

# Glossolalia

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## ABSTRACT

*In this article the authors present through theory and case reports on the phenomenon of glossolalia, the unusual vocal utterances that sound language-like. Sense, meaning and function of glossolalia are closely connected with social and cultural context, and therefore glossolalia is experienced as a normal and expected behavior in religious prayer groups, while in mental disorders it is considered a psychopathological symptom. Historic theological debates explain the pure spiritual etiology of glossolalia, while the current studies present the phenomenon of glossolalia as a result of learned behavior and training. Glossolalia occurs as an individual or a group phenomenon after which the speaker and the persons around him feel good, what is explained psychodynamically as a regression upon early developmental levels. In this temporary regression there is an explanation of positive, almost psychoterapeutic effect of glossolalia.*

**Key words:** *glossolalia, xenolalia, cataphasia, »speaking in tongues«, borderline personality*

## Introduction

According to the definition glossolalia is a vocalization of sounds that are only alike, but in their semantic meaning and syntax they are different from any known languages. The term has been formed from Greek language »glosso, glossa = tongue« and »lalein, laleo, lalia = talking, chatter«, and therefore glossolalia is interpreted as »speaking in tongues«<sup>1-3</sup>. Related term is »xenolalia«, from Greek words »xenos = foreign« and »lalia«, and means foreign language. It indicates conscious talking in real, existing languages (for instance, German, English, Croatian...), which are foreign only to a person who has not learned them<sup>4</sup>.

Glossolalia has been described for centuries in many communities all over the world. Jennings observed that glossolalia is practiced among non-Christian religions: the Peyote cult among the North American Indians, the Haida Indians of the Pacific Northwest, Shamans in the Sudan, the Shango cult of the West Coast of Africa, the Shago cult in Trinidad, the Voodoo cult in Haiti, the Aborigines of South America and Australia, the Eskimos of the subarctic regions of North America and Asia, the Shamans in Greenland, the Dyaks of Borneo, the Zor cult of Ethiopia, the Siberian shamans, the Chaco Indians of South America, the Curanderos of the Andes, the Kinka in the African Sudan, the Thonga shamans of Af-

rica, and the Tibetan monks<sup>5</sup>. Goodman studied glossolalia in four cultural settings including mystical schools of yoga, initiation ceremonies of shamanism, rituals of the Greek priests of Apollo, the ancient Israelites, the Quakers and the Methodists<sup>6</sup>. Glossolalia occurs most often as ecstatic utterance in religious groups, which provoke trance or religious ecstasies during their usual rituals<sup>7</sup>. In those cases glossolalia is welcomed as a clearly positive phenomenon and is not considered a mental disorder<sup>8</sup>. At the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century glossolalia was considered a form of mass hysteria or psychosis, and the modern consensus is that glossolalia is legitimate religious activity and not a psycho-pathological phenomenon, and consequently, the International classification of disorders does not list it as a symptom of psychosis<sup>9</sup>.

### *Glossolalia in religious context*

In religious context, and especially in Christian charismatic settings, glossolalia is highly respected phenomenon. It is connected with the idea of being possessed by the Holy Spirit and communication with God. »The gift of tongues« was given for prayer and proclaiming the Gospel in languages the preachers had never learned<sup>10</sup>. According to Bible the tongues were given for prayer

and praise of God, for conversation between people and angels, as it is stated in the part where the apostles St. Paul and St. Luke describe the acts of the Holy Spirit in the early Church (Bible, Acts: 2:4,6–8; 11; I. Cor. 14: 26–28, 39–40; Acts: 1–4; I. Cor. 13:1). These acts began by outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, accompanied by glossolalia: »They all filled with the Holy Spirit and started talking in foreign languages as the Spirit inspired them«, (Bible, Acts: 2,4). After that the apostles went to proclaim the Gospel on the language of the country they were in, and many nations understood them. Glossolalia is, then, the act of becoming apostle, which differentiates the apostles from nonenlightened<sup>11</sup>.

Glossolalia occurs continually during the Church history /St. Irenaeus, 2<sup>nd</sup> century, Simon Magus, St Francis Xavier/, but is reported sporadically until 1901 when observed and recorded for the first time in public, at mass meetings in Topeka and in Los Angeles. It was officially the beginning of the classic »Pentecostalism«. The Pentecostals are a denomination of Protestant church, named by Greek word pentecoste, what designates the 50<sup>th</sup> day of Christ's resurrection, also called Whitsunday, the birthday of Christian church. Most important in Pentecostal movement is speaking in unknown languages, what is considered one of nine gifts of the Spirit, and being »baptized in Spirit«, i.e. the sign of being filled with the Spirit. After the first baptism in water, the Pentecostals consider »speaking in tongues« the clear sign of being baptized in Holy Spirit. With the sudden speaking the simple personal transformation occurs of those who speak, it legitimizes them as full members of the group and serves to affirm their beliefs<sup>12,13</sup>.

### *Glossolalia in psychopathological conditions*

Besides the high level of tension, i.e., stress in the period prior to beginning glossolalia, in persons practicing glossolalia in general there was no evidence of psychopathological symptoms. Nevertheless, we can encounter it in some known psychiatric entities, like, for instance, in schizophrenia, and manic-depressive psychosis<sup>14–16</sup>. Glossolalia can also occur as the consequence of neurological disorders, like, e.g. epileptic breakout of the temporal lobe, Wernicke's aphasia, various toxic conditions, etc.<sup>9,17</sup>. Cataphasia is a disorder similar to glossolalia. It is a formal disorder in thinking and speaking that is marked as unsystematic schizophrenia. In this disorder the hallucinations and delusions occur incidentally, and paralogical thinking, incoherency, paragrammatisms, agrammatisms and neologisms are dominant, it is all accompanied mainly by euphoric affect<sup>18</sup>. There was a case of glossolalia described in a person who manifested the syndrome of pseudocyesis; the condition in which a woman that is not pregnant firmly believes that she is pregnant, with all the symptoms and signs of pregnancy. She can hear fetal heart; feel fetal movements; she worries about her baby's health until the false delivery when she feels muscular contractions and birth pain<sup>19,20</sup>.

### *Glossolalia during the speech development*

Speech is a special codex of signs and symbols that serve for communication between people. A word transfers a message from an individual who uses a language code freely and intentionally (with the desire to communicate). The speech is a conscious communicative behavior, an act of transferring specific messages from the speaker to the listener with the assumption that both partners share the same linguistic code. The development of speech can be divided to nonverbal and to verbal period, and according to Piaget to three levels: unconscious or fantasy, egocentric, and comprehended or communicative level<sup>21</sup>. The first trimester of the postnatal period is characterized by mesodiencephalic and limbic predominance. Vocals are predominant speech elements, and in psychological life the predominant elements are emotions, i.e. nondominant hemisphere characterized by intuitive, spatial, receptive, tonal and holistic functioning. The ego development correlates with the increasing use of consonants, i.e. with the dominant hemispheric functioning characterized by analytic, linear, active, verbal and organizational functioning. Lexical choice is basically, as well as unconsciously, unlimited, so the child originally shows the ability to express itself in lexical and grammatical system of any language. The normal separation-individuation process at the age of six months is characterized by use of vowels and »soft« consonants (h, l, m, n, p, t, w) including sounds like e.g. ma-ma, and during the second six months the use of »hard« consonants (b, d, f, g, k) and sounds like ba-ba. The first phase coincides with the early oral (oral-incorporative) and Mahler's symbiotic phase and the early differentiation subphase, and the second coincides with the later oral stage (oral-sadistic, oral-aggressive). In that period the individual way of language development starts – by breaking out the dyad of mother and child, and father becomes<sup>22</sup>. According to Vivier (Vivier, 1968), glossolalia is the manifestation of recollection of preverbal speech, i.e. the developmental regression to an infantile level, the regression of communication in the service of the ego. Such communication would be affective and object-seeking communication representative of the baby talk, which conveys emotions, the symbiotic, omnipotent parental or maternal substitute. It is the developmental context, which dynamically, psychosocially and etiologically forms the basis of borderline psychopathology. In borderline personality organization there is the fixation at a level prior to self-object differentiation and the achievement of objects constancy, i.e. the phase of separation-individuation that occurs during third to eighth and 10<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> months of development<sup>23</sup>. Although glossolalia is not necessarily related to a specific type of personality, we can expect many individuals with borderline personality disorders among those actively engaged in glossolalia as well as those who experienced hard life beginning as children in family settings full of tension, conflicts, insecurity, anxiety, fear and stress<sup>15</sup>.

### *Glossolalia in psychodynamic context*

Consideration of glossolalia from the aspect of psychodynamic discourse leads us quite certainly to consideration of the role of language, speech, signs, symbols and interpretation of the structure of unconscious. Glossolalia is an example of a language use that brings thoughts that the person cannot put into words close to conscious, without provocation of feelings of shame, guilt, despair or anxiety. The person feels as if he/she expressed something that cannot be said in words. It makes glossolalia the sort of illusion speech, in which the language is free from any communicative function. Freud and Bauer, while working together on the treatment of hysteria, considered the speech a mechanism, which, besides its communicative value, has got the ability to relax suppressed affects and serve as a substitute for direct action. Presentation of words is in fact a complex of auditory, visual and kinesthetic elements that have their meaning when connected with object presentations. When the word is connected with the experience, there is an increase of cognitive and referential accuracy. It enables full comprehension of what before was only a shape. The implication of that idea finally brings to conscious that what can be named. Thus language, as an energetic mechanism, brings to conscious the processes that are out of the reach of the conscious serving at the same time to share the experience with the others<sup>21</sup>.

The psychoanalysts believe that speech represents only a part of the surface of a very deep level of unconscious capacity, and that that level may even come from an unknown area inside or outside of a man.

The phrase »total or collective consciousness« includes both conscious and unconscious and contains some religious implications, examined by Jung (Jung, 1963). He pointed out that the assumption that the human psyche contains of layers that lie below consciousness is quite common, but the assumption that there are layers above consciousness seems to be rather speculative. According to Jung (1963), the conscious requires central position, while the unconscious content connects it with the moving backwards. At the same time the unconscious is broadened with the moving forwards by intuition and subliminal perception. Intuition and perception come probably from spiritual forms of existence, totally different from everyday types. Jung says that no matter to our not knowing and not understanding such forms of existence, we have a good reason to presume that beyond the veil there is an incomprehensible object that has an influence on us. He describes this power as »demon«, or »God«<sup>24</sup>. He also describes everyday fear, when talking about religion – it leads us to say »unconsciously« since »God« and »Devil« have become something unconscious for us. According to Jung (Jung, 1964), glossolalia occurs in cases, in which there is a predominance of the unconscious<sup>24</sup>.

Among early Christians speaking in different languages was an example of the invasion of the unconscious contents, which commonly occurs prior to inte-

gration of the personality, i.e., the languages paved the way to mental maturity as a sign of the collective consciousness. The practical consequence of such thinking is the understanding that each moment has in itself the characteristics of one unity. No matter when or where something occurs, it is connected with all other occurrences that take place at that time within one unit. They both take place at the same time. They both represent the state of being one unity. From one occurrence we can find out more about the other one. We only need an interpreter. We need something or somebody that will be able to explain this occurrence that we are familiar with, in order to get the answer about the unknown.

### *Relaxing effect of glossolalia*

The experience of glossolalia is always connected with the feeling of euphoria, relaxation and altered state of consciousness. Persinger (Persinger, 1984) examined such states<sup>25</sup>. He explains the positive neuropsychological relaxing effect of glossolalia by the activity of limbic system and anterior hypothalamus. This activity is mediated by acetylcholin, which activates parasympathetic pathways, leads to the reduction in autonomous and skeletal-muscular tension and metabolic activities that protect the organism from the stress and decrease the cerebral cortical activity. This effect is called trophotropic in distinction from the ergotropic answer. This ergotropic answer has its base in a sympatic regulation of posterior hypothalamus and in adrenergic induced »fight or flight« with a hyperphoric social answer. So-called altered state of consciousness (ASC) is a combination of ergotropism and trophotropism, in which a person experiences the feelings of fusion with the environment, the universe, and God; the person has the feeling of power, grandiosity, omnipotence, distortion of sense for time and body image, accompanied by maximum suggestibility, potential loss of identity, ecstasy, mystical experiences. Such states are described during relaxation techniques, mantras, yoga, in deep trance, during contemplative meditations, hypnosis, autogenic training. The EEG of persons in deep meditative trance showed slow and high-amplitude alpha waves combined with theta waves. Such EEG is similar to the EEG of a two-year-old child, and according to psychodynamic interpretation – to regression of the state prior to separation-individuation. The persons report »ocean« feelings of fusion with the universe, the increased empathy for the surrounding, and the development of intuitive problem-solving ability. During meditation the alpha wave production is initiated in non-dominant hemisphere, and when mantra is used, i.e. automatic speech, the dominant hemisphere is activated<sup>26</sup>.

The persons, who are mediating using the vowels, use non-dominant, or in other words non-verbal cerebral hemisphere and affective communication. Those, who combine vocal and consonants, use dominant, or in other words, verbal hemisphere and communication connected with object relations. Glossolalic speech activates both cerebral hemispheres<sup>26</sup>.

*Empirical and experimental studies of glossolalia*

Empirical study of glossolalia begins with the assumption that glossolalia is a kind of loud utterance that can be registered, tape-recorded and analyzed. According to the study glossolalia is automatic speech and production of sounds; the intonation pattern is repetitive, rhythmic and melodic. Vocalization occurs in the state of dissociation, which is trance-like, and represents a neuropsychological correlate of a dream. That speech is not productive, i.e. it is non-communicative in a formal sense, since it does not transmit any message. In order to form a real language out of the speaking, the language should be formed in the system of resonant symbols organized into patterns of systematic series of vowels and consonants arbitrarily related to outer world, and with the main function to exchange the information<sup>27</sup>. In glossolalia there are rudimentary language-like structures, but there is no constant relation between the words and there is no meaning for common listeners. In other words, there might be a phonological structure, which is considered the real language by the speaker, but in fact it is not any known or extinct language, although it can be similar to some of them. It happens mostly because the speaker unconsciously imitates his basic language. That is the difference between glossolalia today and speaking in tongues by the apostles who were understood by everyone. The Christians find the explanation in the fact that in the case of speaking in tongues, it is mainly praising the Lord, and therefore it need not to be interpreted<sup>28</sup>. It is about angelic languages, which originate from God, i.e. it is unnotional prayer, an array of sounds with no meaning to us, but transmitting the message directly to Lord<sup>29</sup>. Sometimes the speaker prays in a language that is not known to him and he personally does not understand the language he is talking in. Among the listeners there is usually a person with the »gift of interpreting the language« and he interprets the message or the prayer that were said. The interpreter intuitively knows what was said, although he does not understand it. In fact, he/she interprets the emotional content of the message. The speaking is considered the sign that Lord wants to say his word to the group, and the interpreting is the word he wants the group to hear<sup>30</sup>.

According to experimental researches Spanos concluded that glossolalia is a type of learned behavior, and that training significantly increases fluency, which is consistent with social learning. Glossolalic utterances are goal-directed actions rather than involuntary, spontaneous happenings<sup>31</sup>.

The phenomenon of trance is taught in prayer groups. The service usually lasts two hours and begins with collective singing; the clapping of hands and stamping of feet follow, as an introduction to the trance; the trance begins with the absence of kinetic activity, disorientation and the psychic, emotional, mental and spiritual sensation of feeling good. A supernatural feeling of peace and warmth, like being half-asleep, was described. Sometimes the leader lays his hands on a person's head,

and sometimes someone breaks in, in unknown languages; it is accompanied by praising and usual conclusion, such as »Thank you, Jesus«, »Halleluiah«, »Praise the Lord« or »So speaks the Lord«.

The phonetic inventory varies somewhat from group to group, but is stereotyped and rigid within the group<sup>32</sup>. Glossolalists' behavior depends on social expectations of their community. Some have convulsions, or lose consciousness; others dramatically fall into a trance, or have amnesia of speaking. There is also a possibility of group induction, as it was observed in the socially deprived group of population in Yucatan; the group consisted of 20 persons altogether – men, women and children. One woman started speaking and the others, in a kind of domino effect, continued speaking, praying and singing, and all stopped eating and sleeping, which lasted for days<sup>33</sup>.

There is the difference between glossolalia, religious hallucinations, like e.g. visions of the Virgin Mary, and similar vision experiences integrated differently into the systems of believing. Vision experiences occur spontaneously and disappear, while glossolalia is learned and goes on for several years, although attenuates in time<sup>34</sup>.

Grady studied some characteristics of glossolalia and he distinguishes several types. There are some differences among speakers, who were practicing glossolalia. Type A is calm, speaks daily or several times a week, more often in private and peace; type B speaks less than once in a week, usually in public, in religious settings and is more often associated with psychopathology. Witnesses who heard, but had never practiced glossolalia and those who had never heard how glossolalia sounds connect it with excitement, and consider it the exceptional activity in religious groups<sup>9,28</sup>.

**Case reports***Case 1 – »Mario«*

He is an adolescent with family and individual problems. He has no capacity for developing constant relationships; his relationships are anaclitic-symbiotic, with dramatic breakups, because of which, he experiences difficult depressive crises. It is the reason why he is most often alone and avoids contacts with his coevals; he is suspicious and cautious. He is occasionally aggressive, mostly towards persons close to him. He regards himself as special and very important, and expects special attention from everyone he communicates with. For him, everything around him is »black or white«. He is most often ambivalent and makes decisions with difficulties. Therefore, it is hard for him to find a job and to keep it. He believes that he has some special powers, but he also believes in faith. When we met him he had several sexual relationships at the same time, without any special emotions for them, and he had some problems with police because of his heroin dependence. He lived of his mother's pension, in her apartment, in a con-

stant verbal conflict with her and other members of the family. In spite of constant police supervision he maintained his contacts with drug dealers, until the moment when he tried to commit suicide, in his bed, by cutting his wrists, while his parents were watching TV. He was saved by the police who were checking where he was.

After a long hospitalization he gradually makes new contacts in the town and meets some persons who introduce him to glossolalia. After experiencing glossolalia, the significant change occurs in his behavior. He describes feelings of being loved, and especially of feeling good. He emphasizes that he can control his emotions completely. He first experienced the phenomenon of »jubilatío« while he was praying loudly with the group, and the prayer spontaneously turned into the singing of one word – »hallelujah«; each person formed his own melody using real word or changing vocals in all tone, which made exciting, pleasant harmony. Depending on inner mood the feelings were manifestations of praising, thanking, but also of remorse and prayer. Occasional shouts could be heard, which showed the unlimited joy that could not be expressed by words. Soon after the occurrence, he started talking »in tongues«, just like other members of the group. He feels protected and fully supported within the group. After discovering and experiencing glossolalia, Mario stopped using all substances that cause dependence; he feels happy, calm and safe. He became almost an ideal citizen. He does not show any need for pharmacological, psychotherapeutic or heroin support, without which he previously could not imagine a day.

### Case 2 – »Maria«

She is forty-year-old depressive patient with specific dissociative i.e. conversion symptom of speech disturbances, which, according to catamnestic data, lasts, without changes, for almost ten years. It occurred during her gradual recovery from a three-day posttraumatic coma after she had had a head injury in a car accident.

Several members of her family suffered from some mental illnesses and she recovered from infantile cerebral paralysis after her birth trauma, which resulted in muscular atrophy of her left side, partial epilepsy and frequent headaches. Before the accident she had symptoms of reactive depression – she had a family crisis because of her husband's infidelity. After her rousing from the coma she suffered, for almost a year, from posttraumatic encephalopathy and Wernicke's aphasia. Gradually she started to recollect some terms and events, and to speak, but only in Dalmatian dialect, the dialect of the town where they spent their holidays before the accident. There are no unintelligible words in her speech, except her dialect, which is unsuitable and noticeable because the patient comes from Podravina; she used to speak the dialect of Podravina, like everybody else in her surroundings, and now ten years after the accident she speaks another dialect, Dalmatian, because she »forgot the dialect of Podravina«. She explains to

others and to herself that »the brain center for words is damaged« and that »the center for dialect of Podravina is destroyed and the center for Dalmatian dialect is well«. As soon as she tries to say something in dialect of Podravina she feels a sharp pain in the left side of her head, where she was hurt, and therefore she stops talking immediately. She explained her transformation to her husband as follows: »You were living with a woman from Podravina and now you are living with a woman from Dalmatia!« In this sentence there is an explanation of the whole case: since she had an accident and since she started to speak in »Dalmatian« her husband was not unfaithful and the family situation was normalized. She presents herself as a completely different person and it appeased the family crisis. This way she constantly reminds her family of pleasant moments they spent together in Dalmatia. Today Maria is socially mainly functional and partially working functional, she is popular in her environment, although she keeps speaking differently. In fact, she is somehow proud of her speech, she accentuates it and offers it as her peculiarity. She had never asked for medical treatment of her speech disorder. We met her during the treatment of her temporary depressive episode, which was successfully stabilized with fluoxetine. Due to the duration and medical effect of her speech on her family, her way of speaking can be considered as glossolalia. »The restoration to health« might bring back the destabilization of her health and the relations in her surrounding.

### Discussion

Glossolalia is a phenomenon of speaking unintelligibly in regressive mental conditions<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, it can be a component of magic rituals in primitive communities<sup>35,36</sup>, charismatic gift of the Holy Spirit on Christian's seminaries of revival in the Spirit<sup>10</sup>, baptism (baptizing) in the Spirit in Pentecostals<sup>12,13</sup>, developmental regression to infantile level in borderline organized personalities<sup>9,23</sup>, symptom of neurological disorder<sup>9,17</sup>, or a symptom of mental disorder<sup>14–16</sup>. According to Vivier (1968), condition that looks like glossolalia is in fact an early phase in speech development – a phase of preverbal speech, and therefore glossolalia is a manifestation of recollection to preverbal speech, i.e., the developmental regression to an infantile level, the regression in the service of the ego<sup>23</sup>. Glossolalia, then, by itself, is neither the gift of the Holy Spirit, nor a psychopathological phenomenon, because her sense depends on the context, in which it occurs. This contextual meaning of glossolalia requires detail analysis of all contextual factors before making any judgments about the phenomenon in some concrete cases. In our concrete case reports these contextual factors allow us to observe glossolalia as a positive psychological phenomenon that is following the adjustment to the environment in persons, who managed to resolve their intrapsychic conflict. Glossolalia, then, by itself, is not a healing factor, but only a sign that a significant positive change occurs in

unconscious that brings relief to a person and opens new possibilities for positive development<sup>37</sup>.

The case No. 1: »Mario«, is about an adolescent with personal and family problems, who in the frames of his borderline personality disorder, maintains very unstable relationships with very dramatic breakups and consequential depressive crises. The first contextual factor that is important is Mario's personality with primary and secondary psychopathology that is considered by Grady and Loewenthal as typical for persons that are disposed to experience glossolalia (with inclination to or tendency for experience of glossolalia)<sup>9</sup>. The other (not less) important factor is inpatient psychiatric treatment that preceded Mario's changes and probably paved the path for them. Finally, he joins a religious group that teaches and supports him emotionally to experience glossolalia. Mario was practicing glossolalia, and when he learned it, he was practicing it as a kind of therapy technique. It is in accordance with the experimental observations made by Spanos – glossolalia is a type of learned behavior consistent with social learning. Glossolalic utterances are goal-directed actions rather than involuntary, spontaneous happenings<sup>31</sup>.

According to Jung (1964), glossolalia occurs in cases of predominance of the unconscious, prior to assimilation of the content into consciousness, i.e. it represents the example of invasion of the unconscious contents into the consciousness prior to integration of the personality<sup>24</sup>. Such assimilation represents, in fact, the solution (solve) of repressed emotional complex, which was kept away (far) from consciousness by the repressing mechanisms as unsatisfactory (unacceptable). It is manifested in changed behavior (conduct) and a line (chain) of wrong actions (acts) in communication with surroundings that increase insecurity and fear (in the circle). Resolving the suppressed emotional complex the forces of repression are unburdened and the subjective feeling of being relieved, calm and secure occurs<sup>38</sup>.

In the case No. 2: »Marija«, she is a person with dissociative and conversion characteristics, who was reactive depressive due to a marital conflict prior to her accident. After a three-day posttraumatic coma, caused by her head injury, she suffered from posttraumatic encephalopathy and Wernicke's aphasia for about a year. Her gradual recollection of words and their usage was marked by an unexpected phenomenon – a Dalmatian dialect. Although this case is not an example of glossolalia in the real sense of the word, since there are no unintelligible utterances in particular regressive conditions, we described it in order to show the psychodynamic background of such phenomenon.

In the case No. 2, »Marija«, we can recognize contextual factors similar to the factors in the case No. 1. »Mario«. There are dissociative and conversion features in her personality structure. This partial consciousness uses the speech as the substitute for the direct action, or in other words. it puts it in the service to relax repressed affects. Besides the specific way of speaking, it can be also explained as a conversion symptom, a presentation of intrapsychic conflict that serves to protect the ego from disintegration (from the disintegration of the ego)<sup>39</sup>. Neurological deficit, in a form of aphasia and speech learning during her recovery, met her intrapsychic need for reorganization of neurotic defenses and designation of change in her life. Marija did not start talking in Dalmatian dialect suddenly, but through speech training during her recovery from aphasia. It confirms the constellation meaning of »ikavica« dialect in the process of solving the repressed emotional conflict and in calming its pathogenic influence on the emotions and behaviour of the patient. Besides a medical-psychological view on glossolalia there is also a charismatic-religious view<sup>40</sup>.

The theologians point out the relative meaning of this phenomenon. According to Dugalic, who is referring to the article »Szentmartonia« (1998), the biggest doubts are dealing with the charismatic seminars, or in other words, with different occurrences that are following them, such as: exaggerated affectivity, talking in languages – glossolalia, religious trans, resting in the Holy Spirit, the feeling of spiritual peace and recovery. Sometimes there is a loss of personal identity in the mass of people, who think in the same way, and the regression with the escape from the reality and responsibility<sup>41</sup>.

A special problem represents affective connection with the charismatic leader and in such cases the seminars quite often turn into the substitute for a psychotherapy. In other words, glossolalia and similar phenomena are constellationally supported and expected phenomenon. A large proportion of published empirical data suggest that religious commitment may play a beneficial role in preventing mental and physical illness, improving how people cope with mental and physical illness, and facilitating recovery from illness. However, much still remains to be investigated with improved studies that are specially designed to investigate the connection between religious involvement and health status<sup>42</sup>. Our presentation of glossolalia cases shows medical and psychological roots of this phenomenon, with the function to solve intrapsychic conflict.

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## GLOSOLALIJA

### SAŽETAK

Autori prikazuju teoriju i dva prikaza slučaja glosolalije, neobične pojave glasova koji sličje jeziku. Značaj i funkcija glosolalije usko su povezani sa socijalnim i kulturološkim sadržajem, i zato se glosolalija smatra normalnom i očekivanom pojavom u religijskim grupama, dok se u slučaju mentalnih bolesti smatra psihopatološkom pojavom. Povijesne debate objašnjavaju duhovnu etiologiju glosolalije, dok novije studije ukazuju na glosolaliju kao rezultat naučenog ponašanja. Glosolalija se pojavljuje kao individualna ili grupna pojava nakon koje se osoba i druge osobe oko nje osjećaju dobro, što se psihodinamski objašnjava kao regresija na niže razvojne nivoe. Pojavom ove privremene regresije objašnjava se pozitivan, gotovo psihoterapijski učinak glosolalije.