

“SERBO-CROATIAN” TO “BCS”

BCS: Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian

- treated as a unified “Serbo-Croatian” literary language under Yugoslavia
- spoken today in Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia
- new national standards codified: “Serbo-Croatian” → “BCS”

BCS as a Foreign Language

- For linguistic and institutional reasons, all three varieties are taught in one classroom.
- Most courses use: Alexander, Ronelle, and Ellen Elias-Bursać. 2006. *Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian: a textbook with exercises and basic grammar*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Students are exposed to the norms of all three variants while actively studying Bosnian, Croatian, or Serbian.

BUT, how to work with culture in a classroom with three separate national variants?

- Emphasize Yugoslav cultural history?
- Balance an assortment of Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian cultural themes?
- → Work with folklore!

FOLKLORE IN LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY & THE BCS CLASSROOM

Why folklore?

Folklore is culture.

Folklore provides access to the cultural concepts important to a language community.

Folklore foregrounds the traditions that a nation uses to construct its national identity.

‘Ajde Jano

‘C’mon, Jana (let’s dance the kolo)’

Folkloric texts demonstrate the universality of human values:

- across the BCS linguistic area

Bez zdravlja nema bogatstva.

‘Without health, there is no wealth.’

- internationally

Kad neće br(ij)eg Muhamedu, hoće Muhamed br(ij)egu.

‘If the hill won’t come to Mohammed, Mohammed will go to the hill.’

Shared international texts allow students to work with familiar ideas in the target language.

Jabuka ne pada daleko od stabla.

‘The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.’

Kad mačke nema, miševi kolo vode.

‘When the cat’s away, the mice lead a kolo.’

Folkloric texts allow even beginning students to work with metaphor.

Vas dan ide, a iz kuće ne izlazi.

‘It walks all day but never goes out of the house.’

The linguistic specifics of many folklore genres make them particularly well-suited for language pedagogy:

- brevity
- memorability
- archaic/rare grammatical patterns

Advanced students should be able to recognize folkloric texts when they are “borrowed” into other contemporary genres.

AN ONLINE FOLK LANGUAGE DATABASE

Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian Folk Language

- hosted by the Berkeley Language Center at bcsfolklang.berkeley.edu
- created using Drupal, an open-source content management framework
- originally intended for instructors but for student use as well
- scheduled for release January 2014
- includes BCS incantations, jokes, lyric songs, proverbs, riddles
- browsable and searchable with a system of tags

Site Capabilities

- Search – for specific words anywhere in the database
- Browse Genres – incantations, jokes, lyric songs, proverbs, riddles
- Browse by Tag – for tags relating to culture, grammar, lexicon, stylistic features, and type
- Advanced Search – for locating texts classified by multiple tags
- Comments – for more information about a text, student assignments, etc.
- Roles – allow students, instructors, and administrators to view and edit different parts of the site