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## **Cultural Identity and Language of Children of Migrants from Serbia and Montenegro who Live in Denmark – Preliminary Research Report**

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“The state is not a unitary object but is, rather, a set of practices enacted through relationships between people, places, and institutions” (Painter, 2008).

“The problem of security is the protection of the collective interests against individual interests” (Foucault, 2008).

“... the individual document is not just a bearer of historical content, but also a reflection of the needs and desires of its creator, the purpose(s) for its creation, the audience(s) viewing the record, the broader legal, technical, organizational, social, and cultural-intellectual contexts in which the creator and the audience operated and in which the document is made meaningful ...” (Schwartz, Terry, 2002).

### **Abstract**

This preliminary research report deals with the experiences of children of immigrants from Serbia and Montenegro in who live Denmark cultural identity and language. Using a method of qualitative survey and interviewing we aim at answering the following research question: the level of communication of his mother language, or functions which they perform that language. The second part was is test of knowledge. In the third part of the respondents were required to write an essay. This preliminary research report uses the social identity theory approach as a framework for the analysis because it helps explain how the social context can affect identity formation. “When conducting a study, it is important that much care is taken to ensure that the research has been conducted in unison with ethical considerations, which means that researchers need to respect the persons involved in the study and consider the harm it might create for them. This study took into consideration both the ethical aspects advocated by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009)” and Mao and Sundell (2014) (see Mao, Sundell, 2014).

**Keywords:** cultural identity, language, children of migrants, Serbia, Montenegro, Denmark.

### **1. Introduction**

All the way to the beginning of the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia in 1991, supplementary schools where taught serbian–croatian language were highly successful way of gathering the children of Yugoslav workers on temporary work in abroad. Disintegration of the former Yugoslavia and partition in several countries has inevitably led to the splitting of the Yugoslav supplementary school so that each newly created state took care of its citizens and the responsibility for the continued existence of potential supplementary schools. Quickly was recorded a drastic decline in interest in the existence of these schools, and fewer parents contained is necessary for their children to enroll in them. Thus, additional schools abroad located in front of their closure and almost complete disappearance (Ćorić, 2009). This situation did not avoid the Yugoslav supplementary school in Denmark. After the "Yugoslav identity," it was necessary to conceive a new, Serbian and Montenegrin identity. This process certainly will not go so easy. After a series of attempts for restoring supplementary schools on Serbian language only in 2005 under the auspices of the Serbian Orthodox Church was formed School "St. Sava" in Copenhagen.

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In seven danish cities of school attended in 2006 a total of 297 children. However, over time there is a loss of interest in these teaching: poor curricula, textbooks that do not correspond to the new generations, the problem of lack of professional teachers, disorganization. How many is interest for remedial classes on the Serbian language the best illustrates data from 2015 that only 48 children of migrants from Serbia and Montenegro attended two additional schools on Serbian language in Denmark "Nikola Tesla" and "St. Georgije". For children migrants originating from Montenegro, there is no supplementary schools. "Complex issues of language, identity and culture are usually not performed by the teams of researchers ... and are left to the initiative and the research skills of individuals to come to the empirical material. This situation in the study of language and cultural heritage in terms of migration, which is largely recognizable and at this point, clearly indicates the need to join efforts, collusion of scientists for the implementation of joint projects" (Savić, 1989). The Community migrants from Serbia and Montenegro, although not numerous (about 10.000), interest for researchers because the Danish state from which it is economically dependent, maintain their social or national identity. How is it notion identity complex, it is necessary to considered in the context of more theoretical approach. So there are two interpretations: one given by the respondents, and another researcher. The theoretical framework implies that, if the examines collective identity, its basis is the individual. That is why the questionnaire and the interview were structured in three parts. The first part is related to socio-demographic data of respondents, the level of communication of his mother language, or functions which they perform that language (hypothesis: if the level is higher, and language performs multiple functions, if the language is closer to the standard of the country of origin of their parents and less subject to change) (see Volf-Pavlinić et al., 1986). The second part was is test of knowledge – multiple choice tasks (getting to The test consisted of 6 questions with four possible answers. Examinee was required to indicate the correct answer. In the third part of the respondents were required to write an essay on a free one of the available themes ("My School", "The Sights of Belgrade", "Summer vacation in Montenegro"(The emphasis on tourist attractions). Election theme was made by choice pupils.

## 2. Methodology

Two main groups of data sources were used in the study. The first group includes the data based on the survey and interview. They were created as a result of years of research of the author for the purposes of the monograph "The migrants from Serbia and Montenegro in Denmark". Due to the inefficiency arranging data in this paper we present partial data, which relates on cultural identity and language of children of migrants from Serbia and Montenegro to Denmark. In the first stage, were selected settlements that represent children of migrants as a whole: Copenhagen, Hilerod, Helsingør, Herlev, Næstved, Ballerup, Værløse, Rødovre and Silkeborg. The number of respondents in this schedule is determined on the basis of the inventory of migrants from Montenegro Rajović (1993), adjusted for the number of migrants from the last data Rajović (2011). In the second stage, the author of the respondents chose the combination of accidental and deliberate choice, in order to ensure the quota. The sample included 28 of respondents, i.e. 14 boys and 14 girls, aged 8 to 18 years\*. All children were born in Denmark; stay in the homeland is mainly related to summer holidays. This unfavorable condition for the knowledge of the mother tongue and cultural heritage is very pronounced. All respondents – 28 of them – live with their parents (one participant has an uncle and aunt). In most cases, the family lived another member, or more, usually a brother or sister. The third stage, the application did interviews, which was very important, because the data provided that the examinee knew what would be asked to freely consents to be interviewed and that the content of the interview maintain a correct record. This research method "face to face" has enabled the author, have better control over the process of interviewing because he was able to be observed and possibly recorded non-verbal reactions of respondents or any other relevant information that the phone would not notice it. The second group of data makes the results of earlier research, published both in domestic and in the international literature. Here literatures are: textbooks, monographs, collections of papers, journals ... (see Vidaković-Petrov, 2007, Vuletić, 2013; Stefanović-Banović and Pantović, 2014;

\* The survey was conducted from the author of this text G. R. from the three occasions: July 2008, June 2012 and July 2015 years. Stamenka Rajović and Darko Rajović & Dijana Jašović who live and work in Denmark they gave a huge contribution in the process being surveyed.

Vidaković-Petrov, 2014; Simović, Jovanović, 2015; Stojanović, Vukosavljević, 1978; Ranić-Podunajec, 1987; Jeppesen, 1989; Šťastná, 2014). We have investigated and documentary references on the internet. According to Oliveira and Ançã (2009) when considering the extent to which plurilingualism nowadays shapes „every facet of human life“ (Aronin, Singleton, 2008) Multilingualism as a new linguistic dispensation. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 5, pp. 1–16 (Taylor, Francis Online), (Google Scholar, pp. 8), especially within European member states, one understands the reason why individual plurilingualism has become a benchmark in education, raising concerns in improving the quality of communication among people from different contexts, in fostering mobility, and in conserving linguistic and cultural heterogeneity.

### 3. Results and Discussion

Mao and Sundell (2014) citing research Phinney et al. (2001) that expires writes that, every individual have a unique identity – their own qualities, opinions, thoughts, and a one-of-a-kind personality. People create identities of their own so that they can relate to their surrounding environment in different ways. There are many things that affect the way people identify themselves, e.g. the surrounding environment, social factors... “When it comes to the children of immigrants, born in Denmark to parents who have a different cultural background from that of the host society, one might wonder how they define themselves. Biculturalism: Is the concept about an individual that deals with two cultures, i.e. children of immigrants, and must then affirm parents' culture as much as the culture of the society that one lives in. In its essence biculturalism is the combination of the cultural norms and attitudes of two or more cultures, ethnic groups and peoples. Identity: When it comes to identity, as it suggests is about the self and being able to be who you are: and in this case, we focus on identity in connection with biculturalism and moreover on how the children of immigrants creates an identity as part of biculturalism” (Mao, Sundell, 2014). Type the sample of surveyed pupils (children) migrants from Serbia and Montenegro in Denmark (special) is not a much greater extent representative; because the sample is not represented to greater extent pupils (only three) who attend supplementary classes of Serbian language (though is she marginal 48 children). All respondents were born in Denmark. The model of early bilingualism of ML children serves as the theoretical framework for the present investigation. As an amalgamation of Baker (1992) 3-component model of language attitudes and De Houwer (1999) 3-tiered early bilingualism framework, it is applied to the young ML children's dual language circumstance: L1 in the home and L2 in the childcare center. De Houwer's framework is based on the parent-child link found in developmental psychology (Johnson, Martin, 1985), where external factors or parental behaviors are important determinants of children's development. According to Chumak-Horbatsch (2008) she applies this parent-child link to early bilingualism and focuses on two environmental factors in her attempt to understand why some very young children, from linguistically mixed homes, use the two languages they are exposed to, while others do not. Perfectly overcome the Danish language, mostly used and English, and five of them served and German, attending regular Danish schools and in them are achieved exemplary results. Perfect are accepted by the Danish and other peers, are active in various societies and clubs and is fully integrated into Danish society. De Houwer (1999) differentiates between three types of early bilingualism. For her, an early active bilingual preschool child regularly responds and initiates conversations in either of the two languages. In contrast to this, she defines early passive bilingualism as a state in which a preschooler appears to understand two languages but produces only one. Finally, an early monolingual is a young child who does not appear to understand two languages and produces only one. Children of migrants from Serbia and Montenegro 72.9 % the identified themselves that it is mainly Serbian language have learned from their parents and they are most used. The use of the mother tongue in communicating with brothers and extended family and relatives is rare (12.5 %), except during the summer holidays spent in the homeland (14.6 %). This suggests that it is communication level serbian language is very modest. Limited use of the mother tongue only in some individuals (parents), and only in some situations (house), summer holidays (homeland) is testimony to its marginalization. This is not conducive to adoption is not developing (see Volf-Pavlinić et al., 1986). According to Magnusson (1989) Serbs and Montenegrins are considered and children born in mixed marriages in Denmark. Interesting what is often the most important factor for maintaining the identity and language states precisely whether the children grew up in and in family where the mother and father from Serbia or

Montenegro. In marriages in which one partner is a foreigner, especially a father, children usually do not know language his parents from Serbia and Montenegro. In short, it can be confirmed by the students who attend classes in their mother tongue or who are related to the association, more often used mother language and in the everyday life, and have come more often. On mother language by reading are newspapers from Serbia and Montenegro. Mao and Sundell (2014) citing research Stets and Burke (2000) that expires elaborates that social identity theory describe social identity as; an individual's acknowledgement and understanding that they belong to a social group or category. A social group is explained as a group of individuals that view themselves belonging to the same social category or that have common social identification. There are two processes involved in social identity formation that are of importance which are; self-categorization and social comparison and both leads to different consequences. The implications of self-categorization is an emphasis of the perceived similarities between the self and other in-group members, and could also be an accentuation of the perceived differences between self and out-group members. This accentuation relates to all the values, beliefs, styles of speech, behavioral norms and attitudes that are believed to be correlated and relevant within the intergroup categorization. As a result of the social comparison process is the separation of the use of concrete insertion effect, especially when referring to the different measurements that will lead to self-change for the better. In other words, it's the self-confidence that is raised by the assessment of the in-group and out-group based on different measurements which results in the in-group being examined favorably and the out-group negatively. The connection between linguistic behavior and cultural identity suggests three categories of respondents: those who are most often identified by the country of origin of parents, then those who feel as Danes as Serbs and Montenegrins and those who predominantly identified as The Danes. In this sense, there is a strong correlation between linguistic behavior and cultural identity. Respondents who identified by country of origin of their parents, more often speak the mother tongue of those who feel like the Danes or Danes as Serbs and Montenegrins; the difference is significant, especially when it comes to communicating with your brother or sister. "This it sounds trivial, but in the theoretical literature on identity ethnic, linguistic and cultural identification is not treated as a means to another" (Magnusson, 1989). The cognitive component (Baker, 1992) of parental L1 attitudes is described as integrative (Gardner, Lambert, 1972), where the home language was described in positive, mostly social and interpersonal terms. In addition to this, parents held a pro-L1 ideology (King, 2000), reporting that L1 was important, not only for specific functions and emotional links to family and relatives: The affective component of L1 included feelings of pride and loyalty to the home country, language and culture, and anxiety, fear and guilt in relation to children's imminent L1 loss and its replacement with L2. Test knowledge refers to some indicators of cultural or national identity. It is clear that the respondents are proud of their parents' origin (16); to consider important to preserve native language and cultural identity (7) that are identified by the country of origin of their parents (4). When it comes to links with ethnic institutions shows that only three of them attend school mother tongue. Also it is noted that the small proportion of children of migrant work included Serbian and Montenegrin associations of the four of them can be considered active members of such organizations. The author of this text is noted that the Serbian language, history and geography now learn without any plan or program. The state of Serbia and the State Montenegro must decide how they will take account of their migrants abroad, and thus in and Denmark. Thus, migrants from Serbia and Montenegro are left to their own devices and on their needs home country do not pay enough attention. For example, it is easy to notice in research that the first and second generation immigrants (born in the homeland) in Denmark is no problem to speak serbian, reads and writes, or the third generation of the difficult to talk, while the fourth generation we have the problem of ignorance of Serbian language. And are if grandma and grandpa live in Denmark and if the children of migrants for summer holiday do not go to Serbia or Montenegro on vacation, then it is most difficult for children to speak out. Therefore, we have the situation that the child knows how to read and write the Cyrillic for example, or not know what is having read. Necessary is on this place to emphasize, yes Cyrillic Children of migrants in Denmark experienced as something special, it is something that in Danish schools, does not know any of their friends. Ignorance of the cultural heritage of Serbia and Montenegro is evident. This suggests that teaching geography and history intended for children in the Diaspora is inadequate and that the children of migrants do not read books, nor anything which encourages creating a visual image about the country of their ancestors. Of the twenty – eight

pupils, the four did not want, know or did not arrived write an essay on any of the proposed themes. The largest number of students took up the theme of "My School" (11), "Summer vacation in Montenegro" (9), them "The Sights of Belgrade" has chosen the four pupils. The first thing in these written texts a striking is their shortness. Another characteristic of these works is the scarcity of vocabulary and stereotypes means of expression. Comparing the knowledge of the mother tongue in solving tasks multiple choice and what is written in the work on three topics, we can conclude that passive knowledge of the language (identification the appropriate language solutions), better than the active implementation of the standards ( as a in research [Volf-Pavlinić et al., 1986](#)).



**Fig. 1.** The Serbian Orthodox Church "St. George" in Copenhagen – marking the school of glory St. Sava 2016 years ([www.copenhagen.mfa.gov.rs](http://www.copenhagen.mfa.gov.rs))



**Fig. 2.** Performance of pupils of the school "Nikola Tesla" from Frederiksberg on youth festival "Meeting culture" – 2016 years ([www.copenhagen.mfa.gov.rs](http://www.copenhagen.mfa.gov.rs))

#### 4. Conclusion considerations

Vučina-Simović and Jovanović (2015) indicate that the end of the eighties there was the idea of launching the project at the federal level, within which to systematically researched speech, language and education of children in migrant conditions. Unfortunately, the project has not been implemented due to political changes in the country, and is realized only on the territory of Slovenia under called "Development and Education of national identity and mother tongue of children of Yugoslav citizens in Western Europe". Vučina-Simović and Jovanović (2015) with the right conclude, "this work we want to increase and renew interest in the scientific community for

studying ... language and identity of its speakers in the diaspora, but also to draw attention to the need for our experts from different disciplines to better connect with each other and jointly engage in contemporary developments in the field of study of migration and diaspora". Our research records based on similar studies Blagojević (2007) indicates that "after an exhausting week, instead of rest, children on Saturday again expected obligations – teaching in Serbian. At the same time, the Serbian language is not popular nor widely considered necessary, it is unclear why the children's parents forced to go to the time when no child in their environment (neighborhood, class, society) do not learn the language (which is not the case with English, French, German). Thus are already moving without great will on classes. Then there are other children who speak Serbian, but not quite the same: those who speak ekavian, a strange jekavian, and vice versa, because outside the country do not have the opportunity to be already familiar with this phenomenon". Dimitrijević (2014) indicates that the aggravating circumstances for the realization of educational process additional classes in Serbian representing and: insufficient aspirations of parents; physical distance of residence of pupils from educational centers where is realized lessons on the Serbian language, a small number total number of pupils the same age in the same municipality; work in combined classes, with a large number of children; under-utilization of the many possibilities of teaching aids ordinary Danish schools and insufficient links with Danish teachers; insufficient improvement of appropriate multimedia teaching aids; insufficient use offers tools for evaluation and self-evaluation of students and the inability of teachers (due to distance) that frequently exchange experiences and didactic-methodical material. In addition to the above difficulties, remedial instruction in their native language in Denmark has a great advantage because it is organized as a small a collective, to participate in the intercultural and multilingual presentations (if the teachers speak the language of the host country at the level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference), direct cooperation with the educational authorities of the fatherland and the diplomatic and consular missions, cooperation with the Church and to all clubs, societies and associations (see [Dimitrijević, 2014](#)).

The spoken language of a migrant according to Štastna (2014) citing research Jeppesen (1989) may be recognizable by some particular accent or other variations from the norm. In 1989, the second generation of "Yugoslav" guest workers had the best knowledge of the language (85 % of interviewees spoke perfect Danish). About 30 % talked to their children in Danish. The first generation usually has troubles in comprehending the new linguistic environment while the second generation is well adapted to the linguistic conditions and may forget the native language or make grammar mistakes. So far processed data on the characteristics of language development of children of migrants from Serbia and Montenegro in Denmark, have shown that children born in this Scandinavian country, confirms Lambert (1977) the term "subtractive bilingualism" (see [Ljubešić, 1989](#)). Namely, Danish language becomes dominant and so pressed out mother language which more and more disappears from active use. As well as Chumak-Horbatsch (2008) and we conclude documentation of parental language behaviors proved invaluable in explaining the toddlers' active bilingualism and the preschoolers' weakened L1 and hasty embrace of L2. Also, external language factors predicted a negative outlook of the children's continued L1 development. The present preliminary research report confirms The L2 dominance and preference of the preschoolers in the present study showed that L2 exposure for children of migrants, who do not yet have an established L1 system comes in tandem with serious reduction of L1 experience and use. The children of migrants finds her in a subtractive-replacement process, as L1 deteriorates, L2 increases steadily and becomes the dominant language. To assist immigrant parents in the language-parenting task, Chumak-Horbatsch (2008) opened a new website, [mylanguage.ca](#). "Its purpose is to provide immigrant parents with information about dual language learning, the importance of the home language, the nature of bilingualism and their role in children's language development. Equipped with this information, it is hoped that immigrant mothers and fathers will work together as a team, dedicate themselves to L1 maintenance and become facilitators of their young children's bilingualism" ([Chumak-Horbatsch, 2008](#)). An example Chumak-Horbatsch, with School of Early Childhood Education of the Ryerson University for Canada is for respect.

In conclusion, the results that we have announced in this study represent a modest contribution to the study of the phenomenon of cultural identity of children of migrants from Serbia and Montenegro who live in Denmark (see [Rajović, 2011](#); [Rajović, 2013](#); [Rajović, 2014](#); [Rajović, 2014](#); [Rajović, 2015](#); [Rajović and Bulatović, 2016](#); [Rajović and Bulatović, 2017](#); [Rajović,](#)

2017). On this occasion we said just a minimum number of research facts and conclusions we reached fieldwork. We hope that the above-mentioned to emphasize incomplete results encourage further, a deeper study of these complex and important issues and that this research will, how many – so much to achieve its purpose and be of benefit to all those who want to familiarize themselves with the topic of migrants from Serbia and Montenegro in Denmark.

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