

RELATIONS BETWEEN DESCRIPTION AND PRESCRIPTION IN CROATIAN LANGUAGE MANUALS

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Avtorja analizirata odnose med opisovanjem in predpisovanjem v hrvaških jezikovnih priročnikih. Menita, da anglocentričnega¹ vidika, ki razume predpisovanje kot neznanstveni pristop k jeziku, ni mogoče uporabiti v primeru hrvaščine, saj hrvaško jezikovno predpisovanje vedno temelji tako na opisovanju, korpusni analizi, razlikovanju med funkcijskimi stili in jezikovno rabo kot tudi na izboru, ki izhaja iz dobro uveljavljenih načel in ne iz osebnih preferenc predpisovalcev. Predpisovanje večinoma izhaja iz institucionalnih okvirov in ne iz individualnih mnenj raziskovalcev, raziskovanje za namen predpisovanja pa izvajajo akademske ustanove.

opisovanje, predpisovanje, hrvaščina, purizem

The authors analyze the relations between descriptivism and prescriptivism in Croatian linguistics and Croatian language manuals. They argue that the Anglo-centric^[1] view, which considers prescriptivism as a non-scientific approach to language, does not apply to the Croatian situation as Croatian prescriptivism is always based on descriptivism, corpus analysis, distinction of functional styles and language usage as well as selection based on well-established principles and not the personal preferences of prescriptivists. Prescriptivism mostly speaks from an institutional instance rather than from the individual viewpoint of a researcher and prescriptive research teams work within academic institutions.

descriptivism, prescriptivism, Croatian, purism

Prescriptivism and descriptivism

The starting point for this analysis is the lexicon *Key Concepts in Language and Linguistics* by R. L. Trask (1999): »The *imposition of arbitrary norms* upon a language, often in defiance of normal usage. [...] Prescriptivism consists of the attempts, by teachers and writers, to settle these disagreements by insisting upon the use of those particular forms and usages which they personally prefer and by condemning those others which they personally dislike [...] A prominent feature of traditional grammar is the frequent presence of prescriptivism: identifying and recommending forms and usages favoured by the analyst.« As opposed to prescriptivism, Trask (ibid.) defines descriptivism as: »The policy of describing languages as they are found

¹ Pojav beležijo tudi jezikoslovci iz drugih držav, npr. Junichi Toyota: *Anglocentrični vidik in njegov vpliv na jezikoslovje: primer pasiva*./This is a phenomenon also noticed by the linguists from other countries, e.g. *Anglocentric View and its Influence on Linguistics: a case of the passive voice* by Junichi Toyota.

to exist. Excepting only in certain educational contexts, modern linguists utterly reject prescriptivism [...] Descriptivism is a central tenet of what we regard as a scientific approach to the study of language: [...] Prescriptivism, in great contrast, is not a scientific approach.«

The difference between descriptivism and prescriptivism is connected with the question: *What is standard language?* As Trudgill's (1999) views on Standard English are often cited by Croatian descriptivists and applied to Standard Croatian, we quote them here: »If Standard English is not therefore a language, an accent, a style or a register, then of course we are obliged to say what it actually is. The answer is, as at least most British sociolinguists are agreed, that Standard English is a dialect.«

In *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* by Rodney Huddleston and Geoffrey K. Pullum (2002) prescriptivism is criticized because: 1. if most users of the language don't use the form that is considered to be correct by the grammar, then it is the grammar that is incorrect – taste tyranny; 2. it has been a common assumption of prescriptivists that only the formal style is grammatically correct – confusing informal style with ungrammaticality; 3. prescriptive grammarians have frequently backed up their pronouncements with an appeal to entirely extraneous considerations – spurious external justifications. On the web-page <http://www.quora.com/> the difference between linguists and schoolteachers is described as follows: »Linguists create descriptive grammars in order to understand language more deeply. They understand that a single language can have multiple dialects, and that each dialect will have its own grammatical rules – internally consistent, but perhaps different from other dialects of the same language. Prescriptivists include schoolteachers, copyeditors, and others charged with correcting people's use of the language. [...] Prescriptivists start with the assumption that there is one 'correct' way to use the language, and many incorrect ways.« In the *Glossary of Grammatical & Rhetorical Terms* the difference between descriptive and prescriptive grammar is described as follows: »Descriptive grammar refers to the structure of a language as it is actually used by speakers and writers. Prescriptive grammar refers to the structure of a language as certain people think it *should be used*.«

In Croatian linguistics similar views are present in the works and reports of some linguists (e.g. Kapović, Sarić, Starčević 2015²). Kapović even interprets linguistic prescriptivism as conservatism in language and connects it with conservative political views. However, the English language situation is completely different from Croatian. English has continually existed as a recognized separate language for centuries; there are a number of prescriptive dictionaries and grammars (e.g. <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/words/usage>), user manuals (e.g. *Longman Dictionary of Common Errors*), sites (e.g. Grammarly: <https://www.grammarly.com>) for correcting grammar, special manuals for different functional styles,³ spelling

² Reports on HIDIS 2014, Međimurski filološki dani 2015 and Lingvistički krug 2015.

³ See e.g. Adrian Wallwork *English for Writing Research Papers* or Antoinette M. Wilkinson *Scientist's Handbook for Writing Papers and Dissertations*.

competitions at the school level, millions of native and non-native speakers, etc. English is a global language, a *lingua franca* of international communication. Thus English does not need language purism. The position of Croatian as a small language is completely different for a number of well-known historical, linguistic and sociolinguistic reasons. Croatian, as other small languages,⁴ has to undergo processes which will make it fit for the challenges of the new, globalized world.

Arguments

Arguments are offered to support the idea that that these views (which occur in Kapović's book *Čiji je jezik*) do not apply to Croatian language manuals. Most arguments are taken from these two normative works: *The Croatian School Dictionary* (2012) and the *The Croatian Orthographic Manual* (2013) compiled at the Institute of Croatian Language and Linguistics, as prescriptivism regularly speaks from an institutional instance and teams of qualified linguists work on the compilation of these manuals.

The aim of linguistics is to describe not to prescribe. When the authors of *The Croatian Orthographic Manual* were faced with the problem of how to spell e.g. CRKVA HRVATSKIH MUČENIKA, descriptive linguistics and corpus analysis states that there are these six ways in which this phrase is spelled: *crkva »Hrvatskih mučenika«, Crkva hrvatskih mučenika, crkva Hrvatskih mučenika, Crkva Hrvatskih mučenika, crkva hrvatskih mučenika, crkva Hrvatskih Mučenika*. Statistics doesn't give any reliable data as the occurrence of this phrase is relatively low even on Google. Only if we take into consideration the orthographic system, e.g. compare this phrase with the spelling of phrases as *Dan hrvatskih mučenika* and *crkva sv. Marka*, can we conclude that the correct form (from the aspect of the language system) is *crkva hrvatskih mučenika* as found in *The Croatian Orthographic Manual*.

Languages change, language change is not bad. One of the characteristics of standard language quoted in all prescriptive textbooks is the *elastic stability of the standard language* which takes into consideration language change. The term was first defined by Ljudevit Jonke in 1964, and it was then taken over by other prescriptive linguists.

In the language system there are no correct and incorrect forms. Everything that is used in a language is correct. One can only say that it might not belong to the standard language. Prescriptive linguists always differentiate between language as a system and language as a standard, and the idea of language mistake is always

⁴ In April 2015 there was a conference *The Role of Lexicography in Standardisation and Purification of Lesser Used Languages* organized by the Fryske Akademy. The reason for such a conference was that »the Frisian language is acquiring new functions and penetrating into new societal domains, or into domains that are traditionally reserved for the dominant Dutch language. Therefore, it needs new terminology [...] For lexicographers, one of the most pregnant issues is the choice between an internationalism or a native word, or to put it sharply, between reality and artificiality. Lexicographers and lexicologists from Wales, Ireland, Belgium, Estonia, the Basque County and the Netherlands will give lectures and discuss these issues.« (From the invitation to the conference)

connected with the standard language, not with jargon, dialect, and literary style. This is clearly stated e.g. in *Hrvatski jezični savjetnik* from 1999 (1999: 47–63) which differentiates language standard from language system, connects the idea of language mistakes only with the standard language, differentiates between standard language and its functional styles⁵ and jargon, and gives specific criteria for the preference of one language feature in the standard language. The difference between standard language and jargon is illustrated in the book *Od računalnoga žargona do računalnoga nazivlja*.

Language purism is viewed as a completely negative phenomenon. »Purism has almost never been a force among speakers of English, but speakers of French, German, Icelandic, Turkish and Basque [...] have at times engaged in large-scale purges of foreign elements, with varying degrees of success.« (Trask: *ibid.*). This completely negative view of purism is not accepted by all linguists, especially speakers of small languages and languages that have been threatened by other bigger or politically stronger languages.⁶ The problem is especially complex in terminology. Language counselling has a long and fruitful tradition in the Croatian language from the year 1904 when the book of language advice by V. Rožić was published. From that year on a number of advice manuals have been published (e.g. *Branič jezika hrvatskoga* by N. Andrić, *Književni jezik u teoriji i praksi* by Lj. Jonke, *Hrvatski naš svagda(š)nji* by S. Težak, etc.).⁷ One of the important activities of the Institute of Croatian Language and Linguistics is giving language advice to all interested parties. This language advice, questions answered and data based on language editing have been used as data for the compilation of three books of language advice: The first is *Jezični savjetnik s gramatikom* from 1971. This book had a very important role in the development of Standard Croatian and the formation of the awareness that Croatian is a separate language and the need for preservation of this separateness. The tradition of *Jezični savjetnik s gramatikom* was continued by *Hrvatski jezični savjetnik* from 1999, the book *Jezični savjeti* from 2010 and the Internet portal *Jezični savjeti* (<http://savjetnik.ihjj.hr>).

Prescriptivists impose arbitrary norms upon a language by insisting upon the use of those particular forms and usages which they personally prefer and by

5 Many language advice books deal with a specific functional style, e.g. administrative Hudeček, Matković, Čutik 2012, scientific Hudeček, Mihaljević 2010, and journalistic Hudeček, Mihaljević 2009.

6 Pieter Duijff, Frits van der Kuip and Hindrik Sijens in the conclusion of their report *How puristic should a purism be* presented at the conference *The Role of Lexicography in Standardisation and Purification of Lesser Used Languages* say: »In conclusion, there is no overall receipt for lexicographers how to deal with loans and purism. First of all, it depends on the language situation you are in. In the case of two closely related languages, it varies from word to word. Sometimes frequency is decisive, sometimes the distance to the source language and sometimes the so-called Frisianness. And it is quite possible that there are other determining factors we have not noticed yet.«

7 Nikola Protuđer lists 77 Croatian language advice manuals (http://www.google.hr/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=0CCEQFjAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww-gewi.uni-graz.at%2Fgralis%2Fgralisarium%2F2011%2Fdocs_2011%2FProtudjer_Graz_7-5-2011.ppt&ei=5wxPVZidJYLzUv7ygKAB&usq=AFQjCNEkc_z3-gPsO9-wGP7apvpGe459SQ&sig2=Ry8g2LjQvdf_FvYdnK04YQ&bvm=bv.92885102,d.d24).

condemning those others which they personally dislike. The formulation of each prescriptive rule is preceded by detailed descriptive study based on all normative works written so far (as has already been shown above), language tests and corpus analysis. The work on such manuals is conducted in an institution, a team of linguists works on each of these manuals so one cannot speak of personal preference, e.g. *Croatian Orthographic Manual* had 14 authors and was accepted by secret ballot by the Scientific Council of the Institute consisting of 24 academics.

While forming spelling rules, all Croatian orthographic manuals and the Croatian orthographic tradition in general were considered, all differences between orthographic manuals were analysed and solutions were divided into groups, e.g.:

Table 1: Different orthography in manuals

BFM, BHM	BFM IV.	AS, BMM
zadatci	zadaci/zadatci	zadaci
brježuljak	brježuljak/brežuljak	brežuljak
u jesen, naizgled	u jesen, na izgled	ujesen, naizgled
ne ću	ne ću/neću	neću
Johnnyja, Johnnyjev	Johnnyja, Johnnyjev	Johnnya, Johnnyev
naš zavod	naš zavod	naš Zavod
II., futur II.	II., futur II.	II., futur II
NASA – NASE	NASA – NASE	NASA – NASA-e

The principle of usage verification has been particularly important in resolving alternative spelling rules and developing ways how to deal with them. Special attention was given to data received from analyzing various texts (from the *Croatian Language Repository*, the Institute's Croatian language corpus <http://riznica.ihjj.hr>) and the Internet. Statistical data from Croatian corpuses and Google search engine were taken into consideration as is seen in the following diagram:

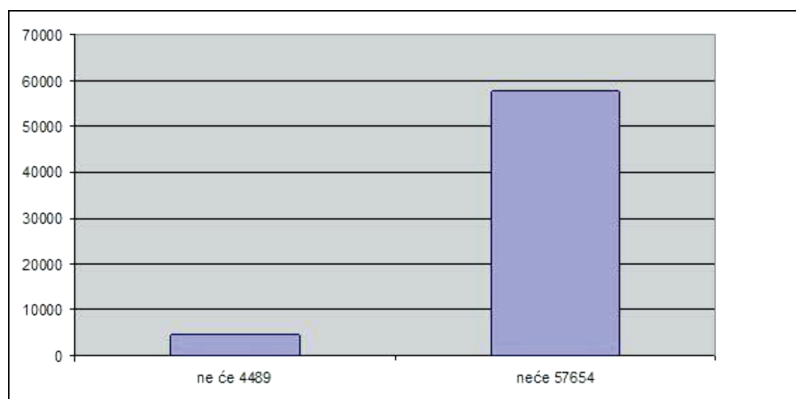


Figure 1: *ne će* and *neće* 1 : 13 on Google (restriction to Croatian) (from the Internet version of the *Orthographic Manual*, pravopis.hr)

Research into alternative spelling rules was carried out in different test groups. It was conducted by researchers who teach at different universities in accordance with carefully designed questionnaires. The results were closely analyzed and were valuable guidelines in establishing certain spelling rules.

As detailed analysis of this test is given in the Ph.D. thesis of Tomislav Stojanov, one of the authors of the *Croatian Orthographic Manual*, here we will only give a fragment of the questionnaire and the results obtained only for one question.

pl. of petak	D od pripovijetka	pl. of privitak
pl. of iscjedak	pl. of crijep	pl. of usadak
pl. of redak	pl. of zadatak	pl. of nacrtak
pl. of predak	pl. of podatak	pl. of curetak
pl. of napredak	pl. of brijeg	
pl. of napitak	pl. of ostatak	

Only the results from the year 2012/2013 of the plural of the noun *redak* are given here:

redci 68 (52,7 %), *retci* 44 (34,1 %), *reci* 12 (9,3 %) *redtci* 2 (1,5), *redovi* 1 (0,7 %), *redki*, *redkovi* 1 (0,8 %) (Stojanov 2015: 25).

At the moment a team of linguists from the Institute of Croatian Language and Linguistics is working on the *Croatian Orthographic Manual* for elementary school children. Our rules and dictionary will also be tested against the corpus of the most common mistakes of the spelling-checker *Hashek*. Here only a few most common mistakes from *Hashek* corpus are shown:

- šta 142084 => što?
- ko 102283 => tko?
- slijedeće 42946 => sljedeće?
slijedeć?
- nebi 39396 => ne bi?
- slijedeći 35125 => sljedeći? sijedeći?
slijedeć? slijepeći? blijedeći?
- jel 29532 => je l'?

Prescriptivism is not a scientific approach to language. As prescriptivism is based on research, is closely connected to descriptivism, and relies on the results of the descriptivist approach and carefully formulated principles, and is carried out by teams in an academic institution it is clearly also a scientific approach to language.

Prescriptivists are teachers and editors while linguists are descriptivists. This is untrue for the Croatian situation as teachers and editors often rely on linguists to solve many language problems. The very impulse for the writing of *The Croatian Orthographic Manual* came from teachers who asked for a unique orthographic standard (<http://www.dphj.hr/o-nama/zakljucci-1.-simpozija-ucitelja-i-nastavnika-hrvatskoga-jezika-8>). Researchers from the Institute of Croatian Language and Linguistics are regularly invited to give lectures at teachers' conferences and meetings. Among 14 authors of the *Croatian Orthographic Manual* four have a degree in General Linguistics and among 12 authors of the *Croatian School Dictionary* three have a degree in General Linguistics. Researchers from many institutions (Institute of Croatian Language and Linguistics, Zagreb Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Pula, Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts) are members of the HRT

(Croatian radio and television) Council for Language and Speech which has been formed in order to solve some of the normative problems.

Prescriptivists do not differentiate between the informal and formal style and declare everything belonging to the informal style to be incorrect. Croatian grammar books, advice manuals, and school textbooks usually have a chapter on the relations among standard language, dialect and jargon, and within the standard language differentiate between functional styles (e.g. Frančić 2005). Normative dictionaries also differentiate between colloquial words marked *razg.*, jargon words marked *žarg.*, and standard words, e.g.

kupaóna *im. ž.* <G kupaónē; *mn.* N kupaóne, G kupaónā > *razg. v.* kupaonica
zèzati *gl. nesvrš. prijel.* <*prez. 1. l. jd.* zèzām, *3. l. mn.* zèzajū, *imp.* zèzāj, *aor.* zèzah, *imperf.* zèzāh, *prid. r.* zèzao, *prid. t.* zèzān > *žarg.*

Standard language is only a dialect of the language. This is not the case with Croatian linguistic terminology in which dialects, jargons, and standard language are carefully differentiated. Definitions are given from *Croatian School Dictionary*:

govor 1. primjena jezika u komunikaciji nasuprot jeziku kao apstraktnomu pojmu
2. jezični sustav kojega ograničenog naselja [*bednjanski* ~]
dijalekt skupina govora koji po nekim zajedničkim kriterijima čine cjelinu
narječje skupina dijalekata koji prema nekim zajedničkim kriterijima čine cjelinu
standardni jezik sustav uređen svjesnom, planskom normom, tj. pravilima koja sadržavaju pravopis i gramatiku te popis riječi koji se nalazi u normativnome rječniku

Descriptivism and prescriptivism in terminology

Descriptive terminological dictionaries give all synonyms used in a field without deciding between the preferred, depreciated and allowed terms. Often they give a whole string of synonyms for one concept or term in a foreign language, e.g.:

computer računalo, kompjutor, kompjuter, obradnik, rednik, komputator
 (Kiš 2000)

There is place for normative (prescriptive) intervention in terminology only when there is a terminology need, i.e. there is a new concept that does not yet have a name (e.g. *nekapnica* a small device invented by a Croatian inventor that is put on a bottle so the wine does not spill; the inventors turned to the Institute for advice); there is a foreign term that needs a Croatian name; or there are many synonymous terms and one needs to be selected. International standards (ISO 704, 2000) propose these principles of term formation: transparency (vs. opacity), consistency, appropriateness, conciseness (linguistic economy), derivability, linguistic correctness, preference for native language, and these term formation methods: creating new forms (derivation, compounding, abbreviated forms), using existing forms (conversion, terminologization, semantic transfer, trans-disciplinary borrowing), translanguaging borrowing (direct loan, loan translation).⁸

Linguists from other countries also agree with these criteria., e.g. in their paper *Term properties and modern terminological systems development* Ukrainian linguists Maksym O. Vakulenko and Kateryna O. Meljnyk (2014: 35) say: »It is argued that a terminological neologism can and should be based mainly on the native lexical reserve. [...] The term feasibility is defined not by the personal affection of a user but by the combination of objective criteria provided by scientific validity, determined by the analytical method, and currency given by the statistical method.«

Conclusion

1. The English language situation is different from the Croatian language situation: English obviously does not need language purism.
2. In order to give valid prescriptive rules we have to start with descriptive analysis which takes into account statistical analysis and corpus analysis as well as principles for standardization.
3. The awareness of functional styles is very important for prescriptive rules.
4. Prescription is very important in terminology where synonymy is unwelcome and has to be resolved by terminological principles. National terminology should be preserved and developed to meet the changing needs of modern society. The best way of preserving and developing national terminology is through the joint efforts of experts in different subject fields and terminologists.
5. Calling standard Croatian a dialect does not coincide with the definition of dialect in Croatian linguistic tradition.
6. Prescriptivists usually belong to a team from a language institution and do not express their personal point of view.

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⁸ *Guidelines for terminology policies* 2005: 10.

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