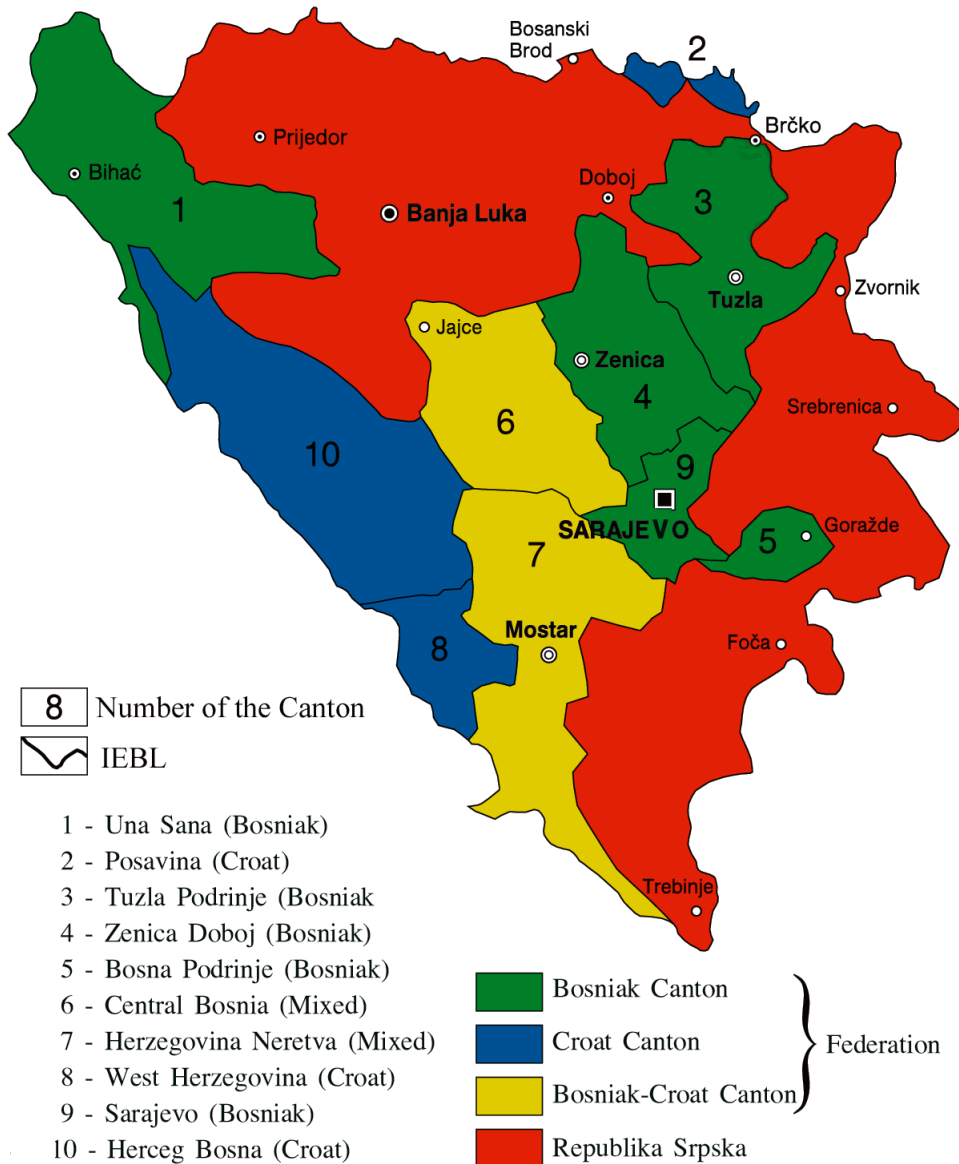


Linguistic Rights in Conflict Ridden Countries in the Balkans (2005)

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1. General Data on Bosnia and Herzegovina and its Population

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is located in the southeastern part of Europe, in the western area of the Balkan peninsula. It borders with Croatia to the north, west and south, while on the east it is bordered by Serbia and Montenegro. The capital city is Sarajevo. Bosnia and Herzegovina declared its independence on April 5, 1992. At present, population of BiH is estimated to 3.950.000.²

According to the last formally conducted census in 1991, BiH population structure included 44% Bosniaks (then declared as Moslems), 31% Serbs and 17% Croats, while 6% of people declared themselves as Yugoslavs.

During the war 1992-1995, approximately 200.000 people were killed, while nearly half of the overall population sought refuge abroad or were expelled from their homes and displaced within the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to recent statistical approximations, BiH nationalities are as follows: 48% Bosniaks, 37.1% Serbs, 14.3% Croats and 0.6% others.³

Ethnic and linguistic division mostly follows the pattern of different religious traditions or regional belonging – Croats, mainly Roman Catholics call their language Croatian, while Bosniaks, mainly Moslems, call their language Bosnian, and Serbs, mostly Orthodox Christians, call the language Serbian

2. Historical Facts Related to Language Development in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Official language (languages) today

Currently in BiH, official languages of the population of BiH are: Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian. Names of the languages on the territory of former Yugoslavia have never been officially established solely based upon linguistic characteristics. Political reasons have often been predominant over linguistic. In socialist Yugoslavia, three languages were officially used. Slovenian was used in the Republic of Slovenia, Macedonian in the Republic of Macedonia (now FYROM), and *Serbo-Croatian or Croato-Serbian*. This was the most commonly used language, throughout Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, as well as the other republics, while the standard of this language was determined by the Novi Sad Agreement in 1954.

After proclamation of independence, the first Constitution of BiH (proclaimed on February 24, 1993) in Article 4 stipulates: “*Within the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina the official language to be used is Serbo-Croatian/Croato-serbian of “ijekivica” pronunciation. Both alphabets, Latin and Cyrillic are fully valid in use.*” (Collection of Constitutions 1997. p. 177). In addition, already in 1994. a law on language in BiH stipulated that the language in BiH is named Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian and the alphabets in use are both Latin and Cyrillic, providing the right to each constitutional people in BiH to choose the name of its language and alphabet. Thus, the old name of the language *Serbo-Croatian/Croato-serbian* was not sustainable, primarily due to political reasons.

In spite of the difference in names, all three variations of the language remain mutually comprehensible, and differ primarily in the usage of a select few words and grammatical structures. The situation is not unlike that of Australian or Canadian English and the English spoken in the UK, or French in Belgium and in France.

Historical Interconnection of Language

² Wikipedia, The free encyclopedia http://sh.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bosna_i_Hercegovina

³ Statistical Yearbook FBiH, 2004.

Many regional dialects had been spoken throughout the region prior to the 19th century, and no consistency existed in either the spelling or the pronunciation. The *Serbo-Croatian* language was a result of the work of Serbian linguist Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, who combined segments of all dialects. It is thus justifiably called *Serbo-Croatian*.

V.S. Karadžić was a part of the *Pan-Slavic* movement of the 19th century, which sought to unite all *Southern Slavic* peoples into one nation. His linguistic work, to write morphological and spelling rules, created the modern language, which he coined *Serbo-Croatian*, since it incorporated the most sensical portions from all dialects. Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, in the first half of 19th century, declared the dialect of Eastern Herzegovina to officially be Serbian, and had given this language *ekavski* dialect. This modern form of the language was spread with Karadžić's translation of the Old Testament into the new literary language, and his version of the rules became the official form of the *Serbo-Croatian* language⁴. Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina utilised *ijekavski* dialect, while most areas of Serbia used *ekavski* dialect. Other dialects remain only in local diction, and are not appropriate in official discourse.

Language in Social Changes

Recently, one of the most manipulated issues in BiH has been the articulation of separate local languages. The differences between the *Croatian, Serbian and Bosnian* languages (or more appropriately - dialects) follow fairly standard rules, not unlike those in many other languages. They are usually present in words with vowel diphthongs, where, eg. the word for milk *mlijeko* in *ijekavski* dialect, becomes *mleko* in Serbian, which uses the *ekavski* dialect. When the same example is applied to the word pretty *lijepo* the structure becomes predictable, since *ekavski* simply drops the long diphthong to *lepo*. One example of forcefully inventing differences in language includes the fact that in Serbian a house is called *kuća*, while the housekeeper or housewife is called *domaćica*. In Croatian, house is called *dom* while a housekeeper is *kućanica*.

Many linguists from the territory of former Yugoslavia claim that this is one language, and that the differences arise in the preferred use of certain terms in the language (or languages) spoken in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, but not exceeding 4-5%. Even these specific terms are widely understood. *Kruh or hljeb* (bread), *dijete or dete* (child), *bijelo or belo* (white), *dom or kuća* (home), *kava or kahva or kafa* (coffee) etc. But following the split of Yugoslavia (during 1991), the slight regional differences seemingly became more pronounced and noticeable in the three major ethnic groups and cultures of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was not due to actual differences but rather due to impacts of the political interference in the field of linguistic. Before the war, the only real differences being that Serb traditionally held to writing the language in Cyrillic alphabet.

Nevertheless, all three ethnic groups understand each other perfectly, and irrespective of these efforts, their languages are difficult to differentiate. The language issue has had a detrimental impact on various facets of everyday life in BiH and especially so on the quality of political discourse. At the Dayton talks, representatives of the three peoples argued strongly that each had the right to use their own language, so this too became a defining principle enshrined within the accord. The international community has been obliged to accept the existence of three different languages, and large sums of money are expended on translation from one to another language of public documents, and official correspondence.

Serb politicians in BiH, have begun to force them selves to speak the *equivocal* - typical pronunciation used in Serbia, but (historically) never in BiH to demonstrate belonging to Serb nationality. Equally, Croatian officials make incredible efforts to learn the new vocabulary advocated

⁴ In Vienna, by the signing of the Literary Language Agreement in 1850, this language was accepted as one of the Slovene languages. According to: Jahić, Dž. Halilović, S i Palić, I. (2000) Grammar of Bosnian Language, Dom štampe, Zenica, p. 55

by nationalist interests in Zagreb. Trivial and minor differences in a common language are being exploited for the purpose of differentiation in the education system, in the arts and society at large. As with other disputes rooted in nationalistic politics, this debate remains highly politicised and divisive.⁵ Immediately following the war, Bosniaks⁶ have established the norm of the *Bosnian* language⁷ and have insisted on words and phrases such as *lahko*, *mehko*, *hlupati* (with the added “h”), etc. They have also revived a number of outdated archaic words which have almost been forgotten (dating back to the Ottoman empire) and for a very long time used only locally.

Many international experts for Slavic languages still refuse to leave the term *Serbo-Croatian* behind and this is how they refer to languages spoken in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, which is in fact considered to be one language, and that the differences amongst these languages are solely political, for example, arising from the promotion of ethnic tensions and lack of tolerance. On the other hand, eminent experts for Slavic languages have gathered in Vienna to mark 150 years of the agreement on modern Slavic languages (reference), and have expressed their understanding of the linguistic changes in the Balkans. Giving the right to Bosniaks to entitle and change their language⁸ according to their own needs, W. Lehfeldt has also confirmed that “Bosniaks have kept and nurtured an adopted child –*Serbo-Croatian* the longest, even though they are not included in its name, nor was their literary culture included in its norm.”⁹

Further elaborating his opinions, Lehfeldt states that “for me there is undoubtedly a Bosnian language. This statement is a result of my convictions that all peoples have the right to entitle their language, which they use in a manner which is correct for them. I consider it fully justified, especially for the Muslim population of BiH to want to use their own language, rather than *Serbo-Croatian/ Croato-Serbian*, as they are excluded as a people by the name of this language, and even though the linguistic base for this language as sought out by Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, should be looked for exactly in Herzegovina.”¹⁰

This brief review of historical development and use of languages within former Yugoslavia and Bosnia and Herzegovina can at least partially present the complex, intertwined and highly politicised linguistic issue, which is greatly reflected in current linguistics.

Currently, in BiH all three languages are proclaimed as equal throughout the territory of the entire country, that is every constitutional person living in BiH has the right to use and name their language in accordance with their nationality. This decision seems to be valid for a number of reasons, and has a deeper meaning founded on democracy, humanity and culture. An additional issue is posed by the fact that this decision is not respected in its entirety. However, in areas where this equality of languages is respected it represents, at the same time, a specific nonsense. The peoples in BiH perfectly understand each other, and due to a few specific phrases or forms of dialect, all formal documents are being *translated* and printed in *all three languages*, all administrative forms, all papers for governmental institutions, parliamentary sessions, etc. This is just one unnecessary expense, as is demonstrated by the three texts attached, written in Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian. Differences have been pointed out.

3. Constitution and Legal Regulation of Language in BiH

Constitutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina

⁵ See more: UNDP, National Human Development Report, 2005:21.

⁶ Note: Bosniak is the title for Muslims in BiH that call their language Bosnian, while Croats or Serbs - intentionally or by lack of information, call this language Bosniak, related with their nationality but not related with territory in which language originates from and is in use. Languages constantly present a political issue, and their natural emergence and development in certain areas is being fully ignored.

⁷ In 1998 was the first Symposium on Bosnian language in Bihać with very important linguistics conclusions. (See more in Jahić, Dž. Halilović, S. and Palić, I. (2000: 63-65).

⁸ During the time period of Kallay, the official language since 1883 in schools was Bosnian, and following 1907 under various pressures this language was changed to Serbo-Croatian (Jahić, Dž. Halilović, S. and Palić, I. (2000) Grammar of Bosnian Language, Dom štampe, Zenica)

⁹ More can be found in «DANI» magazine, no 134, dated 24. December 1999.

¹⁰ Ibidem

The Dayton Peace Agreement, that is Annex 4 of the Dayton Peace Agreement/Constitution of BiH (1996) did not specify the official language used in BiH. In the Constitutions of the Entities and Cantons made at a later date (13 different constitutions), a lot of variety is present. This lack of precise specification within the Constitution has allowed the entities and cantons to resolve this issue as they please, determining educational and linguistic counties, and entitling curricula and language as is suitable to the present national and political interest.

The table below presents an overview of constitutional proclamations of the official language and alphabet in individual entities and cantons up to 1999:

	<i>Entity/Canton</i>	<i>Official Language and Alphabet</i>	<i>Constitutions 1999 Articles and page no.</i>
1.	Federation BiH	Bosnian and Croatian; Latin alphabet	Art. 6, p. 62
2.	Republika Srpska	Serbian with ijekavica and ekavica dialect, Cyrillic alphabet	Art. 7, p. 178).
3.	Una-Sana	Does not specify an official language	-
4.	Posavina	Croatian and Bosniak*; Latin alphabet	Art.10 p.290
5.	Tuzla	Bosnian and Croatian; Latin alphabet	Art. 6, p. 322
6.	Zenica – Doboj	Bosnian and Croatian; Latin alphabet	Art. 9, p. 382
7.	Bosna-Podrinje	Bosnian and Croatian; Latin alphabet	Art. 8, p. 418
8.	Mid-bosnian	Bosnian and Croatian.; Latin alphabet or Croatian and Bosnian; Latin alphabet	Art. 8, p. 460 Art. 8, p. 480
9.	Herzegovina- Neretva	Bosnian and Croatian; Latin alphabet	Art. 8, p. 523
10	West Herzegovina	Croatian and Bosniak*; Latin alphabet	Art. 10, p. 583
11.	Sarajevo	Does not specify an official language	-
12.	Herzeg- Bosnian	Croatian and Bosniak*; Latin alphabet	Art. 10, p. 654

* See footnote no.7 on previous page

The different approach to official languages in different constitutions has, in practice, resulted in numerous problems. According to these regulations, no one within the Federation could officially use the Serbian language or Cyrillic alphabet, while in RS Latin alphabet and Bosnian or Croatian would not be considered official.

In July 2000, the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina brought about a partial Decision¹¹ which states that Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs are considered to be constitutional peoples throughout the entire territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and as such have the legal right to equally use all three languages. This decision was very significant as it clarified the legal status of Serbs in the Federation BiH and Bosniaks and Croats in Republika Srpska.

Even though the right to use their own language and alphabet was *de jure* determined, *de facto* it is being daily forcefully deprived to the minority populations, most frequently being refugees returning to their hometowns and homesteads from which they were expelled during the war.

Legal Regulations in Education

¹¹ Partial decision of the Constitutional Court no. U 5/98 published in the Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina no. 23/2000, Sept. 2000.

Intervention of the International Community

More than 6 years passed after peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina was finally established, before the unified, state-level Law on Elementary and Secondary Education was passed. Due to the activities and support from OSCE, educational authorities have made a reform document which represents a framework for future steps for full legal regulation of the educational system.

The Education Reform agenda has publicly entered into at a meeting of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC), Brussels on 21.11. 2002. This Education Reform agenda is a comprehensive document, composed of five pledges, listing goals for education reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina and focusing on the action needed to realise those goals.

Under Pledge 5 of the *Education Reform Strategy*, education legislation at all levels is to be developed, adopted and implemented based upon European pedagogical and organisational standards and norms, using international human rights conventions as its basis.

Top priority was given to the development of the *State-level Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education (reference)*, which was unanimously adopted by the BiH Parliament and entered into force on 4 July 2003. All of the lower-level legislation on primary and secondary education in the Cantons, the RS and the District of Brcko, has been brought in compliance with this Framework Law.

The State-level Framework Higher Education Law, which was initially put into Parliamentary procedure in spring 2004, is still under discussion. The draft Laws on Pre-School Education, Vocational Education and Training and an Agency/ies for Education have, to date, not entered into parliamentary procedure.

Legal Regulations Dealing with the Languages in Education

The above mentioned *Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education*¹², is a document delivered at the state-level that particularly addresses the issue of language as a possible means for segregation of children during their education. Hence, one of the general aims of education listed in Article 3, point d.) is defined as: *Development of consciousness of patriotism and belonging to Bosnia and Herzegovina, its own cultural identity, language and tradition, in a manner adequate to civilized trends, acknowledging and respecting others and those different, respecting diversity and nurturing mutual understanding, tolerance and solidarity between all people, nationalities and communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and world-wide*".

Further, in Article 7 languages are addressed through: *Languages of the constitutional peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina shall be used in all schools, in accordance with the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina. All students shall, in schools, learn the alphabets that are officially used in Bosnia and Herzegovina.*

Even though there are no minorities in BiH who are represented by more than 0,5% of the population, this Law has also defined their linguistic and cultural rights in education. Article 8 states that: *Language and culture of every significant minority living in Bosnia and Herzegovina shall be respected and incorporated into schools in a manner feasible, and in accordance with the Framework Convention on the Protection of Rights of National Minorities.* This Article addresses *minority communities* that is, true national minorities (listed in the Law) and not constitutional peoples that can be a minority in a certain area.

¹² Framework Law on Elementary and Secondary Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Official Gazette BiH, July 2003.

Due to the low number of children from national minorities, they are often subjected to classical examples of assimilation without acknowledgement of any specific characteristics that would arise from their languages, culture, religion, etc. Currently, more and more Roma that have been in the educational system are identifying themselves as Bosniaks and not Roma, as they were forced to suppress their culture, tradition and language during their schooling.

Article 10 precisely states the situations and activities that can be offensive to the language and culture of individuals during their education: *During educational and other activities conducted within school premises, it is forbidden to use or exhibit didactic or any other type of material, to issue statements by the teachers and other staff within the school, that could be considered as offensive to the language, culture, or religion of students that belong to a different national or ethnic group or religion.*

It is the responsibility of the Entity, Canton and District Brcko educational authorities to form an agency that would conduct supervision and monitoring regarding offenses made in schools regarding the activities listed in the paragraph above.

Upon review of the legal documents and regulations made within them, one can freely state that BiH is a country with proper legislation and legal arrangements, not only in education but in other segments of social life and work. However, daily offenses are made of the legal regulations, without any official enforcement of the law or trial processes.

Offenses of the Law and Constitution without Repercussions

Within schools there are numerous examples of deprivation of rights, and segregation of children of returnees, due to their language, and with the help of language if they are minorities in a given community. As a result of the war, most of the elementary and secondary schools are based on a single, majority nationality and language. In areas where schools are mixed, as the case is with Central Bosnia (6th) and Herzegovina Neretva (7th) Cantons, classes are mostly divided in the same building according to nationality. This is a post-war phenomenon of BiH education – two schools under one roof. Two school systems, one Bosnian the other Croatian, in the same school but separated onto different floors, separate entrances or in separate shifts. Some of the underlying reasons rest in the right to conduct education in mother tongue, while using education in order to create specific linguistic characteristics which would place emphasis on national differences. In this way, the general objective of the war is being accomplished in a more subtle manner. Differences would be stressed and emphasised, leading to the belief that any sort of tolerance and life together is impossible.

As a result of the above-defined educational politics, a specific situation is happening in 60 schools throughout BiH. In the same school building there are two principals, two counselors, two different administrations, two secretaries, double addresses etc. Even though the children understand each other very well, local authorities, under the influence of nationalistic ideology separate them and educate them to think in the terms of *us* and *them*. Hence, most of the school-aged children are already thinking along the prejudices of *we are different, they are different from us and we cannot live together. We are better than them, our language is better than theirs, our culture, our religion etc. is better than theirs* leading up to the real-life situations where children pinch their nose when passing by each other, or fight and argue based on whose culture is better.

Personally, I am not aware of these cases being processed by an authority, other than occasional repercussions by the OHR (Office of the High Representative). On such cases the BiH public is informed by the news headlines and TV reports. Following the media coverage, the Office of Ombudsmen of BiH or the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights are bound to react, along with some other international organization. This leads to a temporary agreement and promises that this practice shall not occur again. However, in most cases it is short-lived and after a little while everything is back to the way it used to be. Educational rights as a legal field does not exist, and it is rather difficult for the legal provisions to be applied in a correct and objective manner.

4. Compulsory Education and Linguistic (Anti) Politics

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious country with a tradition dating back a thousand years. This tradition, up until the war, was strongly supported by the education system. However, the war has brought a number of shifts in values, and as a result, the situation in BiH is currently different from what it used to be. Differences in culture, nationality, religion or language are currently over-emphasised, especially in certain areas, beyond all logic and rationale.

Before the war (beginning of 1992) BiH had 100% coverage of children going to compulsory, elementary schools for the duration of 8 years (in accordance with the Yugoslav General Law on Schooling from 1958). After the war, this coverage had dropped, and it is estimated that 5% of children do not even start elementary school. There are multiple reasons for this, such as the distance of their home to school, poverty, unemployment of parents, family reasons, and frequently the fact that the school is following the curriculum of a different country (mostly Croatia). In these schools the curriculum and language being used is not familiar to most of the children in that area. Hence, the school language and curriculum pose a problem, and are different not only to the children of different cultures but also to the children of that cultural origin. If the school insists on the new language, new pronunciation and grammar which are a foreign concept to the children, and are not used in daily life, then education can be a real nightmare.

The school which is based on a mono-national programme and curriculum of the majority population, frequently using textbooks imported from a foreign country, is not ready to adapt and tolerate cultural, linguistic, religious and other specific characteristics of children belonging to the minority nation in the given society. Even though the law is binding on the school to promote tolerance and diversity, in particular in Articles 6,7 and 8, this is rarely implemented in real life, and in most cases it is solved through the formation of the *second school* beneath the same roof. If there are not enough students of the minority nation to form a new school, then the minority students frequently travel on the average some 25-30 km to the school that uses a curriculum which is more suitable, and acceptable to them.

In the city of Jajce, which does not have a sufficient number of schools that work with a Bosnian curriculum, Bosniak parents would rather send their children to a school that follows a curriculum from Croatia, rather than to have their children travel an hour or two to the school and back.

In the beginning of this school year, the international community had intervened in order to prevent an initiative to form separate schools for Bosniaks in the cities of Prozor-Rama and Stolac, both with a Croat majority in the population.

Absurd situations frequently occur in all mixed societies. Literal application of the right to have an education in the native tongue leads to nonsense. Artificial division of languages amplifies differences of students of different nationalities and leads to segregation and separation. In BiH, all three nationalities can be found either as a majority or minority. The majority population usually causes injustices for other nationalities, which they would not wish to have in other societies, where this population is a minority. A majority of Cantonal officials consider it proper and right to educate children in “their own national schools”. Children and parents can only accept what the political powers determine. Bosniaks in Bosniak schools, Croats in Croatian schools, Serbs in Serbian schools. They all believe, aside from numerous objections and warnings that the appropriate and valid motto is “separate and equal”. A similar situation occurs in high schools and at higher levels of education. For example, in Mostar, after the war, the first national University was formed in Croatian language.

5. National School or one BiH School

Immediately after the war, national schools were established in most of BiH. The curricula and books used were from neighboring countries, in the RS from SR Yugoslavia, in Croat majority areas from Croatia, in areas of FBiH controlled by the Army of BiH books and curricula used were provided by the Ministry of Education of FBiH. This represented a true educational catastrophe, with three different versions of history and the past war. A few years ago, representatives of the international community (OHR and OSCE) ordered all the textbooks from the so-called 'national group of subjects' to be withdrawn, as most of them contained offensive contents for *the others*. As this had proven to be an expensive attempt at a unified school curriculum, the international community instead had ordered the offensive content of the textbooks to be blacked out with a marker. This represents a single case in the history of BiH education, even though the OHR had brought this decision as a replacement solution to the expensive printing of new textbooks.

Educationally, this had proven to be a defeat. Students were even more curious to find out what was blacked out and attempted to find out. It is important to point out that majority of textbooks used are currently printed within BiH, while a few of cantons still prefer textbooks imported from Croatia and Serbia.

Schools which are headed by a single nationality and its ideology, forcefully name the school in a manner that is unacceptable to all children, prefer and promote a certain type of greeting which is not common, celebrate holidays of solely one nation or religion, and the overall atmosphere in schools can be unpleasant or offensive to other children. Numerous interventions have been made by the members of the international community, but unfortunately with very few results.

The overall situation in BiH education is still very complex. All attempts to form a single BiH school with unique basis, which would promote togetherness, multiculturalism, mutual respect, trust and above all patriotism towards the homeland are very slow and labored. Strongly decentralised and thrown into pieces, education in BiH provides for a number of possibilities for the local authorities in education to carry out their own ideological or political desires.

6. National and Political Manipulation of Language

The current depiction of the BiH linguistic politics, offers three names for basically one language: Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian languages (to which we can also add Montenegrin language). Linguists, not burdened by politics, uselessly attempt to prove that this is one language, with different variants and sub-variants, with an almost identical grammar system, with synonyms and lexical doublets can only enrich a language. This is not a problem of different names for the same language. Each culturally and politically aware ethnic community, with recognisable social and cultural identity, has an unalienable right to its own language, including the name of this language. There is no need to discuss this right. The problems arise once the language issue gets to the dangerous ground of political manipulations and politics, which are rather frequent in BiH.

Sensitivity of this issue is directly involved in the sphere of education. Schools that segregate children based on the language they speak, regardless of whether they are both under one roof or physically separate, develop segregation curricula, especially in the group of so-called nationalistic subjects. Whether in the neighborhood, or under one roof, with different curricula, with opposing facts in history class or with negation of the other culture, religion, nationality or its creative productions clearly represents violence over younger generations.¹³

Language, as a living matter, does not withstand violent and artificial formation of norms. This is currently being done throughout BiH. Violence over languages is motivated by political reasons and

¹³ See more: Babić, D. (2000), *Breaking of racial segregation in schools*, Safax Sarajevo & Stina Split, no.3 available at:

www.mediaonline.ba/en/safax/bilten3.htm ; i

Pašalić-Kreso, A. (1999a), *Inalienable rights of a child – culturally sensitive education or survival of hemophiliacs in the educational system*, Oslobođenje, KUN, 19.09 1999;

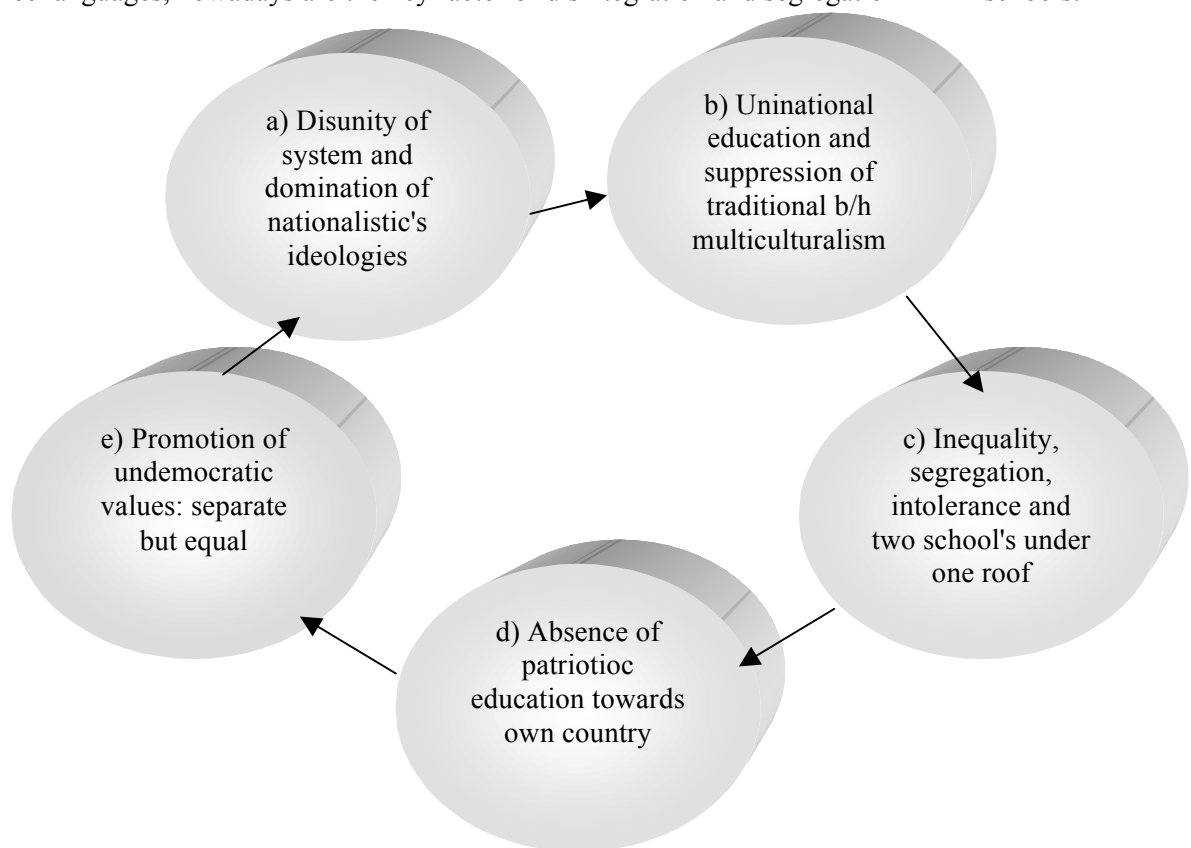
tendencies to point out the differences, representing acts of culture-cide in very essence. Every attempt at forceful unification of language is not acceptable. Both tendencies could well be fought against if it was not for constant involvement of local nationalists.¹⁴

The current (možda je višak) dilemma cannot simply be written off as a choice between two good chances to take a better one. Instead it is a choice of the lesser evil. The guiding rule should be to make the decision which shall impose the least harm on the young generation and the country that they are going to live in.

Is the damage going to be less if we raise our youth in “purity” of one-national language through enclosure in mono-national schools, without a sense of patriotism to the local community/homeland, without basic knowledge of their neighbors, their culture, religion and customs, without tolerance and respect for others?

Or will the damage be less if we reject the reasons for conserving “pure” language, and by teaching in the schools just mother language, use schools to promote meeting of cultures, nations and religions, mutual tolerance and respect, and moreover patriotism towards one homeland, and the homeland of our ancestors?

Three languages, nowadays are the key factor of disintegration and segregation in BH schools:



7. Summary

As a result of the recent war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the country is divided in political, ideological, cultural, linguistic and of course educational field. In the recent years, great effort has been made to develop legislation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the assistance of the international community. Currently, BiH has delivered all of the significant laws required for successful functioning

¹⁴ Pašalić-Kreso, A. (1999b), *Multiethnic and multicultural education versus ghettoisation*, Naša škola, XLVI no.3, Sarajevo 1999. (p. 16)

of the country and its basic activities, all of which are based on the most important international documents regarding human rights in modern, democratic conditions.

However, most of these rights are being violated, or are not in place at all. Particularly there is a significant lack of respect in education. The right to attend the nearest school (Article 12) is being violated, along with the basic right to attend school in mother-language in a public school (Article 7 and 8), the right to follow a curriculum adapted to all children based on their cultural and other specific characteristics (Article 4), the right to attend religious classes (Article 9) for all children equally, and many other rights. As these violations are not being attended to or reprimanded, most of them are continuously being repeated.

Involvement of neighboring countries in matters of language, but also in many other questions, are so strong and complex, that it is impossible to prevent them, nor is there a will to do so.

In the meantime, all of the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina, adults and children, at least regarding their native language, understand each other perfectly well, while many children ask why are they separated and what the differences are amongst them.

Thank you!

HVALA !

HVALA!

XBAAA!

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