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Language usage trends among linguistic minority communities in Serbia: A comparative analysis

Minority Languages in European Societies (MiLES)
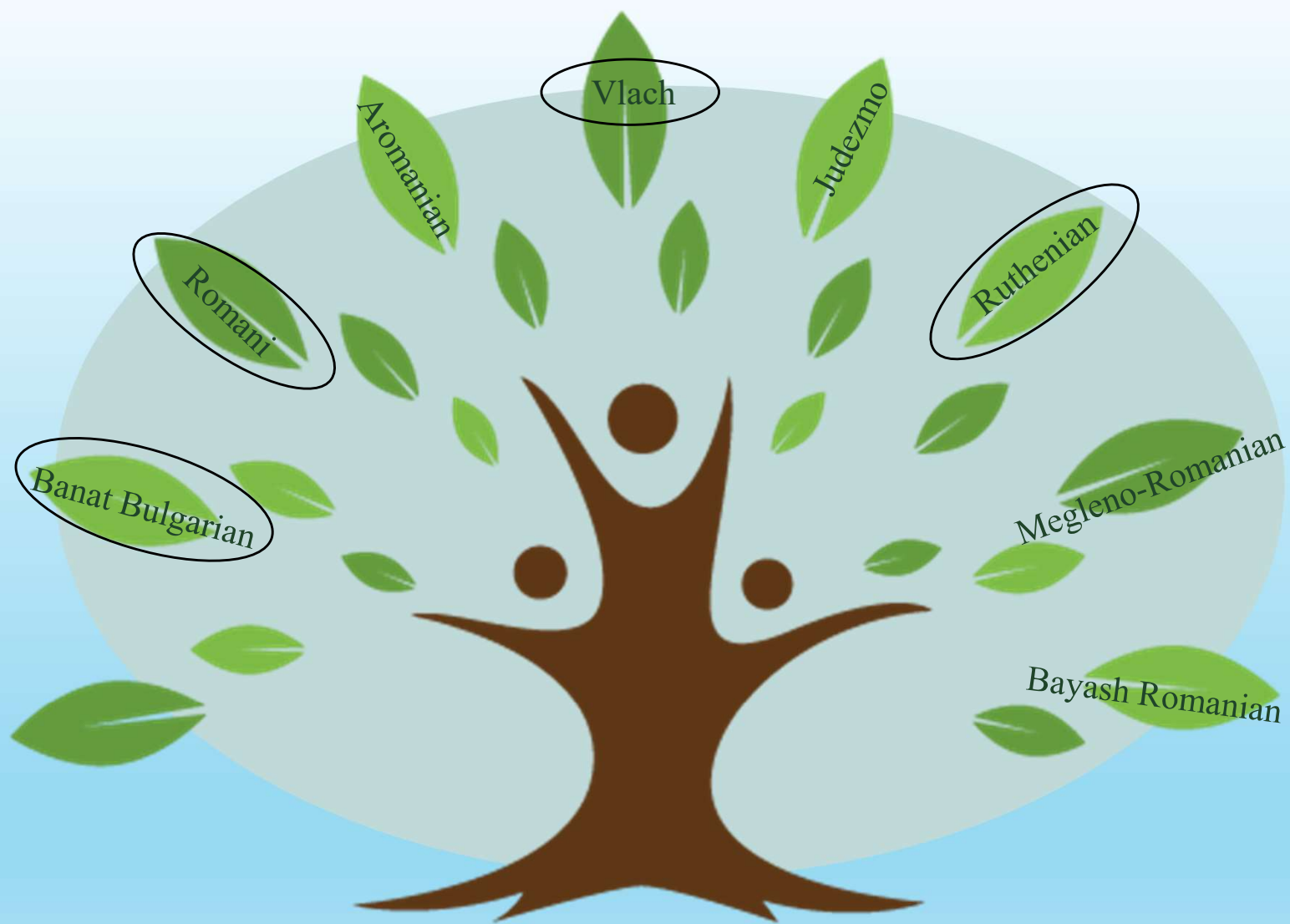Turin / Bard, July 3rd-6th, 2024

04.07.2024.

Project VLingS
"Vulnerable Languages and
Linguistic Varieties in Serbia "

Vlach

Aromanian

Judezmo

Romani

Ruthenian

Banat Bulgarian

Megleno-Romanian

Bayash Romanian

04.07.2024.

Vlach

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Census 2022
Overall population: 6,647,003

Banat Bulgarians	Roma	Vlach	Ruthenians
474* (0.007%)	131,936 (1.98%)	21,013 (0.3%)	11,483 (0.17%)

*Only Bulgarians in Banat, total number of Bulgarians in Serbia is 12.918

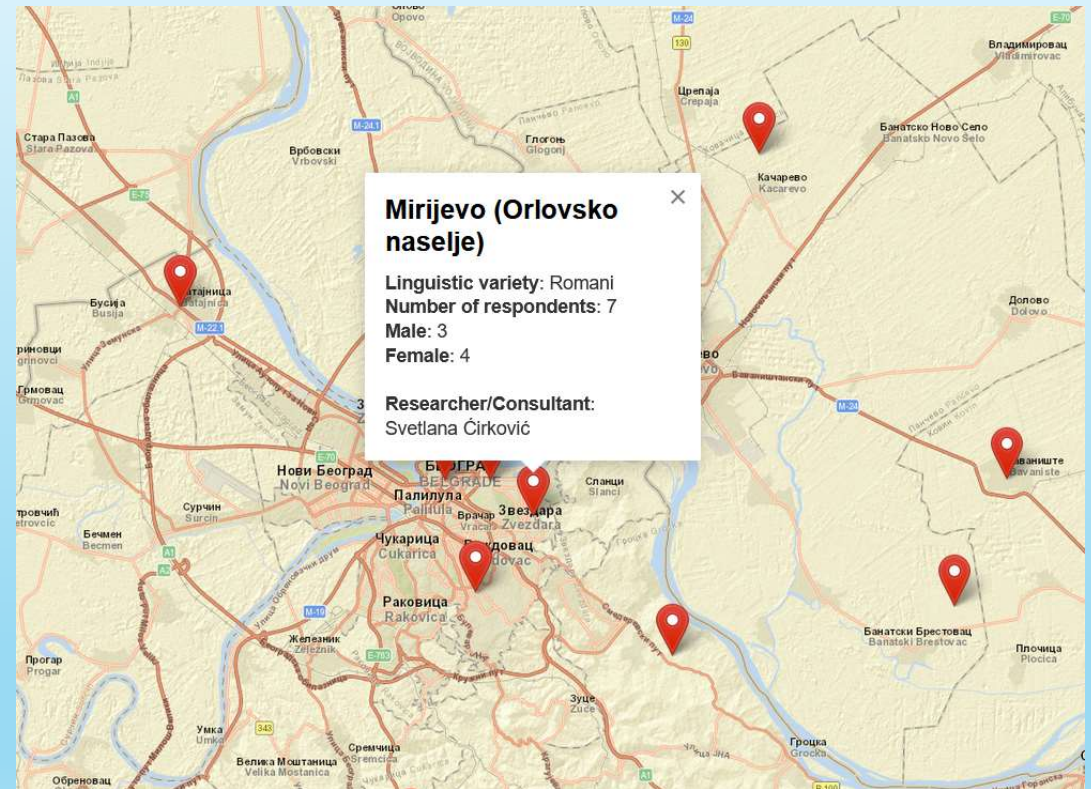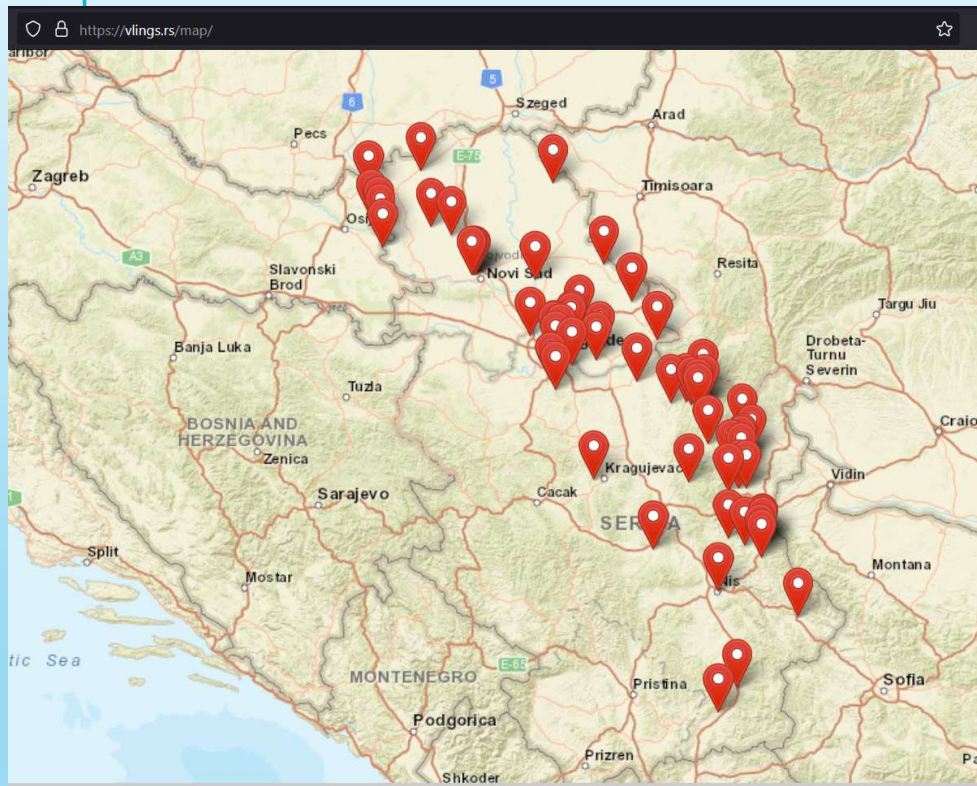04.07.2024.

Methodology

VLingS questionnaire 0.0 (+)

VLingS UPITNIK – PALĆANSKI

WP 1	S1.4 Creating the final version of the sociolinguistic questionnaire	Datum: 21.03.2023.

PROTOKOL

ISTRAŽIVAČ / KONSULTANT →		DATUM RAZGOVORA →		MESTO RAZGOVORA →	

NAPOMENE ↓

III DOMENI UPOTREBE JEZIKA

1. KOLIKO ČESTO KORISTITE PALĆANSKI U RAZGOVORU SA SLEDEĆIM OSOBAMA ILI U SLEDEĆIM SITUACIJAMA? označiti polje sa X (ukupna procena)	1. Stalno	2. Često	3. Ponekad	4. Retko	5. Nikad	6. Nije primenjivo
1. Sa članovima porodice						
2. Sa prijateljima						
3. Sa komšijama						
4. Sa kolegama na poslu						
5. Sa verskim starešinama						
6. Sa službenicima javnih institucija (npr. u opštini/ mesnoj zajednici/ pošti/ policiji)						

2. DA LI KORISTITE PALĆANSKI KAO "TAJNI JEZIK", KADA NE ŽELITE DA VAS DRUGI RAZUMEJU? zaokružiti broj →	1. DA 2. NE	3. AKO KORISTITE, U KOJIM SITUACIJAMA? upisati →	

4. DA LI SLUŠATE MUZIKU NA PALĆANSKOM JEZIKU? zaokružiti broj →	1. DA 2. NE	

5. NA KOM JEZIKU ČEŠĆE RAZGOVARATE O PRIVATNIM TEMAMA (PORODICA, ZDRAVLJE, SVAKODNEVNI ŽIVOT)? zaokružiti broj →	1. Na palćanskom. 2. Na srpskom. 3. Podjednako često na palćanskom i srpskom. 4. Ne znam.	6. NA KOM JEZIKU ČEŠĆE RAZGOVARATE O DRUŠTVENIM TEMAMA (NPR. TEME VEZANE ZA POLITIKU, SELO/GRAD I DR.)? zaokružiti broj →	1. Na palćanskom. 2. Na srpskom. 3. Podjednako često na palćanskom i srpskom. 4. Ne znam.
7. NA KOM JEZIKU RAZMIŠLJATE? zaokružiti broj →	1. Na palćanskom. 2. Na srpskom. 3. I na palćanskom i na srpskom. 4. Na nekom drugom jeziku. 5. Ne znam.	8. NA KOM JEZIKU BROJITE (U SEBI)? zaokružiti broj →	1. Na palćanskom. 2. Na srpskom. 3. I na palćanskom i na srpskom. 4. Na nekom drugom jeziku. 5. Ne znam.
9. NA KOM JEZIKU SE MOLITE? zaokružiti broj →	1. Na palćanskom. 2. Na srpskom. 3. I na palćanskom i na srpskom. 4. Na nekom drugom jeziku. 5. Ne znam.	10. NA KOM JEZIKU SANJATE? zaokružiti broj →	1. Na palćanskom. 2. Na srpskom. 3. I na palćanskom i na srpskom. 4. Na nekom drugom jeziku. 5. Ne znam.

IV PISMENOST

1. DA LI UMETE DA ČITATE? zaokružiti broj →	1. DA 2. NE	Ako je odgovor da, odgovoriti na sledeća pitanja. označiti polje sa X ↓			
2. KOLIKO ČESTO...	1. Stalno	2. Često	3. Ponekad	4. Retko	5. Nikad
1. ... čitate na palćanskom?					
2. ... čitate na srpskom?					
3. DA LI UMETE DA PIŠETE? zaokružiti broj →	1. DA 2. NE	Ako je odgovor da, odgovoriti na sledeća pitanja. označiti polje sa X ↓			
4. KOLIKO ČESTO...	1. Stalno	2. Često	3. Ponekad	4. Retko	5. Nikad
1. ... pišete na palćanskom?					
2. ... pišete na srpskom?					

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Fieldwork and places

www.vlings.rs/map/

Mirijevo (Orlovsko naselje)

Linguistic variety: Romani
Number of respondents: 7
Male: 3
Female: 4

Researcher/Consultant:
Svetlana Ćirković

04.07.2024.

Methodology

Methodology

VLingS Questionnaire 0.0

Sample:
BUG=33, ROM=62, VLA=44, RUS=30 (N=164)

5 self-assessment questions (out of 190) in the *VLingS Questionnaire 0.0*
the frequency and domains of language use

Aim: to compare the communities

RESULTS

All participants are bilingual.

The frequency of language use differs among the communities.

$(\chi 2 \ (18, \ n = 161) = 80.07, \ p < .01)$

LANGUAGES USED MOST FREQUENTLY

Table 1. COMMUNITY	Serbian	Minority language	Serbian & Minority language	Serbian & Foreign language	Serbian, Minority language & Foreign language
VLACHS	**23**	7	7	5	2
ROMA	**30**	5	**24**	1	2
RUSYNS	2	2	**21**	0	3
BANAT BULGARIANS	**16**	0	4	3	4

RESULTS

Communication on different topics

$(\chi2 \ (3, \ n=124) = 32.074, \ p<.01)$

Table 2.

COMMUNITY	Conversations about PRIVATE TOPICS	
	Minority language	Serbian
VLACHS	7	**24**
ROMA	**30**	19
RUSYNS	**18**	3
BANAT BULGARIANS	4	**19**

RESULTS

Communication on different topics

(χ2 (3, n=122) = 30.377, p<.01)

Topics: overall

Table 3.

COMMUNITY	Conversations about TOPICS OF PUBLIC INTEREST	
	Minority language	Serbian
VLACHS	5	**30**
ROMA	17	**27**
RUSYNS	**14**	5
BANAT BULGARIANS	1	**23**

RESULTS

Communication with family members

1 – never
2 – rarely
3 – sometimes
4 – often
5 - always

(F (3, 159) = 8.050, p<.01)

Table 4.

THE FREQUENCY OF MINORITY LANGUAGE USAGE WITH FAMILY MEMBERS

COMMUNITY	N of respondents	Average (1-5)	SD
VLACHS	42	**3.38**	1.431
ROMA	62	**4.02**	1.274
RUSYNS	30	**4.80**	.610
BAN.BULGARIANS	29	**4.10**	1.205
TOTAL	163		

RESULTS

Communication in state institutions

1 – never
2 – rarely
3 – sometimes
4 – often
5 - always

$(F (3, 144) = 7.402, p<.01)$

Domains: overall

THE FREQUENCY OF MINORITY LANGUAGE USAGE IN STATE INSTITUTIONS

Table 5.

COMMUNITY	N of respondents	Average (1-5)	SD
VLACHS	42	**1.52**	1.018
ROMA	59	**1.08**	.535
RUSYNS	29	**1.97**	1.375
BAN.BULGARIANS	18	**2.00**	1.188
TOTAL	148		

DISCUSSION

- Vojvodina Rusyns use their minority language more extensively in communication in comparison to other communities.

- While Roma are typically bilingual in private communication, their language is notably absent in official domains (see Ćirković 2023).

- Vlachs and Banat Bulgarians are characterized by more frequent usage of Serbian.

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DISCUSSION

- Relevant factors

- the compactness of the communities

- the application of the legislative framework regarding formal language usage

- the standardized language forms

- the linguistic proximity between minority languages and Serbian

- the presence of other minority languages in the surroundings

- The consequences for language preservation

04.07.2024.

THANK YOU!

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

04.07.2024.

ADDITIONAL SLIDES

QUESTIONS

I_10: Which language/languages do you most frequently use today?

III_2: In which language do you discuss private topics (family, health, everyday life) more often?
     1. In Romani. 2. In Serbian. 3. In both. 4. I don't know.

III_3: In which language do you discuss various topics of public interest (e.g., neighborhood, village/town, politics, etc.) more often?"
     1. In Romani. 2. In Serbian. 3. In both. 4. I don't know.

III_1_1: How often do you use Romani in conversation with the following people or in the following situations?
     1_Family members

III_1_9: How often do you use Romani in conversation with the following people or in the following situations?
     9_With officials in public institutions (e.g., at the municipality/local community office, land registry, post   office, etc.)

AGE OF SPEAKERS

Significant differences in the mean age of respondents across various language usage-related aspects:

1. Language(s) employed (F (3, 163) = 3.347, p<.05): respondents who do not employ a minority language in their repertoire are younger than those who do.

2. Language(s) used most frequently (F (7, 157) = 4.326, p<.01): the only significant differences are between the respondents who speak Vlach most frequently and those who employ only Serbian or Serbian in combination with a minority language or another language, i.e., Vlach is reported to be used most frequently by older respondents.

3. Language(s) used with partners (F (6, 123) = 3.883, p<.01): the only significant differences are between the respondents who speak Banat Bulgarian and those who employ only Serbian or Serbian and a minority language equally, i.e., Banat Bulgarian is reported to be used with partners by older respondents.

4. Language choice for private topics (t (121) = 2.208, p< .05) and topics of social interests (t (120) = 1.996, p<.05): in both cases, the respondents who employ the minority language are older than those who employ Serbian.

5. Estimated language proficiency of respondents' children (r = .288, p<.01): there is a low positive correlation indicating that the older the respondents are, they estimate their children's proficiency in a minority language to be better.

However, there is no significant correlation between the age of respondents and the usage of minority language within families or in public domains.

04.07.2024.

Overall, the results indicate a potential decline in intergenerational language transmission, with younger generations being less likely to employ minority languages actively. These findings highlight complex dynamics surrounding language usage and transmission within linguistic minority communities in Serbia, with age playing a significant role in linguistic behaviors. Addressing these patterns may require targeted interventions aimed at fostering intergenerational language transmission and preserving linguistic diversity.