

FIVE RECENT BOOKS ON THE SLOVENE LANGUAGE

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William W. Derbyshire. *A Basic Reference Grammar of Slovene.* Columbus, OH: Slavica, 1993. 154 pp., \$16.95 (paper).

Nina Borisovna Mečkovskaja. *Slovenskij jazyk. Učebnoe posobie dlja studentov filol. fak. univ-ov.* Pod redakcijej A[dama] E[vgen'e- viča] Supruna. Minsk: Universitetskoe, 1991. 119 pp. (paper).

Ol'ga Sergeevna Plotnikova. "Učimsja govorit' po-slovenski! (Russko-slovenski razgovornik)," pp. 145-191 in I[skra] V[asil'evna] Čurkina, comp. and ed., *Znakom'tes', Slovenija!* Moscow: Kul'tura, 1996.

Anton Schellander and Marija Smolić. *Slowenisch.* München: Polyglott-Verlag, 6th ed., 1996 [1st ed., 1990]. 48 pp. (paper).

George Carcas. *A Concise Grammar of Slovene.* Pontypridd, Wales: Languages Information Centre, 1994. 36 pp. (paper).

Although it may seem to be no coincidence that the national language of the new state should be the subject of two new grammatical descriptions published at the beginning of the 1990s, both Nina B. Mečkovskaja's *Slovenskij jazyk* of 1991 and William W. Derbyshire's *A Basic Reference Grammar of Slovene* of 1993 were planned long before the independence of Slovenia. The fact that its language can now be referred to in up-to-date manuals in English and Russian is, however—whatever the role of chance—very fortunate. The period 1990–96 also saw the appearance of two phrase-books, the *Slowenisch* by Schellander and Smolić, and the "Učimsja govorit' po-slovenski" by Plotnikova; and also the (very unfortunate!) appearance of the *Concise Grammar of Slovene* by Carcas. With the exception of the two phrase books, I review these separately, for they generally have different aims; Carcas's booklet is so poor that it does not deserve to be treated alongside Derbyshire's and Mečkovskaja's, and my reasons for this assessment are given at the end.

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I have seen two reviews of William W. Derbyshire's book (henceforward, BRGS), by Adriana Krstič (1994) and Raymond Miller (1995); I will not repeat what they say, except to comment on a selection of their criticisms. Most of Krstič's points concern what has been left

out; in several respects I agree with her, but the inclusion of all the items she lists would have added dozens of pages and made the book rather forbidding.¹ I thus do not (except in a few instances) discuss the very difficult question of *choice*; nor do I touch on the *accuracy* of the contents. Rather, I concentrate on the pedagogical aspect of the book (a question also discussed by Miller): How easy is it to use? Does it serve its purpose?

That purpose is, in some respects, something new; the book is, according to the foreword, not aimed only at university students, but at researchers and “persons of Slovene descent who wish to improve their command of their ancestral tongue,”—anyone “at the elementary through intermediate levels of acquisition of the Slovene language.” It is neither a tourist’s handbook nor a grammar in the usual sense. Rather, it is meant as a supplement “for use with any of the several existing grammars of Slovene,” and was considered necessary because existing grammars for beginners “neither present Slovene grammar in a systematic way, nor [...] contain comprehensive charts of that language’s grammar” (9-10). The aims of the book are thus only partly in agreement with the “elementary grammar” proposed by its author ten years ago (1987: 70-71), which was envisioned as being broader in scope, emphasizing also “a combination of communicative skills.” Indeed, Derbyshire now appears to reject this idea: “It is the author’s belief that employing the inductive method in the study of Slavic languages in most instances is not the most efficient path towards mastery” (BRGS, 9). The present book is thus much more in tune with Derbyshire’s proposal of nearly twenty years ago (1978: 68-69).²

¹ Two examples: (1) “Avtor je popolnoma pozabil na veznike, členke, medmete in povednikovnike, ki bi jih lahko vsaj omenil” (586)—it is apparent, however, (see BRGS 23, first paragraph), that most of these were not forgotten but deliberately omitted, given the book’s purpose as a supplement to available grammars (see below); their inclusion would not have been expedient. (2) A lesser omission: the fact that color adjectives (as well as participles and adjectives in *-ov*, *-ski* ect.) form their comparatives with *bolj* (587)—true, but very low priority, surely.

² Miller correctly points out a little confusion: the comparisons that Derbyshire makes with Russian and Serbo-Croat with respect to aspect and word-order are indeed pedagogically useful, but will not help many

Layout. I agree with Miller, but in my opinion he was not critical enough: the printing is not just “austere”; the choice of font and of font-size is very inexpedient. A format such as that of this journal, although smaller in font-size, would have been as easy or easier to read, and would have allowed space for less miserly margins—something most students appreciate for notes.

Phonology. I, like both Krstič and Miller, find this section “clear and concise”; it says all that is really necessary and it says it understandably. Krstič would have liked more examples;³ I agree, especially with respect to the mid vowels and schwa, which are furnished with none and two examples, respectively. She also criticizes the omission of a/the “pravilo zapisovanja nezvočnikov.” Agreed, a statement such as “you write the letter which occurs before a vowel” will help in the spelling of words with morpheme-final obstruents, but this is a problem which will only occur in dictations and in producing written Slovene in compositions; by the time, however, that students can be expected to do such things creatively, I suggest, they will no longer be troubled by the voiced/voiceless alternation;⁴ this is not a serious omission. One further remark: I find that BRGS rather misleading with respect to the spelling of “l” and “v”: the general rules for each are good, but what is stated about the exceptions elevate “v,” unnecessarily, to the level of difficulty which students will encounter with “l”—for both, we read the same statement: “there are exceptions which must be learned individually” (15-16). This is a matter of minor concern for “v” (there are a very few pitfalls of the type *vlaka* /vlaka/ vs. *vlaka* /wlaka/) but a greater problem for “l.” While the “v” exceptions have to be learned lexically, the “l” exceptions involve not only lists of

of the researchers and most of the persons of Slovene descent who are expected to use the book. However, these comparative remarks are few.

³ She calls the lack of examples “ena od osnovnih pomanjkivosti knjige” (586). This is far from correct: apart from the section on phonology, examples abound.

⁴ The equivalent level for “Writing” in the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages’ *Russian Proficiency Guidelines* is, I suggest, “Intermediate-High” (see *Foreign Language Annals*, April 1988)—i.e., a level at the upper end of the scale of those for which this book was written.

words, but derivational and inflectional categories; see, for example, Lencek (192: 168) on forms such as “*skal, kril, volmi*.”⁵

Morphology: nouns. The introductory comments about the intricacies of declension are really excellent; and this whole section, in general, is easy for students to follow. I agree with Miller that the notes for each declension should follow that declension’s paradigms, not be located a few pages later; I agree, too, that BRGS includes overly many non-standard (colloquial, dialectal, archaic) forms; Derbyshire, we should recall, remonstrates with “existing grammars” for not being systematic, but is himself unsystematic in this respect. —I disagree, however, about the question of the best order of cases in paradigms. Miller suggests that the preferred order in Slovenia, N-G-D-A-L-I, may be more familiar to students, so that Derbyshire’s choice of Jakobson’s N-A-G-D-L-I may be confusing. Fifteen years ago Catherine Chvany argued in favor of N-A-G-L-D-I (note the slight difference from Jakobson’s) for Russian; I myself wholeheartedly support the N-A-G part of this hierarchy for teaching *any* Slavic language (at least, those that have more than two cases): given the fact that for all “o-stem” nouns (and their corresponding adjectives) the Acc. is always the same as either the Nom. or the Gen., placing it between them in the paradigm drives this point home to the learner.⁶ the order for the other three cases for teaching Slovene may be determined by the same principle: very nearly all nouns (of all declensions) have the same endings in the Dat. and the Loc., so these two should be placed together. For the final choice of N-A-G-D-L-I,

⁵ Toporišič, in his review of Lencek, characterizes this section (1982: 167-168) as “tradicionalno obremenjena in precej tudi napačna” (1985: 110); but evidence available to me (the discussions about the *Pravopis* in the late 1970s, for instance) is not enlightening. The older *Pravopis* (1962: 20) prescribed /l/=[l] in “*skal, kril, volmi*”; volume I of the latest *Pravopis* (1990: 77-80) is silent on this question (it tells us where “l” is /v/=[w], but it is not clear whether every single other occurrence of preconsonantal or final “l” should or should not be /l/=[l]).

⁶ Chvany (1982) also very clearly explains the statistical and functional justification for the N-A-G-L-D-I order, and in addition argues that this order has “universal” validity. Even without this last argument, is not a combination of statistical occurrence, functional applicability and pedagogical efficiency enough reason for Slovenes, Russians and other Slavs to foresake their traditional anthropocentric order(s) of cases?

see Chvany (1982). Agreed, cross-reference to any grammar originating in Slovenia (and this book is meant to supplement them) will cause *some* confusion, but in my experience students who have begun with one hierarchy can adapt to a second, especially if this can be shown to be more logical. Moreover, the demonstration of this logic can in itself be mnemonic: it is much easier to remember that “A=N or G” and, for all intents and purposes, “D=L” if one uses a logical order rather than the N-G-D-A-L-I we find in Slovenia. —Interestingly, Krstič’s criticisms are rather different from Miller’s. I will dwell on just one: her regret that BRGS classifies the nouns differently from the way preferred in Slovene textbooks. Again, since Derbyshire means this book as a supplement to grammars from Slovenia, the point is a serious one. However, the difference is minimal: BRGS has three classes—viz., with model nouns: I (*potnik, most, leto, srce*), II (*knjiga, gora, cerkev*) and III (*stvar, misel*)—and, e.g., Toporošič (1984) would put these same nouns into declensions Masc. I (*potnik, most*), Neut. I (*leto, srce*), Fem. I (*knjiga, gora, cerkev*), Fem. II (*stvar, misel*). Pedagogically, treating “ordinary” masc. and neut. nouns as belonging to the same declension makes great sense; after all, in the singular they only differ in one case and this emphasizes the “A=N or G” rule.

Morphology: adjectives, adverbs. Again, I find the “explanatory” portions of these pages exemplary. It is clear, here as elsewhere, that Derbyshire has applied his many years’ language teaching experience to good effect: most English-speakers (alas) need *very* clear instructions about grammatical categories and how they are formally realized in languages such as Slovene, and these instructions are just that. —One comment on Krstič here: she would have preferred more space allotted to adverbial sub-types (“ne ločuje časa in količine časa . . .”) and less to the particle *le* (“po nepotrebnem namenja precej prostora [temu] členku”); but English-speakers will not have problems with the former, while they will find the latter extremely unusual; moreover, Toporošič (1984: 344) allots no space to the former, and BRGS gives only seven lines to the latter.

Morphology: verbs. Both Miller and Krstič have a great deal to say here; I will add little. Miller correctly points out that the way the present tense endings are set out is confusing, whereas the use of the two-stem approach is educationally sound. With respect to the first of these points, Krstič is right in asking for more extensive tables showing

examples of the various infinitive/present tense combinations, and also in requesting greater systematization of the conjugational details. The next edition of this book will be greatly improved if these two demands are met; the second of them is, however, not easily achieved, if at the same time Derbyshire's clarity of exposition—which from time to time involves a little repetition and discursiveness—is not to be sacrificed. This clarity is, incidentally, well exemplified in two of the concluding sub-sections, "Comments on the Use of Aspects" and, especially so, "Tense Sequence."

Miscellaneous notes. Both Krstič and Miller find very little to criticize here: this is an absolutely invaluable section, and Anglophones who have managed to learn Slovene will be reminded, as they read it, of many of the difficulties they had to overcome, and also, red-facedly, of many of the mistakes they made as they learned and/or acquired the language. One suggestion only: when it comes to what is traditionally called the "orphan accusative," BRGS is clear, and correct: "In the case of phrases in which the adjective or pronoun modifies an omitted masculine or neuter noun, however, the adjective or pronoun appears in the genitive case rather than in the expected accusative case" (108). But his exposition would be improved if the parallel with pronouns were added: for the endings on adjectives in these circumstances are exactly the same as those on pronouns. Compare *Dajte mi črno obleko / Dajte mi jo / Dajte mi črno* ("Give me the black dress" / "Give me it" / "Give me the black one") and *Dajte mi črno vedro / Dajte mi ga / Dajte mi črnega* ("Give me the black bucket" / "Give me it" / "Give me the black one") (see Priestly 1993: 438). Indeed, seen in this light, Slovene can be thought of as more systematic than the other Slavic languages—for the adjective occurring without a noun is being used pronominally, and may be expected to behave like a pronoun.

Concluding comment. As stated above, I agree with several of Krstič's comments about the use of space, but find her far too demanding; and I do not quarrel with her comments on accuracy. But I permit myself one general observation: namely, that her review seems, in some respects, guided more by some kind of "God's truth" view of Slovene grammar than by what the average English-speaking student needs in order to learn that grammar (although she does indeed consider this latter aspect from time to time). Example: BRGS mentions (29) that words like *lady*, *madam*, *Ingrid* and *Nancy* "are not

declined” in Slovene: a perfectly acceptable statement for all English-speaking students, and indeed for almost any of those students’ Anglophone instructors. Krstič’s comment on this type is, “ki se *po njem* ne sklanjajo” [my italics, TP], implying that they *do* decline. Now for most (all?) North Americans, the statement “are not declined” means, simply, that the endings do not change: *Ingrid je prišla* (“Ingrid arrived”) *Ingrid so prišle* (“[Three or more people named] Ingrid arrived”). One commonly-accepted Slovene view of this kind of noun must have prompted Krstič’s remark; I suspect it to be the same as is expressed in Toporošič (1984: 231, also 223-30 on similar masc. nouns): “Samostalniki, ki vse sklone in števila izražajo s končnico -∅ [...] Pridevniška beseda ob njej ima tem različnim ničlam ustrezne končnice [...]” [my italics, TP]—i.e., there is a different -∅ every time; in other words, Slovene-speakers are considered to have a set of psychologically-existing case/number distinctions; if, for these nouns, they happen to express these distinctions with what sounds like the same ending (or lack thereof), the nouns still “decline” psychologically. This is, of course, quite possible (although I personally doubt it: or has someone actually proved it to be so?); but by stating that these nouns “do not decline,” Derbyshire is only saying that, phonologically, they always have the same ending. To tell students that they have eighteen different -∅ endings will produce laughter, or tears, but no deeper understanding.⁷

But to return to BRGS: this is, as Krstič points out, a pioneering work, requiring a certain boldness and relying on the good judgment of its author as to what is pedagogically most useful and what is the clearest way of explaining it. Whatever should have been included and omitted

⁷ There will be eighteen if there is a different zero for *every* single case and number. But is not, at the very best, the dual gen. -∅ the same as the plural gen. -∅? This is not an idle question: I suspect that, psychologically, Slovene-speakers do not maintain, for any part of their declensional system, a psychological distinction between the gen. dual and the gen. plural, but learn by about the third year of their lives that there is 100% neutralization, i.e., that they have to distinguish plural and dual nouns in the nom. and acc. cases, but not in the gen. (and, this holds true, for other oblique cases). All of this can, however, only be shown to be right or wrong by psycholinguistic testing, which as far as I know has never been attempted.

(and only the users of the book can comment on this), and whatever inaccuracies there may be, the exposition is, I repeat, amazingly clear.

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If Jože Toporišič (1985: 109) was correct in pointing out that Rado Lencek's description of Slovene (with ninety-three pages) had to be "zelo gospodaren, saj se da sodobni knjižni jezik komaj opisati celo na 600 straneh," then **Nina B. Mečkovskaja** had to be very parsimonious in her choices for the book here reviewed; she has, for grammatical exposition, only about eighty pages (of admittedly small type) at her disposal. The problem of choice does, of course, depend on the aims of the book (hereafter, SJUP), which has the traditional subtitle, "[...] a textbook for students in philology faculties of universities." In this review I will pay attention to the question of *selection and presentation* of contents; assessment of the *accuracy* of Mečkovskaja's description I leave to others. My remarks should therefore not be construed as an attempt at a complete review.

SJUP may be characterized as a "traditional" kind of university language reference book. The concise but informative Introduction (3-13) describes the linguistic situation in Slovenia and its political-historical background; briefly contrasts Slovene with the other Standard Slavic languages; gives a sketch of the major dialects; and concludes with a history of the major literary monuments and of the standardization of Slovene. The "Phonology and Phonetics" (13-30) comprises a descriptive section and a comparative-historical one. A very useful section on graphemics and orthography (31-33) is followed by "morphology" (33-92), which (rather oddly, given this title) finishes with subsections on non-morphological phenomena, see below. After two pages of bibliography, the final pages (96-114) present a variety of texts—folk, literary, legal, items from newspapers, and so on. The book is well furnished with over twenty useful tables; without them, the book, with its small typeface and crammed pages, would be very difficult to read.

Phonology and phonetics. The synchronic subsection (13-26) is extremely thorough: both vocalic and consonantal phonemes are presented in tables showing their distinctive features; minimal pairs are provided to show the vocalic distinctions (but not the consonantal ones); the realizations of vowels according to occurrence with stress

and length is explained and colloquial Ljubljana vowel-reduction is mentioned; the consonantal system is very lucidly contrasted with that of Rus and BRus;⁸ an extensive table shows all the consonantal “variants” and their occurrence, with examples and even optional variants provided; voicing assimilation at word boundary is described; and there is a lengthy exposition of the prosodic systems of Sln. Most of the table of “variants” is excellent and useful for Western readers; but these readers should be warned that the approach to (morpho)phonology is that of the “Moscow School,” which results in the allocation of, for instance, [w] to *both* /l/ and /v/, and in [ɣ] being listed as a variant, not of /g/, but of /k/ when the latter is the preposition “k.” The diachronic subsection (“Comparative-historical commentary,” 26-30) condenses a great deal of information into a small space, information about not only regular correspondences between Sln and East Slavic cognates (such as /r: or/ in *grlo* : *gorlo*), but also (something that I have not seen before, and very useful) common correspondences in loanwords (e.g., /b : v/ in *bizantinski* : *vizantijski*), and also tables, with examples and explanations, of correspondences at the suprasegmental level.

After this wealth of information, the **morphology** section might be expected to let the reader down; but it does not. The major inflectional parts of speech are dealt with in the usual order (nouns, adjectives, pronouns, numerals, verbs); within each, first the applicable grammatical categories are described, then the paradigms are displayed, each followed by its own commentary. So, for nouns (33-44), we are told everything that is necessary about gender, animacy, number and case, and then start in with the masculine nouns. Along the way, however, the text is spiced up with very interesting and useful snippets of information; thus, under gender, we read how much more productive Sln is than Rus in its derivation of feminine forms for people’s occupations (e.g., *ministrica*, a form which Russians presumably would consider pejorative); we read about the “two-faced” behavior of stylistically marked derivatives such as *čveka* (which has bigendered agreement in, e.g., *Ti si stara čveka, nikoli ne boš drugačen*); and we are presented with several “gender false friends,” i.e., words whose cognates in East Slavic and Sln are of different genders (e.g., *vonj*: masc. in Sln, fem. in Rus and BRus). As is apparent, SJUP makes

⁸ Abbreviations: Sln=Slovene, Rus=Russian, BRus=Belarusian.

frequent comparisons with Rus and to a lesser extent with BRus; these make the text both more interesting and (I do not doubt) pedagogically more effective. Also, these subsections include information that textbooks sometimes put elsewhere, e.g., the non-use of the dual for “obvious pairs” such as *kolena*, *rokavice*, *starši*. —The order of cases in the paradigms is N-G-D-A-L-I. For masc. nouns (as an example), paradigms for no fewer than seven types are displayed (*trg*, *stric*, *sin*, *oče*, *mož*, *dan*, *človek*) and those plus another six types are discussed in the “commentaries.” Let us look at one type (“M-3”), that of *sin*, which exemplifies the nouns that have the *-ov-* infix in the plural: SJUP tells us that this paradigm “unites a number of nouns: *dar*, *grad*, *hlad*, *glas*, *gozd*, *most*, *pas*, *voz*, *vrt*, *zid*, ect.” (38). What is striking is the brevity of this list: the number of nouns listed in the SSKJ with this infix is fifty; Toporišič (1984) lists fifty-two; Lencek (1982) has thirty-six; Derbyshire (1993) lists thirty. Mečkovskaja has just eleven, and follows this approach throughout SJUP: she opts for greater completeness in her presentation of declensional variants, and saves space by not mentioning very many of the nouns in which the variant occurs. The disadvantage: this results in a vagueness with respect to the relative *importance* of the different variants. For example, when she comes to the “M-5” paradigm *mož*, she mentions that two others belong to this group, namely *las*, *zob*; cf. Toporišič (1984), who lists five such nouns. Students will hardly realize that the three “M-5” nouns represent 60% of those given by Toporišič, while the eleven “M-3” nouns correspond to only 21% of his list. Students will thus gain a sound appreciation of the various components of the language, but not such a good idea of how they fit together.

Mečkovskaja’s subsection on adjectives (44-50), which is, again, extraordinarily thorough, illustrates another point: her recourse to historical explanation, where this is deemed appropriate. Half of a page is devoted to a concise but clear summary of the Proto-Slavic long- and short-form adjectives and their reflexes in the modern Slavic languages. given their very divergent fate in East Slavic, this seems an expedient method; and on the following page is backed up with an exposition of the syntactic function of the *določni* and *nedoločni* forms, with useful examples. Under pronouns (50-58) she even manages to explain the use of *ki* with examples, set out on a (rather cramped) table, of “who” in all cases, genders and numbers, and follows this up with an excellent example of a *ki* sentence which is ambiguous, hence the

preferred use of *kateri* in this instance. The subsection on numerals (58-61) is not restricted to straightforward morphological information: we find out not only that numerals are losing their declension in spoken Sln *and* that some of this loss is acceptable in normative grammars, but also, e.g., how to write cardinals using Arabic numerals (different from the Rus system, “cf. similar graphic methods in German, Latvian and Czech”); the major uses of collective numerals; and the use of numerals in expressions of time. The verb subsection seems, to a non-Slav at first glance, lopsided, because of the relative space devoted to aspect and to present-tense conjugation. For example, in Derbyshire (1993) we find four pages on aspect and ten pages on the present; in SJUP, respectively, three and one half pages. This difference can be ascribed in part to the different *kinds* of intended audiences (people of Slovene descent versus graduate students and researchers) of the two books, but I suggest that a more important reason is the *languages* of these audiences: the Slavic languages’ conjugational systems are so very similar that a presentation of the productive verb conjugations, plus a few other remarks, suffice for Russian-speaking students; but Slovene aspect differs from aspect in Russian in interesting ways that have to be explained at length.

The final pages of this section do not, as remarked above, belong under “morphology.” They include paragraphs on adverbs, modals, prepositions, conjunctions and particles; and extended notes on syntax. One criticism: for some reason—perhaps, because of the traditional kind of arrangement that she has chosen—Mečkovskaja fails to provide sufficient information about (let alone examples of) constructions with those two very important Slovene words, *naj* and *lahko* (which, surely, present problems to Russian- as they do to English-speakers). They are not mentioned under “modal predicates” (76), because they are not verbal. Under “modal semantics of introductory words and similar constructions” we do find *lahko* (one of the few misspelled words that I noticed, in the sentence *lanko se zgodi*) but just as one word at the end of a long list (after *najbrž*, *verjetno*, *morda* and so on). As for *naj*, I finally came across it in the subsection “particles” (83-84) flanked by *le* and *no*. Both words deserve much more extensive exemplifications: the kind that is, very properly, devoted to word-order (84-88), to the (for East Slavs) unusual frequency of the use of the infinitive (90), to constructions with the conjunction *da* (90-91),

and so on. This (*lahko, naj*) lacuna is very uncharacteristic: SJUP is generally very thorough.

In sum: graduate Russophone students must find this book extraordinarily useful, given the enormous amount of information and the way that Mečkovskaja sets it out and expounds it, using diachronic explanation in some instances and contrasting Sln with Rus and BRus in others. It is a book which, for the insights provided by these contrastive comments, I recommend to any linguist with knowledge of Rus and Sln. And, given the enforced parsimony (see my introductory comment), the author has chosen her material very judiciously and used almost every inch of her space very efficiently.

One final comment: this book was, as the publishing data on the very last page tell us, sent to the typesetters in January 1990 and to the printers in May 1991; so, although published close to the date of Slovene independence, its contents (sadly) reflect the communist era: Slovenia is described as “part of Yugoslavia” (3) and one of the reading passages is the Constitution of the SFRJ. Pity.

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The *Polyglott-Sprachführer* series publishes small, handy booklets for German-speaking tourists. the one by Anton Schellander and Marija Smolić of the University of Celovec/Klagenfurt is, in my opinion, excellent: its fifty pages (even the back cover is utilized) contain much more than the barest essentials. The entertaining and informative introductory handbook *Znakom'tes', Slovenija!* contains an historical sketch, descriptions of the major tourist attractions and information for business people; Ol'ga S. Plotnikova's very useful *razgovornik* is at the back of this booklet.

The closest equivalent to these in English is Hladnik & Hočevar 1994 (see Stermole 1989 for a review of its first, 1988, edition). I now make some contrastive comments to illustrate how differences in goal and in execution can result in three extremely disparate “tourist phrasebooks.” For brevity, they are referred to as S&S, P, and H&H. The last-named has a threefold aim: it contains not only conversational phrases, but cultural information and travel tips aimed in particular at the North American tourist of Slovene extraction: those parts of its 150-page length with no language information (“excellent,” Stermole 1989:

215) will be ignored here, so that a meaningful comparison can be made with S&S and P, which are intended only as phrasebooks for visitors.

The national differences in intended audiences account for some of the differences between H&H and the other two: thus English-speakers require (at least!) a page of guidance (H&H 23) through some problems of *tikanje/vikanje*, whereas German-speakers need only one line to be told which are the “Höflichkeitsformen” (S&S 6), and Russian-speakers, who will recognize *ti/vi*, need no instructions at all. Similarly, North Americans must be informed at what hour *dobro jutro* gives way to *dober dan* (H&H 15), Central and East Europeans not so (S&S 7, P 151).

But let us look at a typical section where the national origin of the traveler makes less difference—that dealing with train travel. Coincidentally, H&H and S&S provide a total of about one hundred five Slovene words in their respective sections, while P provides about one hundred thirty; a comparison is justified. All three combine full sentences (e.g., *Oprostite, je to vlak za Mursko Soboto?*) with single words and phrases (e.g., *čakalnica, spalnik, mednarodne vozovnice*). The ratio of the former to the latter in this instance gives a good idea of the general approach: H&H have twelve sentences to fourteen words/phrases; P, eighteen to nine; and S&S, thirteen to twenty-seven. This ratio does have an importance. After all, the authors of a phrasebook, as much if not more so than those of a language-teaching textbook, should have *communicative competence* in mind: its users wish with the help of their pocket phrasebook to be able to understand what is said to them and what they read, and they wish to be able to make their desires (and their feelings too, sometimes) known. The most effective balance between what Bachman (1990: 87) calls “pragmatic competence” and “organizational competence” should be achieved: at the railway station, the travelers must (for instance) know not only how to ask for a ticket to their destinations (i.e., be provided with a simple sentence frame: *Eno karto za ..., prosim*) but also what are the words for different kinds of ticket: one-way/round-trip, for adults/for children, first/second class, and so on (i.e., they must be able to insert different lexical items into the frame). This balance will not be the same, presumably, for Russian-speakers as it will for speakers of German and English. I do not imagine that research has been done into this balance, and the authors have to guess; it is interesting that their

guesses have such differing results. —Within its spatial limits, each has its good points and its lacunae. H&H is the only one of the three to include the request *Mi boste povedali, kdaj bo* [a desired stop]? S&S is the only one to have *Ali ima vlak zamudo?* and P is the only one to list *Kje lahko prestopim v drugi vlak?* So also, the reader of P will have to risk not knowing the meaning of *Zasilna zavora*, but will be able to ask for the *sprevodnik/-nica*; the readers of S&S and H&H are told about emergency brakes, but will have to make do without verbal recourse to the conductor. Again, the compilers can have had only their intuitions to guide their choice of sentences; the hindsight provided by a comparison of this kind may, however, be useful in the future.

“Pragmatic competence” involves, *inter alia*, the very many kinds of language functions that would-be users have to learn; among them, e.g., “ideational” functions such as making inquiries. In this respect, P far out-shines both S&S and H&H. Let us look at one example: expressions, each suitable for one or another kind of situation (and each of which is obvious from the Russian translation): *Zelo mi je žal, da ...; Kakšna škoda!; Sočutim; Prejmite naše sožalje; and Dovolite, da Vam izrazimo naše globoko sožalje.* S&S (7) has just two: *Škoda. Žal mi je.* H&H (36) has just one, but a different one (is this a cultural difference?): *Moje sožalje.*

As for “organizational competence,” this includes knowledge about phonology and spelling, and about grammar. What these authors consider to be the minimum information that is required in these areas varies enormously; the sections on “spelling and sounds” first. H&H is much less thorough (and also much less demanding) than the others, but can afford the luxury, since it comes with an audio cassette to make up the deficiency (cf. Stermole 1989: 215). P provides a really excellent survey in its three pages (148-50); S&S provides the basic information only, in the very crowded space of less than one page. (I also wish to criticize S&S’s hints about pronouncing the different kinds of “e” in Slovene. The difference between “closed e” and “open e” is exemplified with the words, respectively, *Beet* and *ähnlich*; and yet most German-speakers, I am told by a Germanist, have the same vowel in these words.)

As for separate grammatical information, P has, surprisingly for a Russian textbook, none at all, and H&H nothing apart from the

present tense paradigms of *biti* and *imeti*. S&S, on the other hand, has a great deal of basic information: notes on gender, number and case; paradigms, with adjectives, of nouns in all three genders, with the major alternations; a note on comparatives and superlatives; and, for verbs, the present tense endings and the formation of future and past in both positive and negative, with full paradigms. And all of this on just two pages (5-6)! Further: throughout the book, whenever a sentence frame requires a nominal filler, this is shown with the case required: e.g., returning to the section on trains, *Ali ima vlak (iz +2) zamudo?*, where “2”=“genitive.” The presentation is extremely neat and instructive; the information is provided for those who can use it, and those who cannot will surely not begrudge two pages; I suggest that any second edition of P should follow this example.

The information provided varies in many interesting ways; e.g., the two lists (of equal length) of fish dishes in restaurants (S&S 32, H&H 73) have very surprising differences; S&S does and H&H does not include, e.g., *dagnje*, *list* and *orada*; on the other hand, H&H has *osličev file*, *ciplji* and *jastog*, and S&S does not. Do these choices reflect the culinary tastes of the authors, or more generally of German tourists versus North Americans? Or are they fortuitous? (My intentions of further gastronomolinguistic research in this domain had to remain incomplete: P (176) mentions *ribje jedi* but gives no examples.) —One final example of the differences among the three books: the sections headed *Pijače*. H&H (78-82) lists eleven non-alcoholic drinks, including five kinds of juice; their liquor lists have nine wines, five kinds of *žganje*, and (not very surprisingly) four beers. P (175-77) is, however, much more restrained: we find ten non-alcoholic drinks (again, five kinds of juice!), but only five wines, one beer, and three kinds of *žganje*. On the other hand, while S&S do not mention any “health-pledging” phrases at all, H&H provide *Na zdravje!* *Živijo!* and P has three different toasts. This not-so-trivial example illustrates another opportunity for comparative research: not only are the cultural differences involved obviously significant, but it is far from obvious what kinds of communicative situations visitors to Slovenia will find themselves in most frequently.

It is clear, from the samples of contents that I have provided, that the composition of phrasebooks for tourists and businessmen is no easy matter. Each of these three is very useful, but each is also lacking

in what appear to be essentials. The ideal *Sprachführer / razgovornik / phrasebook* for tourists and businessmen in Slovenia is yet to be written.

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The cover of George Carcas's booklet proclaims: "A brief and useful guide to the language of Slovenia, designed to enable the reader to progress to more advanced materials, and to assist appreciation of cognate Slavonic tongues. With a light touch, George Carcas leads the reader with sympathy and humor into the essentials of Slovene structure, grammar and vocabulary."

After an introduction and some general remarks, we find not much more than a page on "Script and pronunciation"; fourteen or so pages of morphology; eight pages of "Exercises," and a ten-page vocabulary. The typeface is, however, small, and these thirty-six pages should have been enough to provide "a brief and useful guide to the language of Slovenia." Brief the book certainly is; but there are so many errors that the claim to usefulness is totally unfounded. Before exemplifying these errors, a brief word on their origin (and on one of the most peculiar features of the book). Carcas introduces it by emphasizing "the difficulty of finding any sort of information about the language" (1) and ends it with an acknowledgment to a librarian in the city of Margate, Kent, England (36). Apparently, he took no pains to inquire at any British university with a Slavic department. The librarian in Margate happened to have de Bray's *Guide to the Slavonic Languages* handy—but unfortunately, this was the second edition of 1969, not the much-improved (though still not fully reliable) third edition of 1980, see my reviews of 1973 and 1981. Not only is Carcas's information therefore out of date—even if Derbyshire's *Basic Reference Grammar* of 1993 was not yet available, Lencek (1982) should have been in the library references—but he seems to have misread what he had to hand: for most of the following selection of errors are NOT in de Bray!

"The earliest manuscripts in which the language appears date back to the 11th century. . . . The language remained a peasant patois until the 19th century" (1): the sixteenth-century achievements of the Protestant scholars remain totally unnoticed.

“During the early 19th century there was a movement to use Serbo-Croat” (1): before the 1850 *Književni dogovor*?

“‘That’ contrasted with ‘this’ is expressed by *tisti* (same). . . (9).

The perfective of *živeti* is given as *oživeti* (13).

Among the examples of aspectual derivation, we find both *délovati* “to work,” pfve. *délati*; and *délati* “to do, make,” pfve. *storiti* (13).

“Only imperfective verbs can have a present tense with a present meaning” (15).

And several howlers in the linguistic examples, such as:

“Imâ knjiga svója. (He has his book)” (10).

“jàz bôm bìl” (I shall be)” (16).

“iméla bôva (we [two] shall be)” (16).

All of this is most regrettable, not only because any grammar put out by a Languages Information Centre should not contain misinformation, but because Carcas has (as the front cover says) an engaging and amusing way of instructing his readers. Thus:

“Slovene, I’m sorry to have to tell you, has significant tonality... Long rising, [which] gives the word the sound of a mild enquiry. Short Falling, [which] makes the word sound like a mild command. Long Falling, [which] gives the effect of a mild protest” (3). —There is no mention of the competing effect of sentence intonation (let alone of the standard non-tonemic system); nevertheless, this is an effective way of explaining the tonemes.

“You’re a sharp-eyed lot, so I don’t really have to point out that some of these prepositions occur ... with more than one case. And I don’t doubt that you’ve already worked out that the prepositions concerned are all close friends of the accusative. So why do they have to wander off to consort with other cases as

well? In-depth investigation reveals that all these prepositions can define either *motion* or *rest* . . .” (5-6).

“You should now be able to give birth to such great thoughts as: *Vaš mládi ósel jè v híši* ... and you can clean up the mess yourself” (11).

Carcas’s “Exercises” section is composed solely of extracts from the New Testament and Psalms, with vocabulary copied (or miscopied) from Komac & Škerlj (1992). This leads to some strange glosses, e.g.: *Ker Gospod sam stopi doli iz nebes s poveljem* is furnished with the explanations “stopati (vb: stopim): descend”—both grammatically and lexically incorrect—and “povelje” (n): shout;”—rather than “command.”

This publication should never have seen the light of day. The claims on the front cover are fraudulent. Let us hope that English-speakers interested in learning something about Slovene will in every instance be directed not to Carcas, but to Derbyshire (1993).

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