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# Linguistic Landscape of Main Streets in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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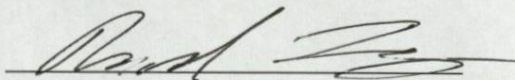
**Linguistic Landscape of Main Streets in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of Honors

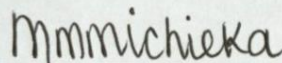
By

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### **Abstract**

After the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1991, the newly independent Bosnia and Herzegovina erupted into horrific ethnic conflict, resulting in atrocities and massacres that added up to genocide. Ultimately, nearly 100,000 people died in the Bosnian War, over half of them Bosniaks. Two decades later, the violence has ended but the conflict is still significantly present in Bosnia; the hasty societal segregation of the 1995 Dayton Accords, intended only as an immediate solution to the violence, is still in place. Population and language distribution are evidence of this segregation. Bosnia's two entities, the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, are home to two different ethnic majorities – Serbs in the former and Bosniaks in the latter. In an environment so sensitive that the government recently feared that merely releasing statistics on ethnic populations might cause violence, the languages that represent these populations are important indicators of social presence and power. In order to evaluate the presence of the Serbian and Bosnian languages, as well as the English language, in Bosnia, signage on the main streets in the country's capitals (Sarajevo in the Federation and Banja Luka in the Republic) were photographed in great detail. It was hypothesized that linguistic majority would match ethnic majority on both main streets, and that English would appear frequently in advertisements. The number of photographs in which each language appeared was tallied up in order to determine how often and in which situations the languages are typically used. Analyses of these results demonstrated that the English language is the second-most ubiquitous on both streets, after Bosnian, and the comparatively small presence of the Serbian language on both streets indicated that the linguistic environment in Bosnia is not conducive to peace and reconciliation.

## Introduction

### Background: The Bosnian War

The breakup of Yugoslavia in 1991 sparked a number of wars where newly independent states contained a sizable number of ethnic Serbs, but it is widely acknowledged that the war in Bosnia was the bloodiest. With Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic drumming up Serb nationalism and Serbs gaining increasing power throughout Yugoslavia, and with the violent, outspoken Serb opposition to the independence of Yugoslav republics, it was dangerous for Bosnia to declare independence – its population in 1991 was 43% Bosniak, 35% Serb, and 18% Croat. But if it stayed, Yugoslavia's Serb dominance meant that “[Bosniaks] and Croats would be marginalized and likely physically abused under Milosevic's oppressive rule” (Power). Bosnia's March 1992 referendum for independence resulted in a 99.4% “yes” vote – partially due to the fact that many Serbs had boycotted the referendum. In response, Bosnian Serbs, with Milosevic's support, declared their own state within Bosnian borders, and the new Bosnian Serb Army began a years-long campaign of “ethnic cleansing” in search of a homogenous state.

With varying action and inaction from international entities, including a UN arms embargo that only served to solidify the already existing Serb military preponderance, the Bosnian War and genocide against Bosniaks (and sometimes against Croats) continued from 1992 until the Dayton Accords in 1995. Victims (primarily Bosniaks) suffered sieges, forced internal displacement, mass killings, and internment within concentration camps, death camps, and rape camps; it was “a deliberate policy of destruction and degradation: destruction so this avowed enemy race would have no homes to which to return; degradation so the former inhabitants would not stand tall – and thus would not dare again stand – in Serb-held territory” (Power 231). The war left more than 100,000 dead, thousands more missing – some of whom

would only be found decades later as mass graves continue to be discovered – and tens of thousands more wounded and traumatized (“Bosnia and Herzegovina”).

The 1995 Dayton Peace Accords ended the violence in Bosnia and divided the country into two entities – the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, inhabited primarily by Bosniaks and Croats, and the Republika Srpska, inhabited mainly by Serbs. The Accords froze the conflict in place but did not address any of its underlying issues; it merely separated the parties involved in the conflict rather than making any attempt at reconciliation. Today, nearly twenty years after the end of the war, ethnic tensions still have significant influence in Bosnia; society is still largely segregated and genocide denial runs rampant in the Republika Srpska. What was meant to be a temporary fix to horrific violence has become the law of the land – the Dayton Accords have limped along for the past twenty years as Bosnia’s constitution. In an environment so tense that it was feared that simply releasing data on ethnic distribution might incite violence, it is vital that rights and social power be closely monitored. Language rights and power are an important facet of this information.

### **Background: Linguistic Landscape**

Durk Gorter explains that linguistic landscapes consist of “on the one hand the literal study of the languages as they are used in signs, and on the other hand also the representation of the languages, which is of particular importance because it relates to identity and cultural globalization” (Gorter). Language is certainly an important component of identity, especially in a society as divided as Bosnia – the Serbian, Bosnian, and Croatian languages are mutually intelligible (when spoken), and are often considered by outsiders to be dialects of the same language. But the distinction is an important cultural one in Bosnia, evidencing just how significant language is as an element of Bosnian ethnic identity.

## **Statement of the Problem**

The current body of work on the linguistic environment in Bosnia is lacking or nonexistent. Because Bosnia is so sensitive to its ethnic divides, evaluating the visual existence of languages in segregated Bosnian society – particularly Bosnian and Serbian – will give important indications regarding which ethnic groups have greater linguistic, and therefore social, dominance or privilege, in important urban areas of the country. This study aims to evaluate the presence of the Serbian and Bosnian languages in street signs and shop signs on the main streets of the capital cities of Bosnia's two entities, the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## **Research Questions**

This study aims to answer the following questions: What proportion of public signage on the main streets of Sarajevo and Banja Luka is in English, what proportion is in Serbian, and what proportion is in Bosnian or Croatian? In which settings or contexts are these languages used?

## Literature Review

### Linguistic Landscape

Although others had previously conducted studies on public signage, Landry and Bourhis were the first researchers to use the term “linguistic landscape” in 1997. Their definition of the field specified that it ought to study “the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings [that combine] to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration” (Landry and Bourhis 25). This definition has been widely accepted and used in most subsequent research in the field. Backhaus clarified that a “sign” is “any piece of written text within a spatially definable frame. The underlying definition is physical, not semantic. It is rather broad, including anything from the small handwritten sticker attached to a lamp-post to huge commercial billboards outside a department store...” (Backhaus 66). Ben-Rafael et al. added that a linguistic landscape includes “any sign or announcement located outside or inside a public institution or a private business in a given geographical location” (Ben-Rafael et al. 14).

The journal *Linguistic Landscape* clarifies that the field normally aims to apply its findings in a broader context, making inferences about the motives behind and impact of particular displays of language in public. Landry and Bourhis explain that linguistic landscape “serve[s] important informational and symbolic functions as a marker of the relative power and status of the linguistic communities inhabiting the territory” (Landry and Bourhis 23). Grbavac, in one of the primary Croatian studies of linguistic landscape, asserts that “linguistic landscape research can lead to various conclusions about speech community and its social and political implications, about prevailing cultural beliefs; it mirrors different social issues” (Grbavac 501).



## **Linguistic Landscape in Bosnia**

Judt and Lacorne, although the work they have compiled does not fit Gorter's definition of a linguistic landscape, include in *Language, Nation, and State* an unofficial landscape of Bosnia's linguistic environment. "It is important to remember," they say, "that Bosnia offers a particularly homogenous linguistic landscape, but a highly divided one from a cultural standpoint" ("Unity and Plurality" 224). They refer, of course, to the mutual intelligibility of Bosnia's three official languages; that they choose to emphasize the languages' similarities despite their separate designations emphasizes the importance of the distinction – the groups that use these languages feel that it is so important to maintain a separate cultural identity that they include language in this identity, even though the languages all have similar roots and are even considered by some to be the same language. In Croat-controlled areas, it is even forbidden to use the Cyrillic alphabet (as of 2004). In the Republika Srpska, use of the Latin alphabet is not prohibited, but "the predominance of the Cyrillic alphabet is more widespread than in Serbia" itself. Bosnian Serbs, then, see cause to be more fiercely protective of their language and alphabet than they would if they lived in Serbia, another sign of the significance of the language distinction in Bosnia. In the Federation, all official languages are supposedly given equal weight on official documents and material, but "in daily use, the Cyrillic alphabet is never employed. All correspondence, books, press, public posters and announcements are exclusively written in the Latin alphabet" (225). Any material in the Cyrillic alphabet is published by Serb communities and organizations.

One area that Judt and Lacorne touch upon is education, which is of particular interest because it is difficult to get solid information regarding language education; management of Bosnia's education is split between thirteen separate ministries that do not coordinate or

standardize their material. In the Federation, some private Catholic schools – the primary religion of Croats – have been opened, and some schools have begun to offer separate classes taught in the Croatian language. Although this adds to language inclusiveness in schools, it also contributes to the physical segregation of students – “for the moment, though, this appeases parents’ fears and the situation appears better than the observed monolithism present in the other two zones” (226).

At least one official linguistic landscape study has been conducted in Bosnia; in 2013, the University of Mostar published a landscape of the language situation in Mostar. Studying areas with both a majority of Bosniaks and a majority of Croats, it found that the eastern part of the city (Bosniak majority) had a higher incidence of Bosnian language on public signage, “followed by English as a language of prestige and positive connotations.” In the western part of the city (Croat majority), it found, somewhat surprisingly, that English occurred on signs with higher frequency than did the Croatian language. This significant English-language presence, says Grbavac, “means that the western part of the city is highly inclined and open towards Western culture and globalization processes.”

Ultimately, the study concluded, “it seems that the status of Croatian language as a dominant language in the western part of the city is not in danger.... Judging from the extremely low percentage of the Bosniak language in that part (4.6%)”; while in the eastern part of the city, “Bosniak language with the presence of 73% is definitely the dominant language” (Grbavac 507).

Valuable though the Grbavac study is in using linguistic landscape to evaluate social power, it only examines territory within one entity of Bosnia; Croats and Bosniaks were not

separated by the Dayton Accords into entirely different entities. This study aims to fill the gap in existing research by comparing areas in both entities.

## **Methodology**

### **Location of Study**

Information for this study was collected from public signage on the respective main streets of Sarajevo and Banja Luka. These cities were chosen because they are the capital cities of Bosnia's two entities, the Federation of Bosnia & Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska respectively. The former is inhabited mainly by Bosniaks and Croats, and the latter by Serbs; with such different ethnic makeups, it was deemed most appropriate that the samples represent both majorities.

### **Content of Study**

Numerous different kinds of material can be used in linguistic landscapes, from street signs to newspapers to menus to television broadcasts. This study includes only public signage due to both a desire for consistency and the author's limited amount of time in Bosnia. Still, even limited to material that is visible from a path along a main street, various types of samples could still be used. This study excludes graffiti and civilian-sponsored posters because it aims to evaluate not public sentiment toward language, but rather linguistic presence as allowed by government, corporations, and businesses – the landscape that citizens are given to work with rather the one they actively create. Graffiti and other such civilian-created samples may be discussed as examples, but are not included in the data.

### **Procedure**

The data for this study was obtained with a Sony *a230* DSLR camera. During a walk down each street (in both directions), photographs were taken consistently from a pedestrian's perspective, so that the collection would form a complete view of the entire street. Some effort was made to document signage hidden behind obstructions such as trucks and maintenance

structures, but if the obstruction appeared to be permanent or semi-permanent, material behind it was excluded. Some material behind non-permanent obstructions had to be excluded because the obstruction could not be removed.

After the data was collected, the photographs were sifted through, with some being eliminated for redundancy or lack of data, and organized into cohesive pictures of the streets. The original collection of photographs numbered over 1,000, but of these only 185 were fit for use in this study. The eliminated photographs were duplicates, improvements, and close-ups of the 185 actually used in the study. Close-ups of the 185 were used for clarification and enlargement of individual signs or small lettering; some of these appear in the analysis section because they better illustrate an example than the versions taken from further away. None of the close-ups or any other type of duplicate were actually used in tallying up data. No unique photographs were discarded; the photographs in the final set of 185 represent a full view of all signage on both streets. Once it had been decided which pieces of information were of the type that should be included in the study, the number of occurrences of each language was tallied up and compared for both streets. If a sign appeared in more than one photograph, it was not counted more than once; separate but identical signs (e.g., if one establishment had multiple identical signs on its store front) were not counted as more than one sign unless there was a considerable distance between them. To determine which scenarios each language was used in, relevant signage was translated by Zerina Hadzic, a native Bosnian speaker and a fluent English speaker.

## **Results and Analysis**

### **Results**

Out of the 115 utilizable photographs from the Sarajevo photoset, 106 displayed Bosnian prominently, 2 displayed Serbian prominently, and 79 displayed English prominently. In other words, 92.17% of the photographs contained prominent Bosnian, 1.7% of the photographs contained prominent Serbian, and 68.7% of the photographs contained prominent English.

Out of 70 utilizable photographs from the Banja Luka photoset, 42 displayed Bosnian prominently, 18 displayed Serbian prominently, and 22 displayed English prominently. In other words, 60% of the photographs contained prominent Bosnian, 25.7% of the photographs contained prominent Serbian, and 31.4% of the photographs contained prominent English.

### **Analysis**

The most striking number in the Sarajevo data is that no more than 2 out of 115 photographs contained Serbian. It is not surprising that the Serbian language would not be in the majority of signs, as Bosniaks, not Serbs, are the ethnic majority in Sarajevo, but it is surprising to see that the Serbian language has such a small presence. Neither of its two occurrences is solitary; in both of its appearances it is always accompanied by Bosnian and English. These inclusions of Serbian appear to be very purposeful.

One of the instances of Serbian relates to Sarajevo's Market Hall and historical events that took place there. A total of three pieces of signage in the immediate area relate to the Market Hall, but two of them do not contain Serbian. This sign (Figure 1) gives details of the architecture of Market Hall in both Bosnian and English, presumably for the convenience of travelers from abroad interested in the history and culture of Sarajevo. Although Serbian is not included on this sign, it is included on the sign placed below it. (Figure 2). This second sign

describes the history of Market Hall, which includes a brief remark on the shelling of Market Hall by Serb forces during the Siege of Sarajevo. “On 28 August 1995,” it says, “a shell landed near the Market Hall and killed 43 people and injuring 84 [sic]. A plaque in their memory has been mounted on the north façade

Figure 1 (right): A sign explains the architecture of Market Hall, in Bosnian and English.

Figure 2 (below): A sign describes the history of Market Hall in Bosnian, Serbian, and English.



GRADSKA TRŽNICA	ГРАДСКА ТРЖНИЦА	MARKET HALL
<b>Historijski/povijesni spomenik</b>	<b>Историјски споменик</b>	<b>Historic monument</b>
<p>Zgrada Gradske tržnice <i>Markthalle</i> sagrađena je 1895. godine na prostoru gradskog Sajmišta. Pretpostavlja se da je projekat <i>Markthalle für Sarajevo</i> radio arhitekta Josip pl. Vančaš, dok je izvedbeni projekat djelo Augusta Butscha. Za izgradnju krovista objekta, po prvi put u Sarajevu, primijenjena je čelična konstrukcija. Funkcija Gradske tržnice ostala je nepromijenjena od otvaranja 1895. godine sve do danas. Naziv <i>Markthalle</i> (tržnica, tržna hala) je vremenom, u svakodnevnoj govornoj upotrebi, „iskrenut“ u naziv <i>Markale</i> i takav se zadržao do danas.</p> <p>Prije Drugog svjetskog rata, na objektu su uklonjeni svi dekorativno-plastični ukrasi, a originalni ulazni trijem je zamijenjen novim trijemom, što je narušilo izvorni izgled objekta. Radovima 1985. godine i poslije 1995. godine, izvršena je djelomična restauracija izvornog arhitektonskog izraza.</p> <p>Od posljedica eksplozije minobacačke granate, koja je 28. kolovoza 1995. godine pala u neposrednoj blizini zgrade Gradske tržnice, ubijene su 43, a ranjene 84 osobe. Spomen-ploča poginulim i ranjenim građanima Sarajeva je postavljena na sjevernoj fasadi objekta.</p>	<p>Zgrada Gradske tržnice <i>Markthalle</i> sagrađena je 1895. godine na prostoru gradskog Sajmišta. Pretpostavlja se da je projekat <i>Markthalle für Sarajevo</i> radio arhitekta Josip pl. Vančaš, dok je izvedbeni projekat djelo Augusta Butscha. Za izgradnju krovista objekta, po prvi put u Sarajevu, primijenjena je čelična konstrukcija. Funkcija Gradske tržnice ostala je nepromijenjena od otvaranja 1895. godine sve do danas. Naziv <i>Markthalle</i> (tržnica, tržna hala) je vremenom, u svakodnevnoj govornoj upotrebi, „iskrenut“ u naziv <i>Markale</i> i takav se zadržao do danas.</p> <p>Prije Drugog svjetskog rata, na objektu su uklonjeni svi dekorativno-plastični ukrasi, a originalni ulazni trijem je zamijenjen novim trijemom, što je narušilo izvorni izgled objekta. Radovima 1985. godine i poslije 1995. godine, izvršena je djelimična restauracija izvornog arhitektonskog izraza.</p> <p>Od posljedica eksplozije minobacačke granate, koja je 28. avgusta 1995. godine pala u neposrednoj blizini zgrade Gradske tržnice, ubijena su 43, a ranjena 84 lica. Spomen-ploča poginulim i ranjenim građanima Sarajeva je postavljena na sjevernoj fasadi objekta.</p>	<p>The <i>Markthalle</i> was built in 1895 on the site of the town's fairground. The design of the <i>Markthalle Sarajevo</i> was probably by the architect Josip Vančaš; the working design was by August Butsch. The building was the first in Sarajevo to have been constructed of steel girders. It was opened in 1895 and has been used as a market hall ever since. The <i>Markthalle</i> gradually became contracted in everyday speech to <i>Markale</i>, the name by which the building is still known.</p> <p>All the decorative mouldings were removed from the building before World War II, and the original entrance portico was replaced by a new one, spoiling the original appearance of the building. Works conducted in 1985 and since 1995 have somewhat restored its original architectural expression.</p> <p>On 28 August 1995 a shell landed near the Market Hall, killing 43 people and injuring 84. A plaque in their memory has been mounted on the north façade of the building.</p>
<p>Komisija/Povjerenstvo za očuvanje nacionalnih spomenika donijela/donijelo je odluku, kojom se historijski/povijesni spomenik - Gradska tržnica (Markale ili Markthalle) u Sarajevu, proglašava nacionalnim spomenikom Bosne i Hercegovine.</p> <p>Oštećenje, uništenje ili prisvajanje spomenika, kao i nedopušteno obavljanje istraživanja i drugih radova na spomeniku predstavlja krivično djelo.</p>	<p>Комисија за очување националних споменика доносила је одлуку, којом се историјски споменик - Градска тржница (Маркале или Markthalle) у Сарајеву, проглашава националним спомеником Босне и Херцеговине.</p> <p>Оштећење, уништење или присвајање споменика, као и недопуштено обављање истраживања и других радова на споменику представља кривично дело.</p>	<p>The Commission to Preserve National Monuments designated the historic monument of the Market Hall (Markale or Markthalle) in Sarajevo, as a monument of Bosnia and Herzegovina.</p> <p>Damaging or destroying the monument, possession of the monument without authorization or conducting unauthorized investigations of the monument, constitute criminal acts.</p>

of the building.” Across the street, this plaque (Figure 3) memorializes those who died and were injured in the attack, but only in Bosnian – it uses the phrase “evil Serbs” in describing who the attackers were, making the exclusion of the Serbian language, on this sign and on the rest of the street, seem very pointed. The difference between the first two signs – that the violence is



Figure 3 (above): A plaque memorializes those who died in the bombing of Market Hall and condemns the “evil Serbs” who killed them.

described in Serbian, but the architecture is not – could possibly be a statement representing lingering resentment about the war.

The second occurrence of Serbian on Sarajevo’s main street also appears between Bosnian and English, but makes no mention of war. A sign (Figure 4) pointing out the Inter-Religious Council in Bosnia-Herzegovina names the building in Bosnian, Serbian, and English, which seems appropriate to its function of promoting cross-cultural cooperation.



Figure 4 (right): A sign for the Inter-Religious Council in BiH in Bosnian, Serbian, and English.



The exclusion of Serbian from signs in Sarajevo could be explained in a number of ways, first among which is the inconvenience of the Cyrillic alphabet. Some speakers of Bosnian, which uses the Latin alphabet, may not be able to read Cyrillic, but most Serbs can read the Latin alphabet – so a large proportion of signs in Serbian may be a great inconvenience for some Bosniaks, but a large number of signs in Bosnian would not be technically inconvenient for most Serbs. Another possible explanation is that Bosniaks harbor resentment against Serbs for war crimes committed by Serb soldiers during the war, and so do not wish to see the Serbian language on a daily basis or to accommodate Serbs.

Although not quite as surprising, it is also noteworthy that a majority (68.7%) of the photos in the Sarajevo photoset contained prominently displayed English. One of the main functions the English language serves on this street is accommodating travelers, as English has increasingly become a global language. Travel agencies, banks, historical markers, and other



places that could fulfil a foreigner's needs tend to explain their functions and services in English and Bosnian. Below (Figures 5-9) are some examples.

Figure 2 (left): A Slovenian airline advertises to English speakers.



Figure 6 (above left): A pharmacy makes itself obvious to English speakers.



Figure 7 (above right): A hostel welcomes guests in English.

Figure 8 (right): A travel agency has written its sign exclusively in English.



Figure 9 (left): A currency exchange office sign in English, as well as other languages.

Figure 10 (bottom left): A street sign gives the history of the street in Bosnian and English.

Figure 11 (bottom right): A sign in English advertises an exhibition on the 1995 massacre in Srebrenica. Internationals often travel to Sarajevo for commemorations of the tragedy.



As Bosnian establishments use English to accommodate and appeal to internationals, international brands in this photoset also rely on English to ensure that their slogans and advertisements are widely understood abroad. This use of English is especially clear in fashion brands, as shown in Figures 12 and 13.



Figure 12 (left): Mango announces its "new collection" in English. Figure 13 (right): Ray-Ban makes its primary point in Bosnian, but slogans "never hide" and "smooth as velvet" are in English.

English in this photoset is not only used to accommodate internationals; Bosnian establishments also use it to attract Bosnians. Establishments in industries that rely on trends, fashion, or professionalism often, or even usually, had at least parts of their signage in English. Based on these photos, it appears that displaying certain words or phrases in English rather than in Bosnian can lend a sense either of stylishness and trendiness or of high class and exclusivity. English in the former category occurred frequently; Figures 14-16 are illustrative examples. Many establishments use an English word or phrase either as a name or as a tagline or slogan, making them appear modern and fashionable. The word "style" itself appeared in slogans or taglines multiple times.



Figure 14 (top): A cafe explains itself in English.

Figure 15 (center): A beauty shop's name in Bosnian, with an English tagline.

Figure 16 (left): These two establishments' signs are entirely in English – their names are single English words, and their slogans or explanations are in English too.

The related use of English to imply high class or exclusivity had a similar structure: names of shops or establishments were often in Bosnian with an English tagline or description, or had an



Figure 17 (above): A copy shop's name in English implies professionalism. English on copy shop signs was very common in this photoset.

Figure 18 (right): A residence advertisement says "exclusive" in English to appear high-class.

English name with a Bosnian tagline. Figures 17 and 18 illustrate this use.

These uses of English in the Sarajevo photoset imply that in Bosnian culture, the English language carries a connotation of fashion, style, professionalism, and success (both financial and social). When businesses want customers to associate them with these ideas, they use English in their signage.



English in the Banja Luka photoset is used similarly to the way it appeared in the Sarajevo photoset, where it occurred in appeals to internationals, with international brands, and for the appearance of high fashion or class, as shown in Figures 19-21. English appears less frequently in the Banja Luka photoset than in the Sarajevo photoset, which may be because Banja Luka is a less popular tourist destination than Sarajevo.



Figure 19 (above) and Figure 20 (below): International brands and trendy phrases appear in English.







Figure 3 (left) and Figure 21 (right): English implies style and draws attention to services a traveler will likely need.

The primary difference between the numbers in the photosets is in the ratio of Bosnian to Serbian. The Sarajevo data featured Bosnian in almost all signs and Serbian in almost none; given Banja Luka's Serb ethnic majority, one might expect its photoset to feature Serbian in almost all signs and Bosnian in almost none, but this is not the case. Not even a majority of signs contained Serbian. Considering that popular opinion in the Republika Srpska supports independence from Bosnia for the entity, the relatively small presence of the Serbian language seems strange.

There are several possible explanations for this difference, the most likely of which relates to the Serbian language's use of the Cyrillic alphabet. The heavy presence of English in both photosets – heavier by far than the presence of any other foreign language – indicates

Western-focused globalization in Bosnia. Serbian and Bosnian are very similar when spoken, but Bosnian uses the Latin alphabet while Serbian uses the Cyrillic alphabet. Relatively infrequent instances of Serbian in this data could be interpreted as a pull away from an alphabet that is not Western-friendly as globalization continues. It is likely that less urban areas of the Republika Srpska have more frequent instances of Serbian than Banja Luka has, as globalization tends to reach urban centers first.

When Serbian appears in this photoset, it usually appears alone or with English, as illustrated in Figures 22 and 23.



Figure 22: A street sign gives street names in Serbian and English.



Figure 23: A bank's sign is only in Serbian.

Only very rarely did Serbian appear with Bosnian on the same signs or on signs for the same establishments. Below are the only two examples from the Banja Luka photoset of Bosnian and Serbian occurring together. The first example (Figures 24 and 25) is signage for a cultural center, an establishment which, like the Inter-Religious Committee in Sarajevo, would predictably want to promote ethnic integration and harmony.



Figure 24 (left) and Figure 25 (right): Signs for a cultural center, located within several yards of one another, have text in Serbian, English, and Bosnian.



Figure 26: A sign announces a sale in various languages, including Bosnian, Serbian, and English.

The second example, shown above in Figure 26, is a sign at a shoe shop advertising a sale, and includes the word “sale” in several different languages. That Bosnian and Serbian appear together here may not be entirely meaningful, as the theme of the sign is “all languages” and not “languages of Bosnia.”

## Conclusions

The most obvious conclusion that can be drawn from this data is that the Bosnian language dominates the linguistic landscape of Bosnia, even in areas with a Serb ethnic majority. It is also apparent that English is the second-most prominent language in Bosnia. At least in terms of signage, English has positive connotations and is often associated with fashion, professionalism, and high social or economic status. On the main streets of Bosnia’s capital cities, the presence of English surpasses that of Bosnia’s other two official languages (Serbian

and Croatian), again surpassing Serbian even where there is an ethnic majority of Serbs. In the capital of the Republika Srpska, Serbian only appeared prominently on a quarter of the main street's signage; in the capital of the Federation, it appeared on less than 2% of signage. Although most Serbs can read Bosnian as well as Serbian, this data shows an imbalance of Serbs' linguistic representation in relation to the portion of the population they make up. Bosnia's linguistic situation, neither in Sarajevo nor Banja Luka, is not representative of or conducive to integration and harmony between Bosniaks and Serbs.

This is certainly not a moral condemnation; it is difficult and unhelpful to pass judgment on how anyone *should* feel after suffering as Bosnia did during the war. It is also not a policy recommendation – it is reasonable to imagine that Sarajevans might be upset to see policy being implemented that greatly increased the presence of Serbian language on signage in Sarajevo.

What the data does support, however, is that the system of ethnic separation set up by the Dayton Accords and the two-entity arrangement, while they did put a stop to violence at the end of the war, is not now supportive of a process of peace and reconciliation. Ethnic separation has not supported proportionate linguistic representation for Bosnia's major ethnic groups.

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