as described in Gvozdanović and Petrak (2018). By preserving their vocabulary, Croats have resisted unitarism and Serbization – not by promoting a political ideology, but by protecting the autonomy of the Croatian language.

From 1918 and the formation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, the first joint state with Serbs, to the disintegration of the last joint state of Yugoslavia in 1991, the Croatian language suffered Greater Serbian pressures (Bašić, 2021). These pressures sought to annihilate Croatian linguistic, and especially lexical, creativity. More specifically, the lexicon clearly emphasizes the unique features of the Croatian language and its differences from the unified "Serbo-Croatian" – a fever dream of unitarist strivings.

Preserving the Croatian language has preserved Croatian autonomy (Ham, 2019). Today, when the Croatian language has survived, this is a matter of the Croatian language culture – it means respecting the tradition and laying the foundation for the future. The aim of the *Jezik* contest is to contribute to this effort.

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