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Globalization on the tip of my (mother) tongue: Language attitudes in L1

Abstract

In the domain of language, culture and communications, globalization seems to have brought a growing respect for variety and plurality, for 'the other' and the different. However, the new values of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism, promoted in the context of global interactions, do not seem to be equally readily applied 'at home', within cultural communities considered 'monolingual' or 'monolithic', with respect to regional and social varieties of language and culture. We present the results of a study of language attitudes expressed by a group of university students from Niš towards different social and regional varieties of Serbian. The findings reveal the participants' marked preference for the varieties they consider closer to the 'standard', i.e. 'correct' and thus socially prestigious, and little solidarity with the varieties markedly different from the standard, which they consider 'sub-standard' and 'incorrect'. Participants' attitudes reveal bias, prejudice and stereotypical views, not only towards language varieties, but towards their speakers as well, with a remarkable discrepancy between overt and covert attitudes.

Key words: regional and social languge varieties, language attitudes, mother tongue

Introduction

That the effects of globalization are often observed through the prism of language is only natural, considering that globalization, as the 'widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life" (Held *et al*.,1999, 2), depends on language as its main vehicle, while, in return, globalizing processes profoundly affect language. Consequentlty, as Blommaert (2003,608) points out, the way language is used has generally become a matter of scale – "the macro and the micro, the global and the local, the different levels at which 'language' can be said to exist and at which sociolinguistic processes operate". Therefore, not only does globalization force us to "grapple with newly emerging collective global issues" (Held 2004), but it also requires us to think 'globally' about the phenomena we have normally regarded as 'local':

> "... [T]he term globalization itself suggests a process of lifting events form one level to a higher one, a global one, *or vice versa*, and a sociolinguistics of globalization will definitely need to explain the various forms of interconnectedness between levels and scales of sociolinguistic phenomena." (Blommaert, 2003, 608).

Bringing both deterritorialization and localization (Erksen, 2007) of phenomena, globalization has placed the spotlight on two important issues – first, identity construction, demanding the recognition of different and unique identitites, local or glocal (Robertson, 1995, 1996;

Wellman, 2002; Block & Cameron, 2002), and second, linguistic and cultural diversity (Kachru, 1998; Phillipson, 2001, 2004; Crystal, 2003; Byram 2007), promoting the respect for 'the other' and the different.

However, it seems that the values of diversity and plurality, promoted in the context of international communications and multi-cultural environments, are not equally readily applied 'at home', within communities viewed as monolingual and homogeneous in terms of national, cultural and language space, such as, for instance, Serbian. When it comes to regional and social varieties, respect for different ways of speaking may be overtly advocated, but is not really evident in individuals' daily interactions. A remark by a taxi cab driver from Albuquerque, quoted by Wolfram in his article *Language Diversity and the Public Interest* (2008,187), perfectly examplifies the common view of the status and importance of langauge varieties: "That's the good thing about dialects; anybody can do it *as a hobby*."

Language attitudes and language varieties

Language attitudes, as complexes of cognitive, affective and behavioural components, are increasingly recognized as an important 'window' into speakers' social identity. Attitudes to 'standard' and 'non-standard' English varieties have been researched extensively – in the USA (Lippi-Green, 1997; Milroy, 2001; Fought, 2002) and the UK (Edwards, 1994; Giles & Coupland, 1991; Macafee 1994; Milroy, 1999), as judged by both native and non-native speakers (Ladegaard 1998, Garret *et al.* 2003; Hiraga, 2005; Coupland & Bishop, 2007). However, langauge attitudes towards varieties of 'small' langauges such as Serbian are rarely investigated (Cveticanin & Paunovic, 2007; Paunovic, 2007a, b; Cveticanin, 2007). In Serbian folk linguistics, the very term 'dialect' is felt to stand for older, mostly rural and mostly out-dated linguistic sub-systems, spoken – if at all – by small groups of elderly speakers at some remote geographical spots. 'Dialects' are felt by many people to be little more than picturesque ornaments that add to the vividness of literary prose – exotic relics, rather than living language forms used by real people in their daily life. That is probably why research into varieties of Serbian spoken by a great number of people in regional centres and urban environments is scarce.

Attitudes towards language varieties are an important motivating factor in speakers' social interactions, being closely linked to dimensions of solidarity (identification) and status (power, prestige) (Fairclough, 1989; Ng & Bradac, 1993; Reid & Ng, 1999). Since speech varieties function as markers of social self-classification (Hudson, 1996) and social

acceptance or rejection, code-switching between varieties or dialects for different purposes and in different situations is an integral part of speakers' communicative and pragmatic competence, as well documented by research (Labov, 1972; Trudgill, 1983; Tajfel, 1981; Ferguson,1991;)). Speech convergence signals social inclusion, while divergence signals exclusion or distance (Hudson, 1996:236), so the native regional variety may be used by its speakers as the 'password code' that ensures acceptance by their native community, the in-group, while a more prestigious variety would be used to ensure acceptance by the out-group. Thus, speech 'accomodation', or, as Patrick (2007) terms it, 'overt prestige' involves the usage of the langauge forms "that are used by a high prestige group in order to claim inclusion", while 'covert prestige' involves the use of language used by a "low prestige group, in order to mark solidarity with that group". As a result, switching between varieties is a constant linguistic interplay of power and solidarity. For instance, McKenzie's research findings (2007, 2008) confirm that standard varieties of English, British or American, tend to be judged positively in terms of 'status', while non-standard varieties are evaluated more highly in terms of 'solidarity,'particularly when the judges are speakers of a non-standard variety themselves.

More importantly, regional varieties different from the 'standard' tend to be associated with sociocultural and socio-economic characteristics of the region in which they are used, so that people's attitudes towards such *language* varieties are often shaped by social, economic and cultural factors (Hudson, 1996; Wolfram & Christian, 1989; Daniels, 1998). Due to such complex interrelatedness of regional and social dimensions, speakers of varieties remarkably different from the 'standard' often feel that the 'standard' variety is the 'high status' one, the 'correct' and 'authentic' version of the langauge, while, in comparison, their native variety is 'low-status', 'incorrect' or deficient. Many speakers of Serbian would agree that the varieties of Serbian different from 'standard speech' are often subject to scorn, ridicule or at least affable jokes, and are often judged in folk linguistics as 'sub-standard', incorrect and inferior. This is shown by research findings on several langauges, among others, by the study conducted in the USA by Holland McBride (2006). Her research focused on the experience of successful professional women, native speakers of a variety remarkably different from Standard American English – the Appalachian English. Her participants stated that their professional environment expected the use of the standard variety, 'along with societal beliefs that Appalachian English is an inferior language variety' (*ibid.*, 1). They did not express overtly negative attitudes towards the standard variety, though, and acknowledged the 'professional promise' it offered them. On the other hand, they took pride in their native variety, and felt it

was part of their heritage and identity. This is how Holland McBride, herself a native speaker of Apallachian, describes her feelings about her vernacular:

> 'It is the language of my ancestors, the people who have loved me, supported me, taught me to love Appalachia while also teaching me to love and appreciate the world outside of my Appalachian home... I will never leave my native variety behind. It comforts me. It speaks to my soul. ... Appalachian English feels comfortable. It is a reflection of my identity. (Holland McBride, 2006,1)

The fact that they felt obligated to 'standardize' (accommodate) their speech led the participants in this study to very ambivalent feelings about both the standard and their native variety. Negative pressure at school or in the working environment made them feel that if they spoke in their dialect they didn't "measure up in some way to societal expectations". In order to balance their membership in the two speech communities, such speakers "balance the two language varieties through bidialectism", and "perpetually strive for more standardization as their careers develop" (*ibid.*).

Because standard varieties are promoted through academic, educational and professional environments, and sometimes even through legislature (Ng, 2007), speakers of different native varieties often feel a conflict in their daily life. As Holland McBride puts it, they feel "pulled in two competing directions" (2006, 7), because they have to choose between "group solidarity and evaluation of social and educational stature by external groups of speakers", and they must constantly "weigh the considerations of status and solidarity as they pertain to speech". Furthermore, whether "blatant or subtle" (Ng, 2007), the pressure of linguistic discrimination makes it obvious that their native variety is considered inferior. For instance, Holland McBride quotes typical comments made "almost entirely by superiors at work.": 'If you don't lose that accent, you'll never move up in this company', or 'Do all Southerners think as slowly as they talk?' (Holland McBride, 2006,12).

As shown in numerous researches on English varieties (Garret, 2001; Garret *et al.* 2003; Coupland & Bishop, 2007), speakers' attitudes are often stereotypical and prejudiced; furthermore, negative attitudes to *language varieties* are easily translated into negative atttitudes to their *speakers*. Therefore, regional differences in *language* are readily associated with certain personal traits, especially related to amiability, skilfulness, and intelligence: And all this often results in social pressure, rejection or even language discrimination (Daniels, 1998; Lippi-Green, 1997). As Ng (2007) puts it, "discrimination against particular linguistic groups is the unfair treatment of an individual or a group of individuals on account of their

language or speech features such as accent. It may be practiced despite legal or human rights proscription or, ironically, with the blessing of the law" (*ibid.., 106-107*).

Previous research

All these issues are more and more widely recognized as important for identity construction and social interactions, and are investigated in various speech communities. Most often, research involves bilingual speakers and members of linguistic minorities (McKirnan & Hamayan, 1984; Lo, 1999; Weisman, 2001; Lawson, 2004; Scott Shenk, 2007; Bergman *et al,* 2008;). More and more researches, however, focus on traditional 'monolingual' communities and the role of dialectal and social varieties, some of them even qiestioning the traditional notion of the 'standard' (e.g. Coupland, 2000). Abrams and Hogg (1987), for instance, investigated language attitudes in Scotland, as related to social identity. They expected, on the basis of social identity and self-categorisation theories, that ingroup speakers would be evaluated more positively than outgroup speakers, especially when of equal status, but their findings showed that in Scotland both varieties were judged as relevant in different situations. Mann (2007) researched langauge attitudes as related to language learning and linguistic accommodation in Wales, while Ray and Zahn (1999) compared language atttitudes towards New Zealand Englsih and Standard Americn English among New Zealand listeners. Beckford Wassink and Dyer (2004), comparing two specific varieties of English, spoken at Corby, United Kingdom, and in Kingston, Jamaica, point out that for bidialectal speakers phonological variants, in fact, 'index distinct and different identities', with the more stigmatised variety serving as 'a means of marking local identity and pride'.

Researches are by no means restricted to English-speaking communities. Heller's (2003) research into attitude and identity issues focuses on Francophone Canada. Ogbu (1999) studied attitudes towards Ebonics, the variety of English spoken by Afro-American speakers, and the relation of language and identity. Dundes and Spence (2007) also discuss how black dialect is judged, and point out the necessity to educate students to recognize racism. Ihemere (2006) investigated attitudes to different langauge varieties in Nigeria, and Migge (2007) investigated code-switching as related to social identities in the Eastern Maroon community of Suriname and French Guiana, while the study presented by Assaf (2001) compares attitudes of Palestinian students towards modern standard Arabic and Palestinian city Arabic.

That language varieties and speakers' attitudes are recognized as socially very relevant is evident from many discussions of education, language policies and socially important practices. For instance, Thompson (2004) discusses the policy for language education in England, Wolfram *et al* (1999) discuss the status of dialects in schools and communitites in the UK, while Martínez-Roldán and Maláve (2004) investigate how language ideologies influence education, and discuss how literacy and identity can be mediated in Mexican students in the USA. In the Serbian context, Filipovic (2007, Filipovic *et al*. 2007) discusses foreign langauge policies. Finaly, the paper by Alvarez Veinguer and Davis (2007), on the status of the Tatar lanaguage in national schooling in Kazan, draws attention to the role that educational and langauge policies and institutions play in shaping speakers' attitudes and their identity. The authors conclude (*ibid.*,203) that "schools, in consort with other institutions, create and reproduce concrete and specific symbols, a cultural representation that simultaneously reinforces a sense of 'belonging' and 'communality', as well as 'otherness'and 'differentiation'… However, differences between Tatars and non-Tatars in attitudes to the language, different readings of history, and differences in representing the 'other', cannot be understood in terms of interaction between ethnocultural or national groups without reference to institutional strategies. … They play an explicit role in reinforcing and promoting specific attitudes and representations." All these issues are in some way relevant for the study we present here.

Present study

The **aim** of our study was to investigate the attitudes expressed by the speakers of one type of variety of Serbian towards other varieties, especially in terms of status and solidarity, langauge discrimination and stereotypes. Therefore**,** we focused on the attitudes expressed by university students from Nis towards different varieties of Serbian, including the variety they recognized as 'standard'. The **research questions** we started from were the following:
  1. What attitudes do young people express towards different varieties of Serbian?
  2. Are their attitudes grounded in geographical proximity or governed by social factors?
  3. To what extent and in what ways do language attitudes influence their social practices?
  4. Are they aware of language discrimination?

The **population** consisted of 75 university students (33% male, 67% female) from state and private universities in Niš, the regional centre of South-East Serbia. All the participants were students of social sciences or humanities (management, law, journalism), aged 19-21. As their

place of permanent residence in formative years (primary and secondary school), 64% participants stated Niš or the Niš county, 20% Southern Serbia, 5% Kosovo, 3% places in Eastern Serbia, 2% in Central Serbia, and 6% elsewhere. Therefore, we could regard 94% of our participants as native speakers of some type of south-east variety of Serbian.

Methodology and procedures. The **research instrument** used for data collection was a single direct-method questionnaire distributed by participants' teachers in class. It consisted of 7 background questions (age, gender, place of birth, place of residence in formative years, mother tongue, nationality, faculty/area of study) followed by the main part containing 30 items: 16 contained bipolar 5-point semantic differential scales; 10 were in some form of bipolar (yes/no) choice (for one or more elements of the item) and 4 contained open-ended questions asking the participants to elaborate on the reasons for some of their choices. The questionnaire did not specify or define any regional variety of Serbian; the term 'standard' Serbian' was not defined either, because we sought to elicit the participants' opinions about what constitutes 'standard speech'. The formulation 'the way people speak' was used to include both the grammatico-lexical and the pronunciation aspect of varieties. The questionnaire focused on four general topics: 1) the participants' native variety, its characteristics, its role in their feeling of identity and pride, their attitudes towards this variety, and the social contexts in which they commonly use it; 2) the variety they perceive as standard, its characteristics, its role in their life, their attitudes towards it and the social contexts in which they choose to use it; 3) other regional varieties of Serbian and their attitudes towards them; 4) the participants' awareness of and experience with accommodation or the pressure to 'standardize' the way they speak, and with language discrimination Our **quantitative data analysis** included standard descriptive statistics (frequencies, central tendencies, variability) and, for bipolar semantic differential scales, T-tests, ANOVA comparisons, F-factor and correlations.

Results and discussion

'Standard' Serbian. The participants' overall attitude to standard speech was not straightforwardly positive. Only 50.7% of them expressed an undivided positive attitude, which, with 26.7% of participants who expressed 'mostly' positive attitudes, left 23% of the participants on the neutral or negative side of the five-point scale. In the participants' perception of the 'standard variety', grammatical correctness plays a more important role than pronunciation: while 'grammatically correct' speech was deemed important by virtually all the

participants (78.7% yes, 21.3% mostly), pronunciation was viewed as an essential element of 'standard speech' by 60% of the participants, with 37.3% whose answer was 'mostly'.

When asked to focus on the essential properties of 'standard speech', the only feature singled out as doubtlessly identifying was word-stress placement (by 76% of the participants), while other features (see Table 1) were recognized as important by less than half our participants, with no significant correlations with either their area of study or their place of residence. Interestingly, the pitch accents commonly described in linguistic literature as the main distinctive property of Standard Serbian were regarded relevant for the standard variety by only 41% of our participants, and only 48% agreed that vowel length was relevant. Intonation was not recognized as an important distinctive property of 'standard' speech.

	yes	no	?
Segments e.g. /č, ć, dž, a, e/...	47 %	48 %	5 %
Stress-placement	76 %	19 %	5 %
4 pitch accents	41 %	54 %	5 %
Length of some vowels	48 %	47 %	5 %
Utterance intonation	37 %	58 %	5 %

Table 1. The characteristics of 'standard speech' perceived as relevant

We wanted to explore whether our participants relied on regional or on social factors more heavily in identifying 'standard' speech, so one of the questions asked them if there was a region in Serbia where 'standard' Serbian was spoken. Only 10% singled out certain regions (Vojvodina and three towns in Central Serbia), while 80% rejected this possibility. However, as many as 59% commented that "it's a matter of 'education'" and not the place you live in, thus showing that their perception of varieties was more closely associated with social factors, especially with 'correctness' and 'education' when the standard variety was concerned.

Concerning the social contexts they associated with 'standard speech', most participants singled out national TV stations, cultural performances (theatre, manifestations) and L1 classes at school as those places where they could actually hear the standard variety. Ranked by mean values (Table 2) on the scale from 1=yes to 2=no, these situations ranged from 1.16 to 1.37.

Situations ranked by mean valuess	1=yes 2=no
National TV stations	1.16
Cultural performances	1.24
School – L1 teacher	1.35
School – in class /teachers	1.37

Family	1.55
Local TV & radio	1.71
Close friends	1.79
Classmates – in class	1.81
Town - public places	1.87
During breaks, club	1.92
Neighbours	1.92

Table 2. The contexts in which participants think 'standard' speech is used, ranked by mean values

All the other social conexts offered in the questionnaire were ranked on the negative part of the scale, ranging from mean values 1.55 to 1.92, showing that the participants did not associate 'standard Serbian' with communication in their families, with their friends and schoolmates, on local TV and radio stations, or the streets of their hometown.

Regional varieties of Serbian. Overall, our participants expressed a positive overt attitude to different geographical varieties. When asked about the regional variety they 'liked' the most and found 'beautiful and pleasant', 70% responded and singled out Central Serbia (41%) or Vojvodina (21%); Southern (5%) and Western Serbia (3%). Dislike for specific varieties was much less straightfowardly expressed, and fewer participants associated negative feelings with some varieties, notably with some places in Southern Serbia (28%), and, somewhat surprisingly, in Belgrade (21%), then, Eastern Serbia (5%) and Nis (3%).

One of the items in the questionnaire asked the participants to associate certain varieties of their choice with 4 traits. Relying only partly on previous research (McKenzie 2007, Garrett et al. 2003; Coupland & Bishop 2007), and much more on popular Serbian folk-linguistic beliefs and views, we chose the traits *funny, difficult to understand, primitive,* and *calssy/noble*. Initially, the former two (both negative) were inteded to represent the dimension of solidarity, and the latter two to be associated wtih status (one negative, the other one positive). However, the post-hoc principal component analysis showed that the two 'status' traits were indeed loaded on component 2, but that only one of the 'solidarity' traits was clearly loaded on component 1 (KMO .668, Bartlett's Test sig. .000), leaving the trait *difficult to understand* ambivalent with respect to status or solidarity (cf Tables 3 and 4).

	Initial	Extraction
funny	1.000	.904
difficult to understand	1.000	.683
primitive / low	1.000	.814
classy/ noble	1.000	.872

Table 3. Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

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	Component	
	1	2
funny	.086	.947
difficult to understand	**.528**	**.636**
primitive / low	.782	.451
classy/ noble	.933	.047

Table 4. Rotated Component Matrix. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 3 iterations

The participants more readily associated certain varieties wtih the trait pertaining to solidarity, than with the two traits related to status. The trait that provoked most responses was 'funny' which only 32% of the participants did not associate with any regional variety, then, 'difficult', which was not associated with any variety by 43%, 'primitive/ low' was not associated with any variety by 53% of the subjects and 'noble/classy' was not associated with any variety by 64% of the participants. Ranked by the frequency of positive answers, the Southern varieities were most readily judged as funny (13%), difficult (10%) and even as primitive/low (3%). Eastern varieties were judged as funny (8%) and difficult (5%) to a lesser degree, the varieties described as 'rural' were judged as funny (5%) and primitive/low (3%) by some participants, while a small number of participants described the varieties spoken in the North of Serbia, Nis and Belgrade as funny (3% each); Northern and Western varieties were judged as difficult by a small number of participants (3% each). The trait explicitely embodying high social status, power and prestige - *noble/classy* - was associated, by 8% of the participants, with only one varitety – that spoken in the North of the country (Vojvodina). Our findings, therefore, show that the attitudes expressed by our participants were pretty much in accordance with the common stereotypes about regional varieties of Serbian – Central and Northern varieties were judged much more favourably than Southern and Eastern varieties.

Participants' native variety. When asked to evaluate the variety spoken in their native langauge community, our participants expressed ambivalent attitudes, neither very positive nor very negative. As can be seen from the graph in Table 5, half the participants (54.7%) opted for the mid-point of the scale, with almost equal numbers on the positive (24%) and negative (21.3%) sides. Such ambivalent feelings are not uncommon for speakers of local varieties very different from the 'standard' and felt to be 'lower' or incorrect by their native speakers (cf. Holland McBride 2006).

Histogram

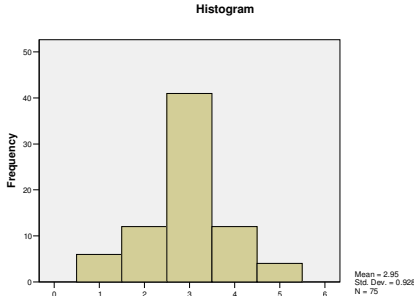Mean = 2.95
Std. Dev. = 0.928
N = 75

Table 5. Do you like the way people speak in your region?

This was even more obvious when the participants were explicitly asked to compare their native variety to the 'standard', i.e. to say which is 'beter' or 'nicer'. The participants' native variety was felt to be 'not really as good/ nice' by as many as 54.7%, and not at all as good by an additional 10.7% of the participants, while only 32% felt it was 'as good' and only 2.7% judged it as 'better/ nicer' than the standard. When asked if they would be proud to be recognized by the way they speak as members of their regional speech community, they expressed almost the same atttiudes: only 13% expressed pride, 25% said they would mostly enjoy that, while 19% were neutral, and 43% disliked that possibility. These findings also indicate the participants' ambivalent feelings about their own local langauge variety.

Asked to define the main characteristics of their 'local speech' that make it different from 'standard speech', most participants singled out word-stress placement (73%), the property they singled out as defining 'standard' speech in a previous question, too. The pitch-accent system or vowel length were not perceived as important (cf. Table 6), while the opinion about utterance intonation was divided. No significant correlations were found here with other variables, e.g students' area of study or place of residence.

	yes	**no**	?
Segments e.g. /č, ć, dž, a, e/...	24 %	68 %	8 %
Stress-placement	73 %	19 %	8 %
4 pitch accents	42 %	50 %	8 %
Length of some vowels	37 %	55 %	8 %
Utterance intonation	43 %	49 %	8 %

Table 6. Characteristics of the local variety – different from the 'standard'

Self-evaluation. When asked to describe the way they usually speak, i.e. to judge how similar their speech is to 'standard' Serbian on one side, and to the regional variety on the other, most participants expressed ambivalent judgements as well. The frequency measures show that almost equal numbers of participants judged their speech as similar to the 'standard' (8%= completely the same, 53% =mostly the same) and to the regional variety (39% completely and

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27% mostly like the regional variety). Similarly, 25% opted for the mid-point of the scale in the first of these questions, and 21% in the second. Only 14 % of the participants explicitely described the way they speak as different from the 'standard', and as many participants stated their speach was mostly or completely different from the regional variety. These numbers indicate that our participants, like Holland McBride's (2006) feel 'pulled in two competing directions', and cannot fully identify with one variety or the other, expressing a certain degree of distance towards them both, and not very positive attitudes. As for the characteristics that made their speach different from the standard, they once again singled out stress placement (44%) and to some degree pitch accents (35%) as such distinctive properties.

Social variation – styles, registres. As many as 77% of our subjects were not aware of code-switching in different communicative situations, while only 22% stated they did not speak the same way on every occasion. However, when asked to specify the communicative situations in which they used a more 'standardized' variety and those in which they used their native, 'relaxed' variety, the participants made a clear distinction between more and less formal situations, and socially close or distant interlocutors. Table 7 shows how they ranked 8 communicative situations in terms of the necessity to standardize their speech (situations ranked by mean values, on the scale from 1=yes to 2= no).

Situations ranked by mean valuess	1=yes 2=no
in class	1.05
with strangers	1.11
in another town	1.31
in public places	1.33
at school, during breaks	1.52
at home	1.60
with neighbours	1.68
with friends	1.71

Table 7. Communicative situations in which speech is 'standardised', ranked by mean values

These results show that, although not aware of that, most participants naturally accomodate their speech and use a more standard variety depending on their judgement about the level of formality and social distance involved in a particular communicative situation. Social factors determined by their perception of in-group solidarity (at home, with neighbours, with friends) and status / power (teachers in class, strangers, people from other towns), as well as their

perception of the distinction between private and public domains of language usage, are all reflected in their choice of langauge variety.

Language discrimination. Relying on previous research, we assumed that our participants, too, would have ambiguous feelings concernig variety switching and the need to standardise their speech on certain occasions. We expected their overtly expressed attitudes and views to be different from the covert attitudes and views expressed indirectly. Indeed, when asked whether they felt comfortable when they accomodated / standardised their speech, 68% of our participants gave a positive answer, and when asked whether they felt any kind of outside, social pressure to standardise their speech, again a great number explicitely stated that it was a matter of their own choice, entirely (43%) or mostly (15%). However, a third of our participants could not express a clear opinion here and opted for the mid-point of the scale (neither natural nor imposed), while only 11% explicitely stated that standardisation was imposed on them, and that they felt social pressure to modify their speech.

When asked to further specify the reasons for standardising their speech in certain situations, our participants again associated 'standard' speech with education i.e. 'correctness' most readily (52%). Table 8 shows the ranking of their answers by the frequency and central tendency measures. Only 5% of the participants associated non-standardised speech clearly with social rejection, but in a more narrowly specified public context (job) 25% recognised the possibility of social rejection. Still, except for possible ridicule, the only aspect of negative social judgement they were aware of was related to the level of education.

If you didn't standardise your speech, do you think that people woould....	Yes	No	Mean	St.D
…appreciate you less?	5 %	95 %	1.95	**.226**
… avoid your company?	5 %	95 %	1.95	**.226**
… think you're stupid?	16 %	84 %	1.84	.369
…not choose you for a job?	25 %	75 %	1.75	.438
… laugh, ridicule you?	40 %	60 %	1.60	**.493**
…think you are uneducated ?	**52 %**	**48 %**	**1.48**	**.503**

Table 8. Social pressure and social rejection

However, when asked explicitly if they thoght that people with a 'better' accent were generally treated better, 32% thought it possible and 41% rejected this possibility, with as many as 27% at the mid-point of the scale, which indicated that, although reluctant to overtly

state so, they did associate divergence from 'standard' speech as the possible source of social discrimination. At the level of overt attitudes, however, the self-image of our participants supported linguistic tolerance – only 5% of them admitted they were annoyed by other people's different accent, while 76% denied having such feelings.

A completely different picture emerged when we asked the participants if they had ever heard someone ridicule, criticize of make jokes about somebody's speech. As many as 72% participants gave a straightforwardly positive answer, and 15% admitted witnessing that at least sometimes. In addition, 62% of them stated that 'everybody does that', including themselves and their close friends, neighbours, and schoolmates. Once again, the stereotypical status of Southern (29%) and Eastern varieties (14%), including the one spoken in Nis (13%), and the unspecified 'rural speech' (12%) was revealed in the answer to the question about which regional varieties were ridiculed most often. Finally, only 16% of our participants admitted they themselves had been advised to 'lose their accent' if they wanted to do better on certain occasions, and 13% stated it had happened only sometimes, while 45% stated they had never experienced this. The discrepancy between the results here and in the previous group of questions shows clearly that our participants were not able to recognize language discrimination although they had encountered it.

Interpretation

Concerning our first research question, it can be said that the overt attitudes the participant express towards different varieties in general are positive. The participants much more readily associate certain regional varieties (most often northern and central Serbian varieties) with positive than negative evaluations, especially in terms of pleasantness and attractiveness. They more readily associate regional varieties with traits related to solidarity than with those pertaining to social status and power. The association of specific regional varieties with certain solidarity and status traits was completely in accordance with common stereotypes about Southern and Eastern varieties of Serbian and the distinction rural - urban. However, when focusing on the differences between local varieties (including their own) and the standard variety (which they cannot clearly specify in terms of its definign lignuistic properties), they express ambivalent feelings and attitudes towards both their native variety and the standard, and cannot identify completely with either one of them. This is in line with earlier research findings, and indicates that the participants feel their regional variety to be

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inferior compared to the 'high' standard variety, and feel urged to balnace the two varieties. Their feeling that their local variety is 'incorrect' or 'corrupted' may explain why they do not readily recognize it a source of their identiy and pride.

Secondly, with respect to the question of whether their attitudes are grounded in geographical proximity or governed by social factors, our findings show that it is social factors rather than geographical that shape the participants' attitudes. Standard speech is mostly associated with correctness and the speakers' level of education, and not with a certain region, and is perceived as a marker of high status only with respect to 'crrectness' and education.

Thirdly, concerning the ways in which their attitudes influence the participants' social practices, we can say that code-switching between the two varieties, the relaxed local one and the standard one, is a common practice for our participants, although they are not fully aware of this fact. Their choice of the variety depends on the level of formality, and on the perceived social distance and social status of the interlocutor. The participants are not aware of the social pressure to standardize their speech and cannot specify the possible consequences of choosing to use their regional variety on some occasions.

Finally, although they indeed have encountered some forms of langauge discrimination (ridicule, rejection) they do not recognize it, and do not classify certain types of social behaviour as discriminative. This finding is especially important, because it shows that educational institutions should pay much more attention to raising young people's awareness about linguistic discrimination.

Conclusion

The small-scale research presented in this paper has highlighted several important problems. For one thing, it has shown that language attitudes, covert rather than overt, play a very important role in the construction of young people's linguistic, cultural and social identity, and motivate a wide range of their social practices. Secondly, it has shown that the importance of attitudes to different 'standard' and 'non-standard' varieties is still not fully recognized, either by speakers themselves or by education- and language policy makers. This is especially true of teaching langauges which, unlike English, are not in the focus of global attention, and of L1 teaching in many contexts, including Serbian.

Thirdly, it is important to remember that negative attitudes toward varieties different from the 'standard' can easily be encouraged through education, in mother-tongue and foreign langauge teaching alike, unless we try, alonside teaching the 'correct' forms of the langauge, to raise studetns' awareness about the legitimacy and beauty of many other varieties. As often pointed out today, students' communicative competence should be developed beyond mere linguistic competence, to include pragmatic and social competences, and the latter two are rooted in the notion of *social appropriateness*. With respect to langauge varieties, this means that our students should learn that there are no 'correct' and 'incorrect' vareities, and that every variety of the language is appropriate in *some* social contexts and performs certain *functions* for its speakers in certain communicative situations. Being a competent communicator means just being aware of what forms are appropriate in what contexts.

Promoting respect for varieties would not undermine either the educationl system or the 'standard langauge' it strives to sustain. Quite the contrary, promoting the respect for different varieties would promote students' respect for the standard variety, too – as one of the many, and as one that has its specific function in *every* speaker's social life, including their own. Holland McBride summs up this idea beautifully: "People must make their own language choices; as educators, we can only hope to help them develop the awareness that underlies those choices" (Holland McBride, 2006:1).

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Abstract

Globalization on the tip of my (mother) tongue: Language attitudes in L1

In the domain of language, culture and communications, globalization seems to have brought a growing respect for variety and plurality, for 'the other' and the different. However, the new values of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism, promoted in the context of global interactions, do not seem to be equally readily applied 'at home', within cultural communities considered 'monolingual' or 'monolithic', with respect to regional and social varieties of language and culture. We present the results of a study of language attitudes expressed by a group of university students from Niš towards different social and regional varieties of Serbian. The findings reveal the participants' marked preference for the varieties they consider closer to the 'standard', i.e. 'correct' and thus socially prestigious, and little solidarity with the varieties markedly different from the standard, which they consider 'sub-standard' and 'incorrect'. Participants' attitudes reveal bias, prejudice and stereotypical views, not only towards language varieties, but towards their speakers as well, with a remarkable discrepancy between overt and covert attitudes.

Key words: regional and social languge varieties, language attitudes, mother tongue