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## **“Let’s Work on our Serbian!”: Standard Language Ideology, Metaphors and Discourses about Serbian National Identity in the Newspaper *Politika* in 2015<sup>1</sup>**

This chapter explores the use of metaphors in the column “Let’s Safeguard Serbian” in the Serbian newspaper *Politika* in 2015. In this column, adherents of the standard language ideology offered advice about spelling, loanwords, and syntax as well as regarding the name of the language and preferred alphabet. Drawing on critical discourse analysis and metaphor analysis, I examine the link between prescriptivism and contemporary discourses on Serbian national identity. I argue that most metaphors appearing in texts that fall into “the complaint tradition” (Milroy and Milroy) do not reveal a clear-cut link between prescriptivism and nationalism. However, the complaint tradition also reactivates a rich repository of conventional(ized) metaphors and metonymies that reach back to Romanticism and have much more far-reaching implications ideologically.

Keywords: metaphors, Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Critical Metaphor Analysis, discourse metaphors, standard language ideology, Serbian standard language, Serbian national identity, Romanticism, discursive history of metaphors

### **1. Introduction**

In April 2015, the Department for Serbian Language of the Faculty of Philology of the University of Belgrade, with the support of the National Library of Serbia, the National Broadcasting Service (RTS), and the newspaper *Politika*, started a campaign under the title *Negujmo srpski jezik* ‘Let’s Work on our Serbian.’ The campaign consisted of short video clips and posters displayed in public transport in which actors, TV announcers, and other

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local celebrities point out and correct frequent so-called linguistic errors.<sup>2</sup> While the organizers declared the campaign to be a huge success (Brborić 2015), some voices in the non-mainstream media, such as the daily newspaper *Danas* and the online forum *Peščanik*, criticized it as patronizing. In the wake of this critique, *Politika* opened its pages to a special daily column somewhat dramatically titled *Sačuvajmo srpski jezik* ‘Let’s Safeguard Serbian.’ In this column, which ran for roughly three months (September to December 2015, with some occasional additions in 2016), proponents of the standard language ideology from Serbian universities and research institutes expressed their opinions about specific aspects of Serbian language use, ranging from advice about loanwords and the use of certain grammatical constructions to the question of the alphabet and the preferred name of the language. Because the campaign was limited in time and space (and organized top-down), it offers a well-delineated sample of representative texts that show how adherents of the standard language ideology in Serbia conceive of the link between national identity and language. Standard language ideology has been well-researched up until now; but how do discussions about language contribute to the ideology of nationalism? And how are claims about the importance of the standard language for national identity made and presented to non-specialist speakers of a language?

Contemporary theories of metaphor have pointed out that metaphor is one of the hidden mechanisms of (any) ideology (Goatly 2011) and is used to persuade the reader/hearer (e.g. Charteris-Black 2004; Hidalgo-Dowing and Kraljevic-Mujic 2017; Musolff 2017). As language is by its very nature abstract, it comes as no surprise that metaphors will be frequently used to think and talk about it. Moreover, ever since the pre-Romantic era (or even before that, see Bonfiglio 2010: 83–94), philosophers of language and linguists have used metaphors to describe language. Drawing on Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), I will explore how and to what effect the *Politika* columnists use metaphors—about language, language politics, language use, and language users.

In contrast to traditional studies of rhetoric, in which metaphor is nothing more than a decorative figure of speech, metaphors are perceived in cognitive linguistics as operating on the level of human conceptualization. The basic claim of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) is that people think in metaphors and that abstract thought is possible only through metaphors (see, for example, Lakoff and Johnson 1980a; Kövecses 2002). Metaphor is, in

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<sup>2</sup> What started as a campaign in Belgrade has in the meantime been exported to the Republika Srpska (in 2016) and is, with the support of the Minister of Education, planned to be carried out on the whole territory of Serbia. See <http://www.politika.rs/scc/clanak/374951/Pocinje-akcija-Negujmo-sccpski-jezik>. Accessed 6 October 2017.

other words, present everywhere. According to CMT, metaphors work by mapping well-understood source domains (which are assumed to originate in our bodily infant experiences) onto more abstract target domains. A classic example of a conceptual metaphor would be UNDERSTANDING IS GRASPING,<sup>3</sup> in which an idea is conceptualized as an object that can be seized and held, as in *Do you grasp it?/Do you get what I mean?*

However, the claim of conceptual embodiment is one of the main reasons why CMT is difficult to combine with discourse analysis: if metaphor use is unconscious, it leaves no room for speaker intention (Charteris-Black 2004: 11; Hart 2008: 94). Therefore, Jonathan Charteris-Black has argued for the need to combine a cognitive with a pragmatic approach (2004). Whereas CMT does a good job of explaining “how metaphors are *interpreted* by individuals,” it does not explain “why particular metaphors are chosen in specific discourse contexts” (Charteris-Black 2004: 243; original emphasis). For that reason, Charteris-Black argued that the complexity of metaphor and the different roles it plays in language require an approach that incorporates the linguistic, cognitive, and pragmatic dimensions of metaphor (Charteris-Black 2004: 7–24, 243–253).<sup>4</sup>

Other scholars have also increasingly devoted attention to the ways in which metaphors “extend beyond individual cognition, into the realm of society and culture” and build upon and interact with existing cultural knowledge and discourses circulating in society over a certain period of time (Zinken, Hellsten, and Nerlich 2007: 365; Šarić 2015: 53). In addition, Andreas Musolff and Jörg Zinken have pointed out that this broader discursive context can extend over a long period of time, arguing for the need for a “‘historically situated’ understanding that includes awareness of discourse traditions ‘revived’ in topical uses” (Musolff and Zinken 2009b: 6); Musolff’s diachronic analysis of the evolution of the metaphor of the “body politic” is a case in point (Musolff 2009, 2010).

Analyzing metaphors used in the texts under consideration as well as the discourse in which they are embedded can give us an insight into the link between normative linguistics and nationalist views on identity in Serbia today. On a general level, such an analysis can shed light on the interaction of metaphors with culture and society, and show *how* the language ideological debate is actually conducted in Serbia (for the notion and importance of language ideological debates, see Blommaert 1999). More specifically, I hope to demonstrate how discourses about “the need to preserve and safeguard the Serbian language” actually

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<sup>3</sup> In line with the conventions of CMT, conceptual metaphors are indicated by small capitals.

<sup>4</sup> Hart (2008) argues along similar lines but pushes the argument even further by claiming that CMT and CDA are incompatible, proposing instead to combine Blending Theory (BT) with CDA.

tend to promote or even insist on a “nationally correct” attitude towards language both from state actors and language users. Moreover, some of the metaphors and metonymies under consideration have far-reaching implications for the way in which the language rights of (South Slavic) national minorities in Serbia are discussed as well as for the representation of speakers of Bosnian, Montenegrin, or Croatian in adjacent states. Taking my cue from scholars who combine CMA with CDA (Charteris-Black 2004; Hart 2008; Musolff 2009, 2010, 2012; Musolff and Zinken 2009a; Šarić 2015), the theoretical point I want to make is that whereas CMT can tell us something about the general entailments of a specific metaphor, the ideological or political implications of the metaphors can only be fully grasped when taking into account the broader discursive context in which the metaphors are used as well as the historical tradition of which they are part.

In what follows, I will first briefly discuss the campaign “Let’s Work on our Serbian” (Section 2) and situate it briefly against the backdrop of standard language ideology and linguistic purism in Serbia. In Sections 3, 4, and 5, I explore some interesting examples of metaphorical language use in the *Politika* columns and point out the implications of these metaphors. Section 3 explores metaphors in the *Politika* columns about standard language and language norms and demonstrates how they relate to what Milroy and Milroy dubbed “the complaint tradition” ([1985] 2012) and to standard language ideology. Section 4 examines metaphors that present language as an organism, or as an organic expression of the people’s character, ideas that can be traced back to the discursive tradition of Romanticism. Section 5 looks into the ideological consequences of conventional metaphors and metonymies in columns that suggest a strong link between territory and language.

I argue that many examples are telling of the way in which prescriptivists and language nationalists in Serbia think about the Serbian standard language (including its relationship with neighbouring or minority speakers of Bosnian, Croatian, and Montenegrin as well as its relationship to the language previously called Serbo-Croatian). My analysis also shows how prescriptivists conceive of their own role in society and, not unimportantly, of their relationship with the addressees of their message—the users of the Serbian language (and, to a lesser extent, speakers of Bosnian, Croatian, or Montenegrin). I suggest that the trajectory from the “complaint tradition” to overtly nationalist discourses about identity and language is not a linear one but one that is made possible by Serbian linguists drawing on a much older Romantic metaphor complex. For that reason, I conclude by suggesting the need to investigate the discursive history of metaphors about (Serbian and related South-Slav) standard language(s).

## 2. “Let’s work on our Serbian”: the campaign and its reception and relationship to the ideology of the standard language in Serbia

The campaign’s title—*Negujmo srpski jezik*—translates literally as ‘Let’s Cultivate the Serbian Language,’ but given the informal setting, it could also be translated as ‘Let’s Work on our Serbian’ or ‘Brush up your Serbian’ and suggests a view of language as something that should be cultivated, looked after, nurtured, or polished. The title of *Politika*’s column series *Sačuvajmo srpski jezik* is set in two colours, dividing the perfectivizing prefix *sa-* from the imperfective *čuvajmo*. The visual highlighting of the perfective and imperfective aspect implies a double meaning: the imperfective imperative *čuvajmo*, set in red, suggests that the Serbian language should be taken good care of, guarded, looked after, whereas the perfective *sačuvajmo* implies a greater intensity: the Serbian language should also be protected from harm, kept from decay, saved.

The posters and video clips of the campaign “Let’s Work on our Serbian” staged well-known celebrities (ranging from international stars such as Emir Kusturica and Monica Bellucci to famous local actors, news anchors, folk singers, and TV presenters) who all stress the need to speak and write “correctly.”<sup>5</sup> Most examples concern spelling, such as *\*Europa/Evropa* ‘Europe’; *\*euro/evro* ‘euro’<sup>6</sup> and, to a lesser extent, grammar/syntax: *\*s kolima/kolima* ‘by car’<sup>7</sup> *\*trebam/treba da* ‘I have to’<sup>8</sup> and phonology/regionalisms:

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<sup>5</sup> Most of the posters can be retrieved by search in Google Images (“Negujmo srpski jezik” [https://www.google.com/search?q=%22negujmo+srpski+jezik%22&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj7st3VrY\\_TAhVBnRoKHapQBtsQ\\_AUICCGB&biw=1321&bih=743](https://www.google.com/search?q=%22negujmo+srpski+jezik%22&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj7st3VrY_TAhVBnRoKHapQBtsQ_AUICCGB&biw=1321&bih=743); accessed 6. October 2017); the videos are available on *YouTube* through a channel operated by the City Library of Belgrade <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCx21nKdrlPAXUrj8-NT3Hfg>; accessed 6. October 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Borrowings from Greek such as *Europe* and words derived from it are in standard Serbian usually rendered and pronounced as *ev-*: *Evropa*, *evro* and in standard Croatian as *eu-*: *Europa*, *euro*. The explanation is that Greek loanwords entered Serbian directly from Greek, but Croatian through Latin.

<sup>7</sup> According to Serbian and Croatian prescriptive grammars, if used with the meaning “by means of,” the instrumental case does not take the preposition *s(a)*, for example *kolima* ‘by car’; if referring to “with someone,” i.e. “in the company of,” then the preposition *s(a)* is used, e.g. *sa Slavkom* ‘with Slavko.’ However, in colloquial language, speakers use *s biciklom* ‘by bike,’ *s avionom* ‘by plane,’ etc.

<sup>8</sup> According to Serbian prescriptivists, the verb *trebati* ‘have to, ought, should, need’ should only be used as an impersonal verb (*treba* + infinitive or *treba* + *da* + present tense) and should not be used as a personal verb (*trebam*, *trebaš* with a grammatical subject in the nominative case) except in cases where it has the meaning ‘need/be needed, e.g. *Trebaju mi te knjige* ‘I need those books’ or *Trebaš mi ti* ‘I need you.’ Tanasić (2015a) gives a concise explanation of this rule in his column, “Treba li nam glagol trebati?” ‘Do we need the verb *trebati*?’ Even though he touches briefly upon the grammatical incongruences that follow from using the verb *trebati* as an impersonal verb, he nevertheless concludes that “as long as the norm does not change, we have to find ways of making correct sentences with this verb,” because “the worst solution is not respecting the norm.”

\**sumljam/sumnjam* ‘I doubt’,<sup>9</sup> \**višlji/viši* ‘higher’.<sup>10</sup> What these “errors” have in common is that both forms are (more or less widely) used but only one form is accepted by normative linguists. Non-accepted forms are considered ungrammatical (\**s kolima*; \**trebam*) or dialectal (\**sumljam*, \**višlji*). Not unimportantly, some of these forms, such as *Europa* or *trebam* are also perceived as belonging to the Croatian standard and for that reason seem to be unacceptable, even though this is not explicitly stated. However, on a more general level, the goal of the campaign seems to have been to “remind” users of Serbian of these “errors” and convince them to give up the “wrong” forms once and for all.

Interestingly, most of the “errors” that are singled out fall into a level of language competence that any native speaker of Serbian should be able to acquire in primary school without too much effort. This indeed seems to suggest, as most critics have pointed out, that the linguists involved in the campaign have an extremely patronizing attitude towards language users, to the point that they imply that language users are stupid (Arsenijević 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2015d; Simonović 2015a, 2015b; Ćosić 2015). To a certain extent, the campaign presents “correct language use” not so much as proof of good education but (particularly if we take into account *who* is sending the message: popular actors, film directors, news anchors) as a sign of being successful and belonging to the elite. Moreover, because the campaign lacks any references to the role of education in acquiring the standard language, it also seems to underwrite a logic of meritocracy—you can become as successful as these actors or news anchors, regardless of your background, as long as you use standard language. The condescending tone of the campaign vis-à-vis language users that went hand in glove with this type of meritocratic logic led Marko Simonović (2015a) to conclude that rather than telling people that they do not know how to use their mother tongue correctly, the organizers of the campaign would do better to lobby for a more up-to-date and inclusive education system.

Whereas most of the posters do not make clear in which context the “errors” in question should be avoided, many of the *YouTube* videos, such as those focusing on language use in text messages or at the market, suggest that even in their private lives and in informal communicative settings, speakers of Serbian are supposed to use “correct language,” that is,

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<sup>9</sup> The form *sumnjam* is the present tense (1<sup>st</sup> person singular) of the verb *sumnjati* ‘to doubt’ and is etymologically derived from the verb *mniti* ‘to think’; the form *sumljati*, *sumljam* is considered incorrect in both standard Croatian and Serbian.

<sup>10</sup> *Viši* is the comparative of *visok* ‘high,’ the colloquially attested *višlji* is considered incorrect.

standard Serbian.<sup>11</sup> It is, therefore, not without reason that Boban Arsenijević called the campaign “a proof of the authoritarianism and small-town normativity of our mentality and of the theoretical and methodological backwardness of the Serbian linguistic scene” (Arsenijević 2015d).<sup>12</sup> In other words, speaking from a linguistic point of view, the campaign denies the heterogeneity of language and presents language instead as a homogenous entity.<sup>13</sup>

The campaign’s obsession with “errors” and “correct Serbian” could be seen as yet another symptom of what Ranko Bugarski, using a metaphor from development psychology, called the “mild identity crisis that Serbian [has been] undergoing” (Bugarski 2004: 32) since the 1990s.<sup>14</sup> With the dissolution of Yugoslavia, Serbo-Croatian ceased to function as the official language and was gradually replaced by separate standard languages in the successor states of Yugoslavia: Croatian, Bosnian, Serbian, and Montenegrin.<sup>15</sup> As it is not possible to discuss this process at length within the scope of this chapter, suffice it to say that all four standard languages kept the same Neo-Štokavian dialectic basis that was also the basis for Serbo-Croatian. As a result of this—however intensive the efforts by normativist linguists and certain groups of language users to create separate standards might be—the standard languages are mutually intelligible and the differences relate to a limited number of items on the level of lexical choices, certain syntactic structures, and the spelling of foreign names.<sup>16</sup>

Given the campaign’s strong purist impulse, a note on the standard language ideology in Serbia and the various ways in which it manifests purism and other forms of prescriptivism (as well as some of the paradoxes they entail) is in order here. According to Marija Ilić (2012: 308–310) three forms of purism can be distinguished in contemporary Serbian: 1) national/ethnic, 2) dialectological, and 3) purism in terms of standard language ideology. As for the first, “national purism,” Ilić points out that the Serbian standard was traditionally

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<sup>11</sup> See footnote 4.

<sup>12</sup> All translations are mine, unless indicated differently.

<sup>13</sup> Lyons (1981: 24–27) defines this as “the fiction of homogeneity,” i.e. “the belief or assumption that all members of the same language-community speak exactly the same language.”

<sup>14</sup> Here we should perhaps add that the campaign is not the first and only expression of standard language ideology; see, for example, the so-called “language advice books” (e.g. *Srpski jezički priručnik* by Pavle Ivić, Ivan Klajn, Branislav Brborić and Mitar Pešikan) and columns about “language doubts” (*jezičke nedoumice*) by Ivan Klajn in several Serbian newspapers, or the radio programme *Srpski na srpskom* ‘Serbian in Serbian.’ See <http://www.rts.rs/page/radio/sr/series/23/radio-beograd-1/3666/srpski-na-srpskom.html>. Accessed 6 October 2017.

<sup>15</sup> On the disintegration of Serbo-Croatian, see Bugarski (2004, 2012); for an overview of the history of the standardization of Serbo-Croatian as a common language and of the four standard languages that were constructed after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, see also Greenberg (2008).

<sup>16</sup> An interesting initiative that counters the frenzy of language segregation is the *Deklaracija o zajedničkom jeziku* ‘Declaration about a Common Language’; see <http://jezicinacionalizmi.com/deklaracija/>, accessed 6 October 2017.

more open to foreign borrowings than the Croatian one (on different attitudes to loanwords in Serbian versus Croatian, see also Greenberg 2008: 47–54). As mentioned above, the Serbian norm still accepts both the Latin and Cyrillic script and ekavian and ijekavian pronunciation, which Ilić sees as an indication of an inclusive norm.<sup>17</sup> However, with the growth of nationalism during and after the wars of the 1990s, this “inclusive” norm has come under pressure, both by normativist linguists and by language users. In 1997, the *Odbor za standardizaciju srpskog jezika* ‘Committee for the Standardization of the Serbian Language’ was established, which kept both the ijekavian/ekavian pronunciation and the Cyrillic/Latin script. It needs to be pointed out that the acceptance of ijekavian in itself is not a guarantee of a “tolerant” or “less purist norm” (as Ilić maintains, 2012: 310), let alone of other forms of “linguistic tolerance”; that is, an inclusive ekavian/ijekavian norm does not automatically mean a tolerant language policy. This inclusive norm manifests itself often as an unambiguous gesture of *appropriation* of all Neo-Štokavian dialects (the previously called variants of Serbo-Croatian) as “Serbian” (for an example of this in academic writing, see Radić and Miloradović 2009)—a sign that the true pluricentric logic of Serbo-Croatian has been totally abandoned by Serbian normativists.

Other examples of an increasingly rigid normative attitude include the insistence on the use of the Cyrillic script, illustrated by the blossoming of “organizations for the defense of the Cyrillic script,” and by the stipulation in the 2006 constitution that “in the Republic of Serbia, the Serbian language and the Cyrillic script are in official use.”<sup>18</sup> Interestingly, the webpages of the Constitutional Court and the Government of Serbia can both be consulted in the Cyrillic as well as in the Latin alphabet. A more extreme example is the (failed) attempt during the 1990s by government officials of the Republika Srpska (a part of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), backed by certain linguists from Serbia, to impose the ekavian pronunciation in a region where traditionally ijekavian is spoken (Greenberg 2008: 77–83). As Bugarski explains, the rationale behind the whole operation was, of course, “to divorce the local Serbs from their traditional Croat and Muslim neighbours and draw them closer to their ethnic mainstream in Serbia, thus contributing to the goal of creating Greater Serbia on the ruins of Yugoslavia” (Bugarski 2012: 228).

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<sup>17</sup> Ijekavian/ekavian refer to the way in which the vowel *jat* from Medieval Slavic is pronounced in contemporary Štokavian: in ekavian, the *jat* is reflected as *e*, in ijekavian as *(i)je*, for example *reka/rijeka* ‘river’ or *pesma/pjesma* ‘song’. Ekavian is mostly spoken on the territory of contemporary Serbia, whereas ijekavian is spoken in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro.

<sup>18</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, Section I, Article X. See: <http://www.ustavni.sud.rs/page/view/sr-Latn-CS/70-100028/ustav-republike-srbije>, accessed 6 October 2017.



In Serbia proper, sociolinguistic studies documented a significant degree of intolerance towards the ijekavian and (parts of) the vocabulary of refugees from Croatia and Bosnia that were perceived as “Croatian” by speakers of the local ekavian standard variety (Petrović 2006). In the campaign, the above-mentioned marking of the words *Europa* and *euro* (instead of *Evropa* and *evro*) and *trebam* (instead of the impersonal *treba da*) as “incorrect” are examples of this “national purism,” as the forms *Europa* and *euro* are associated with the Croatian standard.

The “dialectological purism” that Ilić distinguishes goes back to the nineteenth-century efforts of language reformer Vuk Karadžić and consists of privileging supposedly “authentic,” rural speech over the speech of urban centres that has been allegedly “spoiled” by contact with foreign languages. Serbian dialectologists took over Karadžić’s bias and developed an almost fetishist inclination towards (re-constructing) “authentic” rural dialects and migration flows and a dislike for influences of contact languages (or non-standard dialects) on the standard language. However, Karadžić’s favouring of specific rural dialects, in particular the Eastern Herzegovinian dialect, in turn informs the next form of purism, which Ilić calls the “purism characteristic of standard language ideology” (Ilić 2012: 309–310) and which characterizes both campaigns. To put it succinctly, the standard language ideology boils down to the promoting of uniformity in language structure, which results in a set of beliefs about “correctness” and a firm belief in a single, best variety and a rejection of all other non-standard varieties (cf. Milroy 2001). As James Milroy points out, “varieties of language do not actually have prestige in themselves,” but prestige is attributed to the language varieties by metonymy (Milroy 2001: 532). In the case of contemporary Serbian, the identification of the Eastern-Herzegovinian dialect—which is the basis of the Vukovian norm but in terms of prosody (accentuation patterns) quite remote from the actual speech of the majority of speakers in Serbia, e.g. in Belgrade, and even more so in Central and Southern Serbia—as the idealized variety is actually a case in point. Whereas we find all types of purism in the *Politika* columns (with fewest examples of the second), which are very often closely interrelated, most of them fall into the “purism of the standard language ideology.” In the next section, I will examine how support for the standard language ideology in the *Politika* columns is to a large extent framed in terms of “the complaint tradition” (Milroy and Milroy [1985] 2012), and voiced through a set of more or less predictable conceptual metaphors.

### 3. What's in a metaphor?: the “complaint tradition” remixed

Very much in line with the obsession of the campaign “Let’s Take Care of the Serbian Language,” the bulk of the *Politika* articles falls into what James Milroy and Lesley Milroy have called “the complaint tradition” in their seminal work *Authority in Language* (Milroy and Milroy [1985] 2012). Even though both linguists arrived at their conclusions based on an analysis of the way in which writers, public intellectuals, and linguists over the course of several centuries had thought about the use of English, their insights are certainly not limited to English but apply to prescriptivist discourse and standard language ideology in general. According to Milroy and Milroy, “the complaint tradition” assumes that:

1. That there is only one correct way of speaking/writing the English language.
2. That deviations from this norm are illiteracies, or barbarisms, and that non-standard forms are irregular and perversely deviant.
3. That people *ought* to use the standard language and that it is quite right to discriminate against non-standard users, as such usage is a sign of stupidity, ignorance, perversity, moral degeneracy, etc. (Milroy and Milroy [1985] 2012: 33; italics in the original).

Most of the authors used the column in *Politika* to stipulate what is correct or incorrect language usage and what is grammatical or ungrammatical language, making a clear value judgement of what they describe as the “incorrect” forms. Because most columns voice “complaints” about the deterioration of Serbian speakers’ knowledge of their native language, it comes as no surprise that most metaphors tend to convey rather pessimistic views about the current state and status of the Serbian standard language.

Some of the recurrent metaphors about what is or should be standard language draw on basic conceptual metaphors, such as GOOD IS UP, BAD IS DOWN. Primary conceptual metaphors like these are not in themselves connected to views that support standard language ideology. That is, certain metaphors become part of the complaint tradition because of the way they are used in discourse. In a text about the popularity of the local idiom in Southern Serbia, Sofija Miloradović (Serbian Academy of Sciences and University of Niš) deplores the tendency of students from central and southern Serbia to “fall down” to the local dialect once they return to their home region: “‘Padanje’ na lokalnu normu urbanog dijalekta neophodan je preduslov (ponovnog) uklapanja u sredinu u kojoj se živi i radi” ‘Descending to the local norm of the

urban dialect is a precondition for their (renewed) integration in the environment in which they live and work' (Miloradović 2015). The dialects spoken in Southern and South-Eastern Serbia (Kosovsko-Resavski, Timočko-Prizrenski and Old Štokavian or Torlak) are not considered as a basis of the Serbian standard language by normative linguists but are, particularly in terms of accent and prosody and partly in terms of morphology (Old Štokavian or Torlak), perceived as “deviant” from the ideal(ized) Vukovian Eastern-Hercegovinian norm. The metaphor of “falling down” in Miloradović’s account of students’ attitude towards their local southern or central Serbian dialect clearly suggests the view that STANDARD LANGUAGE IS UP, DIALECT IS DOWN. According to Lakoff and Johnson, high status is perceived as up and low status down; the social and physical basis for this is that “status is correlated with power (social) and power is UP (physical)” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980b: 463). As Tanja Petrović (2015) has shown, the views about “southern dialects” held by the proponents of standard language ideology are connected with and feed into a wide range of orientaling stereotypes that present speakers of those dialects as less civilized and culturally backward. Therefore, it is not entirely surprising that Miloradović not only connects the popularity of the southern urban idiom to those speakers’ need to again “fit in” with the cultural and communicative patterns of their region but also to “the loss of norms in many areas of life” (Miloradović 2015).

One of the consequences of this perceived loss of norms, according to Miloradović, is “the suppression of the awareness of the need for a certain cultural hierarchy and of the place and status of the standard language” (Miloradović 2015). If language norms and moral norms are conflated, that is, if language conventions are equated with ethical rules, then it is a small step to the idea that CULTIVATING LANGUAGE IS A WAR because these conventions are perceived as having an intrinsic moral value that should be “defended.” As Rajna Dragičević of the Department of Serbian Language at Belgrade University warns in an interview for *Politika*, “komunikacija na internetu [je] izazvala talas otpora nepismenih prema pismenima i tihi rat među njima” ‘internet communication provoked a wave of opposition of the illiterate against the literate and a silent war amongst them’ (Dragičević 2015a). Moreover, “sve je više boraca za nepismenost” ‘there are more and more warriors of illiteracy’ (Dragičević 2015a). From the context, it is clear that Dragičević implies that in this *war*, normativist linguists are the heroes, and *the warriors for illiteracy*, the villains.

Interestingly, the BATTLE or WAR metaphors can also be deployed for a different (ideological) goal, for example to describe the dispute among linguists about the question of whether the use of specific nouns indicating female professionals (such as *profesorka*,

*doktorica*, etc. for a female professor/teacher, doctor, etc.) is desirable or not. In this context, Jovanka Radić (Institute of Serbian Language), who vehemently opposes the use of feminine derivatives for occupations, writes that “Na meti lingvista-feminista našli su se nazivi lica po zvanju, zanimanju, ulozi ili delatnosti” ‘Feminist linguists have targeted terms for people’s callings, occupations, roles, or activities’ (Radić 2015). This SHOOTING metaphor implies that “feminist linguists” are executing an attack or assault on language itself.<sup>19</sup>

In the *war* between the literate and the illiterate, language emerges as AN ENVIRONMENT that can be polluted or flooded and that needs to be kept clean: “u opštem rastakanju svih socijalnih i kulturnih vrednosti napadno se zagađuju i naš pisani i govorni jezik” ‘in the general erosion of all social and cultural norms, our spoken and written language is being aggressively polluted,’ or language can be subject to *poplav[a] nepotrebnih tuđica* ‘a flood of unnecessary foreign words’ (Radovanović 2015). The metaphor LOANWORDS ARE A FLOOD suggests that the Serbian language is confronted with a large quantity of loanwords, and it also carries connotations of threat, suggesting that Serbian is in danger (for similar reactions to loanwords in Croatian, see Čičin-Šain, this volume). In this context, the role and importance of normative linguists does not seem to be limited to fighting “the warriors for illiteracy”; “cleaning” the language of polluting foreign influence, or erecting a dyke against loanwords that threaten to flood it are also necessary. One of the linguists’ main tasks seems to be to take care that “the rules” are respected, or at least to sound an alarm when language users do not respect them.

Authors who support such an understanding of the standard language tend to project language onto the domain of law in order to convey ideas about what language users are expected to do. This attitude results in metaphors such as LANGUAGE NORMS ARE LAWS (entailment: laws are binding for all citizens; therefore, language laws should be obeyed by all). But what are the implications of such metaphors for the role of the linguist and what kind of people are those who do not stick to the rules? As Veljko Brborić, the head of the Department of Serbian Language at Belgrade University, exclaimed at a press conference a few months before the column series in *Politika* started, when the campaign *Negujmo srpski jezik* was already at its height: *Potrebna nam je jezička policija* ‘We need a language police’ (Radisavljević 2015b). Interestingly, *Politika*’s illustrator Dragan Stojanović seems to have

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<sup>19</sup> Whereas the English translation ‘target’ is not a vivid military FIRE metaphor, the lexeme *meta* is. Serbian and Croatian dictionaries list as its first meaning ‘an artificial or natural object, a place marked for shooting.’ See, for example, [http://hjp.znanje.hr/index.php?show=search\\_by\\_id&id=e1pnWhE%3D](http://hjp.znanje.hr/index.php?show=search_by_id&id=e1pnWhE%3D).

understood (or thought through) the implications of such a statement better than Brborić himself: he drew a pair of handcuffs, with one cuff open, eagerly awaiting its first language criminal. If “the vividness of good metaphors,” as Ricoeur reminds us in his reading of Aristotle, “consists in their ability to ‘set before the eyes’ the sense that they display” (Ricoeur 1978: 144), then the illustrator indeed visualized some of the mappings of Brborić’s metaphor and the implications they entail. For if someone is to play language police, this unavoidably entails that there should be language offenders—people who should be taken to court and punished.

In an interview for the news portal N1, Brborić drew on the LANGUAGE RULES ARE TRAFFIC RULES metaphor when he claimed: “Ako poštujemo normu u saobraćaju, zašto je ne bismo poštovali u jeziku” ‘If we respect the traffic rules, why wouldn’t we also respect language rules’ (Đurić 2015). Sreto Tanasić, Director of the Institute for Serbian Language of the Serbian Academy of Sciences seems to rely on the same metaphor when he concludes: “Poštovanje norme književnog jezika je obaveza svih koji se služe srpskim jezikom, kao što je obavezno poštovanje pravila koja važe za druge vidove života” ‘Respecting the norm of the literary language is the duty of anyone who uses the Serbian language, just as it is our obligation to respect those rules that apply to other aspects of life’ (Tanasić 2015b). Claims like this bring to mind point three of Milroy and Milroy’s definition of the complaint tradition: the assumption that “people *ought* to use the standard language and that it is quite right to discriminate against non-standard users” (Milroy and Milroy [1985] 2012: 33). However, such a view inevitably raises questions about the “poetic freedom” of writers and whether *language rules* also apply to the use of language in private life.

The request to “respect” language norms as a kind of higher law leads to some even more absurd claims, such as in Aleksandar Milanović’s polemic letter to the American linguist Robert Greenberg. Greenberg’s book *Language and Identity in the Balkans* (Greenberg [2004] 2008) caused quite a stir among nationalist linguists both in Croatia and Serbia, in the former because it describes Serbo-Croatian as a unified standard language that existed and was experienced as such by many linguists and speakers before the disintegration of Yugoslavia, and in the latter because it “recognizes” Bosnian (*bosanski*) as a new standard language.<sup>20</sup> Milanović’s polemic text revolves around the idea that it is (grammatically) incorrect to use the word *bosanski* for the current name of the standard language used in

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<sup>20</sup> For the reception of Greenberg’s work *Language and Identity in the Balkans* in Croatia, see the essays in Peti-Stantić (2008).

Bosnia and Herzegovina, but which Serbian (and Croatian) prescriptivists perceive as the “Bosniak” standard, that is, the standard language used and spoken by Bosniaks, in contrast to the Serbian and Croatian standard. According to this logic, *bosanski* is the adjective derived from the noun *Bosna* (Bosnia, the country) but not from *Bošnjak* (Bosniak, the nationality previously known as Bosnian Muslim), of which the derived adjective would be *bošnjački*.<sup>21</sup> At first sight, Milanović’s position seems to be that in Bosnia, there are three different (ethnonational) standards, one of which should be called Bosniak rather than Bosnian. In his letter, Milanović asks rhetorically:

(1) Zašto [Greenberg] ne ističe da se *prema tvorbenim pravilima srpskog jezika* ovaj politički jezik može nazvati samo bošnjačkim, tj. jezik Bošnjaka, nego nam, na račun “smirivanja situacije”, diskretno savetuje *da svesno kršimo normu?* (Milanović 2015; emphasis added)

Why doesn’t [Greenberg] point out that *according to the Serbian rules of word formation*, this political language can be called only Bosniak, that is, the language of the Bosniaks, but, under the pretext of “appeasing the situation”, discretely advises us [the Serbs] *to consciously violate* the rules of the Serbian language?

On the surface, Milanović’s complaint seems to revolve around the “inviolability” of the norm—as if the norm were God-given and not subject to consensus. However, Milanović’s claim concerns morphology only superficially (incidentally, the morphological rule he mentions would result in exactly the same word, *bošnjački*, in all four standards originating from Serbo-Croatian, including Bosnian). His main point comes at the end of the article:

(2) U Bosni i Hercegovini se odvajkada govorilo srpskim jezikom, za šta dokaze imamo od Povelje Kulina bana iz 1189. godine. Na ovome prostoru Srbi i danas ... upotrebljavaju srpski narodni jezik ... normiran u 19. veku. Bošnjaci krajem 20. i početkom 21. veka pokušavaju da normiraju bošnjački standardni jezik, kroz teške i

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<sup>21</sup> Because *bosanski* ‘Bosnian’ does not specify religion or ethnicity, using this term for the standard language used by the Bosniaks is perceived by language nationalists and by certain speakers of Serbian and Croatian in Bosnia as a hegemonic gesture that would “denationalize” Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats as “Bosnians.” This argument is in its most aggressive form made by Kovačević (2015, 2016), who in turn argues that all those languages came into existence by an act of *preimenovanje* ‘renaming’ Serbian (Kovačević 2015).

neuspešne pokušaje da pronađu ključne, a to su fonološke i gramatičke diferencijalne crte u odnosu na srpski jezički standard. (Milanović 2015)

Since time immemorial, people have spoken Serbian in Bosnia and Hercegovina, for which we have proofs since the Charter of Ban Kulin from the year 1189. Until today the Serbs in this area use ... the Serbian standard language ... which was standardized in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, the Bosniaks attempt to standardize the Bosniak standard language, trying hard but unsuccessfully to find crucial, namely phonological and grammatical characteristics that would distinguish it from the Serbian standard.

Phrasings such as ‘this political language’ (example 1) and ‘attempt to standardize’ (example 2) imply that, by contrast, the only “authentic language” or “non-fake standard language” (to be) used in Bosnia would be Serbian.<sup>22</sup> Implicitly, Milanović’s claim points to the widely-held assumption that language is necessarily linked to a specific nationality, moreover, that language can be *owned* by a specific national group and, following an either/or logic, *cannot* be shared by different nations, religious, or ethnic groups.

Milanović was not the only one to voice such ideas on the pages of the *Politika* newspaper. In an interview with the telling title “A Croat Language Instructor Teaches Serbian,” Brborić laments the state of the study of Serbian outside Serbia, deploring the fact that at certain universities, Serbian is most often not taught as a separate language but “for functional or financial reasons,” taught as Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian or taught not by someone who has an ethnic Serbian background but, for example, by a Croat (Brborić, quoted in Vulićević 2015a). To be sure, the anxiety that Brborić showcases here has nothing to do with the idea that a native speaker is better suited to teach his or her language to foreign students, but with the idea that languages can be “owned” by a national or ethnic group and with the idea that the future of a language is closely related to or even dependent on the politics of the nation-state.<sup>23</sup> To the question of the journalist “How does a language become richer and how does it grow?”, Brborić answers with a whole range of metaphors that

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<sup>22</sup> Milanović is certainly not the only one to dispute the right of the Bosniaks to call their new standard *bosanski jezik*, Bosnian. Rada Stijović (2015) and Miloš Kovačević (2015, 2016) argue along similar lines. In this context, it is difficult not to agree with Bugarski (2015), who, in a polemic against Kovačević, pointed out that absurdities such as translating in Serbian courtrooms from Serbian to Bosnian are not due to Serbia’s signing of the *European Charter of Minority and Regional Languages* but the consequence of the disintegration of Serbo-Croatian as an overarching standard that imploded with the dissolution of Yugoslavia.

<sup>23</sup> For the way in which ideas about “the mother tongue,” “the native speaker,” and ethnolinguistic nationalism are interconnected and historically evolved together, see Bonfiglio (2010).



perceive language as a living being or organism: “Jezik je *živa materija*, bogati se novim rečima, pa i stranim. ... *Jezik raste* i ako se povećava broj govornika ...” ‘A *language is a living thing*, it grows richer through new words, including foreign ones. ... *A language also grows* if the number of speakers increases ....’ (Brborić, quoted in Vulićević 2015a; emphasis added).

He concludes with the view that “Budućnost jezika zavisi i od budućnosti nacije i države” ‘The future of a language also depends on the future of the nation and the state’ (Brborić, quoted in Vulićević 2015a). Brborić’s jump from organicist metaphors to the idea that the future of language depends on the nation-state is not at all accidental but echoes nineteenth-century views on language.<sup>24</sup> The organicist metaphors he uses draw specifically on German pre-Romantic and Romantic thinking about language as the true expression of the character of people or nation, as I will show in the following section. This leads us from conceptual metaphors in the spirit of the “complaint tradition” to discourse metaphors that are deeply anchored in the Romantic metaphor complex.

#### **4. Language as the organic expression of the nation’s character**

The link between metaphors about language as an organism and language as shorthand for the people is made explicitly by Marija Knežević, one of the few poets who wrote a column for *Politika*’s series. Knežević writes: “Jezik jeste najjači mišić u organizmu, ali šta mu to vredi kada telo klone?” ‘The tongue/language is the strongest muscle in the organism, but what good is it if the body succumbs?’ (Knežević 2015).<sup>25</sup> Other authors take this a step further, taking recourse to the metaphor LANGUAGE IS (THE CHARACTER OF) A NATION to point out that language is the embodiment of a collective. According to Gradimir Aničić (2015), *Politika*’s language corrector and the initiator of the column series, “Jezik i narod su jedno. Ili bi trebalo da budu. Izraz težnji i misli naroda. Dok ima jezika, ima i naroda.” ‘A language and a people/nation [*narod*] are one. Or they should be one; the expression of the aspirations and thoughts of a people/nation. As long as there is a language, there will be a nation.’

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<sup>24</sup> On organicist metaphors in nineteenth-century thinking about language, see Morpurgo Davies (1987, 1998).

<sup>25</sup> The pun on language/tongue is possible because the word *jezik* refers to both.



(Aničić 2015). Ideas like these sound like an almost literal paraphrase of Friedrich Schlegel's<sup>26</sup> ideas about the link between language and the identity and fate of a people:

A nation which allows herself to be deprived of her language loses her last hold on her inner, spiritual independence, and actually ceases to exist. (Butler 1970: 7)

Along similar lines, Rajna Dragičević (2015b) writes that “leksika ... je zahvaljujući Vuku, zadržala svoju esenciju koja se ogleda u onome što je Belić zvao narodnim duhom” ‘thanks to Vuk, the vocabulary ... kept its essence, an essence that is reflected in what Belić called the national genius.’ These are clearly examples of the recycling of older metaphors from German (pre-)Romanticism about language as the emanation of the *Volkgeist* or “national genius” (*narodni duh*) that entered South-Slav narratives of identity through the brothers Grimm, Schlegel, and Herder. Over time, they seem to have acquired a familiarity and conventionality that makes them sound almost unsuspecting; that is, many language users of Serbian (Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin) probably will no longer perceive them as a metaphor.

If language can be perceived as a living being or as the expression of the thoughts of a collective, it comes as no surprise that language is presented as having a unique identity. In one of his texts for *Politika*, Miloš Kovačević posits that “in linguistics, there are three criteria to *measure the identity of a language*: the genetic, the structural, and the communicative” (Kovačević 2015). In this text, Kovačević plays with the different meanings of the word *jednakost*—which can mean ‘equality’ as well as ‘equivalence’ or ‘identicalness’—deploring that even though Croatian, Bosnian, and Montenegrin are “derived” from Vukovian Serbian, none of these linguistic communities wants to *acknowledge* this. Along the same lines, there are quite a few other texts that discuss the status of the current Serbian standard against the backdrop of the “death” of Serbo-Croatian, all concluding that the Serbo-Croatian standard was a fraud that *obscured* the truly Serbian character of the language.<sup>27</sup>

Similar ideas to those of Kovačević are developed in more metaphorical terms by the poet Gojko Đogo in the text *Srpski jezik se umnožava deljenjem* ‘The Serbian Language Multiplies Itself by Dividing Itself’ (Radisavljević 2015a). The metaphor in the title is used to

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<sup>26</sup> Friedrich Schlegel, *Geschichte der alten und neuen Literatur*, translated and quoted in Butler (1970).

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, <http://www.politika.rs/scc/clanak/340746/Srpski-jezik-kroz-istoriju>, as well as Petrović (2015a).

refer to emergence of new standard languages after the disintegration of Serbo-Croatian. According to the author, it is “od srpskog [su] jezičkog stabla odlomljena tri ogranka: hrvatski, bosanski i crnogorski, kao tri posebna politička jezika” “from the Serbian linguistic tree that three branches were broken: Croatian, Bosnian, and Montenegrin, as three separate political languages’ (Radisavljević 2015b). On the one hand, this seems like a metaphor from biology, the well-known metaphor LANGUAGE IS A PLANT.<sup>28</sup> This is another metaphor that goes back to the Romantic period, to Jacob Grimm and to Indogermanicists such as August Schleicher (see Koerner 1987) and Franz Bopp (see Morpurgo Davies 1987), but given the tone of the whole text and the discourse of suffering that pervades it, it resonates with and builds upon a Christological discourse of sacrifice developing around the metaphor “I am the bread of life.” Not unimportantly, the passage in Corinthians reads: “For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus *on the night when he was betrayed* took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me’” (1 Corinth. 11:23–24 (English Standard Version); emphasis added). Đogo’s conclusion that “To političko deljenje istog srpskog jezika dovelo je do gubljenja identitetskog prepoznavanja samog srpskog jezika” ‘this political division of one and the same Serbian language led to the loss of the recognizable identity features of the Serbian language’ (Đogo 2015) seems also to point in that direction: it is only by *sacrificing* the Serbian language that the other new standards could come into being. This means that this text both rehearses and revises one of the favourite tropes of Serbian nationalism—that Bosnian Muslims were historically actually Serbs who, by converting to Islam, *betrayed* the religion of their forefathers (see Aleksov 2005). Thus, the circle has been closed: what centuries ago started as religious betrayal, ends as betrayal of linguistic kinship.

A text by Dragoljub Petrović that, strictly speaking, falls outside of the column series but appears in the same time span and perhaps capitalizes on the popularity of the column, pushes the claim of the betrayal of kinship that happened with the emerging of a “new” Bosnian standard language even further (Petrović 2015b). Using the metaphor LANGUAGE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT/A TREASURE (that can be stolen), he talks about *the theft* of the Serbian language by the Bosniaks: “If they [Bosniaks] don’t want to change the particularities of the [Serbian] language but just rename it, then this is called theft in the civilized world” (Petrović 2015b). As Ilić (2014) has shown, the idea of “the theft of the Serbian language [by Croats,

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<sup>28</sup> These metaphors are not only characteristic of the Serbian case but are also recurrent in other standard language ideology debates: for Czech, see Bermel 2007; for Croatian, see Čičin-Šain, this volume. For the importance of plant metaphors for discourses of the national in general, see Rash, this volume.

Bosniaks, Montenegrins]” is a recurrent trope in Serbian nationalist discourse about the neighbouring Bosnian, Croatian, or Montenegrin standard whose use can be traced back in time and that clearly borders on hate speech. Petrović’s argument operates through what Goatly (2011: 263) calls a “false metaphoric logic,” which gives way to a whole range of implications that portray language not only as a valuable object but neighbouring people as thieves.

## 5. Language and territory: the ideological implications of metonymy

Whereas metaphors inherited from the Romantic tradition are used to represent the link between language and its speakers (language is an organism, a plant, a treasure) or to represent the betrayal of linguistic kinship, metonymy is used to deal with spatiality, i.e. to explain to the reader *where* the Serbian language is spoken. Several authors who talk about *celokupn[i] srpsk[i] jezičk[i] prostor* ‘the whole Serbian linguistic space’ (Tanasić, quoted in Vulićević 2015b) actually use (a combination of) metonymy (and metaphor) when they ask *Gde su granice srpskog jezika* ‘Where are the borders of the Serbian language’ (Simić 2015) or when they long for the time when “the Serbian linguistic space was parcelled only by borders between republics, not by national borders” and regret that “as a consequence of the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia a large part of the Serbian linguistic space [*velik[i] de[o] srpskog jezičkog prostora*] stayed outside the borders of Serbia” (Miloradović 2015).

According to Zoltán Kövecses (2002: 145), “metonymy is a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same domain, or idealized cognitive model (ICM).” Keeping in mind Kövecses’s idea that metonymy points to a process of contiguity rather than similarity and that “the elements in a metonymic relationship form a single domain (ICM)” (Kövecses 2002: 146–147), then it appears that formulae such as *na teritoriji srpskog jezika* ‘on the territory of the Serbian language’ (Simić 2015) and *granice srpskog jezika* ‘the borders of the Serbian language’ (Simić 2015) or *srpski jezički prostor* ‘the Serbian linguistic space’ (Tanasić, quoted in Vulićević 2015b; Miloradović 2015) are metonymies for the language of a specific nation or group of speakers who live on a specific territory. At first sight, the only metonymic relationship that occurs seems to be LANGUAGE FOR (NATIONAL) TERRITORY;

however, it builds further upon another metonymy, that of “national territory.”<sup>29</sup> The idea of “national territory” is itself a metonymy (NATION FOR TERRITORY) that goes back to one of the key premises of nationalism, namely that the nation is “a significant group occupying a bounded territory which does or should enjoy political autonomy and with a common identity across the ‘whole’ society” (Breuilly 2008). This view is at the heart of what Ernest Gellner (1983) called the nationalist principle and which requires that in the nation-state, there should ideally be a convergence of the political and the national.

However, in multiethnic regions such as the former Yugoslavia, the convergence of the national and the political was (and is) by definition impossible. The use of such metonymy combinations invites conversational implicatures that, in turn, lead to metaphor (see Radden 2003: 418–419). The conversational implicatures of these metonymic combinations and the problematic metaphors they generate become clear if we take a closer look at the space that Simić, Miloradović, and Tanasić are talking about: the area they have in mind corresponds to the region in which all Štokavian dialects are spoken. Simić (2015) additionally specifies that the ikavian subdialects are characteristic of “Croats and Bosniaks only” and that those Bosniaks and Croats who nevertheless speak ijekavian are the result of processes of “de-Serbization,” specifically by the “mohamedanization” (*muhamediziranje*) and “catholicization” (*katoličenje*) of Serbs (metaphor: IJEKAVIAN-SPEAKING BOSNIAKS ARE MOHAMEDIZED SERBS, ŠTOKAVIAN-SPEAKING CROATS ARE CATHOLICIZED SERBS). The conversational implicature here is, quite clearly, that Štokavian, ijekavian-speaking Bosniaks and Croats are actually Serbs who betrayed or forgot their “true” origins and that they,

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<sup>29</sup> As these examples show, it is difficult to decide which part would be the vehicle and which the target. Contrary to traditional cognitive views of metonymy which presuppose a clearly distinguishable directionality, recent radial models such as that by Barcelona or Handl show that metonymy can to different degrees integrate vehicle and target. Handl distinguishes between “‘typical metonymies,’ [which] involve completely distinct sub-domains, [...] ‘underspecified metonymies,’ [which] involve both the target and the vehicle in their meaning, [and] ‘domain highlighting’ metonymies, [which] have no distinct sub-domains whatsoever, just differences in construal or viewpoint resulting from the juxtaposition of the different” (Littlemore 2015: 56-59; quote p. 58). Following Handl’s insights, it would perhaps be most precise to consider the above-mentioned metonymies as having an “underspecified” meaning. In the metonymy “the Serbian linguistic space,” (srpski jezički prostor), both the language and its speakers are “part of the intended meaning” (Littlemore 2015: 57); i.e. the space “does not simply provide ‘mental access’” to the language: both the territory on which the language is spoken and the speakers of the language are being referred to at the same time. Likewise, in “the borders of the Serbian language” (granice srpskog jezika), the borders refer both to the territory on which Serbian is spoken and to the physical boundaries of this territory. Moreover, Handl “found that underspecified metonymies tend to involve some sort of containment relation. She argues that this is because people rarely need to differentiate between a container and its contents and that they tend to perceive them in a unified way because they operate as a ‘functional unit’ (2012: 4)” (Littlemore 2015: 58). Importantly, Handl has also shown that “many metonymies are in fact often *understood* in an underspecified manner” (Littlemore 2015: 59). In relation to our discussion, this could mean that, since the advent of nationalism (or, again: as a legacy of Romanticism), in speakers’ use and understanding of such metonymies, territory, language and nation are integrated to such extent that it is often difficult to distinguish clearly between target and vehicle.

moreover, live on “Serbian territory.” To sum up, combined or clustered metonymies such as those above are not only telling of the way in which the speaker/writer conceives of the link between language, territory, and national identity. They also have far-reaching implications for the relationship between “Serbs” and Štokavian speakers who live on the so-called “territory of the Serbian language” but might not wish to identify their language as Serbian, let alone to be themselves called a “catholicized” or “mohamedized” Serb. To use a metaphor from mathematics, this relationship is conceived as a zero-sum game, in which whatever is gained by one side is lost by the other.

## 6. Conclusion

By way of conclusion, I would like to point out that there seem to be different degrees, or levels, on which metaphors in texts by advocates of the standard language ideology are connected to nationalism. Many of the *Politika* columns abound in metaphors that fall into what Milroy and Milroy called “the complaint tradition” ([1985] 2012). Those metaphors are mostly used to increase a sense of urgency, and stress the need to act felt by the author. Even though they often reveal a patronizing attitude towards language users, the metaphors in themselves (LANGUAGE CULTIVATION IS WAR; STANDARD LANGUAGE IS UP, DIALECT IS DOWN; LANGUAGE RULES ARE (TRAFFIC) LAWS) are, at least on the surface, not directly connected to nationalism.

In his analysis of the HOUSE metaphor in British and German discourse about the European Union, Musolff (2000: 228) has demonstrated that the metaphors at stake show a certain “argumentative flexibility,” a “semantic openness” that allows them to be used for different, sometimes contradictory political evaluations of the same situation. Given the semantic openness of metaphors, the ideological implications of those metaphors depend entirely on their discursive context. Some metaphors that fall into the complaint tradition, such as LANGUAGE RULES ARE (TRAFFIC) LAWS, suggest a very authoritarian view of language regulation and usage, particularly when used in a discourse that argues for strong state intervention in the field of language (to the point of requesting a “language police”).

Texts that present language as an organism (LANGUAGE IS A LIVING BEING), as expressing the character of the national collective (LANGUAGE FOR NATIONAL GENIUS), or as a metonymy for a territory or a (non-realized) nation-state (LANGUAGE FOR TERRITORY) make the link between nationalism, standard language ideology, and metaphor or metonymy much

clearer. Moreover, this way of thinking about language also affects (the relationships with) neighbouring peoples and minority groups: some of these metaphors (in particular LANGUAGE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT, leading to claims about “the theft of Serbian” by neighbouring nations) signal a discourse bordering on hate speech (see Ilić 2014). Importantly, some metaphors function as chains of interlocking metonymies (LANGUAGE FOR SPEAKERS + SPEAKERS FOR NATIONAL TERRITORY, leading to blends such as “the territory of the Serbian language” or “the borders of the Serbian language”). Such metaphor/metonymy combinations gain and reinforce their ideological strength either by recycling older conventional metaphors or metonymies (e.g. those borrowed or inherited from German Romanticism such as “language is the emanation of the national genius” or “national territory”) or by building on a broader platform. In our case, this platform is a metaphor complex (Musolff 2010: 74) consisting of “innocent” conventional metaphors that underpin the complaint tradition and its cry for the need to cultivate and nurture the national standard language. This constellation, in turn, also underlines the need to further investigate the discursive history of metaphors.

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