

NORWEGIAN INTERFERENCE IN THE LANGUAGE OF YUGOSLAV CHILDREN IN NORWAY

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1. Introduction

1.1. Linguistic interference

For the theory of linguistic interference I will refer to the basic study of Uriel Weinreich, Languages in Contact (1953) and quote his opening passage:

In the present study, two or more languages will be said to be in contact if they are used alternately by the same persons. The language-using individuals are thus the locus of the contact.

The practice of alternately using two languages will be called bilingualism, and the person involved, bilingual. Those derivations from the norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language, i.e. as a result of language contact, will be referred to as interference phenomena.

According to Weinreich (1974, 88) "it is a conclusion of common experience, if not yet a finding of psycholinguistic research, that the language which has been learned first, or the mother-tongue, is in a privileged position to resist interference."

He admits, however, (1974, 91) that in the case of immigration, "the immigrant language, rather than the indigenous one, appears to be the more exposed to interference", for several reasons. The impact of interference on immigrant languages, which may even lead to language shift, was perhaps most clearly demonstrated by the American linguist Einar Haugen, who studied the language of Norwegian immigrants in the United States. The process of interference can be studied by the methods of comparative analysis (as discussed for example by C. James 1980).

1.2. The material

Yugoslav immigrants in Norway do not constitute a large percentage of the immigrant society, numbering less than 2000. Most of them are residents of Oslo and the Oslo area. The bulk came to Norway in the late sixties and early seventies (cfr. Rajić 1978). Yugoslav children are offered language instruction in their mother tongues.

The material for this study was collected by Branka Marjanović Larsen during her work with Yugoslav children as a teacher of Serbo-Croatian in Oslo. The examples are taken from the pupils' written works. The main aim of publishing the material is to give teachers of Serbo-Croatian a better understanding of why the pupils make the mistakes they do. Our purpose is to show how a contrastive analysis of linguistic interference can be useful for pedagogical reasons, in order to make bilinguals aware of the structural differences between Serbo-Croatian and Norwegian.

2. Lexical Interference

2.1 The transfer of Norwegian words into Serbo-Croatian.

The direct transfer of Norwegian words is commonly found, especially in the spoken language. The loanwords are adapted to Serbo-Croatian morphology, and some interesting patterns may be observed.

The verbs normally follow the -a-conjugation (type olevati):

Kada će to <u>beginati</u> ?	(begynne - početi)
To možeš <u>iemati</u> za večeru.	(gjemme [jerne! - čuvati)
Malo se <u>aruam</u> .	(grue seg - imati tremu, bojati se)
Jesi li danas <u>leso iöta</u> ?	(lese - čitati)
Ma znaš kad <u>brenaé</u> drvo	(brenne - spaliti)
Oni su se <u>silali</u> .	(skille seg - razvesti se)
Ti možeš mene <u>beoravati</u> .	(begrave - sahraniti)

Some Norwegian masculine nouns are adopted as feminine nouns:

On će dobiti <u>dasku</u>	(dask - šamar)
Igrali smo se <u>stokama</u> .	(stokk - štap)
Imali krevete u <u>oardinama</u> .	(gardin - zavjesa)

In other cases the borrowed nouns remain masculine:

Idemo skroz do sluta. (slutt - kraj)
 To je Knut, nema tvila. (tvil - sumnje)
 Ovaj lid ja ne tolam. (lyd - zvuk, tåle - podnositi)

In some cases the borrowing may be motivated by the new cultural setting, introducing unfamiliar objects:

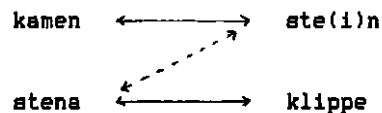
Ide se mnogo bolje na žetitama kad su stramnute (skdyte - kli-zaljka, stramme - zategnuti)

In other cases a Norwegian word may be more "practical", although there is a Serbo-Croatian equivalent, which may, however, be felt to be more unfamiliar:

Jel da hentam Antoniju? (hente - ići po)
 Izgleda kao ogromna kocka sa zelenim plenom (plen - travnjak, tratina, londoneka trava)
 Ležao sam u doktorev krevet bolesan i sa velikom febrom, (feber - temperatura) Marina se zove kusina mi (kusine - rodaka)

In some cases phonemic similarity may be the reason for the mixing of words:

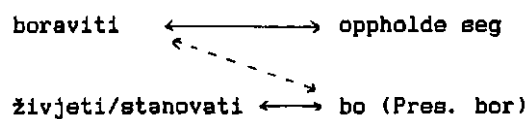
No stena počne ds place (in question is a stone)



The word stena is phonetically similar to sten/stein, and semanti-cally related.

The same may be the case with the verbs meaning 'to live'

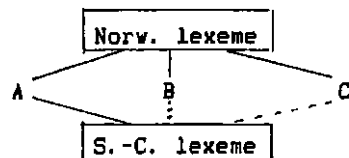
Onda ja kažem da ja boravim ovde i mogu mamu samo da viknem.



2.2. The use of Serbo-Croatian words in conformity with a Norwegian model.

2.2.1 Divergent polysemy

A Norwegian word and a semantically related Serbo-Croatian word may have "divergent polysemy", i.e. there is only partial identification between the semantic content of the two words:



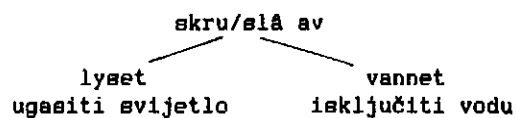
Polysemy:

The Norwegian verb aidre corresponds to Serbo-Croatian raditi, but not in the sense "cause":

i to radi da ga još vise volim - "det gjdr at ..." (i.e. 'zbog toga')

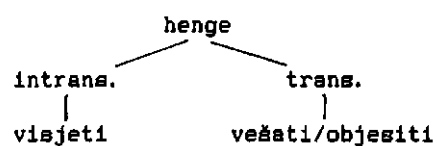
The verb ugasiti can in Serbo-Croatian be used only in connection with "fire", not "water", as corresponding Norwegian verb can:

Ana nije ugasila vodu



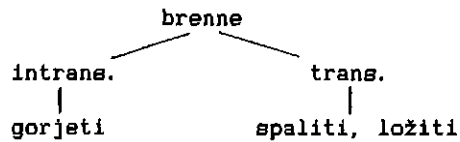
To one Norwegian lexeme may correspond different Serbo-Croatian lexemes depending on syntactical features (valence), e.g.:

Ova je slika da se visi - "et bilde til å henge opp"



Another example:

A malo dalje od dvorista ima jedna velika pec gdje se gori smeće to.



2.2.2. Prefixed verbs

A special kind of lexical interference is found with prefixed verbs in Serbo-Croatian, when verb + adverbs or verbal particles are used in Norwegian!

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eko odu van
      gá ut
      izaći / ići van

On ide uz stepenice gore
      gá opp
      popeti se / ići gore

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The constructions with adverbs are found in Serbo-Croatian, especially in some dialects. In this case an existing tendency is reinforced by Norwegian interference.

Inchoative verbs.

With inchoative verbs ('begin to ...') Norwegian interference leads to generalizing a marginal Serbo-Croatian pattern. The usual way of expressing inchoation in Serbo-Croatian is by using prefixed verbs.

Two types may be distinguished;

a. Beginning of an action:

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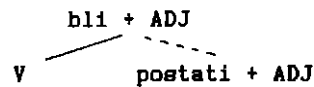
      begynne + V
     /          \
  za-, pro-     početi + V

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On je već počeo ići. (pošao)
 Drago je počeo ići u šumi. (pošao/otišao u šumu)

b. Transition into a state:

Serbo-Croatian normally uses prefixed inchoative verbs: On je postao bolestan.



bli syk - razboljeti se (»postati bolestan)

bli frisk - ozdraviti (»postati zdrav)

bli rik - obogatiti se / postati bogat

2.2.3. Lexical phrases

Whole phrases, idomatic expressions etc., can be modelled according to a Norwegian pattern, for example:

ako ne budem siguran za put - "sikker pa veien"

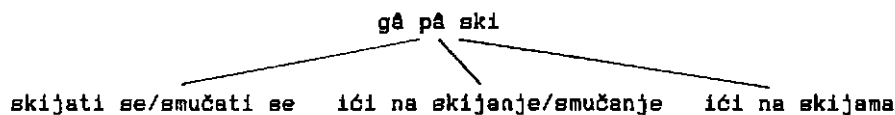
neko ko se raduje za zimu - "glede seg til"

The use of sta instead kako with the verb zvati se is a direct interference:

Sta se ti zoveš - Hva heter du?

A Norwegian pattern is especially likely to occur with lexemes connected to Norwegian reality.

A često idem na skiie. To nikad nisam u Jugoslaviji. Moj druger i ja smo išli na skiie.



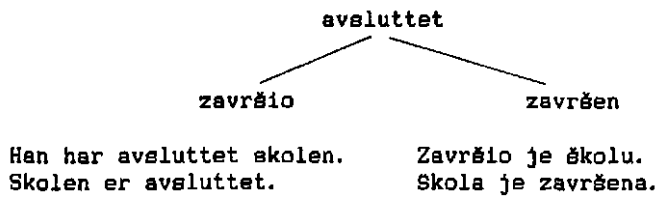
3. Grammatical interference

3.1. Participles

A morphological category in Norwegian may correspond to two categories in Serbo-Croatian. The following example can be explained

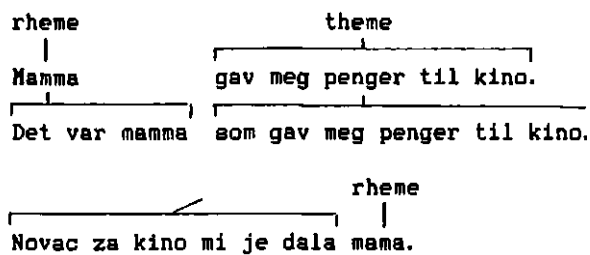
as a result of not distinguishing the two functions of Norwegian t-participles, which are used both as a perfect participle and a passive participle:

Kad je skola bila završila



3.2 Cleft sentences

In Norwegian, a cleft sentence ("utbrytning") is a special construction which gives focal prominence to a particular element of the sentence, the rest being taken as given. This is a way of expressing the functional sentence perspective (theme-rheme-structure), which is mainly expressed by word order in Serbo-Croatian. In a Norwegian cleft sentence, the rheme, or the new, emphasized information, is placed to the left in a clause introduced by "det er" ('it is'), followed by the element on which the focus falls, the rest of the sentence being a relative clause. In Serbo-Croatian the rheme is normally placed at the end of the sentence:



This explains the awkward syntax of the following Serbo-Croatian sentences:

To ie mama sto mi je dala novae za kino.

Jedini ie on bio éto je to znao.

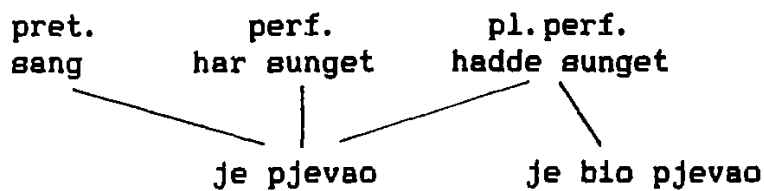
Impersonal det

In Norvégien det ('it') is used as a subject in impersonal and existential sentences, and it can be observed a tendency to use to in such sentences in Serbo-Croatian:

Prošlo je to nekoliko dana posle... - "Det gikk noen dager..."

3.3. Verbal tense

The Norwegian preterite tense system is more complicated than the Serbo-Croatian one:



To the Serbo-Croatian preterite (je pjevao) correspond three Norwegian preterite forms, the simple preterite, the perfect and the pluperfect. The pluperfect is used much less in Serbo-Croatian than in Norwegian, where it is obligatorily used for actions anterior to another action. It can be observed a tendency to use pluperfect more than in standard Serbo-Croatian. This means that an existing Serbo-Croatian model is extended due to Norwegian influence:

On je bio umro.

Bio pokušao da se ubije.

On je bio htio da lovi ribe, ali...

Poslije smo bili krenuli za Slavonski Brod.

On le bio pao na pločnik.

Another example of an existing Serbo-Croatian model being extended due to Norwegian Interference, is probably the use of Serbo-Croatian preterites without a copula. This is a pattern which is commonly found in standard Serbo-Croatian, but some awkward examples can probably be explained by interference from the Norwegian simple past.

Baba došla kod mene i pitala šta mi je i oni došli i odvezli me u bolnicu.

Kada sam došla kuci ja bila kao snesko belie.

3.4. Indirect speech

Norwegian interference is found when the Norwegian pattern of tense agreement in indirect speech is transferred to Serbo-Croatian :

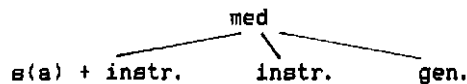
Ja pito jednog dali le znao zbog čega se tuku i on mi odgovori da to nije znao.

In Norwegian the tense of the indirect clause takes the same tense as the verb in the main clause. In Serbo-Croatian the original tense is maintained:

	dir.			indir.	
PRES.:	Han svarte:	Jeg vet ikke.	→ at han ikke visste.		
	(pret.)	(pres.)		(pret.)	
	Odgovorio je:	Ne znam.	→ da ne zna.		
		(pres.)		(pres.)	
PRET.:	Han svarte:	Jeg visste ikke.	→ at han ikke hadde visst.		
		(pret.)		(pluperf.)	
	Odgovorio je:	Nisam znao.	→ da nije znao		
		(pret.)		(pret.)	

3.5. Prepositions

In many cases there is no direct correspondence between Norwegian and Serbo-Croatian prepositions. To a Norwegian preposition may correspond two or more Serbo-Croatian prepositions



The use of the preposition s(a) in cases where standard Serbo-Croatian requires the instrumental case without preposition, is commonly found in Serbo-Croatian dialects, but this use is probably reinforced by Norwegian interference. A more interesting example is the following, where the genitive case is used:

Stajao je uperene strijele u njega.

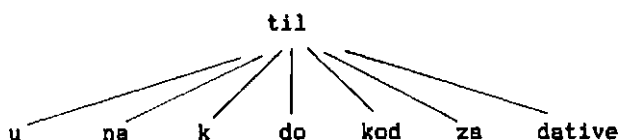
Standard Serbo-Croatian would require s(a) + instrumental in this case, while a "qualitative genitive" is reserved for "inalienable

possession" (in both cases the preposition med is used in Norwegian):

Stajao je s uperenom strijelom.

Stajao je pognute olave.

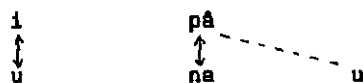
The Norwegian preposition til has several correspondences in Serbo-Croatian:



An extended use of za can be observed, a tendency also found In Serbo-Croatian dialects:

Kada sam pošao za. školu (= til skolen; S/C u školu)

There is a very close correspondence between the prepositions meaning 'on' and 'in'. However, in some cases Norwegian uses "on" where "in" would be expected ("pa skolen", "pa kino", "på kontoret" osv.):



This explains the use of na in this example:

Ona se obukla ko da ide na restoran.

In Norwegian it is possible to coordinate prepositions, without repeating the noun:

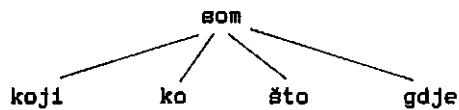
på og under bordet
na stołu i pod stolom (na i pod stolom)

This is generally not possible in Serbo-Croatian, due to the case system, and generally avoided in the standard language even with prepositions governing the same case. The following example may thus be due to interference:

Tako da moramo paziti kad ćemo do ili od škole.

3.6. Relative pronouns

The Norwegian relative pronoun som has several correspondences in Serbo-Croatian :



Due to Norwegian influence there is a tendency to generalize the indeclinable što:

Uvijek će nešto biti što nijedan čovjek nije bio. (i.e. 'Uvijek

će postojati neko mjesto gdje niko nije bio')

Ondak se susreli sa onom što se poljubili. (s kojom)

I ima oni što idu u 8 i 9 razred ko puše i pričaju.

3.7 Negation

With indefinite negative adverbs and pronouns the verb is negated in Serbo-Croatian, but not in Norwegian:

Norw. : NEG. INDEF. PRON. + V

S.-C. : NEG. INDEF. PRON. + NEG. V

There are found examples following the Norwegian pattern, without double negation:

Niko je moaao dati pare. - "Ingen kunne gi penger".

Also in other instances negation is omitted, due to the Norwegian pattern without negation:

I onda Maja stavi pjesak da niko padne.

4. Loss of Serbo-Croatian syntactic models

When Serbo-Croatian possesses a syntactic category which does not exist in Norwegian, the bilingual is likely to make mistakes due to lacking contact with the native language. This can, however, be described not only as a process of oblivion, but also as a case

of interference, i. e. from a language, Norvégien, where these categories are non-existent. I shall here briefly mention three such categories: the case system, verbal aspect and clitic placement.

4.1. The case system

The reduction of the case system among immigrant children has been demonstrated by Burovic (1983). Also in our material some of the same tendencies can be observed. Especially frequent is the tendency to use the accusative case instead of the locative, a tendency which is highly developed in Serbo-Croatian dialects. The total loss of case inflection, as in the examples:

skroz do jedno drugo selo

Ja sam bila s mol razred sama iz norveške škole.

Mama je sve rede puštala onaj dečko na polje

can be interpreted as due to Norwegian interference, where morphological case marking is non-existent with nouns in the standard language (except for optional genitive marking).

4.2. Aspect

Norwegian does not mark verbal aspect morphologically, and this maybe influences the mixing of imperfective and perfective verbs found in the material, for example:

Vidio sam kako spakuju stvari.

Niste strašni, sam odaovarao.

To a Norwegian verb correspond two Serbo-Croatian verbs:



The complicated rules for the right choice of aspectual pair in Serbo-Croatian are lost due to the non-existence of similar rules in Norwegian.

4.3. Clitic placement

Deviations from the standard Serbo-Croatian clitic placement are frequently found, for example:

Malo posle sam našao se

Ja sad se javljam iz Osla.

The word order rules with enclitics are complicated, and since no corresponding patterns are found in Norwegian, this can also be interpreted as a kind of "negative interference".

5. Conclusion

The impact of the Norwegian language is heavily felt in the Serbo-Croatian of immigrant Yugoslav children. Their native language (or at least the language of their parents) has been profoundly influenced by Norwegian. In this paper are given structural explanations for some of the mistakes Yugoslav children have made in their written home works.

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