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Language and Identity in Montenegro

A Study among University Students

Introduction

This paper explores Montenegro's complex language situation from the point of view of identity. I present the results of a study based on interviews of Montenegrin university students who were asked about their views and attitudes with respect to the language they speak and the various aspects of the language situation in Montenegro as a whole. From the interviews, four types of linguistic identity emerged. I grouped these as strongly Montenegrin, moderately Montenegrin, moderately Serbian, and strongly Serbian. I argue that the most significant factors explaining the adoption of a certain linguistic identity are nationality, family background, and primary and secondary education.

In the first part of the paper I briefly introduce the basic theoretical concepts of the study, paying special attention to the notion of linguistic identity. I also give a quick overview of Montenegro and the Montenegrins, which I think is necessary in order to understand the specific context in question. The language situation is described by focusing on its most significant single element, the new Montenegrin standard language. In the paper's second part, I present the results of the interviews. Giving voice to my informants, I introduce the four types of linguistic identity. Then I analyze the factors behind the adoption of a particular linguistic identity and show how these factors work. Finally, I present some concluding remarks.

Preliminaries

I will begin by addressing the relationship between language and identity, focusing on the notion of linguistic identity which, although relatively new

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and still somewhat ambiguous as a concept, has become an important aspect of analysis especially in multilingual contexts. I will also provide a brief overview of Montenegro, the Montenegrins and the language situation in the country. The focus will be on the multiple identities existing among the country's inhabitants as well as on the creation of the new Montenegrin standard language.

Language and Identity

The relationship between language² and identity is significant and multifaceted. Identities are constructed in discourses, thoughts and meanings expressed through language. In addition to this communicative function, languages play an important role in identity construction through their symbolic function. This is especially true for national identities. Nineteenth-century Romantic nationalism, as formulated by some of its most influential advocates—the German philosophers Herder and Fichte—focused considerably on language, seeing it as a natural factor distinguishing and forming nations (Joseph 2004, 110; Hobsbawm 1992, 67–68). The influence of this type of thinking was so strong, particularly in Europe, that even though nations like Switzerland have not needed a common language, most emerging nations, especially the smaller groups living within larger empires and striving for political independence, adopted language as a central element in their nationalism (Wright 2004, 33–34). Thus for the Romantics, languages created nations although later it became common, as now in ex-Yugoslavia, that the equation is turned the other way around and nations themselves create languages.

The key concept of this study is linguistic identity.³ I use it to refer to identification with a certain language, as a speaker of that language and as a member of the group speaking that language. Linguistic identity is the part of an individual's or a group's identity which is connected to the language(s) they speak (Bugarski 2010, 34). Essential to linguistic identity are the values and meanings attached to the language that, for their part, have to do with wider social and political processes. I use the concept in a sense that also

² I will not go any deeper here into what is a language and what is a dialect, and the difference between them. Suffice it to say that in my view, languages are not only defined linguistically but socially as well. Ultimately it is up to the people belonging to a linguistic community to define for themselves which language they speak.

³ In order to avoid confusion, I will consistently use the term “linguistic identity” instead of “language identity”, which is sometimes used to refer to the exact same thing, but sometimes also to “identity” i.e. the characteristics of a certain language.

includes many aspects of the notion of language attitude, or the feelings people have about their own language or the languages of others. I believe that for the purposes of this study a broad definition is needed that takes into account all aspects of identifying with a language. Thus in addition to simply expressing an attachment to a certain language, linguistic identity can be weak or strong, explicit or vague, significant or unimportant.

Like all identities, linguistic identity is connected to its social and historical contexts but also reacts to changes in its environment. In addition to the group with which one shares one's linguistic identity, important too are those groups that are thus excluded. Collective identities are often constructed against the Other, and here linguistic identities make no exception. Often the boundaries and their permanence are actually more important than what is within or outside of them. As the boundaries have become formed, the group membership as such becomes essential and the shared experience of one's own distinctiveness appears as one of the most important uniting factors (Edwards 2010, 25).

However, different communities attach different meanings to language. There are cases where linguistic identity is a more or less meaningless concept whereas in others linguistic identification is at the heart of the collective identity. The connection to the actual linguistic realities might vary as well. For example, the relatively unified language that used to be called Serbo-Croatian has produced several different linguistic identities whereas the large number of people identifying themselves as Arabic speakers often have trouble understanding each other's spoken varieties. Finally, it is important to remember that connecting a language to a certain nation or state and emphasizing its uniqueness are in the end political acts that do not necessarily follow any naturally occurring differences between languages and cultures (Jukarainen 2001, 148).

Montenegro and the Montenegrins

Montenegro was a component part of Yugoslavia but has a relatively long independent history of its own. After the Slavic tribes arrived in the Balkans at the end of the Migration Period, several short-lived state formations were born in and around present-day Montenegro. By the end of the twelfth century the area became part of the Medieval Kingdom of Serbia. By this time at the latest, these lands came under the influence of Eastern Orthodoxy after having been more closely connected to Roman Catholicism (Rastoder 2003, 109). The coastal areas, however, remained under the influence of the

Venetians for several centuries. During the fifteenth century the land now called Montenegro (from Italian, meaning ‘black mountain’), as with most of the Balkans, became part of the Ottoman Empire. The Montenegrins, however, refused to accept Ottoman rule and often rebelled, using their mountainous terrain to their advantage. Ultimately they managed to achieve a partial autonomy within the Empire. During the last decade of the eighteenth and the entire nineteenth century, the area controlled by the Montenegrins was enlarged several times and the principality became *de facto* independent (Rastoder 2003, 118). In 1878, under Nicholas I, the independence of Montenegro was internationally recognized by the Congress of Berlin.

During the First World War Montenegro was occupied by Austro-Hungarian forces and King Nicholas was forced to leave the country. After the war a National Assembly gathered in Podgorica in 1918 and decided to unite the country with the Kingdom of Serbia which then became part of the newly founded Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (from 1929 the Kingdom of Yugoslavia). Many Montenegrins considered the decision to be against both the constitution and the will of the people. A violent guerilla war ensued for several years in which the Greens (*zelenaši*) fought against the supporters of unification, the Whites (*bjelaši*), ultimately losing the battle for Montenegrin independence. However, this division of the population prevailed and can be seen to have implications even in the present day. (Rastoder 2003, 128–131.)

In Tito’s Socialist Yugoslavia Montenegro became one of the six republics and Montenegrins were often over-represented in politics, the army and in other public offices. During the 1980s, however, the poorer economic situation began to affect everyday lives and by the end of the decade tensions between Yugoslavia’s national groups began to emerge. As the country proceeded to fall apart, the question of Montenegro’s future status was also raised. In March 1992 a referendum was held in which an overwhelming 95 % of Montenegrins expressed their desire for their country to remain, now joined only with Serbia, as part of Yugoslavia. According to Malešević & Uzelac (2007, 705), the social dissatisfaction prevailing at that time was successfully channeled into pro-Serbian nationalism. Following the Yugoslav wars, however, the relationship between Montenegro and Serbia became more complicated as the unfavorable international reputation of Serbia and its leader Milošević was increasingly seen as a burden for Montenegro, particularly by Prime Minister Đukanović, who started openly

criticizing Milošević. Đukanović won the critical elections of 1997 and 1998 and from then on began to more openly advocate independence for Montenegro. A referendum on Montenegrin independence was finally organized in May 2006. The campaign was fierce and the outcome remained quite unclear. In the end, 55.5 % of the voters were in favor of independence (Morrison 2009, 218).

The Montenegrin Identity

Montenegro's inhabitants are in many ways divided into two factions, not always directly opposite to each other, but still clearly separate. This split is very evident when it comes to the Montenegrin identity, that is, what it really is and means to be a Montenegrin. To be sure, many people living in Montenegro consider themselves Serbs in ethno-national terms. For them, "Montenegrin-ness" is a geographic-historical subcategory of "Serbian-ness". On the other hand, for many the Montenegrins constitute a nation of their own, separate from the Serbs. Montenegrins do share for the most part the same ethno-religious background with the Serbs. Separate "Montenegrin-ness" is, however, backed up by political history, a unique mountain lifestyle and a traditional society based on clan and tribe membership⁴ (Pavlović 2003, 88). A Montenegrin cultural identity can be said to have existed already for centuries.

In Socialist Yugoslavia the Montenegrins formed one of the constituent nations (*narod*), a category which most residents of the republic in various censuses declared themselves as belonging to. From the point of view of identity, the political situation at that time was balanced: Montenegro was a republic of its own but still belonged to the same federation with Serbia. During those times a third, Yugoslav, identity was also adopted by many. However, even though in the official censuses only one nationality was allowed to be declared, in the socialist republic of Montenegro the categories of Montenegrin, Serb, and Yugoslav were not directly opposite each other and in certain situations it was possible to identify with all three at the same time (Malešević & Uzelac 2007, 704).

In the 1991 census, 62 % of Montenegro's population reported Montenegrin nationality, 9 % Serbian, and 4 % Yugoslav.⁵ By 2003 the

⁴ The tribal system was probably introduced by the Vlachs and Albanians who were assimilated by the Montenegrins in late medieval times (Roberts 2007, 2–3).

⁵ All statistical information is from the Statistical Office of Montenegro (www.monstat.org).

figures had changed to 43 % Montenegrin, 32 % Serbian, and 0.3 % Yugoslav. Some population movements had been caused by the wars in the 1990s but most of the changes can be explained by the dramatic turns in the political and social reality that made people question their previous identities. Not only were the categories of Montenegrin, Serb, and Yugoslav now mutually exclusive, they were also connected to competing nation and state building processes (Malešević & Uzelac 2007, 706). According to the first population census in independent Montenegro carried out in 2011, 45 % of the citizens reported themselves being Montenegrin by nationality, 29 % Serbian, 12 % Bosnian/Bosniak, 5 % Albanian, and 1 % Croat; 5 % of the population gave no nationality⁶. Although the situation has somewhat stabilized since the turbulent 1990s, the question of national identity continues to divide the people of Montenegro into different fractions. As we will see, this split is also clearly visible in the question of language and linguistic identity.

The Language(s) of Montenegro

Two main dialects are spoken in today's Montenegro. As elsewhere in the former Yugoslav lands, the differences in dialects do not follow ethnic or political boundaries. The northwestern part of Montenegro belongs to the same Ijekavian Neo-Štokavian speech territory as the areas across the border in southwestern Serbia, eastern Herzegovina, and southernmost Dalmatia (Ivić 2001, 175–176). These dialects formed the basis of the Serbo-Croatian language as it was first defined in the 1850 Literary Agreement. The dialects of southeastern Montenegro are known as the Old Štokavian or the Zeta-Lovćen dialects. They are separated from the Neo-Štokavian dialects mainly by their more archaic accentual patterns (Ivić 2001, 76–77). Common to all dialects spoken in Montenegro are the Ijekavian reflexes of the Proto-Slavic *jat'*, making Montenegrins the only ethno-national group in the Štokavian

⁶ The census was accompanied by intensive campaigning from various groups trying to encourage people to declare a certain nationality and a certain mother tongue. Many people were intimidated by this, and in the end it was decided that answering the questions on nationality, mother tongue, and religion was not compulsory.

speech territory whose members are all Ijekavian speakers⁷ (Greenberg 2008, 91–93).

As for the literary use of the language, the situation in Montenegro has, historically, largely followed developments in the neighboring regions. The first modern pieces of literature created on the territory of today's Montenegro formed part of the epic poetry of the nineteenth century. The greatest and most famous example is *Gorski vijenac* ('Mountain Wreath') by the prince-bishop Njegoš from 1847. The present-day proponents of the Montenegrin language see the literature of those times and especially the works of Njegoš as an example of the uniqueness of the Montenegrin linguistic tradition whereas Serbs count Njegoš as part of their literature. All and all, the literature created in Montenegro during the nineteenth century constituted part of the South Slavic Orthodox tradition and was thus intertwined with the Serbian tradition (Greenberg 2008, 94–97).

With the establishment of Yugoslavia in 1918, the Serbo-Croatian language became the official language in Montenegro as well. The Novi Sad agreement of 1954 restored the unity of the Serbo-Croatian language after the turbulence of World War II but at the same time acknowledged the existence of two different varieties of the language, Eastern and Western⁸. The Montenegrins were mentioned in the agreement, along with the Croats and Serbs, as one of the nations speaking the language.⁹ The Montenegrins were not, however, assigned with a variety of their own, as was done with the Croats and Serbs. Furthermore, none of the two recognized varieties of the Serbo-Croatian language represented the language of the Montenegrins, which was phonologically akin to that of the Croats but lexically more similar to that used in Serbia (Greenberg 2008, 88). However, such linguistic separatism including own grammars and orthographies that was common in Croatia in the 1970s and 1980s never occurred in Montenegro.

As Montenegro and Serbia formed the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1992, the Montenegrin constitution declared Serbian in its Ijekavian

⁷ The Štokavian dialects are divided into Ekavian, Ikavian, and Ijekavian according to the modern reflexes of the Common Slavic *jat*'. For example, the word for 'milk' in Ekavian is *mleko*, in Ikavian *mliko*, and in Ijekavian *mlijeko*. The Croatian, Bosnian, and Montenegrin standard languages are based solely on the Ijekavian pronunciation. The Serbian standard includes both Ekavian and Ijekavian pronunciations of which Ekavian is the most dominant. Ikavian is not part of any standard language.

⁸ The text of the original agreement and a translation into English can be found in Greenberg 2008.

⁹ Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks) were granted the status of a separate nation only later.

pronunciation as the official language. Thus Montenegro was the only republic situated on the former Serbo-Croatian speech territory where the language did not receive a new name based on the dominant ethnic group. Just like elsewhere, the choice was explained by the political situation (Lakić 2007, 329). Independence was not high on the agenda in Montenegro at that time, and people instead wished to ally themselves with Serbia and the Serbs. Soon after things began to change, however. Individuals who considered Montenegrins to be a nation of their own began talking about Montenegrin as a separate language. This tendency gained popularity as the relationship with Serbia became more complicated in the late 1990s.

The New Montenegrin Standard Language

Vojislav P. Nikčević (1935–2007), professor of literature at the Faculty of Philosophy in Nikšić, became the most prominent advocate of a separate Montenegrin language. During the 1990s, he published several books where he outlined a Montenegrin standard language, including the impressive two-piece volume *Crnogorski jezik* ('Montenegrin Language'). In it, he introduced the characteristic features of the Montenegrin language which, according to him, included the so-called late jotations¹⁰ that produced two new phonemes, *ś* and *ź*; a third new phoneme *dz* that exists in a number of Montenegrin dialects; and certain adjectival and pronominal endings that had not been previously part of the standard language. These features, together with some lexical elements drawn mostly from peripheral and archaic dialects, were supposed to validate the existence of a distinct Montenegrin language, and, quite importantly, separate it from Serbian.

Nikčević began to gain support for his ideas but not so much from other linguists as from different organizations and groups promoting the Montenegrin cause. Most of the supporting arguments centered on national identity, Serbian hegemony, and every nation's right to have its own language (Okuka 2002, 41; Greenberg 2001, 21). Nikčević himself stated that "the Montenegrins cannot exist, can have neither an independent state, nor be a people and nation speaking a foreign tongue" (Greenberg 2008, 88). The most vociferous opposition to the Montenegrin language came from linguists led by professors at the Faculty of Philosophy in Nikšić. According

¹⁰ These late jotations occur when spirants and dentals are followed by *je*: *s + je > śe*; *z + je > źe*; *d + je > đe*; *t + je > će*. Thus, 'axe' in Serbian/Ekavian is *sekira*, in Bosnian and Croatian *sjekira*, and in Montenegrin *śekira*. See Greenberg 2004, 60 and Greenberg 2008, 103 for more examples.

to them, the language spoken in Montenegro is and always has been Ijekavian Serbian, a fact that, in their view, can be scientifically proven (Greenberg 2008, 177–178). Being pro-Serbian, they did not accept the arguments based on national identity either. In the end, the language question became one of the aspects of a wider debate concerning the future of Montenegro.

In 2004 Prime Minister Đukanović stated that he was a speaker of the Montenegrin language. At this point, at the latest, promoting the Montenegrin language became associated with certain political groupings that aimed at strengthening a separate Montenegrin identity and with the ultimate goal of complete political independence from Serbia. In turn, the pro-Serbian parties strongly defended the Serbian language and opposed the establishment of a Montenegrin standard language. When Montenegro finally gained independence in 2006, the language question became one of the most difficult issues to resolve when drafting a new constitution for the country. Finally in October 2007, after long negotiations the Montenegrin parliament adopted a new constitution where it was declared, in article 13, that the official language of Montenegro was Montenegrin, the Cyrillic and Latin scripts were equally valid, and other languages in official use were Serbian, Bosnian, Albanian, and Croatian.¹¹

After being granted official status, a committee was set up to properly standardize the Montenegrin language. The committee was internally divided on certain issues but eventually in 2009 an orthography (*pravopis*) and in 2010 a grammar (*gramatika*) of the Montenegrin language were published. Nikčević's work was taken into account in the process but some of his more radical proposals, like the phoneme *dz*, were left out. The main feature that separates Montenegrin from the other Neo-Štokavian-based standard languages is the so-called late jotations that produce two new phonemes, *ś* and *ź*, and change the spelling of many words (*Gramatika crnogorskoga jezika* 2010, 15, 50–51; *Pravopis crnogorskoga jezika* 2009, 52–54). However, it is still possible to also use the non-jotated forms of the words: *šekira* or *sjekira*, *ženica* or *zjenica*, *đevojka* or *djevojka*, *čerati* or *tjerati*, and so on. In addition to the new phonemes, the grammar and the orthography include some archaic lexical items and grammatical endings

¹¹ “Službeni jezik u Crnoj Gori je crnogorski jezik. Ćirilično i latinično pismo su ravnopravni. U službenoj upotrebi su i srpski, bosanski, albanski i hrvatski jezik.” The text of the whole constitution can be found on the website of the Montenegrin parliament (www.skupstina.me).

that were not part of the written standard before. The grammar has faced strong criticism, mainly for the archaisms as well as for its similarity with Croatian grammar. Of the three authors of the grammar, two were Croats.¹²

The Situation Today

The most recent debate concerns the language used in primary and secondary schools. It had been decided that starting from September 2011 Montenegrin would be introduced as the sole language in the schools. However, at the very last moment the government backed down. Through political horse-trading with the pro-Serbian opposition, a change was made in the law on education. The reformulated article 11 states that teaching will be in the Montenegrin language and, “having in mind the common linguistic basis”, also in Serbian. This formulation, however ambiguous, in a way elevates Serbian to the same level as Montenegrin, thus giving it a different status than that of the other languages. Furthermore, it leaves room to interpret that Montenegrin and Serbian are actually one and the same language. The outcome, which on the other hand does correspond better to the actual sociolinguistic situation, was criticized by the more staunch supporters of the Montenegrin language. For example, in January 2012 the Montenegrin cultural organization *Matica crnogorska* filed an initiative in the constitutional court claiming that the new formulation of article 11, instead of respecting the constitution according to which Montenegrin is the official language of Montenegro, is avoiding its implementation.¹³

As for the speakers themselves, according to the 2011 census, 37 % of Montenegro’s population considers Montenegrin to be its mother tongue. This is significantly more than in the previous census from 2003 when the figure stood at 22 %. Serbian is spoken by 43 % of the population which is less than before but still makes it the largest language. Bosnian is spoken by 6 %, Albanian 5 %, and Croatian 0.5 %. Those considering Serbo-Croatian as their mother tongue were 2 % whereas 4 % were unwilling to answer the question. Comparing these figures to those on nationality presented earlier, it seems that many identifying themselves as Montenegrins still consider Serbian to be their mother tongue. Of the Slavic-speaking Muslims, half

¹² Ivo Pranjković is a professor and Josip Silić a professor emeritus of Croatian language in the University of Zagreb. The third author, Adnan Čirgić, is a Montenegrin linguist currently heading the Institute for Montenegrin language and linguistics.

¹³ The initiative can be downloaded from the *Matica crnogorska* website: <http://www.maticacrnogorska.me/files/Inicijativa.pdf>

report Bosnian and half either Montenegrin or Serbian as their mother tongue.

Linguistic Identity Among Montenegrin University Students

In March 2011, I interviewed fifteen 19 to 29 year-old university students in Montenegro. The interviews were semi-structured: I had ready-made questions to which the students answered in their own words.¹⁴ All students were interviewed individually. The questions were mostly asked in the same way and in the same order, allowing for some variation from interview to interview. The idea was to make the students elaborate on their answers as much as possible. This is what often happened, although some of the students chose to answer the questions more tersely. Obviously, these themes were not important or of interest to everyone. In addition to the actual interview questions, I collected background information on the students' age, home town, nationality, mother tongue and field of studies as well as their parents' home town, nationality, mother tongue and occupation. Of the fifteen interviews, two were conducted in English and thirteen in Montenegrin/Serbian.¹⁵ Five of the students were men, and ten were women. Four were studying in the Cetinje-based music academy and eleven at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Montenegro located in Nikšić. All of the students were born and raised in Montenegro. I asked the people helping me in arranging the interviews to find students with different backgrounds, but other than that I had no preliminary knowledge on their standpoints concerning the language question.

I chose university students as the target group for several reasons. First of all, some limitation was unavoidable since, within the scope of the study, it was not possible to interview a sufficiently large number of people that the greater population of Montenegro would be represented. Secondly, students constitute an interesting group for the study of the phenomenon in question, since they have lived through the recent changes in the language situation of

¹⁴ The questions, or themes, that were addressed in each interview included the meaning of one's mother tongue for one's identity; the relationship between the Montenegrin and Serbian languages; the official language(s) of Montenegro; the language in schools; views on the general language situation in Montenegro; and the political status of Montenegro.

¹⁵ During the interviews, no comments were made on what the language of the interview would be called. I myself used the variety I am most familiar with, standard Serbian with Ekavian pronunciation. Two of the interviews were conducted in English because the informants were students of English language and literature and preferred it so.

Montenegro and have also had to reflect on these changes while constructing their own identity. Furthermore, as young and educated individuals, they can be seen as having both the willingness and the ability to discuss these issues. Thirdly, several similar studies have been conducted among student populations making it possible to compare the results with earlier research.¹⁶ In addition to these theoretical considerations, choosing university students was also motivated by some practical realities. I happened to know people connected to the University of Montenegro who were able to help me in arranging the interviews.¹⁷

Four Types of Linguistic Identity

Based on the analysis of the interviews, I have distinguished a matrix with four different types of linguistic identity that were found to exist among my informants. The basic division is based on the language itself. Seven students reported their mother tongue to be Montenegrin whereas eight said it was Serbian. However, looking deeper at the students' answers, this simple division into Montenegrin speakers and Serbian speakers clearly did not tell the whole story. The stances and attitudes the students expressed on different aspects of the language question varied greatly, from pragmatic to fundamental and from concerned to somewhat indifferent. Therefore, paying special attention to the importance and meaning of one's own mother tongue, the views on certain critical points concerning Montenegro's language situation such as the official language of the country and the language in schools, and the attitude towards the other language and its speakers, I found it necessary to further divide the identities into strong and moderate.

¹⁶ When preparing my research, I found especially useful and inspiring Sanna Iskanius' dissertation (2006) on the linguistic identity of Russian-speaking students in Finland as well as Matthew Ciscel's monograph *The Language of the Moldovans* (2007). Ciscel writes on language and identity in Moldova where the situation in many ways resembles that of Montenegro.

¹⁷ I am especially grateful to Janko Andrijasević, Ivan S. Vukčević, and Violeta Salonen for all the valuable help and information they provided me.

Mother tongue / Stance	Montenegrin	Serbian
Strong (Fundamental)	MN+	SR+
Moderate (Pragmatic)	MN-	SR-

Table 1: Types of linguistic identities among Montenegrin university students.

I will now take a closer look at the different linguistic identities and their characteristics. I will also present personal stories of four students, each representing a different linguistic identity. Finally, I will turn my attention to the factors explaining the adoption of a certain identity.

Strongly Montenegrin (MN+)

JK: Are they (Montenegrin and Serbian) two separate languages?

Man, 29: Yes. Two separate languages, of course. Not different like Finnish and Italian, but... But they are two separate languages, as we are two separate nations.¹⁸

Four of the fifteen students had a strongly Montenegrin linguistic identity. Their mother tongue is Montenegrin which to them is definitely a separate language of its own. They believe the differences between Montenegrin and Serbian, and the other languages of ex-Yugoslavia, are small but real. By nationality they are Montenegrins, just like their parents who also speak Montenegrin. For these students their mother tongue is an important part of their identity. They think that every country and nation should have a language of its own and that this applies to Montenegro as well.

According to these students the official language of Montenegro should be Montenegrin and Montenegrin only. For them, being a speaker of Montenegrin is not just a matter of linguistic identity but an important part of being Montenegrin and supporting the Montenegrin identity. They think that the Montenegrin language should also be the language taught in the schools,¹⁹ although special attention needs to be devoted to the transition

¹⁸ All translations by JK.

¹⁹ At the time of the interviews it was still commonly believed that Montenegrin would be introduced as the sole language in primary and secondary school starting from September 2011. This was later changed (see above).

period so that there is no confusion for example with spelling rules. Even though they strongly support a separate standard language for Montenegro, they have certain reservations when it comes to the proposed reforms.²⁰ They think the overall language situation in Montenegro is complicated and difficult, mostly since people do not know how to deal with the changed situation and are confused which language to regard as their mother tongue. These students find it slightly problematic that so many Montenegrins identify with the Serbian language.

Moderately Montenegrin (MN-)

Woman, 20: I have a two-fold stance towards the [language] question. Considering that we have a country of our own, in that sense I think we should have our own language, but not the way it is done now.

The three students with a moderately Montenegrin linguistic identity considered Montenegrin to be their mother tongue but were less categorical about it. They are Montenegrins by nationality, like their parents. The parents of one of these students speak Serbian, those of the other two Montenegrin. For these students Montenegrin and Serbian are essentially one and the same language that is separated mainly by politics. They see the whole language question as mostly symbolic, but at the same time, however, recognize its great importance to some people. Even though they consider themselves Montenegrin speakers, they also understand those who consider their mother tongue to be Serbian. In the end, it is mostly about the name of the language.

These students think that the language question is very politicized and do not like the fact that declaring oneself a Montenegrin speaker is often considered a political statement. For them, being a Montenegrin speaker is more like a responsibility to their country and people. They are clearly critical of the new phonemes and other larger reforms that are planned for the Montenegrin standard language. They think that it is understandable that Montenegrins, if only formally, have their own language but that there is no need to artificially create differences. The way they see it, the dialect they speak will in any case differentiate them linguistically from the Serbs in Serbia.²¹

²⁰ Including the late jotations, the new phonemes, and the archaic lexical items (see above).

²¹ Hardly ever were the Bosnian or Croatian languages mentioned in the interviews. The situation in Montenegro was clearly seen as a dynamic between Montenegrin and Serbian.

These students agree with Montenegrin being the official language of the country as well as Montenegrin becoming the language of the schools. However, they believe that the people currently responsible for language planning in Montenegro are too nationalistically oriented. They think that the Serbian language could also have some sort of official status, at least in the schools. For them a more significant problem is the professors and teachers who come to Montenegro from Serbia and use an Ekavian dialect with their students that differs from the language spoken in Montenegro. As a whole, they consider the language situation problematic, not least for those older people who need to adjust to the new circumstances. These students also think that the debate surrounding the language question is unnecessarily pitting people against each other.

Moderately Serbian (SR-)

JK: Today the official language of Montenegro is Montenegrin. What do you think about it?

Woman, 19: You know what, it would not have bothered me if they had just changed the name. That would've been OK, if everybody has got their own then why not we, too. But since then they have changed everything, grammar and all that, and that I don't like.

Of all the students interviewed, the four who belonged to this group were the most uncertain of their linguistic identity. In some ways they resemble the moderately Montenegrin with the important exception that they consider Serbian to be their mother tongue. Their views were moderate and pragmatic. Looking at their backgrounds, they are the most heterogeneous group. Only one reported that both of her parents speak Serbian. One had a Macedonian-speaking mother, one gave Serbo-Croatian as the mother tongue of her parents, and one believed that her parents nowadays consider themselves Montenegrin speakers. By nationality, however, these students with a moderately Serbian linguistic identity are all Montenegrin, except for one Croat. Thus in their case, the relationship between national and linguistic identity is far from being straightforward. They did not necessarily consider this to be problematic even though they often mentioned it in their answers. Many considered Serbian to be their mother tongue first and foremost because they studied the language at school. Currently, even with the situation somewhat changed, they feel no need to change this view or their way of using the language.

These students believe that the entire language question is political in nature and that Montenegrin is a political language. On the other hand, they understand the idea that each country should have its own language. Therefore they do not directly oppose the official status of the Montenegrin language, and in a way even support it. Personally, however, they cannot identify with it even though they do identify with Montenegro as their homeland. They believe that the reforms proposed for the standard language are completely unnecessary. Many would be happy with a compromise where the name of the language would change but the substance would remain essentially the same. When it comes to the spoken language, the local features would in any case distinguish Montenegrins from the Serbian Serbs. As for the language used at school, they believed no greater changes were necessary, no matter what the language would be called. All and all, the moderately Serbian were looking for some sort of golden mean between the two sides. As a whole, they think that the current language situation is an absolute catastrophe and that the people in charge of the language issues are not educated or professional enough, which has led to many problems.

Strongly Serbian (SR+)

Man, 24: I don't think any Montenegrin language should exist at all. We can have our own country, Montenegro, with the same language, Serbian. It doesn't matter.

Four of the fifteen students had a strongly Serbian linguistic identity. Their and their parents' mother tongue is Serbian. By nationality, two are Montenegrins and two Serbs. Although they were, like all the informants, born in Montenegro, many had parents who were originally from outside the country, typically from another ex-Yugoslavian republic. Judging from their backgrounds, they are the least "Montenegrin" group. These students were the only ones who were clearly critical of the Montenegrin language as a whole, believing it should not exist at all. The official language, in schools and elsewhere, should be Serbian, as it was when they grew up. It is a matter of one and the same language, actually of one and the same people.

These students think that the idea of each and every country having its own language is erroneous. People in Montenegro can speak Serbian just as people in the United States speak English. The creation of the Montenegrin language has to do with politics and politics only. They believe that the over-politicized language situation has already had a negative impact on relations between neighboring countries, particularly when it comes to Serbia. They like to emphasize the similarities between the countries and

peoples of the region and are quite upset about how the relationships have lately deteriorated. The current language situation in Montenegro is so complicated, they feel, that it is very difficult to adjust to. One of the students said that with all the reforms and changes, all she could do anymore is laugh about it.

The Students' Stories

I will now introduce four students who each represent a different type of linguistic identity. The idea is to display examples that I find to be representative of their group. When choosing the stories to unveil here, I have also paid attention to the students' ability and willingness to elaborate a bit further on the themes in question.

Ana²² (MN+) is 20 years old and studies English language and literature at the Faculty of Philosophy in Nikšić. She is originally from the Montenegrin coast and by nationality Montenegrin, like her parents. Her and her parents' mother tongue is Montenegrin. In addition to English, Ana also speaks some Italian and Spanish.

Ana answered the questions quite tersely but firmly. For her, mother tongue is an important part of identity, for she thinks that culture exists through language. Nowadays she considers Montenegrin and Serbian to be two separate languages. Every country in her view aims at having its own language and therefore Montenegro as well deserves its own. Ana thinks that the official language should be Montenegrin. She also thinks it is a good idea that Montenegrin be introduced in the schools; however, she has some reservations about the practical implementation. She is still a bit uncertain what would be the best solution in the long run. Concerning the language situation as a whole, Ana thinks that it is complicated. Many people do not know how to deal with the changes. She thinks that it is often the family that defines the language: the father says he speaks a certain language and the children follow. She emphasizes that she finds the language situation to be very complicated.

What makes Ana strongly Montenegrin are her clear and resolute opinions. She does not mention the Serbian language but focuses on expressing her thoughts on the Montenegrin language. For her, being a Montenegrin speaker is very natural, just as it seems to be for her family.

²² All the names are changed.

Even though she thinks the situation is complicated, she is sure of her own opinions.

Marko (MN-) is 24 years old and lives near Nikšić. He studies Montenegrin language and literature at the Faculty of Philosophy. By nationality Marko is Montenegrin and speaks Montenegrin as his mother tongue, just as his parents who are also from the Nikšić area. He has also learned English and Russian.

Marko thinks that the whole language question is most of all symbolic. Even though he is studying the Montenegrin language, he thinks that, linguistically, it is a matter of one and the same language and that this applies not only to Montenegrin and Serbian but also to Bosnian and Croatian. He thinks that these languages are separated only by a symbolic function having to do with identity. This symbolic function is, however, important as such. Marko thinks that the Montenegrins have the right to call their language by their own name but that any major differences need not exist. He reminds that the language situation has always followed the political situation, and for example in the early nineties when there was a will to align with Serbia, Serbian was made the official language. After independence the situation changed again.

Marko thinks that the question of the language of the schools is important but difficult to resolve. Basically, he thinks that it is good that Montenegrin be introduced at school but at the same time thinks that the requirement that everyone studies Montenegrin is too nationalistic. This is why he thinks that it should be possible, if one wishes, to study Serbian and if necessary also Bosnian and Croatian, whatever it would mean in practice. Even though Marko is a student of Montenegrin and therefore involved in the language debate, he is critical of nationalistically oriented linguists who believe Montenegrin to be autochthonic and try to deny its connections with neighboring languages. He thinks that Montenegrin has, alongside Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian, developed from Serbo-Croatian. In the end it is a matter of the name of the language and not much more.

Marko is very Montenegrin through his background. For him it is also very natural to consider Montenegrin as his mother tongue. On the other hand, he is able to see the question from different points of view. He understands those who identify with the Serbian language, and all and all represents a moderate and pragmatic approach. For him, the most problematic factor in the language situation in Montenegro is the battle

between competing fractions on the future of the Montenegrin language and the uncertainty and difficulties caused by this.

Zorica (SR-) is 20 years old and is from Nikšić where she studies psychology. By nationality she is Montenegrin like her father. Her mother is from Macedonia. Zorica gives, a bit hesitantly, Serbian as her mother tongue. Her father is a Serbian speaker and her mother's native language is Macedonian, which Zorica speaks roughly. She also speaks English and some Russian.

Zorica says she considers Serbian to be her mother tongue because she has always spoken the language, gone to school in Serbian, and now feels no need to change her thinking one way or another. She is, however, by nationality Montenegrin since she was born and raised in the country. She believes that one's mother tongue is a large part of one's identity although at the same time she thinks that the whole question has in Montenegro become increasingly political. Being a Montenegrin speaker means, for some people, being a supporter of certain political parties. On the other hand she understands the need for a Montenegrin language—every nation should have its own language. Therefore she thinks it is completely acceptable that the official language of the country be Montenegrin and that the Faculty of Philosophy in Nikšić has begun teaching the Montenegrin language. But personally she does not feel that she speaks that language.

Zorica thinks that everyone should speak the language they wish to and call it what they want. In a way, it is a matter of one language, but at the same time people should understand that Montenegrins and Serbs are not one and the same nation. She thinks that some people have wanted, perhaps quite legitimately, that language become one of the factors that separate Montenegrins from other nations in the Balkans. Some people are, on the other hand, involved in the language question for more ulterior reasons. She thinks that a change in the language situation can be good for Montenegro: it is easier to be an independent country among others when you have not only your own borders but also your own language. The image of Montenegro might become stronger, which would be good for tourism and foreign relations.

Zorica reminds that debating language means at the same time debating many other things, including the re-interpretation of certain historical events. As an example she gives the arguing about Njegoš's works and heritage, which she strictly condemns. She feels that the question of the language taught in schools is one of the most problematic. It has been

difficult for her to adjust to the changes, let alone for teachers who have taught one language all their lives and now must start teaching another. On the other hand, referring to her younger sister, she thinks that for the next generation everything will be easier.

Zorica typically represents the moderately Serbian linguistic identity in the sense that her being a Serbian speaker is not so obviously connected with her Montenegrin-Macedonian background but rather with her own experiences and feelings. She understands the need for a Montenegrin language even though she cannot personally identify with it. She still identifies quite strongly with Montenegro as her homeland. Zorica wants to clearly distance herself from the political implications of the language question. In a way, she understands both sides and tries to manage without ending up in conflict with anyone. Although she has been able to analyze the situation deeply, her approach to the language question is in the end quite pragmatic.

Marija (SR+) is 19 years old and studies English language and literature in Nikšić. She and her parents are originally from the capital city Podgorica. Marija is a Serb by nationality and speaks Serbian, like her parents. She also speaks French, English, and Spanish.

For Marija, one's mother tongue is very important, especially now that people are trying to create a Montenegrin language. She talks of the Serbian language as "our" mother tongue, referring to a larger group. She makes the same point as some of the other students: if people in America speak English, why couldn't people in Montenegro speak Serbian. To her, the Montenegrin language and its official status is just politics. She thinks that Bosniaks, Croats, Montenegrins, and Serbs are all one people and speak one language. For her this language is Serbian. Introducing Montenegrin as the language of the schools is, according to her, very problematic. She points out that not one student has yet graduated from the newly established department of Montenegrin language and literature. She thinks the overall language situation is far too politicized.

Marija is one of only two students among the subjects who think that some sort of union with Serbia would be a better political solution for Montenegro than independence. She believes that the country was stronger during the Yugoslav times and that Montenegro had the most to lose in this political split. All and all, Marija is eager to look beyond the borders of Montenegro and see herself as part of a larger community, also when it comes to language. Regarding the Montenegrin language, she does not go

into detail but condemns it outright as a political construction. The language of her nation is Serbian and this nation also consists of people living in other ex-Yugoslav republics. Marija does not seem overly bitter about it but clearly in her view the situation in Montenegro is developing in a less-favorable direction.

Factors Explaining the Identities

After having distinguished and described the different types of linguistic identities it is time to take a look at the factors that can be found lying behind the adoption of a certain linguistic identity. Three factors stand out: nationality, family background, and school. There are, of course, other parameters at play. I took a careful look at, for example, the students' home towns, ages, and fields of studies. Montenegro is geographically divided when it comes to national and linguistic identity. However, in my small sample some regions were over-represented whereas others were not represented at all, which makes it impossible to draw definite conclusions. In the same way, age is certainly a significant factor but due to my choice of university students as the target group, there was hardly any variation here. The field of studies, for its part, seemed to have no influence on an individual student's linguistic identity.

Nationality

Three nationalities were represented among the students I interviewed. Of the fifteen students twelve were Montenegrins, two were Serbs and one was Croat. Montenegrins by nationality were found in all of the four groups. Of them, seven reported their mother tongue to be Montenegrin and five Serbian. Both Serbs, on the other hand, have a strongly Serbian linguistic identity. The one Croat falls into the category of moderately Serbian.

<i>Linguistic identity / National identity</i>	MN+	MN-	SR-	SR+	Total
Montenegrin	4	3	3	2	12
Serb				2	2
Croat			1		1
Total	4	3	4	4	15

Table 2: Linguistic identity and self-reported national identity among the interviewees.

The apparent but perhaps even surprising result is that the correlation between national and linguistic identity is not straightforward. Looking at the table above, one can see, for example, that the students with a Montenegrin national identity are quite evenly divided into the four categories of linguistic identity. However, certain observations can be made which, I believe, do demonstrate the significance of national identity in this matter. All the students with a Montenegrin linguistic identity, strong or moderate, were also by nationality Montenegrins whereas among the speakers of Serbian different nationalities were represented, and also when it came to the students' parents. So it appears to be perfectly possible to be a Montenegrin and speak Serbian. This, however, does not seem to work the other way round—in order to consider Montenegrin your mother tongue you also need to be Montenegrin by nationality. So, it appears that the Serbian language and linguistic identities are less connected to a certain national identity and more inclusive by nature whereas Montenegrin linguistic identities appear to be relatively exclusive.

An additional fact indicating the importance of nationality was that many students raised the issue in their answers. Nationality was brought up and discussed especially by speakers of Serbian who were not Serbs by nationality. Some of these students saw their situation in this respect as a bit difficult, but most thought it was totally fine to be at the same time Montenegrin and speak Serbian. They made reference to English as a language that is spoken among several different nations. Some students with a strongly Serbian linguistic identity brought up the idea that Montenegrins, Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks are actually all one and the same people. This can be seen as a trace of Yugoslavism but also, since these informants specifically spoke of the language as Serbian, as a variety of Serbian cultural imperialism.

Among the Montenegrin speakers the issue of nationality was raised twice. The first informant, a student with a strongly Montenegrin linguistic identity, considered language as one of the cornerstones of nationality and of being a nation. He made reference to Italy and Germany, which, as nations, are clearly based on one common language. For him, two nations, in this case Montenegrins and Serbs, cannot share the same language. The other informant, moderately Montenegrin, expressed a completely different view. She found it problematic that nowadays linguistic identity is automatically connected with the national one. According to her, declaring oneself as a Montenegrin speaker indicates an even stronger than usual national

identification, which is why she sometimes tries to avoid the whole question.

Many of the students having a more moderate stance, both Serbian and Montenegrin speakers, justified their support or understanding of the Montenegrin language by stating that each country should have the right to its own language. It is noteworthy that these informants explicitly used the term “country” or “state” (*država*) and not, for example, the terms “people” or “nation”. It seems that Montenegrin independence has had a major influence on the acceptability of and support for a separate Montenegrin language. All things considered, it can be said that just as in many other cases, nationality plays a role in the formation of linguistic identity. However, in the very specific and complex context of Montenegro, the correlation is not so straightforward.

Family Background

It is quite obvious that the family one is born into influences, among other things, the formation of one’s linguistic identity. With this in mind, I collected information on the students’ parents’ origins, occupations, nationalities and mother tongues, as reported by the students themselves. In addition, I took into account references to parents or family background in general that the informants made in their answers to the open questions.

Mother tongue and therewith linguistic identity is something that traditionally is inherited from one’s parents. The relatively complex language situation in Montenegro accompanied by the recent changes in the political and social reality of its people does not necessarily correspond to the usual pattern where one’s parents’ mother tongue is automatically also one’s own and at the same time the language which one emotionally identifies with. However, concerning the students I interviewed, this traditional correlation was very much present. Of the fifteen informants only three reported having a mother tongue different from that of their parents. One speaker of Montenegrin stated that her parents speak Serbian whereas one Serbian speaker believed that her parents nowadays consider Montenegrin to be their mother tongue. In addition to them, one Serbian-speaking student gave Serbo-Croatian as the mother tongue of his parents. Not forgetting the above-mentioned exceptions, it seems that being Montenegrin or Serbian speaking usually applies to the whole family.

I also collected information on the socio-economic background of the students’ families. Judging from this sample of fifteen, no particular

conclusions can be made on the influence of socio-economic factors on the students' linguistic identity. In all of the identity groups there were students whose parents were highly educated with relatively good positions in working life and those whose parents had traditional working-class jobs or were unemployed. Quite a number had at least one highly educated parent, which correlates with the fact that all of the informants were university students.

The national background and origins of the parents seem, however, to influence the students' linguistic identity. The parents of the Montenegrin speakers were all born in Montenegro and were Montenegrins by nationality, except for the mother of one of the students who was originally from Russia. On the other hand, the backgrounds of the parents of the Serbian-speaking students were much more heterogeneous. Of the eight students with moderately or strongly Serbian linguistic identity in three cases only both parents were Montenegrins. Otherwise at least one of the parents represented some other nationality, including Serbs, Croats, a Macedonian, and a Bosniak. I believe that this can be interpreted to mean that Serbian is the default language when parents are living in Montenegro but one of them comes from another ex-Yugoslav republic. Similarly, being a speaker of Montenegrin appears to be possible only when the parents are both born in Montenegro and by nationality Montenegrins. The only informant whose both parents came originally from outside Montenegro, one from Bosnia and the other from Serbia, mentioned several times how it is for her—"because of my upbringing"—impossible to adjust to the changed language situation and the idea of a separate Montenegrin language. These findings further testify to the relative inclusiveness and multiplicity of the Serbian linguistic identity as well as the relative exclusiveness and uniformity of the Montenegrin one.

School

Interestingly enough, school and its influence on the formation of one's linguistic identity was something that was brought up by many of the informants. The issue of the language taught and used in primary and secondary school was raised in any case since it was one of the themes I took up in each interview. This question, however, referred more to the current situation and the possible changes planned to the mother tongue teaching. Often the students mentioned school and the language they learned at school

already earlier in the interviews, but from a slightly different point of view, when reflecting on their own linguistic identity.

School and the language learned at school had had a particularly strong influence on the students with a moderately Serbian linguistic identity. The fact that they had during most of their school years studied the Serbian language and learned to read and write in it was one of greatest if not the greatest factor affecting their linguistic identification. When asked about their mother tongue, one of them thought out loud about the issue for a good moment, mostly describing the language he had learned at school. Finally he said that “I have studied Serbian and I will simply say [that my mother tongue is] the Serbian language.” Having been taught Serbian at school was the reason why he could not consider Montenegrin as his mother tongue. Another student, referring to the twelve years she had spent at school, said that she saw no reason why she should now change the language she has been using for so long. In addition, three other students identifying themselves as Serbian speakers mentioned the language they had studied at school. Two of them, on the other hand, referred to the next generation, believing that it might think differently if Montenegrin were introduced as the language of the schools. This, I believe, further points to the influence that the language used in the schools has on linguistic identity.

Thus far in Montenegro, however, the influence of school has been only one-way: strengthening the Serbian linguistic identity. This particularly applies to the students I interviewed since they attended school in the 1990s and 2000s when the language taught was simply Serbian. In 2005 the name of the school subject was changed to “mother tongue” and one could choose which name to have printed on one’s diploma, including for the first time Montenegrin. This did not, however, change the actual substance in any way. Most of the students continued to have “Serbian” written on their diplomas.

Thus among the students identifying themselves as speakers of Montenegrin, the language in school was not discussed the same way. It had not influenced their linguistic identity as it had with some of the Serbian speakers. The Montenegrin speakers addressed the subject of language in school more as a topical question of language politics. The students with a strongly Montenegrin linguistic identity in particular expressed their support for the introduction of Montenegrin as the language to be used in the schools. One stated that he believed many people who “actually” speak Montenegrin consider their mother tongue to be Serbian, since they have

studied this language at school. On the other hand, one of the moderately Montenegrin students found the question more complicated and believed that if the language in the schools would be Montenegrin and Montenegrin only then that could be interpreted as a nationalistic undertaking creating more problems than solving them. Therefore he thought it should be possible to study Serbian at school when the pupils and their parents so wish.

Some Concluding Remarks

The language situation in Montenegro is complicated and polarized, with a great part of the population divided into those who identify with the Serbian language and those who consider their language to be Montenegrin, a language which they feel deserves a standard of its own. The language question has become part of a wider discussion of history, identity, politics, and the future of the country, and many factors are simultaneously at play. Young people have found various ways to cope with and find their place in this fluctuating situation.

Of the fifteen university students I interviewed in Montenegro in March 2011 half considered themselves speakers of Montenegrin and half Serbian. In many ways, this was not the most essential difference between them. There was great variety among the students on how they view the importance and meaning of their mother tongue, how they view the general language situation and what their attitude is towards those who think and feel differently. Four main types of linguistic identity could be distinguished: strongly Montenegrin, moderately Montenegrin, moderately Serbian, and strongly Serbian. In a number of aspects, the moderately Montenegrin and moderately Serbian identities had much in common. Students belonging to these groups often expressed very similar views, although personally identifying with a different language. Students with a strongly Montenegrin and those with a strongly Serbian linguistic identity were, understandably, the most polarized when it came to such questions as the nature of the Montenegrin language and the status it should have. On the other hand, sometimes the students belonging to these two groups used very similar arguments to defend their opposing opinions.

When looking at the factors behind the adoption of a certain linguistic identity, three stand out: nationality, family background, and school. The correlation between national and linguistic identity is well-known, and considering the language-centered nature of European nationalism, quite

apparent. In the Montenegrin context, however, this correlation is less straightforward, and even though nationality clearly plays a role its influence on linguistic identity seems to be less strong than in most other cases. Some of the students explicitly rejected the traditional language-nation equation of Romantic nationalism. This was especially the case with some of the speakers of Serbian who had another national identity. The influence of parents and family background was found to be significant, too. In most cases, the parents and children, as reported by the students I interviewed, shared a similar linguistic identity, even though they had grown up in very different circumstances. Here again there was more diversity among the speakers of Serbian. From this point of view, the Serbian linguistic identities appeared more inclusive than the Montenegrin, which were more clearly connected to a certain background.

An important finding of this study is the great influence that the language taught and used in primary and secondary education has had on the formation of the students' linguistic identity. Particularly in the case of the students with a moderately Serbian linguistic identity, all non-Serbs by nationality, the fact that they had studied Serbian at school had a decisive impact. Furthermore, what makes the language of the schools an interesting question is that, of all the possible factors underlying the formation of linguistic identities, it can be easily influenced by politics.

In sum, it seems that the turbulence, uncertainty and fluctuation surrounding the language question in Montenegro are not about to end soon. The ultimate nature and status of the Montenegrin language remains an unresolved issue. The new standard has not been accepted by all of its potential speakers whereas the Serbian language and the linguistic identities connected to it have maintained their strong position. However, as shown by the results of this study, the acceptance of and identification with the Montenegrin language can be influenced top-down, particularly through education.

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