

## **Loanwords and Soap Operas: the Return of Turkish to the Language Scene of Bosnia and Herzegovina**

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### **Abstract**

Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin, and Serbian borrowed a considerable number of words from the Turkish language during the reign of the Ottoman Empire. In the ensuing period, some of these loanwords were so thoroughly adapted that the speakers of Bosnian no longer recognise them as such. Some of them underwent a shift from standard to present-day colloquial usage, and some became obsolete.

At the moment, Turkish is making a comeback to Bosnia and Herzegovina in two ways: through Turkish private schools and through Turkish soap operas being broadcast in the region. This preliminary research concerns the latter; it aims to start examining how Turkish soap operas influence the Bosnian language and its speakers, try to predict further developments, and suggest further research.

Methodologically, the research consisted of conducting interviews with speakers of Bosnian who watch Turkish soap operas. We used a questionnaire which was previously given to the subjects to think about the questions and examples. The aim is to find out to what degree participants perceive loanwords, how their awareness of them changes, whether they notice the differences of usage in Bosnian and present-day Turkish, whether elderly subjects perceive loanwords words no longer used in Bosnian, and if they now use more loanwords in their own speech. The research was conducted in 2011 (57 interviews) and 2013 (23 interviews).

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The Ottoman Empire started its conquest of Bosnia in 1463 and ended it with the fall of Bihać in 1592. Bosnia remained within the empire for more than 400 years until the Austrian occupation in 1878. These four centuries of Turkish rule left a permanent and indelible imprint on the Bosnian language in the form of Turkish loanwords. Although some of these words are of Arabic or Persian origin, they were and are used in Turkish, hence we will consider them to be Turkish loanwords. How many of these words are there in Bosnian? In the introduction to his dictionary, Škaljić (1966) says it contains 8,742 word-forms representing 6,787 lexemes. Peco (2007) says that, since Škaljić did not include all derivatives, there may be 10,000 Turkish loanwords in Bosnian, but he did not support this guesstimate with any research.

In the meantime many changes ensued. Some of these words were so thoroughly adapted into the Bosnian language that they are no longer recognised as loanwords, and moreover, for some of them there are no adequate synonyms (e.g. BOJA, DŽEP). Some of the words have changed their status from being standard in the old days to the present colloquial usage (Riđanović, 2009), and some have disappeared from the modern usage altogether (Škaljić, 1966).

### **New circumstances**

In recent years, Turkish is making a comeback to the language scene of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) in two ways: through Turkish private schools operating in BiH and through an increasing number of Turkish soap operas being broadcast on the TV channels in the region.

Starting in 1998, Bosna Sema Educational Institutions were established in Sarajevo, Bihać, Tuzla, and Zenica, to teach Turkish language on all levels of education, either as a part of a regular curriculum or as an extracurricular activity. Apart from this, a number of free Turkish language courses are being organized by the Turkish Ministry of National Education and Turkish contingent of EUFOR in primary schools throughout Federation of BiH. Some local universities are also

considering plans for opening Turkish language departments (e.g. the University of Bihać).

In 2010, TV channels in BiH and neighboring countries started broadcasting Turkish soap operas. The Turkish soap operas grew instantly popular and remain so today. These soaps have more or less completely replaced their Spanish and Portuguese counterparts. From May 2011 to the time of writing, TV channels in BiH broadcast one to four different Turkish soap operas a day with a total weekly airtime anywhere between 6 (BHT1) and 74 hours (OBN).

Naturally, a question arises: How do these new circumstances influence Bosnian and its speakers?

### **Thesis, Methodology, and Participants**

Since speakers of Bosnian know and use multitudes of Turkish loanwords, the new popularity of Turkish soap operas will change their awareness of this language material, and may even lead to new developments such as an increased usage of the Turkish loanwords and a revival of words no longer used.

For this paper we conducted research among the speakers of Bosnian who watch Turkish soap operas. They were given a questionnaire in which they were asked to give some background information about themselves and to answer five questions:

- 1) Have you noticed any words, while watching Turkish soap operas, which you *did not know* to be of Turkish origin?
- 2) Have you noticed any words which you *knew* to be of Turkish origin?
- 3) Have you noticed any Turkish loanwords which are no longer used in Bosnian? (This question was meant primarily for senior informants.)
- 4) Have you noticed any differences in usage between us and the speakers of the Turkish language?
- 5) Do you think you have started using more Turkish loanwords since you started watching Turkish soap operas (even if only jokingly)?

The first part of the research was conducted in April 2011 with 46 questionnaires collected in Bihać and 11 in Sarajevo; the second part was conducted in February and March 2013 with 17 questionnaires collected in Konjic and 6 in Bihać. A total of 80 questionnaires were collected and the structure of the informant group was as follows:

- sex: 9 men and 71 women;
- age:
  - o up to 25: 32 persons,
  - o 26 to 50: 17 persons,
  - o over 50: 24 persons,
  - o no answer: 7 persons;
- education:
  - o primary school: 3 persons
  - o secondary school: 46 persons
  - o two-year college: 9 persons
  - o undergraduate degree: 19 persons
  - o postgraduate degree: 3 persons

## Results

In this part of the paper we will present our findings and list all examples given by the informants. All examples are presented in bulleted lists where each bullet starts with parentheses stating the frequency of examples which are listed alphabetically within that bullet. Frequency is the number of the same examples (*tokens*) for that particular question given by different informants. All the examples are given in small caps in Bosnian orthography. Each example is followed by parentheses containing the meaning of the word in double quotation-marks, and the original word (*model*) from Turkish in italics. Semicolons are used to separate different meanings of a single word. This additional information is taken from Škaljić<sup>1</sup> and appears only when the example is mentioned for the first time.

### Question 1

In this question there were 57 positive answers, 9 negative answers, and 14 persons did not answer the question. Among positive answers, 53 contained examples for a total of 146 tokens representing 85 word-types (unique words). The examples are listed as follows:

- (12): JOK („no, not“, *yok*);
- (10): TAMAN („adequate; just now; just enough“, *tamam*);
- (8): HAJDE („let's go, come on“, *haydi*);
- (5): BUJRUM („come in; join the meal“, *buyrun*), ÇORBA („soup“, *çorba*);
- (4): AŞIK („lover; love“, *aşk*), ÇARAPA („sock“, *çorap*);
- (3): BAŞUNSAGOSUM („May your head be safe! – use to express condolence“, *başın sağ olsun*), İNŞALAH („God willing“, *inşallah*), MAKAZE („scissors“, *makas*), MERHABA („Muslim greeting“, *merhaba*), PENDŽER („window“, *pencere*);
- (2): BOSTAN („watermelon; garden“, *bostan*), ÇOBAN („shepard“, *çoban*), HAMAM („Turkish bath“, *hamam*), MAŞALA („Wonderful!“, *maşallah*), ORTAK („partner“, *ortak*), OTUR („sit down“, *otur* from *oturmak*), PEKE („all right“, *pek iyi*), SANDALE („sandals“, *sandal*), SAT („hour; clock“, *saat*), SINDŽIR („chain“, *zincir*);
- (1): AGA („master, sir“, *ağa*), AMAN („Oh God!; Mercy!; God help us!“, *aman*), AT („horse“, *at*), BABO („father; respected elderly man“, *baba*), BAKALUM („let's see“, *bakalım*), BEG („lord; gentleman“, *bey*), BEHAR („blossom (petal)“, *bahar*), BOJA („colour“, *boya*), BOŞÇA („bundle cloth; headscarf; tablecloth“, *bohça*), BURMA („wedding ring“, *burma*), ÇAJ („tea“, *çay*), ÇALIŞA („leftovers in a pot after cooking plum jam, usually scooped by children“, *çalmak*), ÇARŞAF („bed sheet“, *çarşaf*), ÇEKİC („hammer“, *çekiç*), ÇESMA („drinking fountain“, *çeşme*), ÇİZME („boots“, *çizme*), ÇOK („a lot of“, *çok*), CEİF („pleasure; whim“, *keyif*), DEVER („life struggle“, *devir*), DILBER („darling“, *dilber*), DIVANHANA („spacious upstairs lobby“, *divanhane*), DOST („friend“, *dost*), DOSTUM SAGOSUM („May my friend be safe! – in response to BAŞUNSAGOSUM“, *dostum sağ olsun*), DŽANUM („My soul!“ – an affectionate address, *canım*), EVET („yes“,

<sup>1</sup>All translations of the meanings are ours.

- evet*), EVLAD („children; descendants“, *evlâd*), FAJDA („benefit, profit“, *fayda*), FENJER („petrol lamp“, *fener*), FUKARA („the poor“, *fukara*), HAIR („luck, benefit; no“, *hayır*),
- HAJAT („lobby, porch, shack“, *hayat*), HAJVAN („animal“, *hayvan*), HALVA („halvah“ *helva*), HAMAN („almost“, *hemen*), HANDŽAR („long dagger“, *hançer*), HATIB („preacher; orator“, *hatib*), INSAN („man, human“, *insan*), JORGAN („quilt“, *yorgan*), KAFTAN („robe“, *kaftan*), KAHVA („coffee“, *kahve*), KAPIJA („gate“, *kapı*), KAT („storey“, *kat*), KATIL („murderer; executioner“, *katil*), KOMŠIJA („neighbour“, *komşu*), LOKUM („a kind of pastry“, *lokum*), MARAMA („headscarf“, *mahrama*), MINDER („cushion“, *minder*), MUNARA („minaret“, *minare*), NALETOSUM („Damn him!“, *lanet olsun*), NEISE („Whatever!; Never mind!“, *ne ise*), PAŠA („pasha“, *paşa*), PEKMEZ („fruit jam“, *pekmez*), PEŠKIR („towel“, *peşkir*), PIRINAČ („rice“, *piring*), POHASITI SE („become overbearing“, *asi*), SAFRA („swoon, faint“, *safra*), SAKAT („crippled“, *sakat*), SOFRA („served meal; low round table“, *sofra*), SUFLE („vulgar person“, *süfli*), ŠERBE („sherbet“, *şerbet*), TULIPAN („tulip“, *tülbent*), VALAH („Indeed! Really!“, *vallahi*), ZEHRA („small amount, particle“, *zerre*).

## Question 2

In this question there were 72 positive answers, only 1 negative answer, and 7 persons did not answer the question. Among positive answers, 68 contained examples for a total of 316 tokens representing 128 types. The examples are listed as follows:

- (30): MERHABA;
- (19): BUJRUM;
- (18): JOK;
- (9): BABO;
- (8): AŠIK;
- (7): AKŠAM („evening, dusk; fourth daily prayer“, *akşam*), TAMAN;
- (6): MAŠALA(H);
- (5): HALAL („absolution; honestly earned; permissible by scriptures“, *helal*), HARAM („fobidden by scriptures; sinful; damned“, *haram*), INSAN, INŠALAH, ŠEĆER („sugar“, *şeker*), ŠEJTAN („devil“, *şeytan*);

- (4): AFERIM („well done, Long live!“, *afirim*), DOST, EFENDIJA („mister; Muslim priest“, *efendi*), SABUR („patience, tolerance“, *sabır*), SOFRA;
- (3): ČORBA, DŽENAZA („funeral; deceased; prayer preceding burial“, *cenaze*), ĐUL („rose“, *gül*), HAJVAN, HAMAM, HASTA („ill“, *hasta*), KAHVA, KATIL, MUŠTULUK („reward for good news“, *muştuluk*), PEKE, PENDŽER, SELAM ALEJK(UM) („greeting“, *selam aleyk*), ZEMAN („time; era“, *zeman*);
- (2): ADET („tradition; habit“, *adeta*), AVLİJA („yard“, *avlı*), BAŠKA („separately, respectively“, *başka*), BAŠUNSAGOSUN, ČARAPE, ČAFİR („infidel“, *kâfir*), ČUPRIJA („bridge“, *köprü*), DIVAN („conversation; council; sofa“, *divan*), DUNJALUK („material world; wealth“, *dünyalık*), DUVAR („wall“, *duvar*), DŽANUM, DŽENET („paradise“, *cennet*), DŽUMA („main prayer in a mosque held at noon on Friday“, *cuma*), EVLAD, HAİR, HAJDE, HANUMA („lady; wife“, *hanım*), HEFTA („week“, *hafta*), KADIJA („Islamic judge“, *kadı*), KURBAN („sacrificial animal“, *kurban*), KURŠUM („bullet“, *kurşun*), MEZAR („tomb“, *mezar*), MUSAFİR („guest“, *misafir*), NAFAKA („food and drink; whatever is destined for a person to consume in a lifetime“, *nafaka*), SABAH („morning; first daily prayer“, *sabah*), VAKAT („time“, *vakit*);
- (1): AFERDOSUM („excuse me, sorry“, *affedersin*), ALA („monster; mottled“, *ala*), ALAHEMANET („good bye“, *Allaha emant ola*), ALLAHRAZIOLSUN („thank you“ in response to ALLAH MÜBARK OLSUN, (Kasumović, 1996), *Allah razı olsun*), AMAN, AMIDŽA („paternal uncle“, *amca*), ASKER („soldier“, *asker*), AT, AVAZ („voice“, *avaz*), AZRAIL („archangel of death“, *Azrail*), BAJRAM („religious festival in Islam“, *bayram*), BASAMAK („ladder rung, stair“, *basamak*), BAŠČA („garden“, *bahçe*), ČAJ, ČARDAK („house, mansion; spacious room with a view“, *çardak*), ČARŠAF, ČARŠIJA („high street, shopping area“, *çarşı*), ČESMA, DEMİR („iron; window bars“, *demir*), DUŠEK („mattress“, *döşek*), DUŠMAN („enemy“, *düşman*), DŽAMIJA („mosque“, *cami*), DŽEP („pocket“, *cep*), ĐERİZ („sewer“, *geriz*), ĐUGUM („copper water jug“, *güğüm*), EJVALA („Good bye!; Thank you!; So be it!; Well done!“), *eyvallah*), EMANET („recomendation; trust; safekeeping; vow“, *emanet*), EVET, FAJDA, FES („fez“, *fes*), FUKARA, GARIB („stranger; poor“, *garip*), GURABIJA („cookie“, *kurabiye*), HABER („news, word“, *haber*),

HAJAT, HALVA, HAN („inn“, *han*), HAREM („a part of house for women“, *harem*), HARF („letter in the alphabet“, *harf*), HASTANA („hospital“, *hastane*), HEĆIM („physician“, *hekim*), HODŽA („imam“, *hoca*), HURMA („date as fruit“, *hurma*), IBRIK („copper pitcher“, *ibrik*), ILADŽ („medicament, cure“, *ilaç*), INAT („obstinacy“, *inat*), JAPRAK („vine leaf“, *yaprak*), JASTUK („pillow“, *yastık*), JAZUK („pity“, *yazık*), JETIM („orphan“, *yetim*), KAIL („willing“, *kail*), KALFA („apprentice“, *kalfa*), KAPIJA, KAVGA („brawl“, *kavga*), KITAB („book“, *kitab*), MELEK („angel“, *melek*), NEISE, ODAJA („chamber, room“, *oda*), OTUR, PARE („money“, *para*), RAHMET („God's mercy; invocation of God's mercy for a deceased“, *rahmet*), SEHARA („wooden trunk“, *sahare*), SIKTER („Get lost!““, *siktir*), SOGAN DOLMA („stuffed onion“, *soğandolma*), SOKAK („street“, *sokak*), SOMUN („round bread“, *somun*), ŠEHER („city“, *şehir*), ŠENLUK („celebration“, *şenlik*), UČKUR („waist-string“, *uçkur*), VALAH(I).

### Question 3

In this question there were 27 positive answers, 6 negative answers, and 46 persons did not answer the question. Among positive answers, 26 contained examples for a total of 85 tokens representing 64 types. The examples are listed as follows:

- (4): PEKE, PENDŽER;
- (2): AFER DOSUM, ARABA („cart, wagon“, *araba*), AŠIK, BASAMAK, DOLAF („wardrobe“, *dolap*), DŽANUM, EJVALA, EVLAD, JOK, KATIL, LEĐEN („washbowl“, *leğen*), NEISE, SINDŽIR, TEZE („maternal aunt“, *teyze*), ZIJAN („damage, loss“, *ziyan*);
- (1): ANTERIJA („dress; long shirt worn by men“, *entari*), ASKER, BABO, BEG, BILMEZ („ignorant person“, *bilmez*), ČARDAK, ČINIJA („bowl, utensil“, *çini*), ĆASA („bowl“, *kâse*), ĆENIFA („toilet“, *kenef*), DEMIR, DUNJALUK, DUVAR, DŽADA („road“, *cadde*), DŽAM („glass“, *cam*), HAJAT, HATULA („horizontal beam“, *hatıl*), HENDEK („ditch; moat“, *hendek*), HIĆMET („wisdom; philosophy“, *hikmet*), HOROZ („cock“, *horoz*), HUDŽERA („storage room next to the kitchen“, *hücre*), INŠALAH, JENGA („bridesmaid“, *yenge*), JOGUNAST („unruly, capricious“, *yoğun*), KAIL, KARPUZ („watermelon“, *karpuz*), KUNDURA („shoe“, *kundura*), KUVET



(„strength“, *kuvvet*), MAŠTRAFI („cup“, *maşrapa*), MERAK („pleasure; yearning“, *merak*), MUHTAR („village or neighbourhood chieftain“, *muhtar*), MUTFAK („kitchen“, *mutfak*), PAŞANAC („brother-in-law; wife's sister's husbands“, *bacanak*), PERDA („shine“, *perdah*), PILAV („cooked rice“, *pilav*), POHASITI SE, RAHMET, SAHAN („copper dish“, *sahan*), TAMAN, TAZE, TEFTER („notebook“, *defter*), TENDŽERA („deep copper pot“, *tencere*), UČKUR, UGURSUZ („unlucky person“, *uğursuz*), ZAHMET („difficulty, effort, trouble“, *zahmet*), ZIJARET („visit“, *ziyaret*), ZINALUK („fornication; prostitution“, *zinaluk*), ZULUM („injustice; violence; tyranny“, *zulim*).

#### Question 4

Differences were noticed by 47 participants (40 gave examples), 14 participants answered negatively, and 19 did not answer the question. The examples concern: pronunciation (15 pairs of words with 24 tokens), meaning (8 examples with 10 tokens) and style (3 examples with 5 tokens).

The examples concerning pronunciation are:

- (13) MERHABA (*meraba*);
- (6) TAMAN (*tamam*);
- (4) AKŠAM HAJROLA (*iyi akşamlar*), pronunciation of personal names;
- (2) BABO (*baba*);
- (1) AŠIK (*aşk*), ČARAPA (*çorap*), ČEKIĆ (*çekiç*), ČESMA (*çeşme*), ČEJF (*keyif*), ĆUPRIJA (*köprü*), EFENDIJA (*efendi*), KADIJA (*kadı*), KAFA (*kahve*), KAJIL (*kail*).

The examples concerning meaning are:

- (2): KURBAN – is now primarily „sacrificial animal“ in Bosnian, while in Turkish it also has a general meaning „victim“, TAMAN – is „adequate; fitting (of clothes); just now; just enough“ in Bosnian, while in Turkish it also has a meaning of general affirmation „All right! O.K.!“;
- (1): ĆAFIR(ĆE) – apart from „infidel“ it can also be used of a naughty child in Bosnian, EFENDIJA – is reduced to „Muslim priest“ in Bosnian, FUKARA – apart from „the poor“ it has acquired a new

meaning in Bosnian „rabble, scum“, MERAK – in Bosnian means „pleasure; yearning“, while in Turkish expression *merak etme* it means „Don't worry!“

- there are two examples in which participants confuse words:
  - o one participant confuses HAIR as „luck, benefit“ and its homonym HAIR as „no“,
  - o another participant confuses SAFRA „swoon, faint“ and SOFRA „served meal; low round table“ not recognizing the former as a different word.

Both HAIR as „no“ and SAFRA as „swoon, faint“ are recorded in Škaljić but they are no longer used in Bosnian.

The examples concerning style are all about the greetings such as: MERHABA, SELAM ALEJKUM, HAIRLI OLSUN and ALAHEMANET. The participants report that these are normal greetings in Turkish, but that they are considered religious greetings in Bosnian.

### **Question 5**

Out of 80 participants, 56 of them (70%) admitted using more Turkish words since they started watching Turkish soap operas, 22 answered negatively (27.5%), and 2 (2.5%) did not answer the question. Two answers given by participants are worth noting. One participant wrote: „I don't, but other people who watch Turkish soaps use them [Turkish loanwords] more than before.“, and another one said: „I use a lot of Turkish loanwords since I am an elderly person, and I learnt them from my parents, and grandparents.“

### **Discussion, Conclusions and Further Research**

In the first question, 71% of participants recognised words which they did not know to be Turkish loanwords, but by the second question, 90% recognised words they knew to be Turkish loanwords. Also, the second question generated twice as many examples in comparison to the first. This all tells us that the speakers of Bosnian are aware of the Turkish loanwords, and that the awareness rises with each recognized word.

There was an overlap of 38 word-types between the first (91 token) and the second question (162 tokens). Furthermore, there were some

unexpected examples of words in the first question (BUJRUM, INŠALAH, MERHABA and MAŠALA) that one would expect to be recognized as Turkish loanwords by a great majority of Bosnian speakers. However, all this suggests that is highly arbitrary as to which words are recognized as loanwords and which are not. Therefore, this criterion should not be used for the purpose of classification.

In the third question, there is a smaller difference between the numbers of word-types and tokens than in the first two questions. This suggests a lower level of agreement between the participants on what words are no longer used.

The answers to the fourth question indicates that there should be more research aimed at semantic and stylistic changes concerning Turkish loanwords in Bosnian, especially because new dictionaries of Bosnian do not indicate these changes.

The answers to the fifth question indicates that, in the future, we may witness a slowdown in the obsolescence of some loanwords, and maybe even a revival of some.

Whatever the case may be, more research is needed to account for the new circumstances of Bosnian-Turkish language contacts, and generally, present-day studies of the Bosnian language are in a desperate need of corpora studies. Of course, first we need corpora with which to start.

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