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Reflecting Social Heteroglossia and Accommodating Diverse Audiences – a Challenge to the Media

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1 Introduction

One aspect of the recent transformation processes in Central and Eastern Europe was the disintegration of larger political entities into states based on a nation principle. Nationalistic ideologies could to some extent fill the void left after the formerly powerful socialist and communist ideologies had disintegrated. The role of media in ethnic polarisations and conflicts and their participation in spreading hate speech became an important topic on an international level in the 1990s. The transformation of the media systems in the former socialist and communist countries was monitored by European and international institutions which mainly used the Western European post-Second World War media order, based on the idea of a dual media system with a strong public-service sector acting within a national public sphere as a blueprint. At the same time on a worldwide scale globalisation processes already accelerated a power shift from state institutions to supranational and to local bodies. In the media and communication sector this reconfiguration became obvious particularly rapidly. In the late 1980s, a wave of corporate mergers, strategic alliances and the convergence of media, communication and entertainment industries changed ownership structures, contributed to altering information and communication flows and to intensifying the spread of globalised cultural products in the countries of Eastern Europe. The state-centred models employed in the transformation process of the media sector

were not only already outdated to some extent, but also their national orientation made them inappropriate for countering nationalistic discourse. The globalised media industries that immediately set out to conquer the new markets opened by privatisation, failed to provide an adequate space for the articulation of civil society.

This chapter focuses on the interplay between media, language and discourse in transition processes. The first section of the chapter gives an insight into the growing field of research concerned with the role of the media in the recent transformation processes. Focusing on examples from the space of former Yugoslavia, the second part examines the role of media in the propagation of a unitary state language as part of a nationalistic discourse. The two following sections are dedicated to media developments that indicate a counter move: media that seek to address the entire former Serbo-Croatian linguistic space, within the Balkan region as well as among migrants in different parts of the world, and media initiatives that engage in opening a space for the heteroglossic publics and weaving translocal connections.

2 Transformation, media and language

In political practice both the media and languages are seen as crucial factors in processes of transformation. Freedom of information and access to information is often considered as a *conditio sine qua non* for political and social change and as prime indicators for a successful transformation process. The tacit assumption that these fundamental rights are guaranteed only to speakers of official languages within a given territory has rarely been questioned, neither in the so-called countries of transition nor in the EU member states. Speakers of minority languages and of languages of migration are still often impaired in their access to media in their language with a national spread. The common state language is still seen as a factor that can foster national unity and provide identification with a state. Although in the past years the Council of Europe and the European Union have increasingly taken up a more active role in conceiving a language policy beyond the individual member state, the field of language policy – especially in domains other than education – remains mainly a prerogative of the nation state.

Media and language policy are interlinked in a multiple sense: which language(s), codes and varieties are being used in the media already predetermines questions of inclusivity and exclusivity of the public sphere and of representation. Media are also powerful actors in the

implementation of language policies. Media texts, just like other texts in the public domain, provide discursive and linguistic resources which can be seen as authoritative voice (Bourdieu, 1982) and media serve as fora in which folk beliefs on language, academic expertise in linguistics and political opinions on language can be expressed and language policies can be negotiated. Media discourse is shaped by everyday language practices and in turn contributes to shaping them.

Traditional transformation research has so far paid only little attention to the role of media (Tzankoff, 2001, p. 9) and to the role of language policies and linguistic practices linked to media (Busch, 2004) in processes of social change. Nevertheless, there is now a growing corpus of research into the role of media in transformation, mainly focusing on Central and Eastern Europe. Some of this work concentrates on cultural dimensions such as, for example, the propagation of westernised mass culture in the space of Eastern Europe (Coman, 2000, p. 51). Alternatively, it focuses on the relationship between media and the state, too often still following the theoretical model developed in the US during the Cold War period. This simplifying model is based on a binary opposition between the controlled and state-dominated media in totalitarian systems and the ideal of free and democratic media in systems in which the market is the main regulating factor (Sparks, 2000, pp. 36ff; Coman, 2000, p. 51). This ideologically loaded way of conceiving media change ignores the important impact of oppositional and alternative media, often summarised under the heading 'samizdat'. It also ignores media developments of internationalisation and globalisation that began a long time before the fall of the Berlin Wall. From a Western perspective the transformation process was understood as a process of 'normalisation' and of 'Europeanisation' of the media systems in Eastern and southeastern Europe (de Smaele, 1999), a process that should ideally result in the adoption of (traditional) Western media standards in the countries of transition. Political interventions from the part of the 'international community' took the outdated Cold War models based on Wilbur Schramm's theories of media and modernisation (1964) as guiding principles in media policy and granted highest priority to media privatisation, expecting that such a process would automatically lead to a democratisation of media in the long run.

The Western European model, which served as an export model, foresees the duality between a public-service media sector with its orientations and obligations regarding the national public sphere and a private media sector which, according to modernisation media theories, should guarantee that a multiplicity of opinions and interests

are represented in this public sphere. This model was often imposed on the so-called countries in transition without taking already-existing media structures and reception habits into account and without regard to the critique that had already emerged around the concept of the national public sphere. Habermas's analysis of the national public sphere as a mediating instance between the state and society, originally published in the 1960s, received larger attention again after its publication in English in the late 1980s. Feminist studies made the criticism that the public sphere was assumed as a male domain (Young, 1987) and post-colonial studies formulated a similar concern regarding the whiteness of the public sphere (Morley, 2000, pp. 120ff). Habermas (1990/1962) himself revised his model with regard to Foucault's work and acknowledges that he underestimated the existence of counter discourses and publics that were already present in the traditional bourgeois public sphere and that the exclusion of the 'other' was a constitutive feature of the national public sphere. Not only gender, ethnic origin, age and political orientation, but also language, can become such a factor of exclusion or fragmentation of the public sphere or rather an ensemble of public spheres that interact (Busch, 2004). Under the conditions of globalisation or, more accurately, of glocalisation in the media and in cultural production, the question of the public sphere also needs other approaches as media flows have become more diverse and multidirectional and reception habits have been changing considerably with the greater availability of new communication technologies.

In the transformation process in the 1990s the taboo of the inviolability of state borders that had dominated the post-Second World War political order in Europe was abandoned, larger multilingual entities disintegrated into states, which considered themselves as nation states. This disintegration caused new majority-minority relationships and a new definition of status for languages spoken and written in the successor states of entities such as the Yugoslav Federation or the Soviet Union. Languages that had formerly been dominant state languages became minority languages with a low status in certain contexts (Russian in the Baltic states in the 1990s) and former regional or minority languages were raised to the status of official languages (Estonian in the Estonian Republic). Besides the flag, the coat of arms, the national anthem and other insignia, the state language was considered a central element for the affirmation of 'new' national identities. The efforts of imposing a single uniform language on the discursive and on the formal linguistic level were closely connected to processes of delineation and assertion,

processes similar to those analysed by Bakhtin in the 1930s in the context of the Stalinist regime (1981, pp. 270ff):

A unitary language is not something given (*dan*) but is always in essence posited (*zadan*) – and at every moment of its life it is opposed to the realities of heteroglossia. (...) We are taking language not as a system of abstract grammatical categories, but rather language conceived as ideologically saturated, language as a world view, even as a concrete opinion, insuring a maximum of mutual understanding in all spheres of ideological life. Thus a unitary language gives expression to forces working toward concrete verbal and ideological unification and centralization, which develop in vital connection with the process of sociopolitical and cultural centralization.

International politics intervened only in the domain of language policy in the media when access to information was denied or when the exclusion from the public sphere was imposed on the basis of language difference, when the violation of basic rights became too obvious. The Council of Europe, the OSCE, the International Federation of Journalists and a number of private foundations regularly intervened in the so-called countries of transition, criticising in particular the slowness of transformation in the media field, the often exclusionary and polarising media discourse and the unvoicedness of state-controlled media. But it was only in 1997 that the OSCE installed the Office of the Representative on Free Media, which was given the role of pursuing questions of media and transformation as well as the role of media in conflict prevention and conflict resolution. Language and the media became a topic in the Office much later with the publication of a comparative study in 2003 (Karlsreiter, 2003).

3 The role of media in the propagation of the state language – reconfiguring the space of former Yugoslavia

During the time of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia a sensitive equilibrium between centralist and federalist tendencies had to be constantly negotiated and renegotiated. These centripetal and centrifugal forces were also present in language policies and in the media sector. The number of standard languages into which the South Slavic linguistic space was segmented varied over time: until the Second World War there were three, Slovenian, Serbo-Croatian (which was then also called

Croato-Serbian) and Bulgarian. In 1945 Macedonian was codified and declared the official language in the Republic of Macedonia, in 1954 linguists from the Serbian and the Croatian Federal Republics formulated an accord on the common Serbocroatian-Croatoserbian language which foresaw the equal use of the eastern and Western variant of the common language (Bugarski, 2004, p. 28). The dissolution of the language unity was a long process: already in the 1980s, that is, before the federation disintegrated, linguistic activities tended to emphasise differences, and a series of new grammar books and of so-called differential Serbian-Croatian dictionaries appeared. It is interesting to note that there are considerable differences between these dictionaries not only in the number of lexical items they list, but also in their general orientation; some represent an extreme attempt at purism drawing on lexical items which stem from the language reform introduced by the totalitarian NDH¹ state during the Second World War, others are more 'moderate' (Okuka, 1998, p. 88; Langston, 1999, pp. 186ff). In 1989 Serbia declared the Cyrillic script as the official script in the Republic and started to replace Latin signs in the public space. In 1990, when Croatia proclaimed independence, the Croatian language and the Latin script were anchored in the constitution as the official ones. Bosnia and Herzegovina followed in 1993, declaring Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian as the official languages. Bosnian linguists published grammars and guidebooks for the use of 'correct' Bosnian. In particular, schoolbooks, administrative communication and the media were considered means of propagating the new standards and stressing towards the outside their distinctive and towards the inside their unifying nature. In practice this policy was not so easy to implement as migration and social transformations (such as urbanisation) have led throughout history to the co-presence of different idioms across the South Slavic space, such as the different languages linked to changing state administrations, different liturgical languages and languages of literary production with supradialectal features. Each of these idioms was linked to a network of speakers, and each idiom had a certain communicative efficiency and was attached to different forms of symbolic power. As individuals participated in different networks, considerable mixing and overlapping occurred. Using different idioms was mainly linked to social belonging. During the separation process national belonging and territorial connotations began to dominate over all other connotations (Škiljan, 2001, pp. 95ff).

In the 'Second Yugoslavia' after the Second World War, the media system was highly decentralised, each of the six Federal Republics – the

Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, of Croatia, of Macedonia, of Montenegro, of Serbia and of Slovenia – and the two Autonomous Regions – of Kosovo-Methodjia and of Vojvodina – had its own radio and TV station. Press was similarly decentralised, not only on a journalistic level but also with regards to production and distribution. In the 1990s each of the successor states of Yugoslavia could therefore rely on its own elaborate and functioning media system. The main interest of those who came to power in the new states concentrated on radio and TV. The idea was that these media could serve as a means of promoting national unity. These 'national' media, also considered the voice of the government, assumed the role of the propagation of the state languages and saw themselves not only as centres of codification but also as guardians of the 'pure' standard language. The West thought that privatisation would necessarily lead to a greater diversity of opinions in the media, but in fact it was through privatisation that the ethnisation of the media landscape was accelerated, oppositional media were often obstructed or silenced by obscure financial transactions, exclusion from production and distribution infrastructures and so on. In this context the cases of two print media published in Croatia, *Danas* and *Slobodna Dalmacija*, became famous on an international level. Both enjoyed a high reputation for their quality journalism. When privatisation began, the journalists were interested in buying the shares and running the papers themselves, hoping that this could guarantee their independence, but their efforts were obstructed. The media intervention carried out by international organisations in the space of former Yugoslavia was the greatest intervention in this sector since the Second World War. These international organisations were not prepared for a highly developed complex media system that from the 1980s onwards had developed a range of critical quality media which did not fit into the polarised East-West way of thinking (Thompson, 2000, p. 5).

The outbreak of the war interrupted the information and communication flows between the now separated states, and differing views from other parts of the space of former Yugoslavia became difficult to access. State radio, TV and print media close to the ruling parties became weapons in war propaganda. The Balkan Neighbours Project² and the research project *Media and War* (Skopljanac, Brunner et al., 2000) analysed media texts in the 1990s and identified discursive strategies which aimed at fortifying national identities and justifying the drawing of borders. Part of this strategy was linking accents and language use to national or ethnic identities and imposing a 'purified' code. It was not only a question of using the new emerging standards but even more of

transporting and amplifying metalinguistic discourses which linked 'correct' language use to national loyalty and stigmatised 'wrong' language use as 'yugonostalgic'. Such metalinguistic discourses, which amalgamated political statements, philological positions and folk beliefs about language, were also spread through language-advice columns which flourished in the media and contributed to create a policing environment.

Examples of ethnicising discourse and hate speech (see Thomson, 2000) linked to prescriptive language use (see Busch, 2004) were discussed for all of the successor states of former Yugoslavia. Two will be mentioned here: in 1993, when the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina was raging, the potentates in Republika Srpska, the Serbian part of Bosnia-Herzegovina, aligned their efforts of 'language cleansing' to the 'motherland' by adopting not only the Cyrillic script, but also by prescribing the ekavian³ variant for public use. In fact the authorities were well aware that the 'ekavian' variant, which is widely spread in Serbia, was not used in the Serbian part of Bosnia in daily practice. The idea was that the 'ekavica should be given back to the people to which it belongs [...] in order to liberate it from foreign influences'.⁴ All media were compelled by law to the exclusive employment of the ekavica and the Cyrillic script. The forced ekavisation ended in a fiasco and in 1998 the Republika Srpska authorities had to revise their decision and re-permit the use of the jekavian variant in the public domain.

Another extreme example of an overtly prescriptive language policy aiming at cementing differences via the media was 'Croatian Radio and Television' (HRTV) in the early 1990s. HRTV produced a handbook that listed desired Croatian and undesired 'foreign' words, oppositional journalists were sacked under the pretext of being unable to speak 'correct' Croatian. Language use in war reporting was strictly prescribed; for example, the Jugoslovenska narodna armija (JNA) had to be called 'Serbian communist occupator' (Thompson, 1999, p. 159). Temporarily state television followed a policy that attempted to make the symbolic boundaries, which had been discursively constructed between the Croatian and the Serbian language, to coincide with communication boundaries. Speakers of Serbian were subtitled into Croatian in TV and in films (Škiljan, 2002, p. 278).

Similarly print media close to the then ruling party HDZ served as a tribune for public debates about language and saw themselves as promoters of the new standard language. There are only very few empirical studies on the effective change of language use in the space

of former Yugoslavia and it is difficult to say how much the efforts to promote unitary languages actually caused changes in daily language practices in the public sphere. One of the few is Langston's study (1999) based on a corpus of text samples obtained from different Croatian media in 1996–7, which he compares to samples taken in 1985. He concludes: 'Noticeable changes in lexical usage in the Croatian media have indeed taken place since the break-up of the Yugoslav state, but on the whole they are relatively minor.' (p. 188). It is not surprising that changes mainly concern the administrative and political vocabulary, as there was a profound transformation of the political and economic system. Even the state media, which had been principal actors in spreading metalinguistic discourses aiming at 'purifying' the language, apparently only differed slightly in their daily practice from the private media and from linguistic practices before the war.

4 Diaspora: ethnicisation or maximising audiences and merging linguistic spaces

Although the ruling elites made considerable efforts to silence oppositional and independent media during the period of the war, this turned out to be impossible. Independent and alternative media in particular, and media addressing the diaspora, developed a way of imagining their audiences in a different way from the national media. A broad spectrum of media, print and audiovisual, is published for the diaspora by media enterprises linked to the space of former Yugoslavia. The daily European edition of the famous Sarajevo newspaper *Oslobodjenje* is one of them. Whereas Bosnian papers that were close to the ruling party during the war, such as *Liljan* or *Dnevni avaz*, propagated a new Bosnian standard language, *Oslobodjenje* continued to allow a plurality of voices and styles. Only the pre-war policy of alternating between the Cyrillic and the Latin script was abandoned. It is possible, even today, to occasionally find in *Oslobodjenje* articles written in the ekavian variant which is to some extent afflicted with a more 'Serbian' connotation. But it is also possible to see contributions showing features that are labelled as 'Croatian' (such as the Croatian names for the months – 'lipanj' instead of 'junij'). Similarly, lexical items that carry a 'Bosniak' marker can be seen occasionally. The European edition of *Oslobodjenje* and the Sarajevo edition differ only in 15 per cent to 20 per cent in their content; not only international news and BiH politics but even local *fait divers* remain in the European edition. It is mainly the local announcements and the advertisements that are particular to one or the other edition. In

an interview with the author in 1993 the editor of the Frankfurt-based edition pointed out that there was a common language policy and a clear convergence between the two editions as readers in BiH were also interested in the activities of the BiH diaspora throughout Europe and beyond. Considering that roughly 2.5 million of the population of Bosnia-Herzegovina live in the Bosnian Federation and 1.5 million in the Republika Srpska, whereas 1 million live in the diaspora, almost every family in BiH has relatives abroad. For readers outside BiH it is important to see the immediate environment they used to live in or their families and friends are living in represented in the media. It is obvious from the personal advertisements that readers – especially in the diaspora – come from all parts of BiH; the policy of allowing for language variation in the paper opens it up for such a diverse readership. In the beginning the final text for the European edition was sent to Germany where the advertisements for the diaspora were added. Nowadays the journalists outside BiH also participate in the editorial work and the communication flow is not one way between motherland and diaspora but multidirectional; language use represents a multitude of language developments in BiH and beyond.

Commercial interests guide the policy of the 'yellow-press' magazine *Svet plus* which claims to be the diaspora magazine with the biggest circulation between Athens and Stockholm. The magazine belongs to the Coban publishing house, which is located in Novi Sad (Serbia) and produces a whole range of not ostensibly political media titles such as love-story magazines, crossword-puzzle magazines and special-interest magazines. *Svet plus* is a 60 to 70-page publication of which about a quarter is taken up by advertisements. It concentrates mainly on celebrity gossip centred on stars and starlets of the pop music scene from the space of former Yugoslavia. Although the ekavian variant is mainly used throughout the texts, care is taken to address migrants from all parts of the space, for example by reproducing satellite TV programmes from Serbia alongside of those from Croatia or BiH. *Svet plus* caters for different tastes and styles with stories about the Yugo rock music scene from the 1970s and 1980s, stories on nationally oriented turbo-folk starlets and features about sport celebrities from the various successor states. The humour page regularly prints jokes on language use under the heading 'Little Multilingual Dictionary'. They usually begin with the question 'How to say [...] in New-Croatian or New-Bosnian?' or 'How do they say it in Vranjan?' (Vranjan is a small town in Serbia). Similar jokes had already circulated before the 1990s in Yugoslavia when the first purist tendencies could be felt.

A similar strategy of maximising audiences by addressing the whole South Slavic space can be observed with the Belgrade-based company Pink TV. Pink, sometimes referred to as 'Balkan MTV', could profit from the large Serbian home market to build a media empire that reaches now even beyond former Yugoslavia. Soon after the terrestrial programme was launched in Serbia, Pink began to broadcast a satellite programme for the diaspora. A little later it continued with a programme for BiH and a programme for Montenegro, both of which rebroadcast the same main programme from Serbia with localised news and talk-show windows. Pink TV advertises specific cultural practices, values and promotes new trends in fashion and music and reaches audiences from Slovenia to Bulgaria, covering BiH and Montenegro as well as Serbia, and is highly popular among the diaspora.

5 Heteroglossic audiences and transnational media flows

Independent, alternative or civic media, that is, media within the private sector but not with a primarily commercial orientation, played a central role in the transformation process. The idea of providing space for an alternative public sphere and of making silenced voices audible are guiding principles in the way these media approach and imagine their audiences, which ideally become active participants in production and distribution process. The role of the so-called samizdat media as catalysts in moments of change was recognised by international organisations, but their connectedness to community and civic media which developed often as a continuation of samizdat initiatives and the role of a third media sector, outside both the public-service and the private sector, was completely underestimated. During the 1990s support for independent and alternative media in the Balkan area came mainly from NGOs active in the field; the only exception were media that reached a kind of iconic status such as 'Radio B92' in Belgrade. Nevertheless, it is within the third sector of civic media that an experimental space is opening up, allowing the development of new forms of media communication and new language practices.

In the past years there has been a growing number of media which address the otherwise fragmented audiences across the Balkan area in a translocal move. One of these is 'Cross radio'. The 'Cross radio' project mainly promotes programme exchange between different radio stations in the space of the former Yugoslavia and between stations that produce programmes in urban centres with a significant diaspora. 'Cross radio'

focuses on culture with the idea of promoting a transnational and thus 'de-provincialised' cultural space. Consequently, different codes and registers can be heard in the programmes, which are re-broadcast by stations from Pristina, via Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana, to Zurich and are also directly accessible to a wider public via the internet. In the print sector there is a range of cultural magazines and periodical publications along similar lines.

In the multilingual area of Vojvodina as well as in the region around Skopje several multilingual media initiatives have been active for some time. Such initiatives as Radio 021 (Novi Sad), urbanNS (TV station, Novi Sad) or Life Radio (Skopje) produce at least some of their programmes in a multilingual format (Karlsreiter, 2003). This means that, for example, Serbian, Hungarian, Slovakian, Romany and Ruthenian can be co-present in one particular time slot. In the multilingual radio programmes different languages alternate, speakers use the language they prefer to speak in and the moderators take care that the programme can be followed by listeners with different language backgrounds. To ensure this they employ different techniques, ranging from direct and complete translations to reframing utterances in a response in a different language or summarising statements in another language. Television programmes can make use of subtitling in different languages and of using voiceover techniques. In multilingual areas such as Vojvodina or Skopje it can be assumed that part of the population has at least some understanding of more than one language. The impetus for the development of multilingual formats originated in an understanding that there was a complete lack of appropriate interfaces between media producing in different languages and often even an unawareness of what media in the respective other languages published. In Macedonia the AIM journalist network has provided translations into Albanian from articles originally written in Macedonian and vice versa. These direct insights into the strands of debate, which developed in the media in the respective other language, helped journalists as well as readers gain a better understanding of the 'other'. Producing multilingual formats is not only a formal question but also has implications for the creation of meaning, for discourse and its reception. Bi- and multilingual media products simultaneously address audiences which are habitually separated; journalists have to keep the interests and needs of both audiences in mind and the positions which are being negotiated have to be acceptable for both.

The most recent example of the central role played by media in the negotiation/language status can be seen in the context of current efforts

to promote the standardisation of Romany. In the past ten years the number of programmes and of media in Romany has increased in Macedonia as well as in Serbia. This development can build on previous experiences made during the 1970s and 1980s when Skopje was one of the centres of the codification of Romany. It was only in the 1980s that the Council of Europe asked the member states to recognise Roma as a minority and to grant linguistic rights for the speakers of Romany. Consequently there was a centralised effort to codify a central Romany standard. But the Courthiade grammar – named after its author – was contested by several Roma organisations and did not seem workable because writing practices that drew on the different majority languages of the countries Romany speakers lived in were already established. Until the 1990s Romany was mainly present in school manuals and in local media and did not serve to a larger extent as a lingua franca in communication beyond the local environment. With the increased migration after the end of the two-bloc logic there is now an intensive contact between speakers of different Roma variants in urban centres, who use Romany as the common language. With the spread of the internet in the 1990s the use of Romany in a written form has increased, especially in the Roma email networks. The fact that local media develop more and more translocal connections and exchange relations also contributes to a process of convergence and to what could be called standardisation from below or postmodern standardisation (Matras, 1999). The aim is not to construct a single unified prescriptive standard but to allow a standardisation that is open for variation and that recognises the multivoicedness of society.

6 Conclusions

Discursive strategies in media can emphasise or minimise political and administrative boundaries. They can also accentuate or diminish language differences and through metalinguistic discourses contribute to a climate in which language becomes a symbolic boundary towards the outside and a homogenising means towards the inside. This becomes critical when symbolic boundaries are constructed as obstacles to communication. Homogenisation in language use is much more difficult to implement today under the conditions of globalisation where media flows have become more diverse and multidirectional than in previous times when media were organised around a national public sphere. In audio and audiovisual media different substandards, jargons and codes are a very natural and 'normal' phenomenon; it is

the administrative discourse that has become the guardian of the standard.

The example of media and language developments in the space of former Yugoslavia over the past two decades shows contradictions. Forces tending toward a strong national public sphere and the creation of a homogeneous linguistic space were equally present, as were actors that imagined their audiences in a much more diverse way. Critical and independent media had already been established during the last decade of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and played an important role in providing the platform for a non-nationalist discourse during the war, although they were repressed by the respective nationalistic state authorities. To apply a linear time-axis model, which represents the development of the media landscape as a narrative that takes its starting point in a less democratic situation and moves to a more democratic one, would therefore result in a crude simplification. Even in exceptional situations of conflict and nationalistic hubris media developments and language developments cannot simply be analysed within their national framework but must be considered in the context of globalisation. With the increasing multiplication and multidirectionality of communication flows, media production, reception habits and media use have changed significantly. Media in the successor states of the former Yugoslavia have become both more local – including the use of local varieties on the Slavic continuum – and more transnational, because publishers are trying to sell to a market that transcends not only the frontier of the present ‘new’ nation states but also the old boundaries of the Republic of Yugoslavia in the pursuit of creating a larger South Slavic market.

Parallel to efforts of linguistic demarcation in national media in the successor states of former Yugoslavia emerge developments that regroup the Serbocroat speaking realm into one. Such developments are motivated less by nostalgia than by market considerations. In the commercial realm this strategy is a means of maximising audiences and creating a public for advertising; the linguistic means aim at avoiding language that is marked as a particular national standard. In the sector of civic media this strategy of addressing linguistic space as public in a translocal dimension is understood as a possibility of ‘dis-enclaving’ the space culturally. Linguistically this is achieved through the direct representation of different voices and discourses with their particular means of expression. For both kinds of media, commercial and non-commercial, the diaspora is an important factor and takes part in the communication flows.

In multilingual situations in which new political borders created new status differences in relation to the official position of languages, national authorities often reacted only with delay or under pressure from ‘outside’, when they guaranteed access to information and participation in public discourse to speakers of languages that had recently decreased in status and become minority languages. On the other hand, minority media could also show a tendency to retreat into their ‘own’ universe. The rise of multilingual formats in the media was a response to processes of ethnicisation. Such multilingual formats make use of the multimodal dimension of media communication and make the co-presence of different languages visible; it also has a transformative effect on the discourse itself.

The decentring of standard language is a phenomenon that can be observed on a global scale. Diverse ‘impure’ linguistic practices – code switching, language crossing, linguistic bricolage – have made their way into the media field and also via the media into other public domains. Transgressing prescriptive linguistic norms and employing codes that combine different elements can function as a means of regrouping audiences beyond the imagined national or ethnic community. Audiences are not necessarily defined on a territorial basis. In the reconfiguration of communication spaces as well as in language policy, centres tend to lose normative power. It is mainly in independent media that the multi-voicedness of society becomes visible in all the three dimensions that Bakhtin (1984, p. 56) described: heterology (*raznorečie*), that is, the diversity of discourses; heteroglossia (*raznojazyčnie*), that is, the diversity of language(s); and heterophony (*raznoglossie*), that is, the diversity of individual voices. The creation of open spaces in which the multi-voicedness of society cannot be reduced seems to be of crucial importance in processes of transition because it is in those spaces that subject positions can be developed and power relations negotiated.

Notes

1. The fascist NDH state (Nezavisna Država Hrvatska/Independent Croatian State) introduced a language reform which aimed at marking the difference between a Serbian and a Croatian language. In the course of this reform an etymological orthography was propagated and internationalisms labelled as serbisms.
2. A project which brought together researchers and journalists to monitor print media in Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Romania, Turkey, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo. The aim of the project was to detect stereotypes and prejudices that were present about the respective ‘others’.

Until the end of the project, the results were published on a regular basis between 1994 and 2000.

3. Ekavian and jekavian relates to the reproduction of the old Slavonic sound 'jat', which can be reproduced as 'e' or 'je' as, for example, in the word for river: 'rijeka' (jekavian) or 'reka' (ekavian).
4. Alternativna informativna mreža (AIM), 13 September 1993. This example is also discussed by Bugarski (1995).

3

Contesting Social Space through Language Education Debates in Latvia's Media Landscape

Gabrielle Hogan-Brun

1 Introduction

During the course of Latvia's move from Soviet authoritarian rule to democratic government since the early 1990s, the speed of socio-political and economic change resulted in societal tensions that also strongly affected the country's educational domain. Looking at the latter, this chapter explores the role of discourse in the construction of Latvia's social and political transition. More specifically, the discursive 'link between the politics of education and the transformation of the educational system' (Mebrahtu et al., 2000, p. 15) is analysed in this demographically heterogeneous setting.

The concept of 'discourse as a form of social practice' (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p. 258) is key for the perspective represented in this chapter. In line with that conception, the chapter aims to explicate that there exists a particular relationship between a particular discursive event (the studied Latvian educational reform), a situation (the divided attitudes of Latvians and Russophones towards the reform), an institution (Latvia's government through the Education Ministry behind the reform) and the (deeper) social structures which frame it. Focusing on the dynamics of the intersection of the political and the social in Latvian post-communist transformation – based on the example of the country's educational policy – the analysis will show that the social changes analysed are indeed rooted in discourses of those who are 'holding power over discourse' and who have direct access to power (in this case politicians and the media;