

IDENTIFICATION OF SERBIAN, CROATIAN, AND BOSNIAN (PRELIMINARY DRAFT)

Linguistic distinctions:

Phonology (“h” instead of “v” or “j”):

From *Serbo-Croatian reading passages*, by Slavna Babić, 1975. “The consonant ‘h’ may be used instead of the constants [sic] ‘v’ or ‘j’ with some words. The words containing the ‘h’ are often used in western Serbo-Croatian [ijekavian form] and the variant with ‘v’ or ‘j’ in the eastern [ekavian form]: *kuhati* = *kuvati* (to cook); ... *uho* = *uvo* (ear); ... *snaha* = *snaja* (daughter-in-law)”

Grammar (use of the infinitive)

From: *Serbo-Croatian: basic course*, U.S. Foreign Service Institute, 1965.

“Central Serbo-Croatian [ijekavian form] often uses an impersonal /-ti/ form, where eastern Serbo-Croatian [ekavian form] has a personal verb form. For example, an eastern speaker says /*želim da jedem*/ ‘I want that I eat.’ The central expression would be /*želim jesti*/ ‘I want to eat.’”

From: *Serbo-Croat: a complete course for beginners*, by David A. Norris, 1993.

“Infinitive patterns: in the eastern variant [ekavian] there is a strong tendency not to use the infinitive form, but to replace it with a pattern using the word *da* followed by the present tense.”

Spelling (future tense):

The future tense in Croatian is written with two words instead of one and with a slightly different spelling. Example: *ostat ću* [in Croatian] instead of *ostaću*.

Vocabulary (use of “who” and “what”):

From: *Serbo-Croatian reading passages*, by Slavna Babić, 1975. “In western Serbo-Croatian [ijekavian] the pronoun *tko* (who) ... is much more used than “*ko*,” and “*što*” (what) instead of *šta*.”

Vocabulary (names of months):

In Serbian the names of the months are clearly cognates of the western European names: *januar*, *februar*, *mart*, In Croatian the names are *siječanj*, *veljača*, *ožujak*, etc.

Vocabulary (dictionaries):

Dictionaries are available to assist in determining vocabulary differences between Croatian and Serbian. Example: *Razlikovni rječnik srpskog i hrvatskog jezika* by Vladimir Brodnjak or *Rječnik bosanskoga jezika : karakteristična leksika* by Alija Isaković.

Choice of variant or dialect:

Works in the ekavian variant are probably Serbian. Works in the ijekavian variant may be Serbian, Croatian, or Bosnian.

Script:

Works in the Cyrillic alphabet are probably Serbian. Works in the roman alphabet may be Serbian, Croatian, or Bosnian.

Ethnicity of author:

If the author is identified as Croatian, then the language is probably Croatian. If the author is identified as Serbian or Montenegrin, then the language is probably Serbian. If the author is identified as Bosnian Muslim, then the language is probably Bosnian.

Place of publication:

Works published in Croatia are probably Croatian, unless published by an organization having Serbian interests. Works published in Serbia or Montenegro are probably Serbian. Works published in Bosnia may be Serbian, Croatian, or Bosnian.

Publisher or issuing body:

If the publisher or issuing body clearly represents the interests or opinions of a particular ethnic group, then the work is probably written in the language of that group.

Content:

In some cases the content of the publication may be used as a guide to determining the language. Example: works on Orthodox Church doctrines are probably in Serbian.