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***The Institute for Croatian Language and Linguistics* and its role in developing the modern Croatian language**

Abstract (English)

The Institute for Croatian Language and Linguistics is the main national scientific institution for research into the Croatian language and linguistics in general. It is also the central body for the development of the Croatian standard language, making it an institution that is involved in the active shaping of Croatian linguistic policy. After 20 years of Croatian orthographic confusion, the Institute for Croatian Language and Linguistics published the first freely available Croatian orthography manual on the internet (pravopis.hr), which is now widely accepted.

Abstract (Croatian)

Institut za hrvatski jezik i jezikoslovlje središnja je nacionalna znanstvena ustanova za proučavanje hrvatskoga jezika i jezikoslovlja. Institut je i središnja ustanova za njegovanje hrvatskoga standardnog jezika i oblikovatelj hrvatske jezične politike. Nakon 20 godina nesređenoga hrvatskoga pravopisnoga stanja Institut za hrvatski jezik i jezikoslovlje objavio je prvi besplatni hrvatski pravopis na internetu (pravopis.hr) koji je naširoko prihvaćen.

Speaking on the subject of this conference from the Croatian perspective now makes much more sense, I believe, as the Institute for Croatian Language and Linguistics has truly become the central institution for work concerning the Croatian language in the past 5 to 6 years.

The Institute for Croatian Language and Linguistics is the main national scientific institution for research into the Croatian language and linguistics. It was founded in 1948 under the auspices of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and has been an independent scientific institution since 1996. The role and mission of the Institute for Croatian Language and Linguistics is scientific research in the humanities within the field of philology. This work includes the systematic scientific study of the Croatian language including all Croatian idioms past and present, all socio-culturally stratified idioms, and all language styles. It also includes the creation of foundational lexicographic works and other linguistic reference materials for Croatian language and linguistics.

Some attempts have been made to systematise official linguistic planning and language policy in Croatia, especially since it became an independent country in the 1990s, but it cannot truly be claimed that these efforts have met with much success. A Croatian Standard Language Norming Council did exist in two separate periods, the first from 1998 until 2001, and the second from 2005 to 2012. It was initially devised as a council of linguists, whose role was to provide the main guidelines for national language policy and to solve linguistic issues. However, the same political forces that created the Council eventually failed to implement its conclusions, most likely – at least in part – because the public sometimes strongly disapproved of the conclusions and opinions of the linguists who sat on the Council.

In my opinion the insurmountable obstacles faced by language planning in Croatia and the subsequent poor results are the result of inconsistent government policy towards language, and the fragmentation of the power and influence of specific groups of linguists from various institutions such as the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the *Matica hrvatska* cultural institution. Some of the publishing companies that publish primary and secondary school textbooks and normative handbooks, such as orthography manuals, dictionaries, and grammars, also played a fairly large role in the failure of language planning and systematic linguistic policy.

This tangle of scientists, educators, publishers, and politicians resulted in an inconsistent linguistic policy. One example of this is the attempt to pass a law on the public usage of the Croatian language. The only legal text in Croatian legislature regarding the Croatian language is the 12th article of the Croatian Constitution, which states:

The Croatian language and the Latin script shall be in official use in the Republic of Croatia. In individual local units, another language and Cyrillic or some other script may be introduced in official use together with the Croatian language and Latin script under conditions specified by law.

The first bill dealing with the public usage of the Croatian language came about in 1995. The last unsuccessful attempt was suggested by *Matica hrvatska* in 2013. A number of other attempts were also made at intervals between these two, but in the end, these bills never got any further than the entrance to the Croatian Parliament, and they were never given serious consideration by Croatian politicians.

As far as the standardisation of the Croatian language is concerned, I must emphasise that the political situation, the war, and the lack of a clear linguistic policy were not advantageous to the creation of normative guidebooks, which would have led to the full standardisation of the language. Of the three foundational normative guidebooks – dictionaries, grammars, and orthography handbooks – only a dictionary was published in the first five years of Croatia's independence. However, this dictionary was the work of a single linguist, Vladimir Anić, and both the first edition in 1991 and the second edition in 1994 met with numerous

criticisms from Croatian linguists. No serious changes were made to orthography in this period, and it is interesting to note that the re-issue of an orthography handbook that had been banned and destroyed in 1971 was an unexpected publishing success – more than 100,000 copies were sold, and it thus served as a standard language guidebook in the first years of Croatia's independence. A grammar that was produced at the Institute in 1979, which bore the forbidden title of "Croatian language" in Yugoslav times, served as the official Croatian grammar starting in the 1990s.

The greatest problem in the modern Croatian language would prove to be orthography. Starting in 2000, the authors of the banned 1971 orthography handbook which was reprinted in 1990 attempted to alter a few of its important rules. Despite strong criticism from cultural workers, scholars, and educators, the authors stood by these changes, resulting in what resembled a small war among linguists. An opposing faction of Croatian linguists from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb, and later from *Matica hrvatska* as well, published orthography handbooks that attempted to impose more acceptable, already partially established orthographic rules on the majority of Croatian speakers. However, political support for the authors of the 1971 orthography resulted in their orthographic rules being prescribed for Croatian schools until 2013. During this period of twenty-odd years, a whole host of orthography handbooks were published, eventually totalling more than 30! Aside from the publishers of these handbooks and their authors, almost no one in Croatia was satisfied with the linguistic situation. This is especially true of the educational system, in which multiple orthography handbooks with differing rules were prescribed or approved for use. Numerous associations of professors and Croatian language teachers submitted various complaints and requests to the Ministry of Education asking for a single orthography handbook to be approved for use; however, politicians perceived this as a hot potato that was best left in the fire.

So, what role did the Institute of Croatian Language and Linguistics play in language policy and the standardisation of the Croatian language from Croatia's independence to 2012?

First, it must be said that the Institute of Croatian Language and Linguistics, as a part of the Academy, was responsible for work on some standard language handbooks. It was initially founded 70 years ago with the task of finishing the largest Slavic lexicographic work – the South Slavic Academy of Sciences and Arts' Dictionary of the Croatian or Serbian Language. Work on this dictionary began in 1880 and it was finished at the Institute in 1975. With 23 volumes, it encompasses nearly 400,000 words even though it is a historical dictionary. Croatian grammars were also created at the Institute in 1979, as well as two language guidebooks (style manuals) in 1971 and 1999. Before Croatian independence, the Croatian language existed under a dual name together with Serbian. It did not have a real opportunity to develop independently along its natural historical

course following the first Croatian dictionary in 1595, the first Croatian grammar in 1604, the first Croatian orthography in 1639, the first Croatian translation of the New Testament in 1562 and 1563, and the first translation of the entire Bible in 1633. The language was also taught at European universities under the title of “Illyrian” in Bologna, Padua, Vienna, Paris, Valencia, and elsewhere beginning in the early 17th century. After Croatia’s independence in 1990 and the drafting of the Croatian constitution, Croatian became the official language and began to develop more freely.

The Institute of Croatian Language and Linguistics did not participate in the aforementioned orthographic chaos that took place during the first two decades of Croatia’s independence. However, in 2012, with strong media support – because, of course, media outlets had an interest in finally untying the Gordian knot of Croatian orthography – a project was announced to create a unified orthography handbook at the Institute based upon entirely new principles. The authorship would be attributed to the institution and the orthographic rules would be voted on at sessions of the Institute’s Science Council, followed by a public debate lasting a month. All educational, cultural, and media institutions and all linguists and orthographers would also be sent a draft of the handbook and asked for a rating, suggestions, and comments, which the Science Council would consider and potentially adopt. After this, the handbook would be published on the internet on its own domain as a public good.

The public debate which was organised in April and May of 2013 included hundreds of interested users, dozens of whom were linguists, and the media followed the entire proceedings as the event of the year. (There were two headlines on the front page of national newspaper *Večernji list* on 15 April 2013: the announcement of the results of the first Croatian elections for EU parliament, and the new unified Croatian orthography handbook.) Between April and June, I personally gave more than 200 interviews and statements for Croatian and foreign media outlets, all of which helped to ensure that the story had a happy ending.

After the public debate, the Science Council affirmed the final rules by majority vote, and each rule was voted on individually. In order to reconcile orthographic differences, recommended and allowed versions were established. Of these two versions, only the recommended versions were implemented in the educational system. It is interesting to note that Professor Hans Zehetmair, president of the German Orthography Commission, gave an interview on Croatian radio during the debate on orthography rules during which he sent our orthography team a message – do not exclude the public from the process of deciding on orthographic rules, and do not make the rules too inflexible. The entire content of the orthography handbook was put online more than 4 years ago, and it has had more than 3 million hits to date. In the meantime, the Ministry of Education has recommended it for use in schools as an internet edition, and all textbooks have been harmonised with the handbook, while all other orthography manuals have since

lost their recommendations for use. 100,000 copies of the printed edition were distributed along with daily newspapers, and it has also been published in book form. The entire concept met with resistance from publishing houses who had their own editions in print. However, in the four years since the publishing of the Institute's Croatian Orthography Handbook, no other orthography handbook has been published, and so we can rightly conclude that the Institute of Croatian Language and Linguistics has succeeded in completing the process of standardising Croatian orthography.

The Croatian Orthography Handbook has become the Institute's model and guideline for further work on modelling the Croatian language. Numerous web-oriented projects have followed, attempting to place the Croatian language on the European language map as one of the 24 official languages of the European Union. In addition to the STRUNA termbase, opened in 2012, and the Orthography Handbook in 2013, the Institute has also developed numerous other online resources which it has made publicly available. These resources show and prove that the study of the Croatian language and systematic, modern care of the language constitute the Institution's fundamental orientation. This approach, including complete media transparency, has made the Institute recognised as the central body for the study of the Croatian language, both by the media, the general public, and, as a result, by political structures.

In order to provide at least a partial overview of the work of the Institute of Croatian Language and Linguistics and its role in the modern Croatian language, I will provide a brief summary of its most recent projects and online web resources.

The primary goal envisaged in the Institute's strategy for the past five, and for the next five years, is the creation of online resources for the Croatian language. We have made great progress in this direction and have created a large number of high quality resources.

This goal is twofold.

Firstly, we have constructed online resources that are user friendly, educational, widely used by the general public, and popular. Within this goal we have created:

- 1) pravopis.hr – The online version of the Croatian Orthography Handbook, our most used and most visited online resource
- 2) jezicni-savjetnik.hr – Language advice online, a list of the most frequent linguistic errors and answers to frequently asked questions
- 3) hrvatski.hr – Croatian in school, a compilation of online games and tests to practice linguistic knowledge on different levels, from primary school through to secondary school
- 4) matura.ihjj.hr – Online tests for preparation for the Exit Exams in the Croatian Language
- 5) bolje.hr – Croatian is better: an online portal with suggestions on how to replace unadapted loan words and phrases, mostly from English, with Croatian equivalents.

We also plan to create online language courses for different levels of learning Croatian as a foreign language.

Secondly, and more in line with our mission of being primarily a research institute, we are building online resources that are the result of externally evaluated academic linguistic research projects; these are often highly specialised and aimed primarily at linguistically educated users.

- 1) In March 2017, the Croatian Online Dictionary (MREŽNIK) project was launched, financed by the Croatian Science Foundation. This corpus-based monolingual e-dictionary is based on the latest findings and methods in the area of e-lexicography.
- 2) MetaNet.HR is our online lexical and semantic database that lists the semantic frames of the Croatian language and their respective semantic roles with lexical units, as well as figurative links among them. This database is our most recognised online resource internationally, used for high level NLP and AI tasks.
- 3) STRUNA is a Croatian scientific terminology database that systematically collects, creates, analyses, and interprets terminology from various fields in order to harmonise terminology in the Croatian language. This programme to build Croatian scientific terminology is also the only form of terminology planning currently underway in Croatia, and it has been available online since February 2012.

Other online resources include a Croatian Verb Valency Database, a Collocation Dictionary, an Online Diachronic Corpus of the Croatian Language, an Etymological dictionary, an Onomastic database, dialectological e-dictionaries, and projects to retro-digitise historical dictionaries and grammar handbooks.

Bibliographical information

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The electronic PDF version of the text is accessible through the EFNIL website at:

<http://www.efnil.org>