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**Critical analysis of textbooks of Serbo-Croatian
for foreigners**

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to contribute to the field of critical research of foreign language textbooks. The researchers in this field have thus far focused mainly on major global languages (with the exception of Catalan). The present study therefore seeks to explore to what extent are the teaching materials of small scope language(s) such as Serbo-Croatian embedded in the dominant ideologies of their historical contexts. Focusing on the topics related to the world of work, culture and gender the goal is to analyse the socio-economic image the teaching materials create. A critical analysis of the contents of three textbooks from different historical periods and regimes (market socialism and neoliberal capitalism) has revealed that the materials promote the values, characteristics and practices of the dominant ideologies and, in the case of contemporary textbooks, position learners as consumers.

Key words: foreign language textbook, language teaching, content analysis, critical analysis, neoliberalism, socialism

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to contribute to the field of critical language textbook analysis. Looking beyond their didactic values the researchers in this field have shown how second and foreign language teaching materials are used by the ruling classes to perpetuate their ideologies. This is still a relatively new research field. Traditionally, until 1970s and the appearance of the communicative approach, language textbooks have been researched mostly as curriculum artefacts and the scope of analyses has usually been an evaluation of the type of grammatical exercises that are included, and similar issues. Additionally, researchers have long been analysing the cultural dimensions of language teaching materials (Risager, 2011). The change of priorities of language teaching by means of the communicative approach meant that the new goal became catering the students' needs in "real life", outside the classroom setting. The approach was gaining more and more attention and it eventually became the main tendency in language instruction. In Europe, for example, it was adopted as one the key elements in the Council of Europe's official documents for foreign language learning and assessment, such as the contemporary CEFR (The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).

This shift in the main focus of language instruction opened the way to critical studies of language teaching materials. As the globalization was advancing applied linguistics, textbook analyses included, started paying more and more attention to the issues of race, gender, ethnicity, multilingualism and multiculturalism. However, the perception of language teaching materials as politically "neutral" has remained generally accepted, and social, political and economy related discussions were left out. This apparent neutrality has however, been contested by the very pioneers of critical pedagogy such as Freire, who claims that education cannot be separated from politics as the teaching and learning are themselves political acts (Kincheloe, 2008).

In recent years we witness a growing body of critical research with the current economic system as the centre of analysis. Researchers such as Andrew Littlejohn, John Gray, David Block, Marnie Holborow and Pau Bori have looked at language textbooks through a critical lens, analysing them as artefacts of the dominant neoliberal ideology. This yet underresearched field focuses on the macro context of textbook creation and recognizes the ideological nature of language (Moita-Lopes, 1996) and language teaching, undermining the apparent neutrality of second and foreign teaching materials, indicating that, as Apple and Christian-Smith (1991) remind, the selection of contents for a textbook shapes an image of reality: “They signify —through their content and form— particular constructions of reality, particular ways of selecting and organizing that vast universe of possible knowledge. They embody what Raymond Williams called the selective tradition —someone’s selection, someone’s vision of legitimate knowledge and culture, one that in the process of enfranchising one group’s cultural capital disfranchises another’s” (Apple and Christian-Smith, 1991, pp. 3-4 in Bori, 2016)

Looking at foreign language textbooks these researchers attempt to reveal how the neoliberal ideology has infiltrated the society beyond the economic layer (Sklar, 1980). Their analyses of textbook contents show a normalization of some of the key concepts of neoliberalism such as entrepreneurship, (self) branding and promotion, competition and individualism, that appear across units dealing with not only the topics of business and professional life, but also with private life, personal relations and free time. In addition, it has also been shown how occupational and market related issues are more often than not emphasized throughout the textbooks and make up the majority of the contents, as well as how some content creators tend to give preference to entertaining content lacking a critical perspective or any sort of content reflecting the complexity of the “real world” (Bori & Cassany, 2015; Gray 2010a, 2012).

Most of the research thus far has naturally focused on materials for teaching major global languages such as English, French or Spanish. Smaller languages that are not so influential on the global stage are less studied in this field with Bori (2018) focusing on Catalan textbooks, standing out as an exception.

The present study therefore seeks to contribute to the field with an analysis of textbooks of small scale language(s) from the periphery of neoliberalism. In addition to the complex sociolinguistic situation of the territory that is due to the breakup of Yugoslavia and the Serbo-Croatian language, the contemporary Serbo-Croatian context presents an interesting example of post-socialist transition to neoliberal capitalism and how language (teaching) reflects and serves it. The case of Serbo-Croatian, or Serbian and Croatian, therefore offers a possibility to investigate how forms of variegated neoliberalism are adopted and promoted to the learners of Serbian and Croatian as foreign languages and contrast it with the placement and the role of socialist values in language teaching materials from ex-Yugoslavia. In the sections that follow I will first describe the evolution of textbook evaluation and analyses more in detail placing it in a broader theoretical perspective. After that I will illustrate the Serbo-Croatian context in order to lay the ground for the analysis that is preceded by the explanation of the methodology that I will use. Finally, based on the findings of the analysis I will offer some conclusions and possible implications for future work.

2.1. Theoretical background

The role of language textbooks in second and foreign language classrooms has by now been explained by many authors (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994; Littlejohn, 2011; Thornbury 2013). With the appearance of the communicative approach and the changes in global economy, the production of language teaching materials has developed into a big industry offering a large variety of textbooks for all sorts of different purposes. As production grew so has the research on textbooks as one of key segments of second and foreign language class organization. Primarily the researchers focused on the form and methodology of the textbooks, that is grammar and vocabulary topics, order of appearance, type of tasks and similar issues in order to facilitate for the teachers to determine the appropriateness of a certain material in their classroom. For some of the early overviews and trends in textbook evaluation see Cunningsworth (1984), Breen, M., & Candlin, C. (1987), Skierso (1991), McDonough & Shaw (1993), Ellis (1998). Evaluations, as Andrew Littlejohn (2011) highlighted, are however biased in a certain manner, as they entail their designer's beliefs about how language teaching should be and thus prevent the teacher from making an objective choice of appropriate materials for their own specific context. In order to be able to offer a neutral insight into the teaching materials, Littlejohn therefore proposes a distinction between an evaluation and an analysis. Evaluation, usually in a form of checklist, is necessarily created under the influence of a certain set of beliefs about the desirable way of teaching, while an analysis should offer a detailed description of a certain material, which allows the materials to "speak for themselves" (Littlejohn, 2011). This is important because, as it is by now already well known, language teaching materials do not only teach language but they also transmit a certain curriculum ideology and an underlying message about "what language is, how learning is to happen, and the decision of power and responsibility between teachers and learners" (Littlejohn, 2011), which is sometimes referred to as "hidden" or

“covert curriculum” (see for example Apple, 2004). This aspect of language teaching, and teaching in general, reveals the close connection between curriculum and cultural and economic reproduction which helps to maintain the cultural, moral and ideological hegemony of the dominant social class, as conceptualized by Gramsci (1971), and the image of society as stratified by class and “ability” (Apple, 2004). And not only do the teaching materials reflect rationalities of their time and are therefore deeply historically and socially contextualized, but they also, as Littlejohn (2013) reminds, support and reproduce a certain view of the world as a “common sense”. (For more on this consult the work of Bourdieu, Foucault, Giroux and Gramsci.) In this way, the ruling class is able to legitimize the social order that favours them, and the institutions such as schools, churches, legal systems, the media, advertising, government regulation have a crucial role in this (Littlejohn, 2013). For some of the fundamental criticism on the role of institutions, especially the school and the church, see for example Ivan Illich, John Dewey, William Goodman.

This is to say that school curricula are always embedded in the macro context of the world outside the classroom, and (language) teaching and the materials used in traditional school settings will always be influenced by the dominant ideology. Michael Apple (2004) takes this a step further claiming that “What was at first an ideology in the form of class interest has now become the definition of the situation in most school curricula.” And the contemporary situation is that of neoliberalism where language becomes a commodity and speaking an additional language is an added value of the *person-product*. Researchers in the sociolinguistics and applied linguistics have observed how the hallmarks of neoliberalism such as the globalization, flexibilization of market and consumerism have affected language policies that are now promoting language as a resource. (Martín Rojo, 2016; Heller, 2010) These market values are embodied in the Council of Europe’s *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* influential beyond Europe, that standardizes language learning

and teaching, or in other words, renders “irrelevant and unnecessary anything that does not match the targeted descriptors” (Littlejohn, 2013)¹, and as such favours the commodification of the education system (Heller 2010, Luke 2006, Torres 2013) and the atomisation of value added services (Littlejohn, 2013). This uniformizing of the teaching materials brought to some teachers rejecting course books as too static or rigid (Thornbury, 2013).

The modern version of hegemony that makes neoliberal rationalities appear as “common sense” made neoliberalism evolve beyond just ideology to a form of governance in the Foucauldian sense (Martín Rojo, 2018). It has been said that language is one of the most powerful means of domination, which in neoliberalism evolves to a point where it becomes a form of self-governmentality as individuals internalize the neoliberal rationalities. What brought to this is the introduction of general competitiveness as a rationality that goes beyond market and colonizes all spheres of social and personal life and all sectors of public activity in all the countries of the globalized world (Martín Rojo 2018). And as individuals conform to these normativities, they become neoliberal citizens (Block, 2018b) on a constant competitive quest of self-realization and search for profit opportunities, and are at the same time flexible and determined, and above all considered as personally responsible for their own success or failure. In reality however, the “success” is more often than not hindered by unequal access to education and resources based on social class, race, gender, age or ethnicity. The latter is of course, rarely addressed in teaching materials. Instead, researchers have shown how textbooks tend to reproduce and promote the dominant discourse.

The language that has been most extensively researched on in this sense is naturally English as the *lingua franca* of the globalized world. In the world of entrepreneurs that have to keep boosting their CVs, and working on their self-branding to stay competitive and sell

¹ Littlejohn relates this standardization practice to Ritzer's concept of McDonaldization.

their skills on the market, English has become an indispensable asset. Studies analysing the EFL/ESL textbooks have shown how proposed activities shape an image of an ideal English speaker. Looking at some general topics that appear and the way they're represented, things like leisure activities such as shopping, travelling, sport and cinema, or housing, transportation and the use of new technologies seem to be things everyone has equal access to and does on a regular basis (Block, 2017). The students are positioned as good consumers and entrepreneurs (Gray 2010b, 2012). In addition, celebrity references are also common, and these characters are usually depicted as idealized and desirable individuals (Block, 2017, Gray, 2012). The self-directed individuals with entrepreneurial spirit are naturally also the main characters of the units about the world of work in which a typical set of desired characteristics on the job market is displayed, and, expectedly, nobody seems to work in a precaritized or underpaid position. Instead on the exploiting system, the responsibility is fully put on the worker, which "allows poverty to be explained by individual fecklessness or lack of aspiration" (Gray and Block, 2014). Similar tendencies are confirmed in analysis of textbooks of Spanish as a foreign language (Español lengua extranjera – ELE). Bori and Kuzmanović Jovanović (2021) show how activities proposed in contemporary textbooks are oriented towards a promotion of entrepreneurial spirit and employability of the learners. The learners are in the first place provided with linguistic knowledge that allows that to become employable through activities that include writing a CV, interpreting a job advertisement or going to a job interview (Bori and Kuzmanović Jovanović, 2021). Additionally, more recent ELE textbooks seem to more frequently adopt a task-based approach that requires the students to exercise the entrepreneurial values they're instructed throughout the book which is a clear example of the above mentioned governmentality.² Furthermore, in the spirit of neoliberal

² It should be noted though, that the task based approach has also been used in classrooms adopting the critical pedagogy approach. Crookes and Ziegler (2021) offer an overview of empirical proofs from Japanese and several English classrooms in which an approach inspired by Auerbach and Wallerstein (1987) was employed.

world of opportunities, all of the jobs and activities appearing in these textbooks seem directed at an apparently classless audience. In Gray and Block (2014) the authors show how all of the proposed activities are in fact associated with middle and upper-class citizens, and any topic appealing to working-class characters seems to be erased in contemporary ELT textbooks, which is again confirmed in the context of ELE Bori and Kuzmanović Jovanović, (2020). In a diachronic analysis the authors show how textbook contents are ideologically driven: the ELE textbooks from the 1970s appear to emphasise the clear division of society into the working class and the capitalists, indicating the apparent Marxist influence. More recent textbooks, from the second decade of the 21st century, on the other hand, depict a single-class society where, in accordance with the dominant discourse, everyone seems to belong to the meritocratic class in which everyone is free to achieve their goals, and there are no structural obstacles to impede this. French textbooks are also shown to reflect the political-economy landscape of the time they're published (Gray and Block, 2014). For example, like in ELT textbooks, the discourse of self-care and self-branding is an important part of FLE (Français langue étrangère) textbooks. However, there also seems to be some sensitivity towards social issues such as environmentalism, animal rights, education, new technologies, immigration, the culture and the media, especially in the more recent editions (Gray and Block, 2014). Comparing textbooks from two different periods (2010 and 2015) the authors saw how the greater representation of such key social issues was, on the other hand, followed by an increasing number of activities and units related to self-care, holidays and travel, food and cuisine, shopping and fashion, and physical and psychological health and well-being. This shows the flexibility of the neoliberal model, in the sense that it adapts to the social changes and needs of the contemporary times "allowing" one to be of different race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or even socially engaged, as long as they are a good consumer.

In regards to the culture(s) in language teaching, it is by now generally accepted that the knowledge about culture is an important part of communicative competence. And language textbooks are to be seen as cultural artefacts as well (Gray, 2000). Research has shown that second and foreign language textbooks, especially those for teaching English, tend to portray a cosmopolite society, avoiding reference to a particular nation state (Gray 2010b, Gray and Block 2014, Babaii and Sheikhi 2018). And in case of other languages, such as French, Russian, Spanish, or Italian for example, the dominant culture in the textbook remains the one connected to a nation-state. And although in recent few decades a tendency to acknowledge multi and interculturalism has been noticed, this practice remains rather superficial, favouring thus the conceptualizing of culture in a highly static and homogenous way (Canale, 2016)³. This usually leads to mere apolitical comparisons of “our” vs. “their” culture, while as Canale (2016) points out, any critical view of culture or reflections about its complexity and dynamics are left out.

The dependence of capitalism on domestic work and women’s role in social reproduction have been gaining increasing attention in recent social studies (Bakker, 2007). But even though a general tendency of higher representation of female characters in language textbooks was confirmed by researchers (see for example Gray 2010b, Tahriri and Moradpour 2014), the textbooks still seem to prevalently sustain the capitalist regime (Amerian & Esmaili, 2015). The apparent move towards equality remains superficial, as gender bias and gender-based stereotypes still seem to characterize much of the ELT textbook contents (Lee & Collins, 2009, 2010). It is true though that attempts were made for example to give female characters more active and diverse roles, however gender related issues are still hardly addressed in an explicit and critical way. Instead, language textbook discourse naturalizes

³ Canale (2016) relates this to the PPP (perspectives, practices and products) model of culture conception that “assumes all participants would have the same access to cultural practices, and that culture is the cohesive element that makes users behave in similar – if not identical – ways.”

heteronormativity and binarism (Gray, 2013) and a “natural” and unequivocal relation between gender, sex and social identity/behaviour (Canale & Furtado, 2021). And in the rare cases of improvements in for example LGBT representation as noted by Gray (2013), as the author himself admits, they are only found in contexts where this is considered financially profitable.

All of this is to show how language textbooks not only attempt to represent the world as it is at the time of their writing, but through proposed activities and by reproducing the dominant discourse they indoctrinate the learner and instruct them on how to adopt the values of the dominant system and become a neoliberal citizen. In this sense it is important to reflect on the importance of these languages on the market. English, French and Spanish are promoted as useful assets that position their speakers higher in the world of work and open the door to international markets for them, or as Luisa Martín Rojo (2018) puts it: “the competent speaker of profitable languages in a flexible market is equated to an entrepreneurial project in human resources and managerial literature, and in language industries”. Smaller, or less attractive languages on the global stage, are therefore less studied in this field. But focusing on Catalan, Pau Bori (2015, 2016, 2017,2019) finds very similar trends in the teaching materials of Catalan for foreigners. The references to culture are mainly linked to that of Catalan nation, however in a rather simplified and idealized manner. Though Bori’s work offers a very thorough insight into the state of the art with Catalan materials, it is still true that studies of non-global languages in this sense remain very limited.

2.2. Historical background

As I have already stated, the territory of former Yugoslavia is an interesting ground for sociolinguistic studies. In the first place, for the role linguistic identity has played in the period leading to the 90s wars, but also in what followed. In addition to that, the ground of ex-Yugoslavia with its ethnically complex situation, also offers an interesting example of transition from workers self-managing socialism to nationalist neoliberal capitalism that dominates the political economy today. Croatia and Serbia's path of transition differ in certain aspects and present examples of variegated neoliberalism. In the sections that follow, I will describe the political and economic situation of Yugoslavia, and its two successor states, Croatia and Serbia, and explain the linguistic situation before and after the breakup of Yugoslavia and Serbo-Croatian language.

2.2.1. Yugoslavia

Yugoslavia was a country in southeast and central Europe that came into existence in 1918 and officially ceased to exist in 2006. In this study I will mainly refer to its federal phase from 1945 until 1992. This ethnically diverse socialist state, one of the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement, occupied the territory of today's Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia and North Macedonia. Yugoslavia's model of socialism was a somewhat unorthodox version to workers' self-management market socialism (Woodward, 1995) differing significantly from that of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc countries. Even though they were state-owned and controlled, most companies, including public services like health and education, were managed by the workers who had equal access to decision making. However, the distribution of power between the workers and the management was in reality rather unbalanced (Grdešić, 2015) and the attempt of creating a self-managed classless society didn't seem to succeed (Jakir, 2005).

Attempts were also made to improve the social position of women. Along the Marxist principles, the issue of women in workplace was considered an issue of class and it was believed that the self-management can liberate women (Ramet, 1984). However, the overall lower representation of women in paid employment and especially on leading positions, lower wages, as well as their generally lower education level, and the fact that most domestic work was still done by women is assumed to be an indicator of persistence of the so-called traditional values (Reeves, 1990).

In the 80s the already existing problem of high unemployment rate became worse and was accompanied by high inflation, shortages and external debt (Woodward, 1995) which increased social stratification. The 80s were also marked by a rise of nationalism and ethnic violence. Soon, the war in Croatia started (1991) and a year later another armed conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. After the war the successor states were transitioning to neoliberal capitalism while the rest of the Europe and the western world already had it well established. With the beginning of the new millennium, the global capitalist regime fell into crisis, that has by today only deepened and goes in hand with the rise of right and left- oriented populism and even neo fascism (Martín Rojo, 2018). In the following sections we shall see how is this reflected in Serbian and Croatian contexts.

The language issue played an important role in Yugoslavia. The language most commonly referred to as Serbo-Croatian belongs to the South Slavic group of languages. Under Josip Broz Tito, the country's most famous leader, the language was promoted as the symbol of "brotherhood and unity" of all Yugoslavian people. Despite the country's authorities' attempts of promoting an image of a strong unified nation, as Greenberg (2005) reminds, referring to Bugarski (1997) the "external identity" of unity didn't have much influence on the "internal identity" of the speakers of Serbo-Croatian. The tensions between language and ethnic groups rose significantly after Tito's death in 1980, and, amid the above

mentioned economic and political crisis, were to some extent used as an excuse for the outbreak of the war in the 90s. With the breakup of Yugoslavia, the Serbo-Croatian language also “disappeared” and as each country gained its respective independence the following languages were proclaimed as official: Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian and Montenegrin. Greenberg describes the process that led to this disintegration in a sense of Kloss’ (1978) differentiation between languages that develop on the basis of *Abstand* and *Ausbau* processes.⁴ The most important characteristic of *Ausbau* languages, such is Serbo-Croatian, is the mutual intelligibility which to this day remains admitted by most speakers of the successor languages. Many foreign linguists, like Robert Greenberg and Keith Langston, along with some local ones like Snježana Kordić and Ranko Bugarski, offer evidence in support of the idea of Serbo-Croatian as a pluricentric language.

2.2.2. Croatia

After the violent collapse of Yugoslavia, Croatia swiftly transitioned to neoliberalism. The transition wasn’t smooth due to in the first place, issues with corruption and nepotism, but also heavy nationalism which was also reflected in the language, as a form of language purism (Langston, 1999). From the very beginning of the dissolution of the ex-federal state, alongside nationalism that was growing stronger and patriotism that was adopted as the supreme value, the ideal of western Europe was promoted as a synonym for prosperity and progress to strive to. The transition didn’t however, as predicted, lead to a Western-style liberal democracy. What followed is the transition to the actually existing nationalist neoliberal capitalism favoured by the loss of political hope and the dominance of a single neoliberal model in the post-socialist world (Razsa, 2003). It should be noted though, that, as described in Bell (2012) the case of Croatia offers evidence in favour of variegated

⁴ The term *Abstand* refers to languages that separated “naturally“, due to linguistic differences, while *Ausbau* refers to languages separated usually for political motives, with intervention of languages planners, linguists and politicians. (Greenberg, 2005)

neoliberalism theories, as the process of neoliberalism in this country is strongly influenced by the social setting, which besides the above mentioned rocky road to transition is also characterized by particular forms of counter-neoliberal discourses. Bell offers examples of contestation of market-reform from three different perspectives – the first rooted in remains of socialist ideology which led to distrust towards western style capitalist values, the second, nationalist and conservative, and the third, most marginalized, the anarcho-syndicalist (illustrated more elaborately and accurately in Razsa (2003). This combination of capitalist neoliberalism with strong nationalism and conservatism and utter marginalization of critical perspectives is clearly reflected on the position of women in the contemporary Croatian society that is witnessing intense repatriarchalization and clericalization (Drakulić, 1993) where the issues like social reproduction (Čakardić, 2018) are far from being meaningfully addressed in the public and political discourse.

After a 10-year process of neoliberal disciplining (Cozzolino, 2013), in 2013 Croatia finally joined EU. The results were the privatization of enterprises, usually by foreign investors, flexibilization of the market labour, a high unemployment rate, a decrease in salaries and attack on workers' rights (Cozzolino, 2013). Many workers are left with seasonal work (usually in the sector of tourism) as their only option for employment, as the country's economy becomes increasingly dependent on the revenue from tourism (Holzner, 2005).

And in the context of Croatian as foreign language this opening to foreign markets meant a certain rise in the number of learners, however mainly within student population coming to Croatia through different EU student mobility programs such as *Erasmus*.

2.2.3. Serbia

In the period following the breakup of Yugoslavia Serbia was under heavy sanctions by the whole world for committed war crimes and politics of ethnical cleansing (Pirani,

2000). After the imprisonment of the infamous country leader, the new head of state and prime minister changed the political discourse, introduced the idea of joining the EU showing their determination to recover the country's deteriorated relations with the West. The following phase was criticized for bad management of the total state, poor economic planning which led the country to economic crisis, outdated and unreformed political and social system and underrating and privatization of the public interest (Filipović, 2012). The new change of country's leadership brought back the nationalist and conservative discourse, but maintained the agenda of the so called European integrations. This is often presented in the public and political discourse as "Serbia's European path" which promotes the EU as the best model and solution for Serbia's future (Kuzmanović Jovanović, 2018). However, the opposition to the integration with EU still holds strong as the country maintains close relations with Russia and China (Hartwell & Sidlo, 2017), and the general public keeps a certain level of Euroscepticism caused by EU's permanent conditioning of costly reforms, fear of jeopardizing the Serbian identity, loss of jobs, decrease of competitiveness of domestic companies, etc. (Todorović Lazić, 2018).

Finally, in line with the above mentioned coupling of late capitalism with populism and neo fascism, it should be added that Serbian transition is, like in Croatia, accompanied by the process of repatriarchalization, but curiously also by the gendering of nationalism within the new right wing streams (Dević, 2021). This means that the Serbian right wing "femonationalists" advertise the high representation of women in political life, including the prime minister, Ana Brnabić, one of the world's first openly gay prime ministers, (according to World Bank data on the representation of women in political life, Serbia holds the eighteenth place among 118 countries, and the first among the countries of Southeastern Europe (Dević, 2021)), while in reality it only superficially treats women's issues neglecting the systematic discrimination of the victims of violence, precaritized workers, minorities and

LGBTQ+ people. Thus, as Dević (2021) points out, the ruling party seems to comply with the requirements of the EU while at the same time failing to address the issues of discrimination in a meaningful way.

3. The present study

Michael Apple (2001) notes how despite having international scope, the neoliberal policies tend to produce different realities. He therefore reminds that teaching policies and practices are historically embedded and, to a certain extent, dependent on “the balance of forces in each nation and on the histories of the ways progressive tendencies have already been instituted within the state”. Considering the above described socio-political contexts of ex-Yugoslavia and its version of workers self-managing market socialism on the one hand, and the variegated neoliberalism of its successor states, on the other, we can see how the (ex) Yugoslavia presents an interesting opportunity to compare the means of naturalizing the dominant discourse in language textbooks of small scope language(s) from two different historical and political contexts.

By comparing the teaching materials used in market socialism to those used in two states in different variations of capitalist neoliberalism, the aim of this research is to relate the corpus of the textbooks to the economic and socio-political context of their historical times in order to investigate in what way does the discourse employed in the textbooks reflect and/or promote the discourse of the dominant system and how have the textbooks of Serbo-Croatian changed over the period from late 20th century to contemporary times.

More specifically, the analysis that follows is guided by the following questions:

- What practices, values, and characteristics typical of the socio-political context appear in textbook content related to work, culture and gender, and how are they presented?
- What is the socio-economic reality presented by the textbook corpus in these three areas?
- What are the predominant lifestyles and social classes of the characters in the materials?

4. Methodology

In order to answer the questions from the previous section, a content analysis of three textbooks was carried out. This qualitative analysis relies on the approaches of critical applied sociolinguistics and critical pedagogy. These approaches take a holistic view of education revealing its integral role in the socio-political order. By identifying the (version of) reality that is represented in the textbooks we are able to see how, through education, the dominant system as a macro cultural factor underlies the micro cultural phenomena such as classroom activities or interpersonal relations (Gifre & Esteban, 2012). As suggested earlier, in reference to one of the key figures of critical pedagogy, Paulo Freire, by adopting a critical point of view, I want to point to the inextricable relation between education and politics in which education is a key factor in either sustaining or undermining the dominant system. An apparently neutral analysis would thus only be able to contribute to the *status quo*, while a critical one allows to contextualize the textbook discourse and determine whether it is used as a means of emancipation, or does it serve to integrate the learners in the existing system (Kuzmanović Jovanović, 2022). Additionally, a critical approach aims to transform its area of study (Canagarajah, 2005) and contribute to it in a way that it identifies the oppressive practices and suggests possible alternatives.

As introduced above, a comparative analysis of the teaching materials from two different socio-political and historical contexts will allow us to identify possible common practices in establishing the discourse of the dominant ideology as common sense.

4.1. Sample

The sample of the analysis therefore consists of one textbook from Yugoslavia, *Kroatisch-Serbisch Lernbuch mit Grammatik für Anfänger* from 1975, aimed primarily at German students, but not only, and assessed by its contemporary linguists as the best textbook of Croatian or Serbian for foreigners of its time (Pranjković, 1984). In line with the traditions

of its time, the exercises following the reading texts throughout the textbook focus solely on grammar practice. However, as the analysis shall show, the textbook does not lack of culture related contents. In Yugoslavia, the production of textbooks of Serbo-Croatian for foreigners was limited and mostly didn't include materials beyond beginners' level. According to another textbook from that period (Ćorić, 1985), the target learners were foreign students and professionals from the field of philology attending a seminar by the *International Slavistics Centre*, and whose needs rarely exceeded basic communication. In order to make the sample comparable, I chose two contemporary beginners' textbooks of Serbian and Croatian too. The Croatian textbook, *Hrvatski za početnike 1*, is a 2015 edition of the textbook by *Croaticum*, the *Centre for Croatian as a Second and Foreign Language*. The Centre is a part of the Department of Croatian Language and Literature at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Zagreb and is the main official provider of courses of language and culture for foreigners. The language of instructions throughout the textbook is solely Croatian, and a four lingual dictionary (Croatian to English, German and Spanish) is provided at the end of the book. The book is organized by units and at an outline at the beginning of the book lists communication goals, linguistic competences and cultural information of each unit.

The Serbian textbook, *Step by Step Serbian* from 2014 by a commercial publisher is, as the author explains, adapted to both independent and classroom use. The language of task instructions, titles and linguistic explanations is English and a section with key vocabulary items translated to English is featured in every lesson. The textbook is organized by units, each of which is focused on specific linguistic and communication competences. Cultural information is not included as a specific category in the outline of the units. An English-Serbian dictionary is featured at the end, as well as a separate section about Cyrillic writing and transcriptions of all texts in Cyrillic.

The contents taken into consideration in the analysis include: titles, primary texts (dialogues, stories, descriptions, literary excerpts etc.), grammatical exercises, and instructions to the proposed activities.

4.2. Content categories

Following Apple's (2001) suggestion that education related discourses must be considered in their historical context and their analysis must "critically examine their class and race and gender effects", the selected categories of the present analysis are: the world of work, culture and gender. The selection was also made based on a revision of the distribution of topics across the sample. Taking a critical perspective, the aim is to relate the text to the "real world" context in order to see what kind of an image of the world is constructed through these textbooks based on the three categories, and who benefits from this.

4.2.1. World of work

The category of the world of work is one of the categories that is related to the political economy of its time in the most obvious way, and, as noted by Bori (2016) it is also one of the most common topics in foreign and second language textbooks. In the contemporary globalized, deregulated and growingly competitive context, economy becomes a personal discipline of flexible workers and lifelong learners (Flores 2013). As individuals bear the full responsibility of their own professional success or failure, the only difference between the allegedly equal citizens is that of merit that is determined on the basis of the amount of effort invested. In such a meritocratic society, the workers are expected to practice and value the concepts such as entrepreneurship, self-branding and self-promotion, competitiveness, individualism, risk taking, flexibility, etc.

In the context of socialism, the workers are put at the centre, and are again seen as equals, but in terms of rights, access to goods and profits and participation in the decision

making. Market socialism is however also characterized by competitiveness and the imperative of successfulness is promoted.

4.2.2. Culture

With the adoption of the communicative approach to language teaching, the issue of culture becomes an integral part of the didactic materials in foreign and second language learning. In the context of neoliberal capitalism, the conceptualization of culture is characterized by the promotion of homogenization (Ritzer, 2012). This is particularly pertinent in the context of big global languages such as English or Spanish that “may be presented as locally heterogeneous but then homogenised at the global scale” (Canale, 2016). This is usually accompanied by the notions of multiculturalism (usually reduced to stereotypical comparisons of “our” homogenous culture and “their” homogenous culture) and cosmopolitanism. In the case of smaller languages homogenization is often adopted without need to account for any type of heterogeneity (Canale, 2016).

In socialism on the other hand, and specifically in the socialist Yugoslavia, cultural and ethnic diversity is generally acknowledged, however, the homogenization still takes place, and in this case with the aim of maintaining “brotherhood and unity” and promoting the idea of a common national identity.

The analysis of the category of culture follows the three categories as suggested by Risager (1990). (For the full list of the categories refer to Appendix 1), and combines the three types of analysis of culture in learning materials, as proposed by the same author (2014), which are: thematic analysis, intercultural analysis and power and empowerment analysis. In the first stage, the contents were divided into following topics: daily life and routine, geography and travel, art & history, literature, food and drink, health, science, media, entertainment and celebrities, housing.

4.2.3. Gender

In order to identify the ways in which gender policies of the dominant system are reflected in the textbooks, following Amerian & Esmaili (2015), the analysis examines the following factors: female and male's social roles, female and male's domestic roles, female and male's semantic roles, female and male's titles, order of appearance, masculine generic construction and activities females and males engaged in.

In the current form of capitalism strongly characterized by consumerism, gender stereotypes often come out in its crudest form. Women are thus often portrayed as “good consumers”, spending their free time shopping and in line with the growing individualism and concepts referred to earlier such as self-care and promotion, they often engage in activities aimed at taking care of themselves, with focus on their physical appearance. Their professional achievements are also accounted for, but at the same time they generally bear the majority of domestic work. Furthermore, heteronormative relationships and communities are still seen as the norm, with much attention paid to the preserving the ideal of the nuclear family.

In market socialism, as explained earlier, women were increasingly represented in the workforce, however generally in lower positions. The domestic work was completely considered as female task and the nuclear family concept was starting to be promoted as the norm.

Following Bori (2016), the analysis was conducted in the following stages:

1. Recollecting texts according to the above mentioned criteria that relate to the topics of the world of work, culture and gender.
2. Establishing the image of the socioeconomic reality that the contents of each separate textbook shape based on the three categories

3. Identifying practices, values and characteristics of the dominant system (as described above) in the in the content related to these three topics in each of the materials by examining in detail each page consisting contents relevant to the three categories.

4. Using specific examples, identifying the attitude of the authors of the texts or the protagonists in relation to the practices, values and characteristics presented in the materials from a critical point of view.

5. Analysis

5.1. World of work

5.1.1. Kroatisch-Serbisch Lernbuch mit Grammatik für Anfänger

As already explained, the target audience of this textbook are foreign students. There are therefore not so many references to the world of work, but the local characters do talk about their or their family member's jobs and professions, and one of the local students also has a part time job as a receptionist at the student dormitory. He works night shifts, but doesn't complain:

“S[tudent]: Good morning! Did you sleep well?

G[unther]: Thank you, I did. And you didn't sleep all night?

S: No.

G: I think it's hard to work at night. Do you often work at night?

S: I don't work often. Only twice a week.”

(Drilo, 1975, pp 71)

In the socialist regime this practice was common, especially for students from lower class background. Other students refer to their parent's occupations:

“L: Mr. Brown, where does your father work?

S: My father works in a factory.

L: What is your father: an engineer or a worker?

S: He is a worker; he is not an engineer.

L: Miss Weber, what is your mother: a worker or a clerk?

S: My mother is a worker; she is not a clerk.

L: Where does she work: in a post office or in a bank?

S: She works in a post office.

L: Does she spend the whole day in the office?

S: Yes: she is in the office in the morning and in the afternoon. She comes home only in the evening.”

(Drilo, 1975, pp 35)

In lesson 15, Helga and Gunther, the German students who we follow through the book, travel to the south of Croatia, depicted as a busy tourist destination, and they meet a student whose parents rent rooms for tourists. The father also works as a fisherman. The other son of the family works as an engineer, and the daughter is a student. It is worth noting that the daughter is politically engaged in the student movement and in lesson 22 she takes the German students to a meeting where students discuss organizing a strike to call for educational reform. Engagement in student and workers' councils was a common practice in the socialist Yugoslavia, but this is the only example of it in this textbook.

Furthermore, despite valuing workers' rights, socialist Yugoslavia had a serious issue of unemployment which led to many workers moving abroad for work, as described in section 2.2.1. This issue is reflected in lesson 28 when Helga and Gunther meet Darko, a young man who moved to Munich in order to find a job so he can provide for his brothers and sisters, as their parents died.

“When they asked him how long is he going to stay in Germany, he stopped to think for a few moments, and then, not looking at them, he said:

Darko: That I don't know... I have three brothers and two sisters, I have to take care of them. All three brothers are still too young. Two of them came to Germany last year, but they came back. This summer 25 people from Primorje came to the company where I work; two of my neighbours are already going back home.

G: How are you doing in Munich?

D: In the beginning it was difficult, the worst part was that I didn't know the language. It's better now; I learned some German, so it's easier.

G: Can you make good money and save?

D: So, so... I have some money on my bank account, but if you want to earn more and put some money aside, you really have to work hard. Some people came to Germany thinking they would make money quickly and without much effort, but they were wrong. It's the case with the two of my neighbours who decided to go back even though they didn't even spend two full months there.”

(Drilo, 1975, pp 249)

Even though he doesn't appear very satisfied with his German income, he doesn't mention the reason he couldn't find a job at home and does not appear critical of the economic situation in Yugoslavia or the working conditions in Germany. Instead, he criticizes his neighbours for not being persistent enough.

Another Yugoslavian friend of Helga and Gunther, Marko, describes the time he worked as a journalist. He presents more of a middle class perspective, and an example of a hardworking and flexible worker: "I worked for ten years, and I think I did everything one can do in that profession... I started as a proof-reader, then I edited the city sports and culture section, [I worked] as a reporter from different places in the country and abroad and commented on internal and external political events, I was searching for the latest news and chasing sensations..., and I ended up as the chief editor of a local newspaper in Dubrovnik. [...] I worked hard, it's true, but I saw and enjoyed so much ..." (Drilo, 1975, pp 262)⁵

In summary, the image of the world of work in *Kroatisch-Serbisch Lernbuch mit Grammatik für Anfänger* revolves around working class characters, though individuals from different backgrounds appear. However, the general attitude of the characters, that is of the author of the book, fails to take a critical turn on the issues of the working class.

5.1.2. Hrvatski za početnike

As the analysis of the category of culture in section 5.2.2. shall show, the focus of this textbook are leisure activities and entertainment, and the references to the world of work are therefore not so frequent. There is however one unit dedicated to education and work. In this unit, there is a lesson about a job interview for a journalist where the candidate presents a typical example of a neoliberal citizen on the job market.

⁵ I have personally, as a native speaker, translated all the cited parts of texts from the original.

“Candidate: I have two degrees: I studied journalism and marketing.

[...]

Interviewer: Do you speak foreign languages?

Candidate: Yes, I am fluent in English and German.

Interviewer: Have you worked anywhere before?

Candidate: Yes, but not in my field. Only seasonal jobs. I mostly worked as a tour guide.

[...]

Interviewer: Do you know we work in shifts?

Candidate: I don't mind such working hours because I don't have a family.

Interviewer: Great! You're hired! Good luck at work!”



(Čilaš Mikulić, Gulešić Machata, Pasini and Udier, 2015, pp192)

The candidate is overqualified, but has never worked in his field. His experience as a seasonal tourist guide is emblematic of Croatia's job market where seasonal jobs in tourism are often the only option regardless of the worker's professional orientation. The requirements to speak foreign languages and be flexible in terms of working hours are typical characteristics of neoliberal job market. Following this text is a speaking exercise in which students are supposed to role play interviews for different jobs (manager, doctor, tour guide, photo reporter, teacher, etc.). In the same unit, there is a text about plans for future that describes possible directions for young people after they finish high school. These include work or university. The focus is put on those who choose university: “[...] They will get new ideas and views of life and the world. They will have a nice and interesting student life with a lot of time for socializing, fun, travels, hobbies... And what happens after that? They will get a job.

Maybe they will get married. Maybe they will have children. Maybe they will travel and move a lot. Maybe they will become rich and famous. Or...?” (Čilaš Mikulić, Gulešić Machata, Pasini and Udier, 2015, pp 188) The promotion of similar practices and values (being rich and famous, having a family, travelling) is further promoted in the topics related to culture (see section 5.2.2.).

Another example of a worker embodying neoliberal values, characteristics and practices is Jasna, a secretary praised by her boss for being well organized and meticulous. She engages in typical self-care and improvement activities such as learning a foreign language and taking aerobic classes.

And not only does the neoliberal worker not complain about their position and work conditions like the journalist from the example above, but they are also required to be happy. The imperative of happiness and non-critically accepting life conditions under the neoliberal regime is promoted in a reading comprehension practice:

“You wake up nervous every morning? The alarm went off and your body still isn’t rested. [...] You’re afraid you won’t be able to do everything well and on time? You’re angry with yourself for not being well prepared for the new day? [...] Tomorrow you will laugh about this, because already tomorrow everything will be different. Here’s the recipe:

When your alarm goes off, joyously turn to it for the enjoying in the new day already begins. You’re happy because you wake up healthy and they will be happy to see you at work because they know you try hard. [...] Living in a rush is possible. And happily and longer.”

The responsibility for well-being and success is thus completely put on the individual, the “life in a rush” is normalized and the system doesn’t seem to play any role in it.

5.1.3. Step by Step Serbian

The protagonist of the Serbian textbook, Steve Bond, an English businessman who moved to Serbia for work, sets the tone for the contents of the book. There are many references to Steve and his friends and colleagues work routines and practices, however the focus is their free time and leisure activities. Steve works in a foreign import-export company, but there aren't any details on his position in the company or what his job consists of. It is however repeatedly highlighted how Steve is hardworking and spends a lot of time in his office and in business meetings and often works beyond his work hours or on the weekends. "On Monday he was at work from 8AM to 8PM. [...] On Tuesday he had to travel to Niš. [...] he was on a meeting for two hours. [...] On Wednesday he spent the whole day in the office. He had meetings and conversations with colleagues again. [...] On Thursday he spent the whole day at a conference in *Sava Centar*. [...] On Friday he had a lot of work in the office. [...] He didn't have time for lunch, [...] He went home around 8PM. He was very tired." (Danilović, 2014, pp 102-103)

Other characters' work conditions and habits such as for example, that of his friend Jovan (lawyer) and Jovan's daughter Svetlana (tourist agency manager) are described promoting similar neoliberal values and practices.

"I arrive to the agency around eight, but I start working with clients at nine o'clock. I stay at work until half past four, but I often stay longer." (Danilović 2014, pp 178)

Jovan represents the upper middle class: he works as a consultant for the privatization agency and he earned his doctoral degree in London. He specialized in international law in Bristol. We find all this information in his CV. However, the exercises that follow this lesson are purely grammatical (genitive case) and do not engage the learner in practices of reproduction or reflection on the characteristics of Jovan's education and work experience, as is usually the

case in foreign and second language textbooks, and as we find in the Croatian textbook (see previous section) that seems to pay less attention to the world of work in general.

Jovan's wife Milena is a librarian but she is not employed. This is the only unemployed character in all three textbooks. However, Milena's family lives a typically (upper) middle class life, and even though we do not know the reason of her unemployment, it is suggested she has a lot of work around the house. They also have a son, Milan who is a student of medicine.

Besides Steve, there is one more foreign character who came to work to Serbia, also for an international company. Judith another example of a hardworking and a flexible worker ("I work from nine to five, but often I am in my office until six or six thirty." (Danilović, 2014, pp 83)). Judith's husband is a doctor, and their family is another example of middle class characters.

In conclusion, it can be said that the neoliberal values and practices such as flexibility and mobility are presented in a positive way, and with the choice of characters and their points of view, the authors offer a selective image of the working conditions and practices in Serbia.

5.2. Culture

5.2.1. Kroatisch-Serbisch Lernbuch mit Grammatik für Anfänger

The textbook follows two groups of protagonists – the foreign students from Germany travelling through Yugoslavia, and a group of locals. The focus of the textbook is Croatia, so most geographical references are in relation to that particular federal state, however Yugoslavia is clearly considered and referred to as a unified nation, and its cultural diversity is admitted and portrayed as Yugoslavia's richness:

“Traveller: [...] Beautiful landscapes, interesting cultural and historic monuments can be seen everywhere...

H[elga]: I read that folk customs and folk costumes are very original and diverse...

T: This is understandable: different nations live in Yugoslavia - Slovenes, Croats, Serbs, Macedonians, Montenegrins and various national minorities.” (Drilo, 1975, pp. 130)

Geographical information is mostly presented from a consumer, that is, a tourist, point of view, as locations are referred to rather as destinations, than as places to live in. They are mostly urban areas, typical tourist destinations, though a point is made about difficult life conditions in rural areas:

“H: People in these villages are really having it hard. I think they don’t have conditions to live here at all.

P: Only the old people have stayed in the fields and in the vineyards, the young work in the cities.” (Drilo, 1975, pp 137)

And indeed, the workers that appear throughout the book all live and work in the cities, as we saw in the previous section. The local population is generally portrayed as working, and the foreigners are referred to as visitors (who can afford to travel). Mentions of locals travelling are rare, and only at one occasion is it for leisure (Drilo, 1975, pp 89), while in other examples they either go to other countries to work, to visit relatives who work abroad, or to go back to their hometowns (in cases of students and individuals working abroad).

However, even though mainly portrayed as a tourist destination, there is also a text with some general facts about Yugoslavian geography, that is followed by a more detailed description of Croatia, with a focus on its industry.

“The economic significance of Croatia is affected by two characteristics of its position in FPRY. Croatia⁶ owns more than 90% of the total coast of FPRY and all major islands, so it has a developed industries of shipbuilding, maritime affairs, fishing and tourism. Even though most national income is created in industry and mining, the energy and raw material base of the industry is not particularly strong. [...] Croatia is the biggest producer of wine and olive oil in Yugoslavia. [...] Most of the tonnage of the Yugoslav merchant navy is registered in the ports of NRH, and almost 100% of foreign traffic takes place in its ports. [...] Zagreb is the capital city of Croatia [...] In terms of economic potential, it goes alongside the most important cities in Southeast Europe...” (Drilo, 1975, pp 286)

It is interesting to note, especially in relation to the following section related to contemporary Croatia, how tourism is mentioned only as one of the many sectors of its developing economy

In relation to the topics of daily life and routines, these mainly include discourse about going to work, using public transportation, spending free time in cafes, restaurants, going to theatre or cinema, playing sports (tennis and swimming), shopping, and similar activities usually typical of middle class. However, it should be noted there are sections with practical vocabulary such as going to the post office or to a mechanic.

Another frequent topic is art, but more specifically literature. Institutions related to art such as the national theatre, national library, or events such as contemporary painting exhibition, *Dubrovnik summer festival* etc. are again mentioned in the context of tourist sights to visit. Much more attention and space is however devoted to literature. There are numerous references to some of the most significant writers of the 20th century Yugoslavia in the grammar exercises (Miroslav Krleža, Ivo Andrić, etc.), and the final four lessons consist entirely of literary excerpts. There is also an additional section with more literary texts, poetry

⁶ originally „NRH“ (Narodna Republika Hrvatska), which translates as People's Republic of Croatia

and prose, and some examples of folk literature. There is also a text about contemporary literary critics describing their contributions, values and initiatives. It should be noted that the selection of literary texts presents mostly texts dealing with topics of poverty, misery, exploiting system and criticism of bourgeoisie.

Other relevant topics include housing, where in addition to student dormitories, most dwellings referred to are those typical of middle class (spacious private owned apartments etc.). But a different perspective is also referred to in an example of Petar, a student who shares a small room with another two students, which is characterized negatively (“It is difficult to live and work in such conditions.” (Drilo, 1975, pp137)). Another example of typical socialist practice is a worker getting an apartment from their company, which is the case of Ljubica:

“Lj: I also have a nice apartment now; I got it three months ago from my company.

I: Do you still work in the Paper factory?

Lj: I don't. Half a year ago I got a job at the Underwear factory. [...]” (Drilo, 1975, pp 99)

Following is the topic of traffic with some useful vocabulary about traffic rules and similar issues, an interesting practical contribution, not found in contemporary Croatian or Serbian textbooks. Topics related to money and shopping also occasionally appear, contributing to the positioning of the learner as consumer.

Overall, it can be said that even though the contents of the textbook prevalently focus on (wealthier) student population, characters from diverse backgrounds are represented in the contents, and the general image created by the contents normalizes the working class practices and values. Finally, it is obvious from the above examples that the only culture referred to is the Yugoslavian. There is no mention of other cultures and the local one is portrayed as homogenous which could invite for an “us vs. them” interpretation, or as Canale (2016) puts

it: “comparisons between ‘our’ homogeneous culture and ‘their’ homogeneous culture [which] tend to reinforce mono-dimensional and stereotypical comparisons of everyday practices.”

5.2.2. Hrvatski za početnike

The Croatian textbook doesn't have the protagonists that we follow through the units, but it does present some characters in the introductory lesson that reappear in later units. These characters are both locals and foreigners who came to live to Croatia. As already mentioned, the textbook is organized in such way that each unit has a part dedicated to cultural information. Just like in the Serbo-Croatian textbook, the dominant culture is the local one, though there are many more references to foreign cultures. These appear in all the units and in different topics from arts, celebrities, folk customs, geography, food, sports and others. In some exercises students are encouraged to compare certain topics between Croatian and other cultures, or are asked to compare the culture of their own country to the Croatian one. The Croatian culture is homogenized and the references to other cultures remain at the stereotype inducing level of “our homogenous culture vs. their homogenous culture” (Canale, 2016), like in the following exercise where countries have to be connected to corresponding symbols:

Poznajemo li zemlje...

Po čemu je pojedina zemlja poznata? Odaberite pravu riječ i upišite je u lokativu: VJEŽBA

Argentina je poznata po	korida	
Italija je poznata po	vino	
Španjolska je poznata po	pizza	
Francuska je poznata po	tango	
Amerika je poznata po	votka	
Švicarska je poznata po	sat, <i>mn</i>	
Rusija je poznata po	coca-cola	
Japan je poznat po	piramida, <i>mn</i>	
Kina je poznata po	sauna	
Egipat je poznat po	sombrero	
Meksiko je poznat po	svila	
Finska je poznata po	kimono	

139

(Čilaš Mikulić, Gulešić Machata, Pasini and Udier, 2015, pp 139)

This is followed by a question “What is Croatia famous for?” accompanied by photos of some Croatian tourist destinations. Interestingly, a photo of Vukovar, a city known as the symbol of the ‘90s war, is also included.


VJEŽBA *Odgovorite:*

Po čemu je poznata Hrvatska?

			
Dubrovnik	Pula	Plitvice	Bol na Braču
			
Istra	Vukovar	Brijuni	

(Čilaš Mikulić, Gulešić Machata, Pasini and Udier, 2015, pp 140)

Of all the topics, the most prominent one is geography and travelling. Similar to what was found in Serbo-Croatian textbook, geographical information about Croatia is presented from a tourist point of view. Almost each unit contains a text describing a city, town, island or another locality in Croatia, with explanations of what they are famous for, what are the typical souvenirs of those areas, or why they are worth a visit (like in the example below) which gives an impression of reading a tourist brochure.

	<p style="text-align: center;">Zadar</p> <p>Zadar je srednjodalmatinski grad smješten na poluotoku. Nalazi se nasuprot otoku Ugljanu. Mnogi turisti posjećuju Zadar. Razgledavaju spomenike i građevine. U Zadru je poznat antički Forum Romanum. Na Forumu je glasovita predromanička crkva Sveti Donat (11. stoljeće). Uz more su morske orgulje.</p>
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(Zadar is a central Dalmatian city, located on a peninsula. It is located opposite the island of Ugljan. Many tourists visit Zadar. They go sightseeing at monuments and buildings. The ancient Forum Romanum is well

known in Zadar. A famous pre-Romanesque church of st. Donatus (11th century) is located on the Forum. By the sea there is a sea organ. (ibid, pp 164)

Such view of culture supports its conception as a market product and positions the language learner as a consumer. The focus is on urban areas, especially the capital city, but there are also mentions of smaller towns and islands. There is only one instance of clear reference to rural area without references to tourism, in a listening practice in Unit 7 titled “Granny Jana and piglets”.

1. *Dopunite tekst:*

BAKA JANA I PRAŠČIĆI

Ovo su moji prašćići. Hranim _____ ujutro i navečer. Jedan se prašćić jako voli maziti. Baš _____ volim.
Imam i mačku. Uživam _____ gledati kako se igra. Za _____ su životinje velika radost.



(ibid, pp 285)

There doesn't seem to be any difference in travelling habits and possibilities of Croatians and foreigners (tourists), as travelling is shown as something available to anyone, regardless of their socioeconomic situation. The first lesson in Unit 12, dedicated specifically to travelling, opens with a story about Carl from Sweden: “Some people live their whole lives in the place they were born. Some travel a lot. Carl is Swedish. He travels a lot. [...] If you ask Carl why he travels he will tell you: „ I like dynamic life. When I travel I enjoy because I have a chance to meet new people, places, music, food, drinks... When I travel I learn a lot about life. For me, life is a journey. [...]” (ibid, 161). This is followed by a set of questions about where do different nations travel to most (“Where do the Swedish travel to most?,”


Where do Croatians travel to?” etc.) and finally by an exercise inviting the learners to share their thoughts and experiences (“Do you like to travel?, Where do you travel?, which of your travels was especially nice and interesting?, Which other countries do you want to travel to?”)

Planiramo putovanja i izlete

12
cijelina

Putovanja

Neki ljudi cijeli život žive ondje gdje su rođeni. Neki mnogo putuju. Carl je Šveđanin. On često putuje. Nedavno je bio u Hrvatskoj. Poslije je posjetio Bosnu i Hercegovinu, Srbiju, Bugarsku i Rumunjsku. Uskoro odlazi u Poljsku i na kraju se vraća u Švedsku. Ako pitate Carla zašto putuje, on će vam reći: „Ja volim dinamičan život. Kad putujem, uživam jer imam priliku upoznati nove ljude, krajeve, glazbu, hranu, pića... Na putovanjima puno učim o životu. Za mene je život putovanje. Stari su filozofi govorili da je život kretanje. I ja tako mislim.”



Znate li odgovor:

- Kamo najviše putuju Šveđani?
- Kamo putuju Hrvati?
- Kamo putuju Japanci?
- Kamo putuju Amerikanci?
- Kamo putuju Nijemci?
- Kamo putuju Australci?

VJEŽBA

Odgovorite:

Volite li Vi putovati?

Kamo Vi putujete?

Koje je Vaše putovanje bilo posebno lijepo ili zanimljivo?

U koje zemlje još želite putovati?

VJEŽBA

(ibid, pp 161)

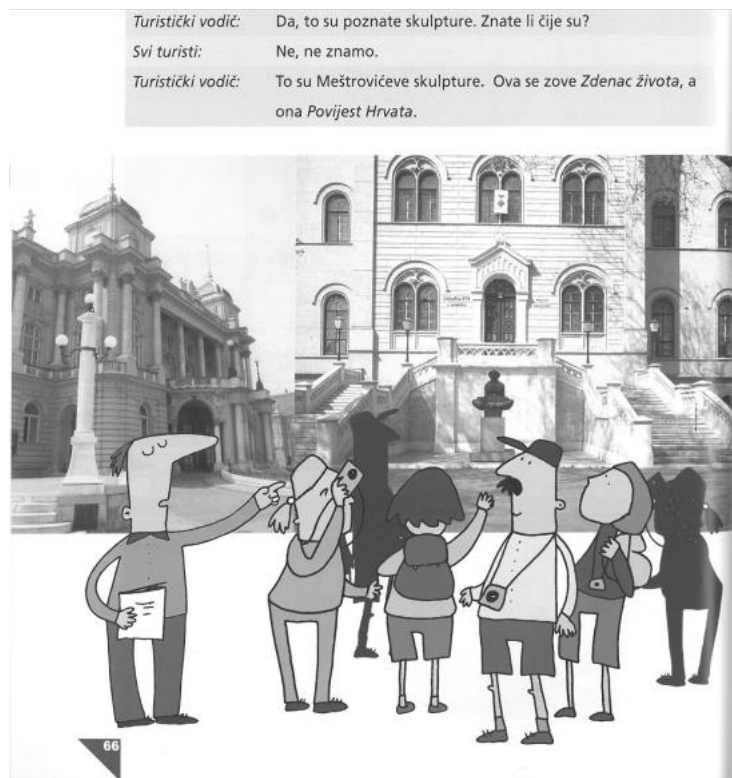
The remaining texts in this unit describe travel plans and some Croatian destinations. In the section describing the foreigners’ in Croatia the characters explain their motivation to learn the language and stay in Croatia. However, when referring to Croatians abroad, the learners are presented with numbers (of Croatians on each continent) and historical reasons

for immigration. The present-day exodus of Croatians abroad that followed after Croatia joined the EU, and that is due to financial crisis and poor work conditions is not mentioned (according to the 2021 population census more than 350 000 Croatians left the country within the last decade, DZS, 2021).

References to daily life and routines present practices typical of middle class: typical daily routine is usually described from a point of view of an employed individual, and free time activities are mostly directed at entertainment (watching, TV, going out, going to cinema), self-care (relaxing, exercising, having a haircut) and consumption (shopping, going to cafes and restaurants). These practices are presented as standard and available to anyone, and learners are encouraged to talk about their daily lives and routines, as well as free time activities and travel experiences and habits. Some exercises invite them to compare habits of their home countries to those presented as typically Croatian.

Furthermore, references to famous and/or rich individuals and celebrities are also present in almost every unit. Most of such characters are related to the local culture, however some lessons present international stars and ask students to talk about famous individuals from their own countries. There are also numerous references to fashion, clothing and models are described as desirable (for example on page 154 a female character regrets leaving her ex-boyfriend when she realizes he is *Mister 2006*, and describes that as a disaster (ibid, pp 154)). Local celebrities often come from the world of sports and discourse in these texts often praises international successes of Croatian athletes. These texts often promote competitiveness, like in the text titled “We are the first!”, or the text about the national handball team (“world champions”; “world’s best handball player”). Texts about athletes are also used to promote family values, which reappear frequently in other units as well, as well as hard work, successfulness and branding.

There are also some references to arts (however significantly less than in the Serbo-Croatian book, especially in regards to literature) and history which are also presented from a tourist point of view, like in the following example where a tour guide presents the work of a famous Croatian sculptor Ivan Meštrović to a group of tourists:



(ibid, pp 66)

References to science are rare and brief and only present local scientists and inventions. The topic of housing covers discourse on looking for and buying an apartment, as well as descriptions of apartments (usually spacious, well located and privately owned) and traditional Croatian dwellings. In regards to the topic of food and drink, typical Croatian dishes are presented and diets of Croatian regions are described. Typical food of other world cultures is also described and learners are encouraged to discuss the differences and talk about the food of their countries. There are many references to visiting restaurants and cafes, which are again portrayed as activities available to anyone regardless of their economic and social

status. In the unit dealing with the topic of health a character is caricaturized as obese, irrational for not taking care of himself because he doesn't want to quit his bad habits of smoking, drinking coffee and not eating healthy. In a listening practice in Unit 20, health is presented as, at the same time, a personal responsibility and a commodity in an advertisement for health insurance and pharmaceutical products. ("Healthy lifestyle is the first half of your health. Leave the other half to *Croatia* health insurance." *ibid*, pp 296)

Additionally, religious values are also promoted on multiple occasions (for example in a section about holidays in Croatia, only the religious Catholic holidays are described). But consumerism is also promoted through numerous references to money (discussion on money and happiness, vocabulary on money and currencies and payment options, luxury, rich individuals, etc.) and shopping. The example below presents an example of normalization of values like consumerism, successfulness and individualism.

Želje

Ja sam Kristina.
Svi ljudi imaju želje.
I ja imam želje.
Želim nove cipele.
Želim novu frizuru.
Želim završiti školu.
Želim dobar posao.
Želim imati lijepu kuću i vrt.





Ja sam Josip.
Svi ljudi imaju želje.
I ja imam želje.
Želim novi auto.
Želim dobar posao.
Želim dobro društvo.
Želim dobro pivo.
Želim dobru nogometnu utakmicu.



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Wishes

I am Kristina. Everybody has wishes. I have wishes too. I wish to have new shoes. I wish a new hairstyle. I wish to finish school. I wish a good job. I wish a nice house and a garden.

I am Josip. [...] I wish to have a new car. I wish a good job. I wish good company. I wish good bear. I wish a good soccer game. (*ibid*, pp 127)

One of the readings dedicated to the topic of money presents an example of the neoliberal practice of making the individuals, instead of the system, responsible for issues

such as poverty, famine, etc.: “[...] Giving up one coffee with milk a day or 6 kn⁷ can help to take care of orphans in Haiti. 82€, the price of two tickets to theatre, can buy 10 kg of medication for a hospital in Sudan. 90€, the price of weekly rent of sun loungers on Italian beaches, can pay for 180 vaccines for African children etc. These are just some of the examples of small sacrifices that don't mean much to us and can be a great help to someone.” (ibid, pp 294)

As I already stated, learners are encouraged to discuss different topics, express their opinions and share information about their local cultures, comparing them to the Croatian one. They are also encouraged to discuss some social and economic issues (for example there is a speaking exercise that invites the learners to discuss the pros and cons of globalization), but in total it can be said that the culture is simplified in a way that it is reduced to tourism and entertainment (travelling, shopping, celebrities, leisure activities, etc.).

5.2.3. Step by Step Serbian

Unlike the Serbo-Croatian and Croatian textbooks whose focus was the student population, the Serbian textbook's protagonist is the already introduced Steve Bond, an English businessman who came to live in Serbia for work. The other protagonist is Jovan, his friend, who, along with his family, presents the local group. The large majority of cultural references are related to the local culture. In fact, besides Steve, and a sporadic mention of his classmates at the Serbian course, there aren't any references to other nationalities or national minorities living in Serbia. The only other foreign character is Judith that appears on page 83 in a translation exercise:

⁷ kuna (kn) is the Croatian currency

“My name is Judith. I am 42 years old and married. My family and I now live in Serbia. I work as an economist in a large, foreign company. We live in a big flat on the sixth floor. My husband works in the hospital. [...]” (Danilović, 2014, pp 83)

As Steve is the protagonist whose life we follow from unit to unit, most of the texts revolve around his every day activities. These often include work related practices, as we saw in section 5.1.3., and in regards to the topic of free time, Steve and his friends engage in typical middle-class activities such as going to restaurants and cafes, going to cinema and theatre, shopping, playing sports and learning foreign languages. Reading and listening to music also appear as frequent leisure activities, and are also the only references to arts. Visiting cafes and restaurants seems is a particularly frequent reference, presented as a regular activity in the Serbian day to day. The discourse of these units also illustrates the typical Serbian dishes and drinks.

Geographically the focus of the contents is the capital city, Belgrade which is where Steve and his friends live. There is a description of the city centre and its famous sights: “Belgrade is a big old city. There are old buildings in the centre. The National Theatre and The National Museum are on the Republic square. Restaurants and cafes are on the square. Knez Mihailova street is near. Old buildings and new shops are in the street. Kalemegdan park is not far. [...] In the park there are the restaurant “Kalemegdanska terasa” and a small old church. The zoo is also there.” (Danilović, 2014, pp 22). Generally, the characters travel to business trips or family visits, but there are also mentions of leisure travelling. They go for vacations and short trips around Serbia and these sections offer descriptions of a few destinations around Serbia and typical foods, sights and things to do, like in the example below where Steve goes with Jovan to his vacation house:



(Steve Bond plans a weekend in Šumadija, *ibid*, pp 119)

“My friend Jovan invited me to his vacation house. [...] I am going on Friday, after work. [...] We will probably have lunch together, and after lunch I will go to Oplenac. [...] I will stay there until 5 and then I will go to Arandjelovac. [...] I will surely go to the park across the street from the hotel. I will take a walk, look at the sculptures in the park, go for a coffee, read the newspaper, talk to people. Maybe I will go to the city museum. [...] Šumadija is an agricultural area so fruits and vegetables are tasty and good quality. [...] I will eat the specialties of Šumadija and drink the wine from Oplenovac. [...]” (*ibid*, pp 119)

Jovan and his family say they like to travel abroad, but without mentioning specific destinations. The only location outside Serbia referred to more in detail is London, which is where Steve comes from. In a unit about comparatives, Steve is asked to compare London and Belgrade. The aspects of comparison do position the two cities as places to live in, rather than as tourist destinations (as is typical of Croatian textbook). A simplifying, “us vs. them” comparison consists of a non-critical list of pros and cons from a middle class point of view in regards to shops, free time activities such as going to restaurants, cinemas, theatres and concerts and housing (typical dwellings). A point is also made about prices being higher in London, but the income-cost of life ratio isn’t considered.

The housing situation of the characters is described more into detail than in the textbooks from the previous two sections. All of the characters appear satisfied with their

housing situations, and most of them live in wealthy areas of Belgrade. Steve first lives in a hotel in the city centre, but then rents a three-bedroom apartment for himself. Jovanović family lives in a two floor house with a big garden in one of the wealthiest neighbourhoods of the city, Senjak. They also own a vacation house Svetlana, Jovan's daughter, lives in an apartment in the city centre with her family, and her husband's family also has a big family home with a garden. Steve's home in England is also a two floor house with a garden in the suburbs of London. The grandmother Stanislava, Jovan's mother, also has a house with garden of her own in Zemun, a town in the municipality of Belgrade. The grandmother is also the only retired character, and one of the very few to appear in any of the three textbooks, which is interesting as she is also one of the characters to embody some of the most typical neoliberal values: she highlights her good health despite her age and points to the importance of taking care of oneself and being physically and mentally active: "I live healthy – I walk by the river every day, I do everything on my own around the house. [...] I don't smoke, I don't eat much, but sometimes I have a glass of red wine. [...] Twice a week I take Italian lessons. I like learning foreign languages, and I think it's useful. Science says that for good health and long life we should exercise our mind and our body." (ibid, pp 144)

The grandmother and the rest of Jovanović family are also used to promote family values, which are reinforced by the examples of other characters as well (Steve, his secretary, Judith, etc).

The learners are occasionally invited to share their experiences and opinions, mostly about their personal lives, and almost never about their countries' cultures. The speaking exercises, especially role plays, tend to position the learners as consumers (in a shop, restaurant, café, theatre or as tourists).

“Role-play:

- Dobar dan. Izvolite. (Hello. How may I help you?)

- *Ask to see a blue dress from the shop window.*
 - *Koja veličina vam treba? (Which size do you need)*
 - *Ask for size 42. Say that you prefer it in other colour. Ask what other colours they have.*
 - *Imamo istu haljinu sive boje. Da li želite da probate? (We have the same dress in grey. Do you want to try that?)*
 - *Ask where the dressing room is.*
 - *Kabina je pravo pa levo. (The fitting room is straight and then left.)*
 - *Say that the dress is fine and you wish to buy it.*
 - *Kako plaćate? (How are you paying?)*
 - *Ask if you can pay with a credit card.*
 - *Naravno. To je 8.420 dinara.” (Of course. It’s 8 420 dinars.)*
- (ibid, pp 150)

In summary, cultural references are much less frequent than in the Serbo-Croatian, and especially than in the Croatian textbook. The Serbian culture is the only represented culture which is portrayed in a simplified manner, as homogenized and from a single (middle class) point of view.

5.3. Gender

5.3.1. Kroatisch-Serbisch Lernbuch mit Grammatik für Anfänger

The already described protagonists of this textbook are Gunther and Helga. They are equally represented, engage in the same activities and generally there doesn't seem to be much difference between the two characters.

If we look at linguistic aspects of the discourse of Gunther and Helga, however, some differences can be noticed. The most obvious factor is the order of appearance as when referred to the couple, Gunther always appears first. This is noted in other examples throughout the book as well (Ivan and Ljubica, Marko and Ana, etc.). As required by the grammatical norm of the Serbo-Croatian language, when referring to a mixed pair or group of

individuals, the masculine plural is always used. However, masculine plural also prevails when referring to unnamed groups of individuals (like for example to talk about the German or the Yugoslavian people in general the masculine plural is used), and this is especially in apparent in grammatical exercises. Unnamed characters such as the shop clerk, driver, marine, police officer, tourist, traveller, student, mechanic, and other characters Helga and Gunther meet along the way are also dominantly male characters, with exceptions of one post office and one shop clerk. In regards to the semantic roles of the female and male characters, there aren't any significant differences.

Furthermore, looking at domestic roles, which are in fact very rarely referred to, we note a certain degree of stereotypization, like in the following example from a grammatical exercise: "She offered wine/beer/cognac/brandy to the guest." (Drilo, 1975, pp 94). The case of Darko, the young Yugoslavian working in Munich to support his brothers and sisters (see section 5.1.1.) is an example of providing for the family being considered as men's job as Darko only refers to his brothers saying they are too young to work. But considering the rarity of such examples, this cannot be said to be representative of domestic roles in Yugoslavia or this textbook.

Another example of stereotypical gender roles is seen in reference to shopping, which is considered to be a typical favourite activity of women: "She shops often and gladly."; "She was buying everything she could." (Drilo, 1975, pp 94). Another grammatical exercise aimed at practising the vocative case, subtly stereotypizes social roles: (male) "dear friend, old camarade, respected professor, esteemed doctor"; (female) "lovely mother, dear sister" (Drilo, 1975, pp 117). However, when looking at sentences in context, social roles seem to be fairly balanced, especially in relation to the world of work. In the world of students, male and female students are represented, but also politically active and engaged in sports activities.

However, it should be noted that there are less female students participating in the students' council meeting and sports competition.

Finally, in the last units dedicated to literature, all the authors that appear are men and even the anonymous authors of folk literature are referred to as men.

In conclusion, we can see that the author attempted to account for gender equality advocated for in Yugoslavia, which is especially apparent through social roles male and female characters engage in. However, scratching the surface, and especially looking at the linguistic aspects, gender bias and stereotypes are revealed.

5.3.2. Hrvatski za početnike

The Croatian textbook doesn't have typical protagonists, but as I already mentioned in the previous sections, there are characters that reappear throughout the book. Gender wise the representation of characters is fairly balanced, which however, cannot be said about topics regarding celebrities, artists, scientists and famous historical figures, where male characters predominate.

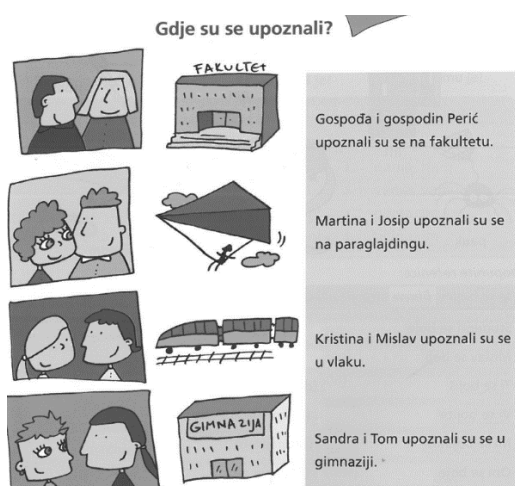
Looking at social roles and activities male and female characters engage in, gender bias and stereotypes appear very obvious. In texts related to the topic of work, male characters prevail, they talk about business, go to meetings and job interviews (also conducted by a man, see example in section 5.1.2.) and travel for work. The stereotype of men enjoying sports is reinforced through male characters often engaging in sports activities or talks about sports, like in the following example: "Ivan, like all men, likes to sit in front of the TV and enjoy football." (Čilaš Mikulić, Gulešić Machata, Pasini and Udier, 2015, pp 292). Male characters also engage in buying an apartment, assembling kitchen furniture, drinking beer, and talk about cars. Female characters on the other hand, often engage in activities such as shopping, going to a fashion show and modelling, watching romantic movies and soap operas, going to

fitness classes, embroidery, etc. Many female characters also talk about being on a diet. They also often talk about men and romantic relationships. The most emblematic of such conversations is the one already mentioned in section 5.2.2., titled *Disaster!* where Jadranka calls herself a fool for leaving her ex-boyfriend who now lives with his new girlfriend, has a great new job and became *Mister 2006*. Gender stereotypes are best presented through the example of domestic roles in Perić family, where mister and misses Perić's daily routine is described: in the morning he waits for her to get ready for too long, and in the afternoon when they come back from work, Mr. Perić reads the newspaper, while Mrs. Perić prepares lunch and then gets upset when he keeps reading as the lunch is getting cold.



Morning vs. afternoon in Perić family, (Čilaš Mikulić, Gulešić Machata, Pasini and Udier, 2015, pp 196-7)

The entire unit 19 is dedicated to the topic of love, which is in fact talk about hetero sexual romantic relationships.



“Where did they meet?”

Mr. and Ms. Perić met at university.; Martina and Josip met paragliding.; Katarina and Mislav met in train.; Sandra and Tom met in high school.” (ibid, pp 262)

The contents of this unit are also used to promote the already mentioned (nuclear) family values.

Looking at the linguistic layer of gender issues in this textbook, it can be said that, unlike in the Serbo-Croatian one, the order of appearance varies (see the example above). However, the modern day Croatian language doesn't seem to move away from gender bias in comparison to Serbo-Croatian if we look at the practice of masculine generic construction.

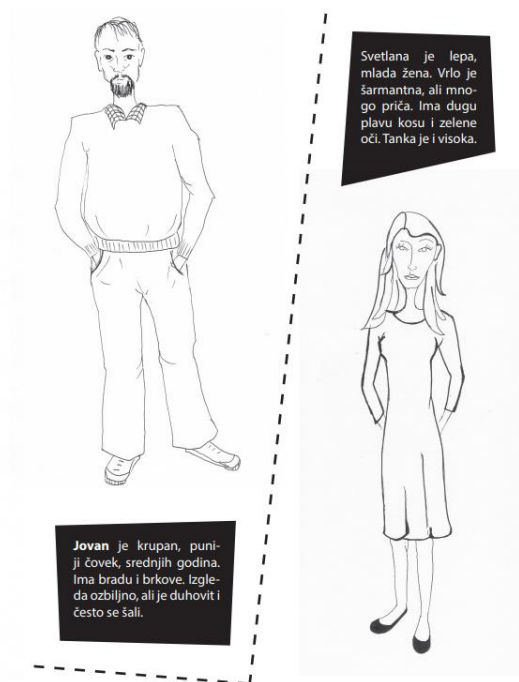
In summary, the gender bias and stereotypization as well as heteronormative values that are noticed at first glance of this textbook, are only confirmed through analysis of social and domestic roles of the characters, the activities they engage in and other practices, as well as the linguistic aspects of the book's discourse. These findings confirm the conservative and patriarchal tendencies in the present day Croatia as described in section 2.2.2.

5.3.3. Step by Step Serbian

For the choice of its protagonist we can say that *Step by Step Serbian* is the most gender biased of the three textbooks from the sample of this analysis. The majority of contents revolve around Steve and a lot of texts are written from his perspective. But besides

Steve, the general representation of the rest of the characters seems fairly balanced. The business women and men embodying neoliberal values as shown in section 5.1.3. appear equally. Looking at their social roles, a certain degree of bias is revealed: men appear more often on leading positions in business, while women work on lower positions (for example Tanja, the secretary) or their positions in the companies are undefined (Judith is an economist in a big foreign company, and Maja works in an office). There is also Milena who is as mentioned earlier, and who is unemployed. She is a librarian, but currently doesn't work and it is mentioned she has a lot of work around the house. In the household of their daughter Svetlana, however, the domestic roles are different: "[...] My husband Zoran works in school and goes to work later than I do. He stays with Anka and waits for Vera who takes care of our daughter while we're at work. [...] Zoran finishes work earlier and comes home around two. He and Anka have lunch [...] They come home before me and wait for me with coffee." (Danilović, 2014, pp 178); "Zoran made dinner and waited for me so we can have dinner together." (ibid, 180)

This is the only example in all three textbooks where a man takes care of children and prepares food. In regards to the activities they engage in, the characters' practices are more stereotyped: Zoran and Milan like sports, while Svetlana, Milena and Maja like shopping. The unit dedicated to description of characters enhances the stereotypes as description of women focus more on physical appearance and they are all beautiful, good looking, charming, have beautiful smile, etc. A remark is made about Svetlana being charming, but talking too much. Men are on the other hand characterized as robust, tall, smart, serious, but funny, etc.



Jovan is big, chunky middle-aged man. He has a beard and moustache. He looks serious, but he is funny and jokes a lot.; Svetlana is a pretty young woman. She is very charming, but she talks a lot. She has long blond hair and green eyes. She is thin and tall. (ibid, 165)

The unnamed characters such as the waiter, the clerk, the receptionist, the student, the neighbour, the guest, etc. are predominantly males, and masculine generic construction is favoured. But what is interesting in this textbook is that many dialogues do not have speakers specified, like in the example below:

- “- Excuse me, how can I get to Kalemegdan?
- Go straight, and then go the first street on the left.
- Can I walk there?
- Of course, it’s near.
- Is the National Theatre near?
- Yes! It’s on Republic Square, not far from the National Museum. [...]“ (Danilović, 2014, pp 24)

It seems that the author tries to keep a certain gender neutrality in this way. And the representation of genders in grammatical exercises, as well as the order of appearance and semantic roles also reveal balanced representation of both genders.

In summary, it can be said that the characters of *Step by Step* embody neoliberal ideals in a way that an idealized “gender neutral” society is portrayed where gender related issues don’t impede one’s professional success.

6. Conclusion

The historical and socio political embeddedness of the second and foreign teaching materials has been confirmed in many analyses of global and smaller languages, and the present analysis seems to confirm it in the context of a small scope language that is the Serbo-Croatian. Relating the contents of the three textbooks regarding work, culture and gender to their larger socio-political and economic context the present analysis shows how they reflect and reinforce the dominant discourses of their time.

The 70s textbook from socialist Yugoslavia thus promotes typical values, practices and characteristics of the market socialism. Workers' perspective is normalized in the contents related to the world of work, with clear references to the working class, but class inequalities are hardly accounted for. Market values and consumerism are promoted in the contents related to culture which is homogenized and commodified as a product for touristic market, but in topics related to daily life and activities a certain diversity of social classes and lifestyles is reflected. In relation to gender issues the socialist ideals are probably the most apparent. The equal representation of female and male characters, especially in the world of work is accounted for, however domestic roles remain within the frames of the so called traditional values.

The two contemporary textbooks on the other hand, reveal similar tendencies to those found in other critical analyses of contemporary second language teaching materials. In general, despite different perspectives and choices of target audience, both textbooks are predominantly focused on the same topics related to free time, leisure and entertainment. The favouring of activities typical of middle class lifestyles reinforces the image of a single class society. In relation to the contents regarding the world of work numerous examples of neoliberal values and practices (flexibility, mobility, personal responsibility for success and well-being, etc.) are presented in a positive way and are naturalized and lacking of critical

perspective, and accounts of social, economic and political inequalities of the system.

Contents related to culture, are characterized by consumerist values and practices, especially in regards to the dominant practices that are travelling, shopping and going to restaurants and cafes. The marketized view of culture is especially characteristic of the Croatian textbook, which resembles a tourist brochure, reflecting thus the economic reality of Croatia depending largely on tourism without any critical accounts of it. The focus is prevalently on the local cultures which favours stereotypical and static conceptions of culture. In regards to gender representation, in the case of Serbian, an apparent gender neutral approach in neoliberal sense is adopted, while the Croatian textbook presents examples of the gender bias and stereotypization favouring the repatriarchalization of the society (Dević, 2021), especially in comparison to the Yugoslavian materials. The textbooks propose tasks favouring the static conception of culture, and generally position students as consumers engaging them in activities such as role plays related to shopping, going to restaurants and bars and travelling.

The ways in which teachers and learners interpret and use these tasks in classrooms doesn't of course, necessarily coincide with the ways materials are shaped and designed (Littlejohn, 2011). An analysis of how the materials are "brought to life" in actual classrooms is a necessary complement to content analysis if we want to work towards building a critical and more righteous language teaching practices, but the use of materials is beyond the scope of the present thesis. However, I do hope that, in addition to contributing to the research field of critical textbook analysis, the findings of this thesis can help the teachers to better understand and take more control over the materials they use in teaching Serbian and Croatian to foreigners. Because as Bori (2015) reminds, teachers and learners conscious of the practices and values proposed in the teaching materials as embedded in neoliberal capitalism are able to resist and reverse the oppressive and indoctrinating ideas they promote.

Critical interpretations of the teaching materials are a common practice of the teachers who see education as an emancipatory practice. However, some educators and researchers go beyond the proposals of customizing the materials by supplementing or omitting aspects deemed problematic. As Scott Thornbury points out, such practices may be inappropriate on a long term basis as “the [...] nature of coursebook texts [isn't] likely to bear the weight of so much critical analysis over a sustained period of time” (Thornbury, 2013). Instead, some teachers and pedagogues, led by ideals of critical and libertarian pedagogy, opt for coursebook-free courses where teacher assume the role of mediators and co-creators of knowledge. In such classes, that often adopt the CLIL method, students have an active role in the production of their own custom learning materials.

In conclusion, I would like to point to the limitations of this study which might indicate the direction for future work. The first limitation regards the sample size. As only three textbooks are analysed the findings of this study should not be generalized, but should instead be taken as an insight into the teaching materials in Serbia and Croatia and possibly, as a point of departure for future research. In order to obtain a more detailed and structured data, a quantitative analysis of a larger sample should be conducted. In addition, as already suggested, an analysis of reception of the materials would be crucial in developing a better understanding of the reinterpretations of the materials that would allow for more constructive critiques and creation of more egalitarian and empowering teaching and learning practices.

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Appendix 1

Risager's analytical categories (1990: 182-183)

1. The micro-level –phenomena of social and cultural anthropology:

- a. the social and geographical definition of characters.
- b. material environment.
- c. situations of interaction.
- d. interaction and subjectivity of the characters: feelings, attitudes, values and perceived problems.

2. The macro-level –social, political and historical matters:

- a. broad social facts about contemporary society (geographical, economical, political, etc.)
- b. broad socio-political problems (unemployment, pollution, etc.)
- c. historical background.

3. International and intercultural issues:

- a. comparisons between the foreign country and the pupil's own.
- b. mutual representations, images, stereotypes.
- c. mutual relations: cultural power and dominance, co-operation and conflict.

4. Point of view and style of the author(s)