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## Chapter 3, Selected Papers on a Serbian Village: Social Structure as Reflected by History, Demography and Oral Tradition

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## THOUGHTS ON COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN A SERBIAN VILLAGE

by

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Prefatory Note

A recent ethnographic monograph<sup>1</sup> by the editors of the present collection does not deal adequately with an important aspect of the culture under study. Barely touched on are sociolinguistic features of life in a Serbian village--how people intuitively respond verbally to the range of social situations in which they find themselves in the course of living out lives.

This paper, therefore, is in a sense an addendum in the form of a preliminary overview of language use by the peasants of central Serbia. Based on field work in Yugoslavia intermittently over the period 1953-1971, and written in 1972, its preparation did not benefit from adequate familiarity with significant ideas developing in the United States while field work was in progress. Particularly relevant here, of course, is Dell Hymes' productive formulation of the ethnography of speaking (1962)<sup>2</sup> and related ideas which continued to evolve over the ensuing decade.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, much that is of sociolinguistic significance in Serbian rural culture may be viewed by some as here treated somewhat simplistically, that is, basically descriptively rather than by means of setting up codes and other analytical devices. With refinements in Hymes' original formulation and with a considerable corpus of comparative material now available on aspects of communicative competence in other cultures, this situation is in the process of rectification.<sup>4</sup>

Linguistic Theory and Communicative Competence

An on-going trend has been to adapt notions originally formulated in formal linguistic theory to the broader scope of behavioral sciences. This is exemplified by the widespread use in cultural theory of the distinctions inherent in the terms emic and etic, based on phonemic and phonetic differences.<sup>5</sup> Chomsky's development of the theory of transformational generative grammar<sup>6</sup> introduces an abstract notion of competence, or innate knowledge, which he characterizes as the set of internalized rules which make it possible for a speaker to comprehend and produce the grammatical sentences of his own language. The meta-theory is brilliant, but it falls short of allowing speaker and hearer to function in their real world; Chomsky's quest for linguistic universals of necessity places his so-called ideal speaker and ideal hearer in a cultural void. The focus is on abstract ability, the explanatory devices, elegant as they are, account for ideal language use only.

Patterned on Chomsky's notion of innate ability, Hymes has defined a more practical kind of capacity: communicative competence, as manifested by performance in real situations:

...students of communicative competence deal with speakers as members of communities, as incumbents of social roles, and seek to explain their use of language to achieve self-identification and to conduct their activities....the central notion is the appropriateness of verbal messages in context or their acceptability in the broader sense.<sup>7</sup>

Definitions of knowledge-competence (Chomsky) as compared with performance-competence (Hymes) in many ways up-date and extend distinctions first presented by de Saussure as langue and parole.<sup>8</sup> Scholars concerned with the relationship of language and culture increasingly deemphasize inventory-like distinctions, however, stressing instead a need to go beyond taxonomies and look at the total content of language, including semantic and symbolic, or ritual, interpretations of verbal interaction.<sup>9</sup>

According to transformational generative grammar's notion of deep structure and surface structure, for every sentence of a given language the deep structure provides the semantic foundation, and from it the surface structure, the phonological component, the actual utterance, is generated by means of formal, ordered operations (transformations) which permute or otherwise alter structure. Within a sociolinguistic framework which takes into account the native speaker's communicative competence, it is possible to show how speech acts triggered by behavioral variables such as guile, distrust, ineptitude, modesty, carelessness, etiquette, teasing, threat, or other context may be derived from what the speaker really means to say, or, conversely, how external, situational transformations operating on deep structure may generate utterances somewhat different from those the speaker thought of saying. Transformations operate within a system of constraints imposed on syntactic structures as these are generated to the surface; in like manner cultural constraints of various kinds can be shown to operate.

### The Socio-Cultural Setting

#### Geographical, Historical and Social Factors

Our "messy data of parole"<sup>10</sup> are from the region of central Serbia known as Šumadija, Woodlands, after the oak forests which covered much of its rolling hills before the land was cut over and cultivated during periods of settlement in the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century. Settlers to the pioneer area came northward from regions today part of southern Serbia and Montenegro.

Geographically and emotionally, Šumadija is the heart of Serbia. Any Serb will corroborate this. "We have the cleanest air, the best water, speak the purest form of the language and are the best lovers." For the record, their language is the štokavski dialect (a lexical variant) of Serbo-Croatian, further identified as the ekavski sub-dialect (a phonological variation) and represents the largest group in the main South Slavic language (in terms of numbers of speakers).

Ethnically the area is homogeneous. In addition to language identity, being a Serb means being a member of the Serbian Orthodox Church and sharing as well a set of ritual observances that pre-date Christianity. Most notable among these is the slava, the feast day honoring the descent group's patron saint. Gde ti je slava, tu ti je srbin, (Where you have a slava, there you have a Serb).

In addition, Serbs from this region share a history of almost 500 years under the Ottoman Empire plus frequent warfare during the past century. Significantly, Šumadija is the historical heart of Serbia. It is here that successful revolts against the Turks took place in the early nineteenth century, drawing their leadership from local peasants and traders. Despite some measure of industrialization since World War II, and changes from a largely subsistence to a partially cash economy, Šumadija in the early 1970s remains largely a region of peasants living a peasant way of life, with a social structure patterned on patriarchy and patrilocality and based on evolving forms of the distinctive Balkan extended family household.

With these strong determinants, and also because people who do not fit the image are so noted by fellow Serbs, it is possible to characterize the peasants of Šumadija generally as independent, emotional, proud, patriotic, highly aware of their origins, of their place in the larger scheme of things and, importantly, verbal. Ja sam svoj čovek, (I am my own man). These traits are particularly positive (i.e., steadfast as opposed to stubborn, passionate as opposed to violent) when attributed subjectively. They also serve to mark distinctions between themselves and others: "Croats are cold." "Macedonians live like animals." "Germans have teknika but no compassion." "Italians are miserable soldiers."

An individual is most highly regarded if he or she is endowed with the related characteristics of capability (sposobnost), diligence (vrednost) and seriousness (ozbiljnost). Great value is placed on work and on "making it" according to the Serbian ethic, thereby reinforcing the conviction that it is possible to control one's destiny. (When external factors negatively shape events (for example, a traumatic accident or devastating hailstorm) these are attributed, with appropriate accompanying paralinguistic manifestations, to sudbina, fate.

Over time, the structure of the extended family household has altered. Formerly, brothers, each with his respective nuclear family, shared the household and economy of their ageing parents. For a variety of demographic and social reasons household structure is now more vertical, and households containing four generations are not uncommon. The peasant economy, based on a combination of livestock-raising, grain cultivation and diversified small fruit, dairy and other agricultural enterprises on a relatively small holding (under ten hectares, and usually under five), has also changed, moving away from semi-subsistence as more village men become full- or part-time workers in industry, at the same time maintaining residence and life-style in the village.

### Some Linguistic Features of Village Speech

Village speech, as contrasted with that of the nearby market town, includes phonological, lexical and syntactic manifestations of various kinds. Phonologically, a characteristic is vowel lengthening with accompanying exaggerated stress and tonality, especially marked when all three elements occur simultaneously on the same vowel. Another phonological indicator is that older villagers appear to favor the sub-dialect of their forebears (ijekavski), the usual sub-dialect of the heroic epics, perhaps as an unconscious marker of age and status (standard dete become dijete; mleko → mlijeko). Another phonological clue to village speech is that loan words where the initial consonant (or syllable initial consonant) is the voiceless slit fricative [f] become voiced in the village: familija → vamilija; oficir → ovicir; furuna → vuruna. Interestingly, kafana remains kafana, while a Slavic word, griva is devoiced to grifa.

Syntactic options exist, especially with regard to inflectional endings in the genitive and accusative cases. Lexically, village speech contains holdovers of loan designations for items in the material culture inventory which were introduced before an appropriate Serbian term was in common useage. An example is plajvas (from German blei, lead), invariably used by villagers over forty, and by young children not yet in school, to designate any writing tool, from lead pencil to ball-point pen.

A competent village speaker makes use of an expressive array of expletives and curses not routinely used by townspeople. A characteristic exclusively rural exclamation is the Turkish jok!, (emphatic no!), with accompanying head and facial gestures.

Most townspeople are themselves only one or two generations removed from the village (and no more than three or four even in Belgrade), so that any systematic survey of village/town speech distinctions would have to take into account the important variables of age of speaker, length of time in urban setting and extent of formal schooling.

(Formerly, a wide range of semiotic distinctions were apparent immediately. It was possible to tell by dress and other secondary visual symbols (i.e. sunburn pattern, condition of hands) an individual's rural or urban affiliation as well as relative age, marital status and of course sex. Today in Šumadija, as elsewhere, features such as long hair and jeans on an individual walking along the road between village and town convey to the observer one bit of information only: approximate age.)

### Aspects of Village Speech Behavior

#### Speech as an Integrating Device

Village speech has always been an integrating device. Historically there was no question of a need to establish social distance, for everyone had similar rural origins. Villager speaking to another villager, villager to bureaucrat in town, to priest, to considerably older person, to stranger -- in all cases the overall pattern is similar, and the informal ti form is universally used. If one inquires "Kako ste Vi?" (How are you [formal])?" the reply will be the plural, "Ma smo dobro (We are well)."12

In addition to formalized fictive relationships among individuals (godfatherhood and bloodbrotherhood), Serbian village culture supports an informal all-village fictive kin system. People from the same village refer to one another as moj seljak, (my [fellow] villager). Any child may be called affectionately sine moj (my son), a term which includes the semantic feature [+ male] but which is used for both sexes, as though it were the neuter word, child. A child or adult of appropriate age may be addressed as blago dedi (grandpa's comfort), slatko kćero (sweet daughter), etc. People know when to address or to refer to men older than themselves as čika (general fictive uncle, not a kin term) and when to switch to deda.

There are three terms for aunt: tetka, the specific kin term for father's sister or mother's sister and used as the fictive term as well; ujna, for mother's brother's wife only; and strina, reserved for father's brother's wife. It is interesting to note that under certain social conditions, as when a particularly close bond develops between a younger girl or woman and an unrelated matron, perhaps a special neighbor, the patriarchally closer strina becomes permissible fictively.

Villagers who are approximate age-mates call one another sestro, sister, or brate, brother. From the latter an informal vocative and also the expletive bre is derived, as in Gde si, bre? literally Where are you, brother? and meaning How are things? What's up? Bre is another instance of an originally male term used for either sex.

When referring to individuals, full names are not necessary. Identities are made clear by use of the person's father's given name. Unlike the formalized Russian patronymic, here one says, for example, Ljubomir's Milan. In addition, most adults inherit or acquire identifying nicknames. If these are not too derogatory, particularly if they refer to an aspect of the individual not readily concealed, they are used freely: Limpy's Spasenija; Trembler; One-eye (inherited from a grandfather partially blinded in the war in 1913). Use of openly uncomplimentary but universally known nicknames implies a communicative competence with built-in features of indiscretion or indifference. Nicknames of this type include Krokodil, for a man with a wide, toothy grin, and Djundra, from the word for manure, the nickname given a certain sloppy woman.

An important function of speech as an integrating device takes place at the weekly market in town, especially if sizeable goods are to be traded, as in the case of a livestock transaction. It is felt necessary to establish a relationship before trade negotiations are initiated. A market town usually serves some twelve to fifteen outlying villages. A prospective buyer from one of them approaches a stranger from another who has, say, a ram for sale. The seller opens with the direct, information-seeking interrogative "Odakle si ti?" (Where are you from?). The buyer answers, and the question is reversed. The two usually will be able to come up with a roster of ties (by means of enumeration of brides marrying out from the buyer's village to the seller's, and vice versa, possibly over a 50-60 year period), by which means they reveal their identities to one another and establish fictive and perhaps actual affinal connections. Only after distance has been diminished in this manner do they get down to the highly stylized verbal and non-verbal interchange involved in negotiation over sale of the ram. This is ritual behavior known to both. It consists of a sequence of requested and rejected prices, signified paralinguistically by "slapping away" (refusing to agree on) a sum and culminating in eventual agreement finalized by shaking hands on the deal.<sup>13</sup>

#### Oral Tradition

Serbia, in common with many Balkan areas, remains a domain of oral traditional culture (now undergoing transition, of course). Especially known are the impressive cycles of epic narratives recounting heroic deeds in the Serbian kingdoms of the Middle Ages. These have been studied in detail and compared in structure, thematic aspects and modes of composition to the epics of Homer.<sup>14</sup> They are transmitted orally from generation to generation, chanted to the accompaniment of the single-stringed gusle. Šumadija is becoming increasingly literate; most village men can read, as can all school-age children, and the tales are now available in printed form and even on phonograph records. Most village grandfathers, however, continue to chant the carefully structured

ten-syllable lines they heard from their own elders, embellishing if they happen to be creative, and their grandsons absorb and retain more by hearing the characteristic accoustical patterns, rich metaphor and expressed values than they would by reading.

These epics continue to have an important function in reinforcing identity and national pride and in perpetuating a respect for oral genres generally, an attitude worth noting in a society where other kinds of communication are becoming increasingly accessible. The tradition belongs not to selected skilled composers and singers but to all men in the village and to the children to whom they transmit it. Ten-year old boys are able to chant sizeable excerpts from the Kraljević Marko cycles, for example, which relate that hero's wondrous feats in the company of his talking horse Šarac, and to recite contemporary epics composed in epic style (by others) on occasions such as the death of John Kennedy and on the first moon landing. (With real heroes with whom to identify in settings of miracles, suspense and violence, Superman types appear superfluous in this culture.)

Certain types of folk songs, also transmitted orally, are restricted to special occasions, to invite young people to a spinning bee, or to look over a bridegroom, sung by the bride's female relatives when the groom's wedding party comes to lead her away:

Come forward, beribboned wedding party,  
So we can see who the bridegroom is,  
Is he better-looking than our maiden,  
Or have we given gold for lead?<sup>15</sup>

A large group of lyrical songs deals with romanticized themes of courtship as applicable in the village setting:

"Jovan calls to Ruža on his flute," or "I'm watching the sheep down in the glen/Try, darling, to come to me there;" "Oh hill, guard my flock/So I can go see what the girls are doing." Females of all ages sing such songs, often in groups of three or four while collectively watching sheep or other livestock. Village singing has a distinctive quality, with the vocal cords held tightened in a way that alters pitch. One singer leads off, and the others join on the third beat, which coincides with the second stressed syllable, often contributing more vigor than melody. Older songs have considerable melodic ornamentation, part of the extensive heritage of the centuries of Turkish influence. At the conclusion of a song tone is held constant. Singing in this manner permits sound to be audible over a wider area, and one can frequently hear fragments of songs floating over fields and pastures from some distance away.

Similar vocal control is used for the village telefon, augmented by calling into cupped hands. From scattered homestead sites people can



communicate effectively to family members in the fields or to neighboring homesteads, often a kilometer distant. In part this is due to lack of acoustical interference; the sound travels over open land and carries equally well the noise of quarrels, roosters and radios.

Serbian villagers, particularly men, have a strong sense of their ritual role in the scheme of life. Perhaps this is attributable to traditional oral culture, to the heritage of the heroic epics, to past illiteracy and to sense of self; these attributes in themselves are inter-related, as we have seen. The most important ritual role performed by the elder of the household is conducting the slava ceremony. His role of host is secondary; the most significant function is to intercede directly with the lineage's patron saint. Many men well into their seventies have total recall of military experiences of fifty years prior, including such details as the serial numbers on their rifles. They are able orally to reconstruct genealogies, their own and frequently those of others, going back seven or eight generations to the lineage's founder, keeping track of vital statistics and often of the villages of origin of the in-marrying brides. Tax records and market prices of decades earlier, personal grudges, even details of distribution of small tools and utensils when households divided, are all capable of recall by most village men. Predictably, it is youths in the process of sloughing off (or temporarily rejecting) village ways, in their leisure time reading tabloids or watching TV in the kafana, who may reply to queries about events in their own past with "Ne znam, ne zapamtim (I don't know, I don't remember)."

#### Verbal Reaction to Emotion

People in other cultures may react to various emotional situations by smiling, trembling, crying, withdrawing, applauding,<sup>16</sup> banging a fist against a wall or throwing things. A Serb reacts verbally first, and this is so whether or not he is aware of hearers present.

Certain social situations foster stylized expressive outlets. For example, when greeting a baby (or a baby animal, for that matter), villagers including children instinctively crouch down and coo to it, showering it with verbal endearments in intuitively known Serbian baby talk. This is not to please mother or baby but simply to express affection.

Another instance is the means of expressing grief. After a funeral, and at ritually prescribed times during the ensuing year, close female relatives lament, alone or in turn, at the grave of the deceased. The loud and therefore public wailing, punctuated by heart-rending moans of Jao, kuku meni (Oh, woe is me) serves several needs: it alerts passers-by that the bereaved is behaving in the socially approved way; it is therapeutic, freely giving vent to feelings of loss; it provides a verbal means for reestablishing contact with the deceased. In these laments the village women call directly to the dead, speak to them,

share recollections and inform them of new events. They implore the deceased to pass messages on to other departed kin. The laments are a highly stylized genre, usually in 8-syllable lines. Although often structured, according to the kinds of information the mourner wishes to impart, there is room for considerable improvisation, especially if the deceased is a child requiring care by an older dead relative.<sup>17</sup>

Verbal reaction to other types of emotional situations varies from individual to individual. While caring for a sick cow one man, frustrated, shouts obscenities at it and curses his fate to own such a wretched beast. His father enters the stable and croons to the animal reassuringly, talking to it while tying through its neck-folds the strand of red yarn which will guide out the illness.

Many linguistic embellishments are available. They include an extensive inventory of folk sayings and proverbs culled from the mind at the appropriate moment according to the communicative competence of the speaker. There are also aphorisms such as Nije lako, ali ako (It's not easy, but [we'll manage]) and Čovek mora da radi (A man must work). On je dobar kao hleb (He's good as bread) and Ona je zlatna jabuka (She's a golden apple) are examples of traditional metaphor expressing approval. Curses and obscenities expressing disapproval, the latter characteristic of everyday village speech are, in fact, rather benign. As in English, Go to the devil! is semantically received as the mildest temporary insult. This is also the case with the very common Jebem ti! (Fuck you!). Villagers, young children included, internalize the rules for generating stronger variants. To the basic insult/annoyance verb jebiti (apparently fairly universal), in Serbian used declaratively, in contrast to the imperative mode in English useage, may be added a potentially infinite set of nouns, inflected for accusative case (your mother, the sun, God, your right arm, life). What the verb lacks in modal power is compensated for by the dative pronoun, with reference to the addressee. The structure, therefore, is: Jebem ti majku! ([I] fuck to you [your] mother). In using these expressions some villagers are more selectionally restrictive than others; they check themselves before shouting obscenities in front of children or uttering blasphemies in the graveyard in the presence of one's forebears.

Gossip is popular. People are good at it and also at eliciting information to fill in gaps in general all-village knowledge. Curiosity is appeased by asking outright: "How much did you get for that ram?"; "How come you're not a grandfather yet -- what's wrong with your daughter-in-law?" Sometimes information can be concealed, sometimes not. Aspects of this type of competence are discussed below.

### Constraints in Speech

Structural linguistics and transformational theory both show how constraints operate in given environments. The obvious ones are im-

posed by tradition and prescribed behavior. As notions of acceptable behavior alter, so, too, do the restrictions. Formerly such constraints were imposed by age and sex. Children did not speak in the presence of adults. Women did not speak in the presence of men. Even within the household it was considered sramota, shameful, to speak directly to one's spouse except in private. In the presence of others, husband and wife addressed and referred to one another obliquely, never by name. These patterns have been changing.

Children and young people always greeted elders (both men and women) with the respectful phrase Ljubim ruku (I kiss your hand), followed by the actual act. Rarely today is the verbal component heard; kissing the hand as a mark of respect is no longer done. Said one old man, "I used to greet my father with 'I kiss your hand.' My own son greets me with 'Ćuti, bre! (Shut up, man!)'!"

Many subtle kinds of constraints on speech exist, and some of these will be examined after a brief consideration of aspects of non-restricted speech.

#### Some Examples of Non-restrictive Speech

In this highly verbal society much enjoyment is derived from talking and listening. The listener fully participates, punctuating the speaker's narrative with exclamations of "ej!" and by head-shaking and sympathetic tongue-clicking to underscore his attentive empathy. In relaxed social situations there are virtually no societal constraints on what can be said. Restrictions (talk about politics, sex, gossip) other cultures might impose in similar situations do not appear here. The common use of obscenities in Serbian village speech occurs in public speech acts as well as between individuals, even in events such as the dedication of a war memorial. Again, as is often the case in English, the expressions serve as adjectival or adverbial fillers as well as for expletive impact. Further, old women, who have special status in this society, may also use such expressions.

Another example of speech acts permissible in Serbian villages but often constrained elsewhere is threats to children. The Serbian variant of the bogey-man, still viable, is that the Gypies or the devil will carry off a child who does not behave. A three-year-old boy who had trouble selecting which hand to extend in order to manfully shake hands with a visiting relative was chided sarcastically and then menacingly, "Ej, diko moj! ma šta ti je! Ako ne znaš da pružiš ruku kako treba, onda ruka će ti da nabere pa otpada kao zimski jabuka! (Hey, my pride, my glory, what's wrong with you! If you don't know how to stick out that right hand it's going to shrivel up like a winter apple and drop off!)"

A special type of non-restrictive speech takes place at wedding festivities. A man koji zna da priča, a good talker, is selected to be vojvodski momak, a sort of jester with sanction to verbally embarrass, insult or titillate by means of suggestive banter. He may direct remarks at anyone present, members of the wedding party as well as guests, including the most highly honored persons such as the godfather and the social structurally important ritual witness (the groom's mother's brother). He might say "And here's our honored friend Čika Milivoje, with his imposing belly -- by God, I don't know how the girls bear up under it!" or, "Where are you skittering off to, bre baba Anka? -- just going to the cornfield, or do you have a rendezvous with one of these handsome young men?" or, "Whose feet stink? Yours, bre Rade?"

### Types of Restricted Speech

It is in a consideration of constraints on specialized speech acts that communicative competence and sociolinguistic application of notions of deep and surface structure come into play. While trying to avoid fixed taxonomies, three main types of restricted speech events can be noted:

The first has to do with constraints imposed by true ritual observance (as opposed to etiquette and "tradition") and is therefore inviolable. There is a formal verbal interchange, with only one acceptable pattern. This type of speech event can be heard, for example, at the beginning of the slava ritual, when the head of the household crosses himself, wafts incense toward the icon of his patron saint and toward his guests at table and blesses them. They must respond with stylized toasts to the health and prosperity of the host's household, then murmur "Da, Bože! (God grant it!)." The host cuts a ritual loaf along the lines of a cross and declares, "Christ is in our midst, now and forever, Amen!" and again receives the patterned response. Without this exchange the ritual would lose its order.

A similar situation occurs at memorial feasts for the dead. A collation is spread out on the graves, and when a member of one household invites a member of another to partake of the proffered food the former must say, "Eat this, for the soul of my departed ----." In receiving the offering the other must kiss it and respond, "God grant his soul an easy resting-place."

A second type of restricted speech is self-imposed, usually motivated by a desire to conceal information. The way to effect this is to keep quiet or to minimize speech. Many social contexts might encourage this kind of behavior: for example jealousy, covert competition, fear, and, especially, efforts to deflect the evil eye. We have seen that the village functions fictively as one big family. People

know what others are up to. It is not possible to hide by subterfuge a substantial economic gain or loss, a special honor or discredit to a member of one's household or other news of public interest. One simply replies to direct questions with brief, laconic responses. Receivers and transmitters both understand the code well.

This type of situation frequently takes place on a more intimate scale when it occurs between brothers who have recently "divided" (e.g., one remains with his family in the original house, perhaps with the aged parents, and the other gets half the land and equipment, including farm and household items, plus certain extras to compensate for the expense of a separate dwelling for his own nuclear family). The two sisters-in-law, who until then shared the same roof and same economy, are now wary of each other and especially of any material changes or seeming inequalities each may observe but not speak of directly.

An individual is careful not to be boastful. A jealous neighbor might put a curse on one's best milk cow, honey bees, or grape vines. When told by a neighbor "Your grapes seem to be doing well, much better than ours," one might respond by thinking "They certainly do, than God," and transforming this, enroute to the surface, to "Oh, they're so-so," or, better, "Yours look fine to me."

A third type is semi-institutionalized. There are patterned responses, but the event is extremely economical of speech and is hardly a ritual. It occurs when villagers greet each other in passing, as when one man is up early hoeing his field and another happens to pass by on a bordering lane. The passer-by may call out, "Je si poranio? (Are you up early?)," to which the one hoeing will reply, "Poranio sam (I'm up early)." Or the first may call, "Šta radiš? (What are you doing?)" and get the reply, "Eto, radim (Well, I'm working)," or "Jesi vredan? (Are you diligent?)" "Vredan sam (I'm diligent)." No information has been dispensed and none has been received, other than the fact that the man working wishes to concentrate on his work and not stop to chat. The important thing is that the society's verbal niceties have been followed.

It has been suggested that this, too, represents an attempt to discourage the evil eye. This may indeed motivate such behavior, but certainly a typology cannot be clearly drawn. It appears, however, that this third type differs from the second in that it is strictly temporal. It also represents a direct manifestation of the work ethic so strong in village culture, as illustrated by the aphorisms quoted earlier. In a chance encounter on the road later that morning, when both men may be going in the same direction, they will converse freely in an ordinary, non-constrained way.



NOTES

- <sup>1</sup>Halpern, Joel and Barbara Kerewsky Halpern, A Serbian Village in Historical Perspective, Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology series, New York, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1972.
- <sup>2</sup>Hymes, Dell, "The Ethnography of Speaking," in Anthropology and Human Behavior, Thomas Gladwin and William Sturtevant, eds., Washington, D.C., The Anthropology Society of Washington, 1962, pp. 13-53.
- <sup>3</sup>See for example Gumperz, John and Dell Hymes, eds., The Ethnography of Communication, special issue of the American Anthropologist, Vol. 66, no. 6, part 2, 1964; Hymes, Dell, "Models of the Interaction of Language and Social Setting," Journal of Social Issues, Vol. 23 (2), 1967, pp. 8-28; Hymes, Dell, "Sociolinguistics and the Ethnography of Speaking," in E. Ardener, ed., Social Anthropology and Linguistics, London, 1971, pp. 47-93; Gumperz, John and Dell Hymes, eds., Directions in Sociolinguistics: The Ethnography of Communication, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972.
- <sup>4</sup>Analysis based on field work extended through the mid-1970s and on continuing developments in sociolinguistics will be presented theoretically and methodologically as well as descriptively in a forthcoming dissertation "Communicative Competence in a Serbian Village." I here acknowledge with appreciation comments by Robert Rothstein and E. Wayles Browne for their careful reading of the original draft of the present paper.
- <sup>5</sup>Pike, Kenneth, Language in Relation to a Unified Theory of the Structure of Human Behavior, part 1. Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1954; revised ed., The Hague, Mouton, 1967.
- <sup>6</sup>Chomsky, Noam, Syntactic Structures, The Hague, Mouton, 1957; Current Issues in Linguistic Theory, The Hague, Mouton, 1964; Aspects of the Theory of Syntax, Cambridge, Mass., the MIT Press, 1965; see also Chomsky's review of Verbal Behavior, by B.F. Skinner, in Readings in the Philosophy of Language, Fodor, J. and J. Katz, eds., Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice Hall, Inc.
- <sup>7</sup>Hymes, in Gumperz and Hymes, op. cit. (1972), p. vii.
- <sup>8</sup>de Saussure, F., Cours de Linguistic Général, Paris, Payot, 1916.
- <sup>9</sup>Goodenough, Ward, Culture, Language, and Society, a McCaleb Module in Anthropology, Reading, Mass., Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1971, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup>Fishman's phrasing, referring to Bloomfield (1933) in Fishman, Joshua, Sociolinguistics: A Brief Introduction, Rowley, Mass., Newbury House Publishers, 1970, p. 13.

<sup>11</sup>Interestingly, here, as with all initial stops, the change is from voiced to voiceless (in contrast to [f]). In krompir, potato, for example, from the Austrian grundbirn, the velar and bilabial stops [k], [p] are devoiced, with accompanying assimilation of the nasal [m]; the final consonant is dropped.

In other instances, when foreign phones are comfortable to Serbian ears, a term enters the village lexicon intact, by way of the town. What changes is meaning. For example, pedantic, which in urban Serbian as elsewhere bears the semantic message of hyper-precision, in the village is a fashionable new term denoting care and cleverness. A recently composed village narrative in traditional epic decasyllable contains this well-structured stich about the girl the hero is about to wed:

Ta je moma pedantna i fina.

(That's a maiden pedantic and fine.)

Also of interest is the combination of archaic moma, (intuitively selected over the usual word in order to fit the required syllable count) and the brand-new term.

<sup>12</sup>This contrasts with other parts of Yugoslavia, notably areas in Croatia and Slovenia where, after the political revolution, people were encouraged to switch to the informal code for all occasions; most speakers there, however, continue to retain the option of selection according to more traditional patterns of communicative competence. See also Brown, Roger and Albert Gilman, "The Pronouns of Power and Solidarity," Readings in the Sociology of Language, Joshua Fishman, ed., The Hague, Mouton, 1968, pp. 252-275, and Friedrich, Paul, "Social Context and Pronominal Useage," in Gumperz and Hymes, eds., op. cit., 1972, pp. 270-300.

<sup>13</sup>On another level, it is obvious that the more completely the outsider or marginal villager, e.g. the investigator from another culture, develops a degree of communicative competence, the more meaningful are his observations. If the investigator sometimes is not sure of correct forms, this will be equally confusing to the native speaker, who must assess and assign to the newcomer appropriate forms within an established but restricted system. In certain situations the writer was an honorary male, seated with men and participating (but not quite fully) in male conversation, and in others was addressed as devojko, maiden, the feature [+ youth] at that period assessed as stronger than [+ married] despite the unambiguous local matronly symbols of wedding ring, kerchiefed head and covered legs.



- 14 Jakobson, Roman. Studies in Comparative Slavic Metrics, Oxford Slavonic Papers, Vol. 3, 1952, pp. 24-66; Parry, Milman and Albert Lord, Serbo-Croatian Heroic Songs, Vols. I and II, Belgrade, Yugoslavia and Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1954; Lord, Albert, The Singer of Tales, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1960; and Parry, Adam, ed., The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Writings of Milman Parry, Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1971.
- 15 For full text see Halpern, Joel M., A Serbian Village, New York, Columbia University Press, 1958, or revised ed., Harper and Row, 1967, pp. 194-195.
- 16 Differences in cultural response were underlined for me on two recent flights from Boston to Milan and from New York to Belgrade, respectively. In each case the passengers were almost entirely Italians or Yugoslavs returning home on charter flights after visits to relatives here. When the wheels of the Al Italia plane touched the runway, everyone released a guarded sigh (many were praying) and burst into applause. After the flight to Belgrade everyone simultaneously shouted out congratulations to the crew and, significantly, to themselves.
- 17 For an especially poignant lament over the grave of a young girl, see Halpern, op. cit., (1967), pp. 226-227.