

Lexical stratification in 20th-century Croatian children's poetry

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Aim: Using selected works from the corpus of 20th-century Croatian children's poetry, this study aims to demonstrate how Croatian has been consciously inherited and preserved and how the standard language keeps developing across different lexical layers. The analyzed works belong to the sixth stage of the Croatian language history, spanning the entire 20th century. This period is marked by the consolidation of the key features of the standard language, codified by normative manuals aligned with the doctrines of Croatian Vukovians. The focus is on analyzing the relationship between the literary functional style and the standard Croatian language, highlighting the significant influence of literary works on the development of standard Croatian.

Methods: The analysis encompassed poems by four notable 20th-century Croatian children's poets – Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić, Vesna Parun, Zvonimir Balog, and Luko Paljetak. Lexical stratification was examined using normative manuals from the relevant historical periods and modern Croatian dictionaries, both synchronic and diachronic descriptions are provided. The methodological framework divides the vocabulary into temporal, regional, and functional layers.

Results: The findings revealed temporal, regional, and functional strata of Croatian vocabulary. The study demonstrated the connection between the poetic language of the analyzed works and earlier Croatian literary and linguistic tradition, uncovered dialectal influences in two of the authors, and shed light on linguistic innovation in line with the principle of elastic stability. Compared to the literature of the first half of the 20th century, in the latter half, there was a shift away from passive vocabulary, with a more pronounced preference for lexical innovation and neologisms.

Conclusions: 20th-century Croatian children's poetry exemplifies a synthesis between tradition and innovation. While drawing upon the literary and linguistic foundations established over centuries, the authors of selected works enrich the standard language through imaginative wordplay, creative word formation, and diverse stylistic approaches. These findings validate the viability of Croatian as a literary medium, confirming that literary works have always been the guardians of the lexicon, emphasizing the interaction between linguistic heritage and contemporary expression, while maintaining its distinct identity.

Keywords: Croatian poetry; poetry for children; lexical stratification; Croatian vocabulary; tradition and innovation

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Cite as:

Milavić A, Milinović Hrga A. Lexical stratification in 20th-century Croatian children's poetry. ST-OPEN. 2025;6:e2025.2204.22.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.48188/so.6.1>

Introduction

There are diverse perspectives on the relationship between literary style and standard language. Some classify the former as a functional style of standard Croatian, while others see it as part of the Croatian language system (1, 2). According to Silić (3), the literary style is a language *sui generis*; only a language system provides the artist with complete freedom, without which there is no creation. The literary artist bypasses norms to reach the individual speech act, making the language of literary works emergent rather than pre-existing. Bagić rejects it as a functional style, describing it as a “superstyle” (4) instead. Reflecting on the often-used 1950s axiom of *Piši onako kako dobri pisci pišu!*, meaning “Write as good writers do!” ((5), p. 6; (6), p. 15–16), Bagić wonders if it should truly be so, only to emphatically rebuff the notion. He contends that the maxim equates the language of literature with everyday speech.

By referencing Skok’s paper on linguistic culture (5), Jonke wanted to highlight the symbolic functionality of the standard language and its importance as an aspect of linguistic culture, rather than encourage imitation of the exquisiteness of literary language and its inimitable aesthetic value. The backdrop for the tenet was a need to paraphrase the well-known battle cry of Croatian Vukovians: “Write as the people speak!” In keeping with this principle, the basis for codification was the then-spoken (neo)Shtokavian idiom. For Jonke, this was an outdated doctrine in need of reshaping to meet contemporary circumstances. He believed that the best way to understand the norm of the modern literary language was by studying the language of good writers who were not imitators and who possessed a sense of linguistic correctness and purity ((7), p. 24). Jonke’s understanding of the standard linguistic norm was similar to that of the Prague School: “the totality of linguistic expressions across the lexicon, grammar, phonetics, and orthography that are generally accepted, seen as exemplary, and the only correct (...) The norm is not a prescription external to the language; it exists within the language as a result of a collective agreement and as the work of the national collective” (translation from Croatian in Jonke ((7), p. 24).

Opposing the view that there is no place for the literary style in the standard language framework, Težak maintained: “Although it is often argued today that the literary word evades the norms and rules of the standard language, and rightly so, it must be said that among the thousands of church, instructional, legal, business, scientific, and other books and writs, the literary word was the decisive factor in the creation the common Croatian language” (translated from Croatian in Težak ((8), p. 5).

Modern Croatian linguistics has proven and widely acknowledged the hypothesis that the mid-18th century marked the beginning of the development of standard Croatian (9, 10). Brozović divided the history of literary Croatian into three pre-standard stages and three stages of standard language development, with the mid-18th century as the break-off point ((11), p. 173–260). The language of Croatian (*i.e.*, Slavonian, Dalmatian, and Bosnian) writers of the time played a significant role in building up “normative pressure”, ultimately resulting in the formation of the Croatian literary language, as anticipated by Krstić ((12), p. 416). As Ham put it, “The 18th-century Croatian Shtokavian was so developed and polished that it could serve in every domain of life – in poetry, liturgy, and science alike. Shtokavian reached its full polyfunctionality” (translated from Croatian in Ham (13)). This refuted the

earlier assumption that the Croatian national revival period played a crucial role in the development of standard Croatian.

According to Hudeček, “There is no place where language is better preserved and created than in literary works, including the standard language” (translated from Croatian in Hudeček (1)). If the standard language appears in literature, or if the literary style, together with the spoken language and parts of the journalistic functional style, shapes the standard language, should we not then call it a functional style of standard Croatian? Would there be literature without the standard, or would the standard not exist without literature?

Hudeček provided an overview of the language of 20th-century Croatian writers (2). In the 21st century, research by Vulić and Laco (14) on orthographic, linguistic, and stylistic features of 20th-century Croatian literature showed that Croatian writers always drew upon earlier Croatian literary traditions. Their analysis spanned about twenty literary works, proving that even during the heyday of the Croatian Vukovians and their doctrines, there was a pushback against the “de-Croatization” of the Croatian language.

Materials and methods

The methodological framework for the analysis was a three-fold stratification of the lexicon into temporal, regional, and functional layers ((15), p. 30–44).

The temporal layer of the general lexicon, used by Croatian speakers in everyday situations, is further divided into active vocabulary, passive vocabulary, and transitional lexis. Active vocabulary includes lexemes that are familiar to the majority of Croatian speakers in a given period. When a text written with active vocabulary incorporates passive or transitional lexis, this often creates a heightened sense of style. Passive vocabulary comprises historicisms, archaisms, necrotisms, and literary lexemes. The distinction between active and passive vocabulary is fluid, enabling lexemes to transition between groups. The shift is gradual, giving rise to a transitional layer that includes several lexeme clusters. Transitional lexis, meanwhile, encompasses obsolescent terms, buzzwords, revived words, and neologisms. The regional stratification includes localisms, regionalisms, and dialecticisms.

The functional layer encompasses the major functional styles of the standard language; this typically includes literary, journalistic, scientific, administrative, and conversational styles (3, 15, 16). However, Stanić Rašin (17) challenged the conventional, five-pronged division of styles, proposing an updated system that redefines the roles of both spoken and literary language. The linguistic literature is ambivalent on the subject of “conversational style” and “conversational language”. The Croatian Linguistic Terminology project led by the Institute of Croatian Language uses only “conversational style”, defined as “a functional style used in day-to-day communication, characterized by communicative spontaneity, artlessness, casualness, naturalness, and familiarity” (translated from Croatian in Struna (18)). Citing Lewandowski, Samardžija defined conversational language as a lexical layer of the conversational style, “a lexical layer characteristic of informal direct communica-

tion, situated as an intermediary layer between the standard language and dialect” (translated from Croatian in Samardžija (15), p. 43).

Some authors have challenged the existence of a conversational style and referred exclusively to conversational language. According to Katičić: “Developed societies use conversational language alongside the standard as a more relaxed and less formally polished vernacular (...) In Croatia, conversational language is tied to major urban centers, extending over areas in their sphere of influence. This language is not completely settled and uniform, exhibiting a strong influence of both the standard language and regional dialectal colors” (translated from Croatian in Katičić (19), p. 13). For Težak and Babić, there is a difference between literary and conversational language, defining the latter as “the language used for direct communication in everyday life” (translated from Croatian in Težak & Babić (20), p. 30). As this is the interpretation we favor, we used the term “conversational language” throughout this paper.

Analyzed works

We examined the lexical features of selected Croatian children’s literature from the 20th century, including selected poems from Croatian children’s authors: Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić (1874–1938), Vesna Parun (1922–2010), Zvonimir Balog (1932–2014), and Luko Paljetak (1943–2024). All poems are in standard Croatian and belong to the sixth period (or the third period of the development of standard Croatian), encompassing the entire 20th century (10). This period can be subdivided into three intervals, separated by the two world wars. The poems of Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić belong to the first pre-war and the second inter-war interval, while the poems of Vesna Parun, Zvonimir Balog, and Luko Paljetak belong to the third interval starting after the Second World War.

Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić (1874–1938)

Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić created and published her works at the beginning of the 20th century, during the literary epoch of modernism. For Novak, the outstanding feature of her style is her “cultivated language, its succinctness, and the skillful innovation of linguistic heritage using paradoxical constructions” (translated from Croatian in Novak (21), p. 200). Her lexicon often included archaisms, localisms, and words from Croatian and Slavic folklore, giving birth to a mythical intertext ((22), p. 108). Her best-known works include the novel *Čudnovate zgode šegrta Hlapića* (translated into English as “The Brave Adventures of Lapitch”) and the collection of short stories *Priče iz davnine* (translated into English as “Croatian Tales of Long Ago”). In this analysis, we examined selected poems from four of her works: *Valjani i nevaljani. Pripoviedke, priče i pjesmice za dječake*. (23), *Škola i praznici. Male pripovijetke i pjesme iz dječjega života*. (24), *Slike. (Pjesme 1912.)* (25), and *Knjiga omladini* (26).

Her works were published at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, amidst the shift away from the 19th-century system and towards a vernacular based on the Vukovian norms. Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić, raised and schooled in the spirit of the Zagreb Grammar School, adhered to its convention of morphological spelling in her writing. However, in a drive to

conform with the newfangled principles of the Vukovian school, 20th-century publishers intervened in the language of 19th-century Croatian writers. These interventions, ostensibly targeting spelling rules, often went deeper. The works of Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić shared the same fate. Although she agreed to certain adjustments that were meant to align her works with the Vukovian phonologically-based orthography during her lifetime ((8), p. 221), the changes ended up being more extensive. Stjepan Babić (27) provided a detailed demonstration of the postmortem “modernization” of her works. Four volumes of critical editions of her collected works were published at the beginning of the 21st century (28–31), allowing for an analysis of interventions that were made in the editions published during her lifetime (32, 33).

Given the major discrepancies between the editions, we based our analysis on the first editions of her poems that were published during her lifetime. All cited examples were verified against the critical editions, which preserved the unique phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical features of her texts ((28), p. 357).

From her earliest published collection of poems and stories, *Valjani i nevaljani* from 1902, we cited examples from the following poems: *Kako se osvetila Zorkina beba*, *Majmun Jopo*, *Ivo tješi tatu*, *Kažnjena lakomost*, *Koja razlika!*, and *Dječje srdce*. The analysis focused on the original edition of *Škola i praznici* from 1905. Lexemes were cited from the following poems: *Pred ispit*, *Ispit*, *Đaci*, *Dječji svatovi*, *Mala velegrađanka na selu*, *Konj – zec*, *Zakasnila...*, *Mali patuljak*, and *Anin sanak*. From her 1912 collection *Slike*, examples were cited from these poems: *Suton*, *Noćna oluja*, *Svetovid*, *Košute*, *Dvie slike (po narodnoj pjesmi)*, and *Led na rieci (Triptih)*. The analysis also included the poem *Ide mati...* from *Knjiga omladini* from 1923. It is immediately apparent that all original titles of collections and poems included punctuation (usually a period, sometimes an exclamation mark or ellipsis). This was a contemporary norm prescribed by Broz in his orthography, *Hrvatski pravopis* ((34), p. 32, 52). In the critical edition, the punctuation was “corrected” and all periods removed from the titles ((28), p. 357).

Vesna Parun (1922–2010)

Vesna Parun began her writing career by publishing her debut collection of poems *Zore i vihori* (1947). Her poetry is highly diverse, characterized by linguistic virtuosity with a blend of traditional and modern expressions ((22), p. 554). Novak described her vocabulary as “one of the richest in recent poetry” (translated from Croatian in Novak (35), p. 166). Alongside poems for adults, notably the anthology *Crna maslina*, Vesna Parun also wrote for children. Our analysis covered the lexicon of her verse novel for children, *Mačak Džingiskan i Miki Trasi* from 1968 (36). We further cited examples from the following poems: *Brodolomci*, *Miki i budilica*, *U novom domu*, *Džingiskan se sprema na put*, *Četvrti dan*, *Meduza se vraća u Kukljicu*, and *Sedmo Džingiskanovo pismo*.

Zvonimir Balog (1932–2014)

One of the major names in Croatian children’s poetry, Zvonimir Balog was a member of the generation of authors that emerged in the 1950s. He is best known for his lexical Luddism that challenged the traditional flows of Croatian children’s literature. According to Novak,

“As a poet, Balog overturned a record number of standardized meanings and phrases; as an author, he used primary meanings and primary sounds as jumping-off points for impossible wordplays” (translated from Croatian in Novak (35), p. 182). This analysis focused on the lexicon of his twice-awarded collection of children’s poems, *Nevidljiva Iva* (Invisible Iva), first published in 1970 (37). Examples were cited from the following poems: *Najprije*, *Ljulačka na orahu*, *Klim se klimatao*, *Čari*, *Visibaba*, *Nevidljiva Iva*, *Jasno mi je da buča buči*, *Kad bi pjesnici*, *Bio sam*, *Vulkani*, *Gnjavator*, and a lexeme from the chapter title *Ovu pregršt nazovite kako hoćete*.

Luko Paljetak (1943–2024)

In the words of S. P. Novak, “Paljetak’s poetic opus should be read as a unique, energetic experiment with words. Paljetak’s verses were the greatest manneristic project attempted by any single author in Croatian” (translated from Croatian in Novak (38), p. 66). Our analysis focused on his magnum opus, the collection of poems *Miševi i mačke naglavačke*, first published in 1973 (39). We extracted examples from the following poems: *Jedna je mačka mnogo jela*, *Jedna je mačka mnogo pila*, *Jednu su mačku zvali Ica*, *Umjetno disanje*, *Jedna je mačka glasovir svirala*, *Jedna je mačka jela slatkiše*, *Jedna se mačka samo smijala*, *Stonoga u trgovini*, *Tri mesara*, *Dva dinosaurusa*, *Morski jež*, *Sličica*, and *U vrtu kralja Pumpulina*.

Normative guides

Our lexical analysis of linguistic features of the selected poems by 20th-century Croatian children’s writers was both diachronic and synchronic, whereby we stratified the observed lexemes into appropriate lexical layers. The analysis included poems by Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić published during the first three decades of the 20th century (in 1902, 1905, 1912, and 1923). During this period, the Croatian language was codified with normative guidebooks that were based on the doctrines of Croatian Vukovians. These included the phonologically-based orthography *Hrvatski pravopis* from 1892 (34) by Ivan Broz, the grammar *Gramatika i stilistika hrvatskoga ili srpskoga književnog jezika* from 1899 (40) by Tomo Maretić, and the dictionary *Rječnik hrvatskoga jezika* from 1901 (41) by Ivan Broz and Franjo Iveković. As already demonstrated by previous research, Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić retained some older, distinctive linguistic features of the Zagreb Philological School; we thus mostly verified lexemes from her poems using Šulek’s dictionary, *Hrvatsko-njemačko-talijanski rječnik znanstvenoga nazivlja* (1874–1875) (42, 43). To paint a lexical picture of the era that preceded her times, we also cross-checked lexemes in the historical multi-volume dictionary *Rječnik hrvatskoga ili srpskoga jezika* by the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts from 1880–1976 (44). This will be referred to as the Academy’s Dictionary (AD) further in the text. It is important to note that, although the AD includes both Croatian and Serbian sources, it frequently omits lexemes recorded only in Croatian. Specifically, the corpus also almost entirely ignores Croatian romantic and realist writers, as well as most Kajkavian sources. We therefore used Benešić’s dictionary, *Rječnik hrvatskoga kajkavskoga književnog jezika od preporoda do I. G. Kovačića* (45–52), and the online *Rječnik hrvatskog kajkavskog književnog jezika* (53) to cross-check examples of re-

gional stratification. We will refer to the latter as the “Dictionary of the Croatia Kajkavian Literary Language” (DCKLL) in this text.

The analysis also included poems by Vesna Parun published in 1968, Zvonimir Balog in 1970, and Luko Paljetak in 1973. When it comes to language, the unitarist pressures began mounting as early as the 1950s in the so-called Second Yugoslavia. The second half of the 1960s was defined by the publication of the dictionary *Rječnik hrvatskosrpskog književnog jezika* in 1967, while the early 1970s were marked by the Croatian Spring of 1971. The normative dictionary of the time was the *Dictionary of the Croatian-Serbian Literary Language* from 1967, published by prominent Croatian and Serbian language institutes, “Matica hrvatska” and “Matica srpska” (54). Only two volumes were published, however, before “Matica hrvatska” withdrew from the project in the wake of an outpour of negative reactions on the Croatian side. The standard for spelling was set by the orthography *Pravopis hrvatskosrpskoga književnog jezika s pravopisnim rječnikom* from 1960 (55), also known as the Novi Sad Orthography. In the aftermath of the Croatian Spring, Stjepan Babić, Milan Moguš, and Božidar Finka started working on a new, independent orthography *Hrvatski pravopis*, which was released in a small printing in 1971 before being banned. It was eventually published in London in 1972, the year that Croatia adopted constitutional amendments officially changing the name of the language into “Croatian or Serbian”. We otherwise cross-checked the lexemes from the poems by Vesna Parun, Zvonimir Balog, and Luko Paljetak in the 1967 dictionary *Rječnik hrvatskosrpskog jezika*.

To provide a diachronic perspective on the contemporary usage of all lexemes, we consulted two modern Croatian dictionaries: the *Rječnik hrvatskog jezika* from 2000, edited by Jure Šonje (56), and the 2015 digital version of *Veliki rječnik hrvatskoga standardnoga jezika*, edited by Ljiljana Jojić (57). The latter, referred to here as the “Great Dictionary of the Standard Croatian Language” (GCD) is the most exhaustive dictionary of contemporary Croatian to date, featuring over 120,000 headwords and subentries, showcasing the full depth of word meanings and providing clear usage labels. We highlighted any discrepancies and conflicting definitions between Šonje’s dictionary and the GCD.

Finally, we cross-referenced the analyzed phrases in two dictionaries: *Frazeološki rječnik hrvatskoga ili srpskoga jezika* from 1982 by Matešić (58) and the *Hrvatski frazeološki rječnik* from 2003 by Menac, Fink-Arsovski, and Venturin (59).

Results

Temporal stratification

Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić

The noun *pjesan* (“song”, “melody”) used by Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić is documented in various early Croatian dictionaries, beginning with Vrančić. It appears in Šulek with the label *stilistica* ((43), p. 779). According to the AD, the noun was archaic by the early 19th century ((44), 1884–1886, vol. 9, p. 917). Šonje does not list it as archaic, merely poetic ((56), p. 832), but the GCD does (57).

Another interesting noun is *číslo*, meaning either “number” or “rosary”. Contextual hints suggest that the author intended the latter sense in the following lines ((25), p. 14): *Još čuju se čisla što kližu kroz prste / Al bledji i bledji jur bivaju mrtvi / I plinu – put neba uzdižući krste* (“You can still hear the beads slipping through fingers / But fainter and fainter, the dead become / And drift away – raising crosses to the sky”).

This meaning was recorded as early as the 12th century, appearing first in Mikalja, followed by Belostenec, Jambrešić, and Stulli ((44), 1884–1886, vol. 2, p. 40). Šulek has the word, but only its mathematical meaning ((42), p. 196). In Šonje’s contemporary dictionary, the meaning “number” is described as an archaic one, while “rosary” is not; it is merely labeled as religious ((56), p. 145). The only meaning provided in the GCD is “rosary”, and is also tagged as archaic (57). Another noteworthy noun is the now-archaic *hòra* (“time”, “hour”; “appropriate time”, “right time”), present in Croatian since the 16th century and recorded in some older dictionaries, including Mikalja, Della Bella, and Stulli ((44), 1887–1891, vol. 3, p. 650). Šulek did not include it. In contemporary dictionaries, Šonje did not mark it as archaic ((56), p. 332), but the GCD did (57). The now-archaic noun *trh* (“burden”, “load”) is recorded in older dictionaries such as those by Habelić, Vitezović, Belostenec, Jambrešić, and Stulli ((44), 1962–1966, vol. 18, p. 637). Šulek did not include it. Neither did Šonje, while the GCD lists it as archaic (57). Brlić-Mažuranić used the noun *mnijénje* (“opinion”, “result of the thought process”), now archaic, but still relatively common in the phrase *javno mnijenje* (“public opinion”). In Šulek, the entry has the stylistic label *phil. stil.* ((42), p. 611). The AD notes that, while probably recorded in Stulli, the accent of the noun is uncertain, as it is a booking word ((44), 1904–1910, vol. 6, p. 852–853). According to the dictionary *Etimološki rječnik hrvatskog jezika*, the spelling was *mnjinje* in the 16th century, *mnenje* in the 18th century, and *mnijenje* in the 19th century ((60), p. 624). The noun *luč* (“torch”, “light”) is recorded in numerous dictionaries from Vrančić onwards ((44), 1904–1910, vol. 6, p. 186). Šulek also included it as *luč – lučka* tech. ((42), p. 560). Šonje did not mark it as archaic ((56), p. 552), but the GCD did (57). Brlić-Mažuranić also employed the noun *dub* (“oak tree”), recorded in dictionaries since Vrančić. According to Karadžić, the word was especially prevalent in southwestern regions ((44), 1884–1886, vol. 2, p. 837); it is still found in some Croatian dialects. Šonje marked it as a regionalism rather than as archaic ((56), p. 217), in contrast to the GCD (57). The noun *pedepsa* (“punishment”), now archaic, is recorded in Della Bella, Voltiggi, Stulli, Šulek ((44), 1924–1927, vol. 9, p. 751), and Belostenec (53). It is not considered archaic by Šonje ((56), p. 815) but it is by the GCD (57). The noun *žíce* (“life”) appeared in Vitezović and Stulli ((44), 1975–1976, vol. 23, p. 375) and is confirmed in works by Croatian writers – the GCD cites P. Preradović and M. Begović (57). Šulek did not include it. The GCD marked it as archaic, while Šonje’s dictionary did not ((56), p. 1444). The now obsolete *proljet* (“spring”) does not appear in Šulek, AD, or Šonje, but is recorded in the GCD as obsolete, with a citation from a work by J. Polić Kamov (57). The DCKLL features *prolet*, with a citation from the poetry collection *Lice dana* by Grgur Karlovčan from 1940 (53).

In her poem *Noćna oluja* from *Slike*, Brlić-Mažuranić used the noun *nebosklon* (*Dok oblaci sablast vuku / Preko nebosklona* (“As clouds pull the specter / Across the sky”). Šulek did not include it. The AD, compiled at the beginning of the 20th century, listed it as a recent loanword from Russian (meaning “horizon”), with only two known examples of

usage ((44), 1911–1916, vol. 7, p. 798). This means that it was a recent loanword for Brlić-Mažuranić. Šonje ((56), p. 666) views it as an unnecessary loanword, redirecting readers to *vidik* (“view”) or *obzor* (“horizon”). The meaning provided in GCD, where it is labeled obsolete, is “vault of heaven” or “sky” (57).

In Brlić-Mažuranić, the noun *râvan* had the meaning of “plain” or “flatland”, which has been attested in both older and more recent Croatian writers such as Menčetić, Demeter, Martić, Jurković, Pavić, Begović, Nazor, Lovrić, and Hanžeković ((49), p. 2600–2601; (61), and supported by a quotation from Preradović in GCD (57). Šulek ((43), p. 912) listed both the geological and mathematical meaning (“plane”). The AD did not include the geological sense. The entry is tagged as a Serbian loan in Šonje ((56), p. 1046), redirecting to *ravnica* (“flatland”), *ravnina* (“plane”), or *razina* (“level”). However, Brodnjak states that this is a Croatian word meaning “flatland” ((62), p. 456). The GCD labels it as bookish (57). Contemporary grammars still provide it as an example of the i-declension ((63), p. 419). In the Kajkavian literary tradition, the noun is used in the phonological variant *raven* as a masculine noun of the a-declension, as recorded in the DCKLL from the epic *Adrianskoga mora sirena* by Petar Zrinski (53). The author also used the noun *sunovrat* to mean “abyss”. This meaning appears in Della Bella’s and Stulli’s dictionaries ((44), 1959–1962, vol. 17, p. 17). The noun is labeled as bookish in GCD, but Šonje did not include this usage note. The noun *slavić* (“nightingale”) is present in all older Croatian dictionaries from Vrančić onwards ((44), 1956, vol. 15, p. 466), as well as in Croatian writers such as F. Marković, Bertić, and Šenoa ((50), p. 2950). Šonje did not include it, whereas the GCD lists it as bookish (57).

Notable adjectives include the bookish *sur* (“grey”, “ashen”), which has been recorded in a series of older Croatian dictionaries, including Mikalja, Habelić, Vitezović, and Belostenec ((44), 1959–1962, vol. 17, p. 40). It is labeled as bookish in GCD, but not in Šonje ((56), p. 1200). Vesna Parun also used this adjective.

In *Knjiga omladini*, a collection of prose, essays, and poems, Brlić-Mažuranić used the now obsolete *veli* (“large” or “great”). This was recorded in Della Bella and Šulek ((44), 1971–1972, vol. 20, p. 695–698), but “was not common in the Croatian Shtokavian literary tradition of earlier centuries” ((64), p. 229). Šonje’s contemporary dictionary did not include a usage note ((56), p. 1345), whereas it is obsolete in the GCD (57).

When it comes to verbs, a noteworthy example is *račiti se* (“to deign” or “to condescend”), listed in dictionaries such as Vrančić, Mikalja, Belostenec, and others ((44), 1952, vol. 12, p. 850–851). The GCD marks it as obsolete, while Šonje did not include it. The verb *jezditi* (“to ride”, “to speed”, “to race”) has been recorded since the 14th century and appears in older dictionaries such as Mikalja, Della Bella, and Voltiggi ((44), 1892–1897, vol. 4, p. 636), as well as in the DCKLL (57). The GCD has it as obsolete, but there is no such label in Šonje. The verb *mniti* (“to think”) is listed in almost all older Croatian dictionaries and has numerous attestations in literature such as in Marulić, Lucić, Hektorović, Pelegrinović ((44), 1904–1910, vol. 6, p. 853–857). Šonje did not label it obsolete ((56), p. 604), but the GCD did (57).

The past participle *utruđen* from *utruditi* (“to exhaust”, “to tire out”, “to weaken”) is recorded in Della Bella, Vitezović, Belostenec, and Stulli and confirmed in the works of Menčetić,

Vetranović, Gučetić, Gundulić, and Kanižlić ((44), 1971–1972, vol. 20, p. 142–143). The word is absent from Šonje, while the GCD marked it as obsolete (57).

Brlić-Mažuranić also employed the now obsolete adverb *jur* (“already”) in her poetry. The AD notes that this was recorded as early as the 15th century “in the western regions among Christians” and in earlier dictionaries such as Mikalja, Della Bella, Belostenec, Voltiggi, and Stulli ((44), 1892–1897, vol. 4, p. 686), as well as in the DCKLL (53). Numerous older and more recent literary attestations – for example, Zoranić, Menčetić, Tommaseo, Demeter, Bogović, Kukuljević, Pavlinović, Šenoa, Palmović, Kovačić, Gjalski, Leskovar, Kranjčević, Tresić-Pavičić ((47), p. 8638–8664) – confirm that the word is a treasure of the general Croatian vocabulary, found across Shtokavian, Kajkavian, and Chakavian dialects. Šonje did not record it, while the GCD marked it as obsolete (57). Brlić-Mažuranić’s adverb *vaz-da* (“always” or “forever”) is also labeled obsolete in GCD, but not in Šonje ((56), p. 1342); it is listed in a majority of older Croatian dictionaries. The AD notes that it was recorded in Vrančić, Mikalja, Della Bella, Belostenec, Jambrešić, Voltiggi, and Stulli, among others ((44), 1971–1972, vol. 20, p. 637). The adverb *većma* (“mostly” or “for the most part”) has been recorded since Mikalja, followed by Vitezović, Della Bella, etc. ((44), 1887–1891, vol. 3, p. 671). Šonje did not label this word as obsolete ((56), p. 1343), but the GCD has it as both obsolete and bookish (57). For *sveudilj* (“constantly”, “continually”, “persistently”), the AD notes that the adverb appeared in Croatian from the mid-16th to the late 18th century, as well as in two 19th-century dictionaries ((44), 1959–1962, vol. 17, p. 235). Benešić, however, unearthed numerous cases of its usage in Croatian literature, including in Tomić, Leskovar, Gjalski, and Galović (51), p. 3383–3384). Šonje did not mark it as bookish ((56), p. 1207), but GCD did (57). The adverb *udilj* (“always” or “immediately”) was recorded since the 16th century and appears in numerous early Croatian dictionaries ((44), 1967–1971, vol. 19, p. 226–228). Today, it is considered obsolete, as confirmed by both Šonje ((56), p. 1292) and GCD. The adverb *jošte* (“yet”, “still”) is listed in dictionaries from Vrančić onwards ((44), 1892–1897, vol. 4, p. 665). Today, it is considered obsolete, as seen in both Šonje ((56), p. 419) and the GCD (57).

I. Brlić-Mažuranić used the conjunction *ter* (“and”) in her poetry. This was recorded in dictionaries by Mikalja, Vitezović, Belostenec, Jambrešić, Voltiggi, and Stulli ((44), 1962–1966, vol. 18, p. 216), and is consistent with the Croatian literary tradition ((64), p. 231; (52), p. 3657–3658). The word was not featured in Šonje’s dictionary, while the GCD marks it as obsolete (57).

In the domain of phraseology, an example used by Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić is *Ne vrijediš ni dva groša* (“You are not worth a dime”). As the noun *groš* was already a historicism in her time, a footnote in her work explains that “the word lives on among the people, so it is said, for example, you are not worth a dime” ((65), p. 11). Matešić’s dictionary, *Frazeološki rječnik* ((58), p. 174), features the following phrases: *bit će čega, koga (i) po groš* (“be a dime a dozen”); *ne vrijediti (ni) pola groša* (“not worth a dime”); *nemati ni (prebijena) groša* (“not have a penny to one’s name”); *nije čist (pravi) groš* (“something is fishy”); *primiti (uzeti) što pod (za) gotov (pravi) groš* (“to believe easily”, “to accept naively”); *raditi za svoj groš* (“to work for one’s own benefit”); *uzeti što pod (za) gotov (pravi) groš* (“to believe easily”, “to accept naively”); *za prebijen groš* (“for nothing”). The dictionary *Hrvatski frazeološki*

rječnik by Menac, Fink-Arsovski, and Venturin included only *primiti/primati (uzeti/uzimati) za gotov groš*, meaning “to believe easily, to accept naively” ((59), p. 88).

Vesna Parun

In Vesna Parun’s poetry, we encounter the archaic *udes* (“fate/destiny”), recorded in earlier dictionaries such as Mikalja, Vitezović, Della Bella, Voltiggi, Stulli; in literature, the noun was first documented in Gundulić ((44), 1967–1971, vol. 19, p. 218). Benešić identified it in various Croatian writers such as Kumičić, Leskovar, Begović, Preradović, Ogrizović, Kolar, Ujević, and Harambašić ((52), p. 3987–3988). Šonje did not include a usage note, but the GCD labeled it as archaic (57). Today, this is seen as a Serbian loan ((62), p. 550). The noun *sanja* (“fancy”, “unrealized desire”, “fantasy”; “daydream”, “dream”; “flight of fancy”) has been documented in Croatian since the 15th century, including by Habelić, Belostenec, Jambrešić, and Šulek ((44), 1955, vol. 14, p. 618). It was used by numerous writers such as Vidrić, Car Emin, Batušić, Ujević, Krleža, and Krklec ((50), p. 2768). Šonje did not provide a usage note, while the GCD labeled it as bookish (57). This noun was also used by Zvonimir Balog.

The verb *hajati* (“to care for”, “to look after”, “to take care of”) from the verses of Vesna Parun was recorded in Della Bella’s, Voltiggi’s, and Stulli’s dictionaries, as well as in literature since the 15th century onwards, including in Marulić, Menčetić, Hektorović, Divković, etc. ((44), 1887–1891, vol. 3, p. 548). It is also featured in the normative Croatian-Serbian Dictionary, with an example from Mažuranić’s epic, *Death of Smail-aga Čengić* ((54), p. 159). Šonje’s entry does not include any usage labels ((56), p. 316), whereas the GCD labels it as an anachronism (57).

Zvonimir Balog

Balog used an interesting rare noun *zdenčar* (“well-digger”) in his poems, recorded in Belostenec as well as Šulek’s dictionary of scientific terms ((44), 1975, vol. 22, p. 689). The noun is not featured in Šonje’s dictionary, while the GCD labeled it as *rare*, which is to be expected, as the concept is not almost obsolete (57). Another lexeme is *pregršt* (“a handful”), recorded in Della Bella, Voltiggi, and Stulli ((44), 1935, vol. 11, p. 527). The primary meaning is “hand joined to form a vessel, or the quantity that can fit in hands so joined” (a handful of flour). Šonje’s dictionary did not provide a usage note for *pregršt* ((56), p. 936), while the GCD labels it as bookish (57).

Balog was known for his wordplay and unique neologisms. His nominal and verbal neologisms are best illustrated by his poem *Nogom nogimo*:

RUKOM RUKNIMO / a GLAVOM GLAVNIMO / da bi se OVO OVILO / da bi se ONO ONILO /
da bi TREP TREPTAO / da bi LIP LIPTAO / da JEZDOVI JEZDE! / GLAVOM GLAVNIMO / da
ŽIVOT OŽIVI / da GLAVE GLAVNU / da se OGLAVE / da TRAVE TRAVNU / da se OTRAVE
/ da ZVIJEZDE ZVJEZDNU / da se OZVJEZDE / da BUD što više BUDNE / da LJUD što više
LJUDME!

(Let’s HAND with our HANDS / and HEAD with our HEADS / so that THIS could THIS / so
that THAT could THAT / so that BLINK could BLINK / so that GUSH could GUSH / so that

DASHES could DASH! / Let's HEAD with our HEADS / so that LIFE could LIVEN UP/ so that HEADS HEAD UP / so that they could BEHEAD / so that GRASS could GRASS UP / so that they could BEGRASS / so that STARS could STAR UP / so that they could BESTAR / so that BE could BE more / so that PEOP could PEOPLE!

Balog's poetry features countless puns, for example: *zrak se zrakatao* ("the air aerated radiantly"); *bac se bacakao* ("the tra was trashing around"); *sat je nešto satio* ("the watch was watching"); *slova se slovila* ("the letters were lettering"); *visiseka* ("snowdropping"); *zvonimirljivo* ("bell-like") or ("Zvonimir-like"); *balogljivo* ("Balog-like"); *kesten-bomboni* ("chestnut candies"); *kišobran-vrganji* ("umbrella-mushrooms"), *oblakovača* ("cloudjuice"), and so on.

Luko Paljetak

The analyzed collection *Miševi i mačke naglavačke* showcases Paljetak's verbal Luddism, producing nominal, adjectival, and verbal neologisms such as *stonožac* ("male centipede"), *krokodomobil* ("crocodilemobile"), *srebrn-česmice* ("silver fountains" or "silver springs"), *vlastonožni* ("legwritten"), *žiriti se* ("to get fat from consuming excessive amounts of acorns"), *mišiti* ("do like a mouse"), *mačkati* ("do like a cat"), and so on.

Regional stratification

Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić

The works of Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić featured several regionalisms, including *kreljut* for "wing" (*Nije li kreljut laste lagane?* ("Is it not the wing of a light swallow?")). According to the AD, the word has been in use since the 15th century only among speakers of the Chakavian dialect. It is documented in dictionaries by Mikalja, Della Bella, Belostenec, Jambrešić, Voltiggi, and Stulli ((44), 1898–1903, vol. 5, p. 501–502). Šulek also recorded that it was used in zoology ((42), p. 509). Marulić used the word in his *Judita* ((66), p. 105), as did various Croatian authors such as Kukuljević, Preradović, Martić, Šenoa, Kumičić, Jorgovanić, Domjanić, and Krleža ((48), p. 1050–1051). Contemporary Croatian dictionaries, including Šonje and the GCD, do not include this word.

We also observed the verb *sfuriti*, derived through prefixation from *furiti*. Neither Šulek nor the AD recorded this verb, but it is listed in the DCKLL, meaning "to bake" or "to scald", and is typical of the Shtokavian dialects in Slavonia (53). In Šonje, *furiti* is a regionalism meaning "to sear" or "to steam" ((56), p. 274), while the GCD lists *furiti se* as a colloquial version of *duriti se*, meaning "to sulk" (57).

Brlić-Mažuranić also employed the regionalism *ded/deder* (the imperative particle; used as a form of command). *Ded* was first recorded in the 18th century, for example, in the works of M. Katančić; *deder* was similarly attested in the 18th century, as well as in Stulli's dictionary ((44), 1884–1886, vol. 2, p. 330). Benešić recorded *ded* in the works of Šenoa, Korajac, and F. Mažuranić, and *deder* in the Vraz, Šenoa, Mažuranić, Draženović, and Velikanović ((46), p. 305). Šonje listed both forms without specific stylistic markers, while the GCD categorized *deder* as a regionalism (57).

When it comes to phraseology, we recorded the idiom *nositi beza, bezara* (“to carry a heavy load on one’s back”). Different regions have different versions of this phrase, including *nositi pišivoga (pušljivoga) lonca* or *nositi na krkače*. A footnote in *Srce od licitara*, a collection of poems and stories, explains that *nositi beza, bezara* is a feature of Slavonian vernaculars ((65), p. 30). Neither Matešić nor the phraseological dictionary by Menac, Fink-Arsovski, and Venturin recorded this idiom. Matešić’s phraseological dictionary lists the following idioms with the noun *lonac* (“pot”): *bacati/baciti (trpati, stapati) sve u jedan lonac* (“to compare apples and oranges”); *postati lonac i poklopac* (“to be thick as thieves”); *biti (postati) svakom loncu poklopac (kutlača, zaklopac)* (“to meddle” or “be a know-it-all”); *izvući se kao tarana iz lonca* (“to shirk one’s responsibilities”); *loviti iz lonca* (“cherry-pick”); *metnuti svijeću pod lonac* (“to hide one’s light under a bushel”); *nemati što metati u lonac* (“to be poor”); *postati kao lonac i poklopac* (“to be thick as thieves”); *postati svakom loncu poklopac* (“to meddle” or “to be a know-it-all”); *prazan lonac* (“living hand to mouth”); *previjati se kao piškori u loncu* (“to writhe in pain”); *strpati sve u jedan lonac* (“to compare apples and oranges”); *zavirivati u tuđi lonac* (“to stick one’s nose into something”) ((58), p. 3173–3181). The *Croatian Phraseological dictionary* by Menac, Fink-Arsovski, and Venturin includes *biti svakom loncu poklopac*, meaning “to meddle” or “to be a know-it-all”; *kuhati se u istom loncu*, meaning “to be in the same boat”, and *strpati u jedan (isti) lonac*, meaning “to compare apples and oranges” ((59), p. 152–153).

Luko Paljetak

Paljetak used the regionalism *zdur*, a name for a commoner from Dubrovnik in the service of the Republic (*K njima su tada prišla dva zdura / i pitali ih: – Koja je ura? / Što radite vas dva u Gradu, / jeste li došli na paradu?* (“Two zdurs approached them then / and asked: – What time is it? / What are you two doing in the City, / have you come for the parade?”). The AD listed three meanings of this noun (Shtokavian for “poppy flower”, “court official”, and “sea fish”). It can also be found in the dictionaries by Mikalja, Vitezović, Della Bella, Voltiggi, and Stulli ((44), 1975, vol. 22, p. 720–721). It is not featured in either the GCD or Šonje’s dictionary.

Paljetak also used the adverbial phrase *sim-tam* (“here and there”, “now and then”; sometimes “randomly”, “scattered”; to describe a tedious task with many details – “this and that”, “all kinds of things”, “anything”, “whatever”), which is a feature of Kajkavian idioms recorded in the DCKLL (53). The GCD has *simo* (“here”) as an archaic adverb (57).

Functional stratification

Elements of colloquial language, such as colloquialisms, jargon, and even vulgarisms are a common feature of the literary style, whereas lexemes characteristic of other styles are much less frequent.

Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić

The author used the verb *bečiti (se)* (“to stare” or “to goggle”), recorded as early as the 16th century, as well as in Della Bella’s dictionary ((44), 1881–1882, vol. 2, p. 220). Benešić also recorded this verb, but found only one case of its usage in Kušar’s work ((45), p. 83). More recently, the word is featured in the dictionary *Rječnik hrvatskog žargona* with the meaning “to stare” or “to goggle” ((66), p. 58). The GCD labeled it as colloquial, but Šonje did not include a label at all ((56), p. 61).

Brlić-Mažuranić also used the particle *bogme*, featured in the Academy’s Dictionary and attested in the works of various Croatian writers such as Držić, Mrnavić, and Reljković ((44), 1880–1882, vol. 2, p. 474). More recently, it is listed in the dictionary of jargon as a colloquialism, meaning “indeed”, “truly”, or “really” ((66), p. 68).

Finally, Brlić-Mažuranić employed the scholarly lexeme *mnijenje* (“opinion”). It was noted in Šulek with the designation *phil. stil.* ((42), p. 611). Šonje did not include a usage label ((56), p. 604), whereas the GCD marked it as archaic (57).

Vesna Parun

The colloquial verb *šenuti* from Vesna Parun’s work was recorded in Sabljak’s dictionary *Rječnik hrvatskog žargona*, meaning “to go mad” ((67), p. 415). Šonje’s dictionary does not provide a usage note ((56), p. 1217), but the GCD marked it as colloquial (57). The noun *knedla* (“dumpling”) is recorded in the dictionary of the Croatian-Serbian Dictionary as *knedla* and *knedl* and labeled as a German barbarism ((54), p. 595). Šonje’s dictionary labels it as a foreign word and directs readers to use *okruglica* or *valjušak* instead ((56), p. 458), while the GCD marks it as colloquial (57). Sabljak’s dictionary of jargon has the noun *knedl* ((66), p. 214). Parun also used the phrase *nije greda*, meaning “no problem” or “no trouble”, which is recorded in the Croatian-Serbian Dictionary as urban slang ((54), p. 111). Matešić recorded the meaning “it doesn’t matter” or “it’s not serious”, but did not indicate that this is colloquial ((58), p. 168). Sabljak also included the phrase in the *Rječnik hrvatskog žargona* ((67), p. 165).

Zvonimir Balog

The colloquial noun *gnjavator* (“a nag”, “a nuisance”), used by Balog, appeared in the dictionary *Rječnik hrvatskosrpskog književnog jezika* without a special usage note ((54), p. 60), whereas both Šonje’s contemporary dictionary ((56), p. 293) and the GCD marked it as colloquial (57). The noun *ćuška* (“slap”; “embarrassment”, “scandal”, “disgrace”) also appeared in the Croatian-Serbian Dictionary without a special usage note ((54), p. 439); this is labeled as a regionalism by Šonje ((56), p. 153), as a colloquialism in the GCD (57), and as jargon by Sabljak ((67), p. 100). In Šonje, the entry for *šljem* (“helmet”), a noun of German origin, redirects to *kaciga* ((56), p. 1225), while the GCD described it as colloquial (57). The noun *bašča/bašta* (“garden”) is recorded as a Turkish loan in the *Rječnik hrvatskosrpskog književnog jezika* ((54), p. 140), as colloquial in the GCD (57), and as a Slavonian regionalism in Sabljak ((67), p. 57). The verb *broditi* (“to travel”; “to navigate life”) is recorded in the *Rječnik hrvatskosrpskog književnog jezika* without a stylistic label ((54), p. 268). It is marked as colloquial in the GCD (57), but not by Šonje. Another verb found in Paljetak’s

work, *kliznuti/klisnuti* (“to escape suddenly”), is recorded in the *Rječnik hrvatskosrpskog književnog jezika*, albeit without a usage note ((54), p. 582), whereas the GCD labeled it as jargon (57). The verb can also be found in Sabljak ((67), p. 213).

Luko Paljetak

Paljetak’s *Miševi i mačke naglavačke* contains several colloquialisms. Some appear in Sabljak’s dictionary *Rječnik hrvatskog žargona*: the noun *štos*, meaning “joke”, “point”, or “trick” ((67), p. 433); the noun *žbir*, meaning “snitch”, “informer”, or “policeman” ((67), p. 496); the adjective *šiznut*, meaning “enraged”, recorded in Sabljak as *šiznuti*, meaning “to go mad” or “to freak out” ((67), p. 418); the verb *skljokati*, meaning “to knock down” or “to collapse” ((67), p. 390); the verb *ljasnuti*, meaning “to fall” or “to fail an exam” ((67), p. 251); the verb (*ne*) *šljiviti*, meaning “to not care” ((67), p. 422); the verb *odmagliti*, meaning “to vanish” or “to escape” ((67), p. 297); the verb *kesiti se*, meaning “to laugh” ((67), p. 207), also recorded in the dictionary *Rječnik hrvatskosrpskog književnog jezika* without a stylistic label ((54), p. 545); and the verbs *njupati*, meaning “to eat” ((67), p. 294), and *cugati*, meaning “to drink” ((67), p. 88), both recorded in the *Rječnik hrvatskosrpskog književnog jezika* as German loans, without a stylistic label ((54), p. 352). All of these words are colloquial lexemes in the GCD (57). Šonje’s dictionary marked *skljokati se* ((56), p. 1134), *šljiviti* ((56), p. 1225), *odmagliti* ((56), p. 732), and *cugati* ((56), p. 130) as colloquial, but not *štos* ((56), p. 1232), *žbir* ((56), p. 1441), *ljasnuti* ((56), p. 557), or *kesiti se* ((56), p. 445). The noun *žbir* (“policeman”) is said to be archaic in both Šonje and the GCD, and pejorative when it means “informer” or “spy”.

Paljetak’s work also included a lexeme from the journalistic functional style: the noun *žurnal* (“fashion illustrated weekly”, “monthly magazine”).

Discussion

In this study, we aimed to demonstrate that the Croatian language has been consciously inherited, preserved, and developed across different lexical layers using selected works of 20th-century Croatian children’s poetry. From the historical perspective, the unifying factor of the sixth phase of the development of standard Croatian, spanning the entire 20th century, is the consolidation of its key features. More specifically, 20th-century linguistic norms were codified in normative manuals aligned with the doctrines of Croatian Vukovians, especially in the first half of the century. The Croatian Vukovian standard was rooted in the (neo)Shtokavian idiom, completely disregarding earlier literary and linguistic traditions, as well as the “major achievements of Croatian lexical renewal and augmentation that from the 1850s (...) greatly promoted the polyfunctionality of the Croatian standard language” ((68), p. 119). This caused a break in the continuity of many lexemes that had been common in literature until the early 20th century. In the wake of attempts to enforce the unification of Croatian and Serbian languages, especially in the first half of the 20th century, the 1960s and 1970s saw rising awareness about the need for a separate Croatian (neo)Shtokavian norm. From that point onwards, standard Croatian has made consistent and independent advancements (69).

Our findings are consistent with previous studies of Croatian in 20th-century literature (14). Previous research has shown that the vocabulary used in literary works from the early 20th century closely resembled the literary language style of the 19th century, as seen in the linguistic features of the analyzed poetry by Brlić-Mažuranić. A shift came in the second half of the 20th century, partly due to the influence of the Croatian Vukovian school and their codification that favored a strict and puristic Shtokavian norm, and partly due to various extralinguistic forces (some lexemes became obsolete, some disappeared or were replaced, and so on).

This is reflected in the use of the now outdated adverb *jur* (“already”), featured in older Croatian dictionaries and common in literary and non-literary works from various Croatian regions until the end of the 19th century. It appears in organic idioms and dialectal literature from the 20th century onwards ((70), p. 193–197). Here we identified *jur* in the works of Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić, whose language bears closer resemblance to the literary tradition of the 19th century, but not the other three authors. Her lexicon is characterized by a pronounced temporal stratification, especially of passive vocabulary. In children’s literature, archaisms often serve to evoke past times, particularly in fairy-tale and mythological narratives. However, these archaisms are not necessarily indicators of linguistic hybridity, but rather stylistic choices that contribute to creating a specific atmosphere. This type of linguistic stratification is typical of the literary style of the genre. Some lexemes were already archaic in her time (*groš*, *pjesan*), but many are now seen as stylistic. However, two contemporary Croatian dictionaries, Šonje’s and the GCD, often provide contradictory information. Various lexemes from this analysis are labeled as obsolete in GCD, but not in Šonje. This is especially noticeable in Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić’s work. According to the GCD, the following are now obsolete: *pjesan*, *číslo*, *hora*, *mnijenje*, *dub*, *pedepsa*, *žiče*, *jezditi*, *mniti*, *vazda*, *većma*, *udilj*, and *jošte*. However, in Šonje, only *udilj* and *jošte* are marked as obsolete. The GCD also lists obsolete words that are completely absent from Šonje, including *trh*, *proljet*, *račiti se*, *utruditi*, *jur*, and *ter*. Finally, *sunovrat*, *sur*, *veli*, and *sveudilj* are tagged as bookish in the GCD, whereas Šonje did not provide this label. *Slavić*, labeled as bookish in the GCD, is absent from Šonje’s dictionary altogether.

The noun *nebosklon* is an interesting case, as it was a recent loanword from Russian, when Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić used it in her poem; today, a hundred years later, the GCD marks it as obsolete, while Šonje only has it as an unnecessary loanword.

Vesna Parun, Zvonimir Balog, and Luko Paljetak wrote in the second half of the 20th century, also in the sixth period of Brozović’s periodization. Notably, obsolete lexemes were significantly sparser in this period, although Vesna Parun did use them. Contemporary dictionaries again provide conflicting data. According to the GCD, *udes* and *hajati* are obsolete, while *sanja* is a bookish expression. Šonje provides no designations for any of these lexemes. Neologisms became more common, especially in Balog (*ruknuti*, *glavnuti*, *trep*, *lip*, *jezd*, *ljud*, and so on) and Paljetak (*vlastonožni*, *stonožac*, and so on). A clear trend emerged of lexical innovation and Luddism, where literature became a space for invention and the forging of new words. This word formation is “a legitimate process and one of the constants of Croatian language production” ((71), p. 110).

Regional stratification was less pronounced than temporal stratification in the analyzed works for several reasons. The works were written in a standard language, which often eschews localisms, regionalisms, and dialects. Furthermore, Croatian Vukovians of the 20th century advocated and practiced ethnographic purism ((72), p. 77–78), arguing for the purity of rural dialects over urban vernaculars or the standard language, while accepting linguistic contributions only from select dialects. According to Croatian Vukovians, only the (neo)Shtokavian dialect was a suitable source; this accounted for the lack of regional stratification. The ethnographic purism advocated by Croatian Vukovians faced significant pushback, leading to a revival of Croatian dialect literature in the early 20th century. Although this was not the focus of our research, the analyzed works, written in the standard language of the 20th century, demonstrate that these authors incorporated lexemes from various dialectal and regional layers, not just their native dialects. For instance, Brlić-Mažuranić used the noun *kreljut*, more typical of the Chakavian dialect, the verb *sfuriti* from Slavonian Shtokavian and Kajkavian vernaculars, as well as the phrase *nositi beza bezara*, common in Slavonian vernaculars. Similarly, Paljetak used the regionally colored *zdur* from Dubrovnik, as well as the Kajkavianism *sim-tam*. As already stated, Balog used the noun *zdenčar*. Dialectological research confirmed that *zdenac* is part of the core Croatian lexicon shared by all three Croatian dialects and is still preserved today in the Chakavian, archaic Shtokavian, and archaic Kajkavian vernaculars (73). Although elements of dialectal diversity occasionally appear, their presence is not significant enough to support the idea of a continuous influence of hybrid linguistic idiom from the Glagolitic scribes, the Protestant writers, the trilingual literary language of the Ozalj Literary Circle, to the modern era and the golden formula of the Croatian language (ČA-KAJ-ŠTO), which, thanks to the efforts of Drago Štambuk, became an intangible cultural asset in 2019. The linguistic hybridity in these works reflects a general dynamic of literary language rather than a specific connection to Croatian linguistic tradition. While Croatian tridialectism, which “refers to the fact that all three Croatian dialects contributed evenly to the development of the Croatian literary language; the tridialectism is the heart of the oneness of the Croatian literary language making it uniquely Croatian” ((13), p. 86), is often highlighted, the analyzed works do not consistently adhere to this tradition. Instead, the linguistic hybridity in children’s literature tends toward a universality of expression, where the standard language and stylized dialects contribute to aesthetic impact, but do not confirm the idea of a continuous linguistic heritage from historical literary periods to contemporary authors. Such hybridity is more a feature of literary language in general, which often transcends the boundaries of local and historical specificity, than a consistent reflection of tridialectal tradition.

Regarding functional stratification, we observed colloquial lexemes in all four authors, but most frequently in the works of Parun (*šenuti*, *knedla*), Balog (*gnjavator*, *klisnuti*, *broditi*), and Paljetak (*šiznut*, *skljokati*, *njupati*). Most lexemes that are labeled as colloquial by contemporary normative guidebooks were not marked as such when the works were originally created. An exception is the phrase *nije greda* in a poem by Vesna Parun, which is labeled as slang in the Croatian-Serbian Dictionary, Matešić’s phraseological dictionary, as well as in Sabljak’s dictionary of jargon. There is a noticeable divergence between contemporary Croatian dictionaries in what is classified as colloquial. For example, Šonje’s

dictionary and the GCD only agree that the lexeme *gnjavator* is colloquial; in contrast, the GCD lists *ćuška*, *šljem*, and *bašča* as colloquial, while Šonje's dictionary classifies *ćuška* and *bašča* as regionalisms, *šljem* as an unnecessary foreignism, and provides no usage label for *broditi*.

Conclusion

The analysis of the opuses of four poets active in different periods of the 20th century – Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić, Vesna Parun, Zvonimir Balog, and Luko Paljetak – has provided a representative insight into the evolution of Croatian linguistic practices in this genre. The lexical stratification analysis of their poetry has shown that these authors have significantly contributed to the formation and maintenance of the Croatian language via various lexical layers. The shift in the attitude towards language during the century has been noticed – whereas writers in the first half of the century more frequently resorted to the passive lexical stratum and tradition, in the second half, an enhanced tendency of linguistic innovation is evident.

Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić was seemingly more closely connected to the older traditions of Croatian literature through the use of archaisms, historicisms, and dialectisms, thus preserving the richness of the Croatian lexical heritage. Archaisms, in particular, were used for stylistic purposes, most notably in mythological and fairy-tale ambiance. Balog and Paljetak, however, were very innovative in their language use through lexical play and neologisms.

The regional component is less pronounced due to the dominance of the (neo)Shokavian standard. Although dialectal elements and regionalisms occasionally appear in the works of Brlić-Mažuranić and Paljetak, they are rather an issue of stylistic variation and not a marker of an unbroken linguistic lineage to historical idioms. Linguistic hybridity in their writing consequently manifests itself as a sign of literary innovation and inventiveness and not merely of historical continuity.

The use of colloquialisms and conversational lexemes by Parun, Balog, and Paljetak speaks in favor of the adaptability of the Croatian literary language to contemporary social changes. Differences between the definitions of the same lexemes in two contemporary dictionaries – Šonje's and the GCD – have created challenges in the interpretation of findings.

The poets analyzed here consciously relied on rich literary-linguistic heritage while simultaneously expanding the boundaries of the standard language through creativity and flexibility. Their openness to lexical diversity and stylistic variations attests to the principle of elastic stability.

Literature remains a crucial factor in the shaping and development of the Croatian standard language, reconfirming the fact that authors of literary texts are both its guardians and innovators.

Provenance: Submitted. This manuscript is based on the master's thesis by Ana Milavić, deposited in the Dabar repository (<https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:172:703297>).

Received: 5 May 2023 / **Accepted:** 20 January 2025 / **Published online:** 8 May 2025.

Peer review: Externally peer reviewed.

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Authorship declaration: AM participated in the definition of a work topic. She collected and analyzed the data and wrote the first version of the manuscript. AMH provided a critical review of the text, analyzed the data and edited the manuscript. Both authors also participated in manuscript revisions.

Disclosure of interest: The corresponding author completed the ICMJE Disclosure of Interest Form and disclose no relevant interests.

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