

On-line Delivery for Serbo-Croatian (Bosniac, Croatian, Serbian): Tailoring Technology to the Learner

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Abstract:

This paper discusses the project of full on-line delivery of an introductory Serbo-Croatian (Bosniac, Croatian, Serbian) course at the Arizona State University Critical Languages Institute. The issue of tailoring technology to meet diversified needs of a wide range of learners (from heritage speakers of the three Serbo-Croatian speaking ethnic communities to professional non-heritage learners) is in the center of the discussion.

Introduction

This paper discusses the project for providing full on-line delivery of introductory Serbo-Croatian (BCS—Bosniac, Croatian, Serbian), i.e., the equivalent of traditional Serbo-Croatian 101 and 102, at the Arizona State University Critical Languages Institute (CLI, <http://www.asu.edu/cli>). Following the meticulous analysis of data from three years of hybrid delivery (traditional in-class lessons with on-line homework and other out-of-class assignments) and a careful needs assessment in varied Serbo-Croatian learners' communities, courseware for full on-line delivery has been developed, including multimedia content, clickable texts, interactive drills, and lexical lists.

The following aspects of the project will be discussed in turn. After elaboration of the goals and parameters of the project, including the institutional setting, the varied groups of learners, the technological potentials and limitations, etc., the theoretical background of the project will be addressed, comprising both underlying L2 acquisition theories and proficiency assessment. This will be followed by a

detailed description of the e-learning objects and authoring tools developed for the course. The final two sections will then address the limitations of e-delivery of the coursework as well as the follow-up development for this project.

Objectives and Parameters

One of the hallmarks of the early twenty-first century is the shifting locus of educational encounters from the traditional fixed classroom to the Internet. Language instruction is not an exception in this respect. There is a demand for on-line language learning. The need for this is particularly strong for less commonly taught languages, few of which are offered regularly in university and community college classrooms nationally, and for which there are significantly fewer qualified instructors.

At present, there are two audiences driving the use of language instruction either entirely on-line or combining traditional classroom instruction with hybrid e-learning components: prospective learners and institutions of higher learning. Among prospective users, the following groups have been less well served by traditional classroom instruction and will benefit from the availability of e-learning language modules for less commonly taught languages: 1) heritage language learners; 2) English native speakers with marital or other family ties to the speakers of less commonly languages; 3) English native speakers with scholarly or professional interests in the region; and 4) students at community colleges and universities where such languages are not offered. Potential students may be hindered by the inaccessibility of traditional in-class instruction because of time conflicts or sheer distance from centers where less commonly taught languages are offered. For universities, the impetus to create hybrid and on-line courses lies in the need to use limited resources to provide broad and democratic educational opportunities. Even the largest publicly funded universities cannot afford to offer classroom instruction in a full complement of less commonly taught languages, which could possibly suffer from lower enrollments than other classes.

An obvious solution to meet the needs of both potential learners and university providers is to organize the delivery of foreign language instruction via the Internet. This has indeed become a major pathway for the delivery of English as a second language and for Western European languages commonly taught across the United States. Numerous on-line resources are available, such as Purdue University's Online Writing Center <<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/internet/owls/index.html>>, the Interactive Spanish Center <www.studyspanish.com>, the German On-Line Distance Education Network <<http://www.goethe.de/uk/was/sprache/golden.htm>>, etc. If we compare the availability of on-line resources for these languages with those for less commonly taught languages, there is a clear discrepancy. As noted in the University of Oregon Yamada Language Guide <<http://babel.uoregon.edu/yamada/guides.html>>, less commonly taught languages are largely bereft of on-line learning opportunities.

Considerable differences exist within the group of less commonly taught languages. Most notably, ample materials are available for Russian language instruction, such as Rusnet <<http://www.rusnet.org>>. Rusnet has been developing advanced distributive e-learning objects for some time, following a clear set of methodological guidelines while employing state-of-the-art technology. In contrast, most other less commonly taught languages face a paucity of instructional materials, a lower quality of textbooks, dictionaries, and other resources, and the lack of a methodological framework. Indeed, the quality of much of the on-line e-learning materials has been mixed and lacking clear proficiency expectations.

The case of Serbo-Croatian brings an additional intricacy in the form of its three ethnic variants (Serbian, Croatian, Bosniac), a problem shared by numerous other less commonly taught languages, as demonstrated in a 2001 NCOLCTL panel (Bergman, et al. 2001) for Cantonese, Rwanda/Rundi, and Arabic. More information about Serbo-Croatian ethnic variants can be found in Bugarski & Hawkesworth (1992) and Okuka (1998).

The objectives of offering introductory Serbo-Croatian on-line are thus determined by the following parameters:

- a) institutional parameters,
- b) technological parameters,
- c) methodological parameters,
- d) learner parameters:
 - d1) needs
 - d2) capabilities

The institutional parameters at stake here are related to the cost effectiveness of the program, which involves the following factors: a) desire to reduce required instructor time and b) desire to reduce the time needed to design the course. This parameter is not limited by the level of the institution offering such courses; it is concurrently related to strategic national needs of creating teaching capacity at strategic levels (see Brecht and Rivers 2002 for further discussion).

Technological parameters stipulate a number of restrictions, primarily in the lack of real-time full visual and audio contact. The development of the important network of affective ties in class is thus seriously impaired.

Methodological parameters will be discussed at some length in the next chapter. In a nutshell, the need exists to adapt the underlying in-class methodological framework to a different environment.

Learner parameters stipulate the necessity to address the varied needs of the learners, ranging from heritage speakers solely interested in developing basic communicative skills and professional learners from the government setting interested in reading and listening comprehension to graduate students interested in linguistic aspects of the language. At the same time, the capabilities of the learners to acquire linguistic skills are highly diversified.

Theoretical Considerations and Previous Research

This project follows a pragmatically determined set of goals as follows:

- a) to bring its participants to ILR level 1+ in reading, with other skills remaining in the range between 1 and 1+,

- b) to create solid foundations for further development of the ILR level 2 skills in the intermediate course and ILR level 3 skills during the study abroad program in the former Yugoslavia, which is preceded by an intensive pre-academic-year immersion language training,
- c) to serve as a refresher in the intervening period between the introductory and intermediate course (both taught at the CLI in the summer with a ten-month lapse in instruction),
- d) to function as an on-line component of a hybrid summer CLI course.

The methodology selected in this course is subordinated to the aforementioned overarching goals. Using the terminology adopted from Leaver & Shekhtman (2002) (which provides a useful concise review of recent methodological trends), we can state that the dominating methodological framework in the introductory course delivery falls under the rubric of the cognitive code approach, interspersed with occasional utilization of communicative approaches. The intermediate level instruction is then dominated by the communicative approach, involving the exclusive use of authentic materials, communicative focus, etc. There are several valid reasons for such methodological framework.

First, Slavic and other languages with rich inflectional morphology necessitate strong emphasis on form in the initial phases of the learning process. Secondly, failure to master the form at the elementary level has historically led to what is known as “terminal level two plus learners.” Third, numerous authentic materials cannot be offered at the early acquisition stages as they, by the virtue of targeting native speakers at ILR level 3 or higher, clearly violate Krashen’s *i+1* rule, i.e., the principle that only the materials introduced in class cannot be more than one level higher than the student’s actual proficiency level (see Krashen 1998). Fourth, the present-day stage of information technology still limits the realm of role playing and similar activities.

The approach is at the same time congruent with basic didactic principles. This is of particular importance with regards to the progression of the materials. More complex items are always pre-

ceded by less complex ones, and known materials always precede less known content.

Finally, the project greatly relies on contrastive, cross-cultural, and quantitative linguistics. Being designed for speakers of American English, the course contains frequent contrastive remarks addressing the differences between American English on the one hand and Serbo-Croatian, along with its three ethnic cultures, on the other. The course operates on the lists of lexical minimum, grammatical forms, and intentional phrases derived from longitudinal quantitative studies of linguistic corpora and instructional process. More information about these materials is presented in Šipka (2002).

One should also address the state of the art in the field of research. The UCLA Language Materials Project <<http://www.lmp.ucla.edu>>, a systematic review of available language instruction courseware, attests that there are no materials which follow sound methodological guidelines while utilizing the full range of technological possibilities in order to provide a coherent instructional offering. Occasional “on-line courses and tutorials” which can be located on the Internet are merely more or less amateurish impromptu experiments or for-profit ventures and do not answer the needs addressed in this project.

Moreover, the most commonly used textbooks (Hawkesworth 1998, Magner 1995, Norris 1995, Šljivić-Šimšić 1985) are methodologically inadequate and dated. Our project is thus at the same time an attempt to overcome inadequacies in classic courseware products.

Serious projects of on-line delivery of other Slavic languages other than Russian (SLOTs) can be found on the Internet, most notably the Introductory Polish project by Oscar Swan <<http://www.polyglot.pitt.edu/Polish>>. The ongoing e-mail exchange among the colleagues has resulted in a 2003 American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies Convention panel titled “E-learning Resources for Slavic Languages Other than Russian.”

Implementation

Institutional Setting

On-line delivery of Serbo-Croatian is a part of the Arizona State University Critical Languages Institute (CLI, <http://www.asu.edu/cli>). The CLI offers intensive summer courses in Albanian, Armenian, Macedonian, Serbo-Croatian, and Tatar with plans to include Arabic, Polish, Tajiki, and Uzbek. At the same time, Serbo-Croatian, along with other courses taught by the CLI faculty, such as Computational Linguistics of Slavic Languages <http://www.asu.edu/clas/reesc/asucomp> and History of Slavic Languages <http://www.asu.edu/clas/reesc/asugh>, are offered at the associated Slavic Section of the ASU Languages and Literatures Department. The institutional setting mandates that resources developed for on-line delivery of Serbo-Croatian be transferable, to the highest possible degree, to both other languages taught at the CLI and to some extent other courses taught by the CLI faculty.

This requirement of portability across the curriculum has also mandated independence in terms of excluding proprietary software and assuming full control over the resources.

Introductory and elementary intensive Serbo-Croatian courses have been offered at the CLI as hybrid (in-class with an on-line component) for the past three consecutive years (see <http://www.public.asu.edu/~dsipka/syl1.htm> and <http://www.public.asu.edu/~dsipka/syl1.htm>), which offered an excellent opportunity to conduct a need assessment survey among participants of these courses. The varied groups of users and their needs mentioned previously in this paper have been identified in this survey.

Technology

The imperative of being independent in developing this resource—hence capable of uninhibited trans- and cross-lingual transfer of the objects involved has dictated rejection of technological solutions commonly used in preparing e-learning objects. Both the use of authoring tools (such as Micromedia products, see <http://>

www.micromedia.com) and educational platforms (for example Blackboard, see <http://www.blackboard.com>) have been rejected, as they result in dependence on proprietary software and the companies behind it. All e-learning objects in the project have been created without any proprietary software, instead using HTML, including forms, Java Script, cgi scripts in Perl, and Java. Cgi scripts in Perl dominate the interactive server-side communication, yet Java servlets and applets have been gradually introduced with plans to expand once Java Runtime Environment becomes ubiquitous. Authoring tools have been developed along with e-learning objects. Both the e-learning objects and authoring tools are hosted at the CLI Web server <<http://cli.la.asu.edu>>.

All e-learning objects feature cross-platform portability (PC, Macintosh, Unix) with minimal requirements on the part of the user.

Practically all templates are transferable *mutatis mutandis* both trans- and cross-lingually. Moreover, several authoring tools enabling the creation of e-learning objects by technologically unskilled instructors (for example: <http://cli.la.asu.edu/pisi22.htm>, <http://cli.la.asu.edu/clitext.htm>) have been created. Finally, the aforementioned course in Computational Linguistics of Slavic Languages <<http://www.asu.edu/clas/reesc/asucomp>> covers all technological aspects of creating e-learning objects, producing thus a pool of technologically literate graduate and undergraduate students—hence prospective authors of new e-learning objects.

Design

The course is designed in such manner that one can select either Serbo-Croatian in its entirety or one of its three ethnic variants (Bosniac, Croatian, Serbian). This strategy solves the problem often encountered in the in-class setting that some heritage speakers exhibit reluctance to study the areas not directly related to their ethnic variant. The four versions of the course satisfy both heritage speakers (who use one of the three ethnic variants) and professional learners, who are, as a rule, interested in the language in its entirety. At the course design end, this strategy remains cost effective, as ethnic variants of the course are designed by modifying the Serbo-Croatian

version. In addition to offering a solution for full on-line delivery of languages with ethnic and other variants, this aspect of design provides an opportunity for hybrid courses in that heritage speakers engage in homework and other off-class activities with material solely devoted to their ethnic variant. The identical strategy has been employed in case of the CLI multilingual chat client <<http://cli.la.asu.edu/chat/chat.html>>, where four separate chat rooms for this course are designated.

While four versions of the course (Serbo-Croatian, Bosniac, Croatian, Serbian) solve the problem of varied needs among prospective participants, the different levels of capability among the participants are addressed by a popular general presentation of the materials while concurrently providing links for more linguistically and intellectually sophisticated users. The difference is illustrated in Appendix 1 using the example of a general description of the consonants and a description in an additional link for sophisticated users. This strategy eliminates the objection, often encountered in the traditional setting, of the presentation being overly slow or unsophisticated for some users while at the same time being overly swift and sophisticated for other users.

The design operates on a frequency-based list of lexical minimum of about 1,500 Serbo-Croatian lexical entries and similar lists of intentional phrases (approximately 300) and basic inflectional forms. The progression of the material follows general didactic principles. This means, for example, that the cases with less intricate endings, which are synthetically marked in English (e.g., the Accusative as in English *him* as opposed to *he*) are treated prior to more complex ones which are at the same time more distant from their English counterparts (e.g., the Locative/Prepositional).

The course is divided into nine lessons, with the first and last ones amounting to approximately twenty hours of coursework each, and the remaining seven lessons forty hours each. The last lesson does not introduce any new material, but rather summarizes and consolidates the material covered in the previous eight lessons.

Each lesson consists of nine distinct components. E-learners are advised to cover them in the following order:

Table 1
Standard Lesson Components

Component	Summary Description
Introduction	General overview of the lesson, instructions on how to proceed with studying
Cultural competence	Both <i>Landeskunde</i> summary of basic cultural facts (high culture, popular culture, culture of daily life) and contrastive account of socio-psychological and other cross-cultural differences in relation to American culture
Grammar	Phonology with prosody, basic morphosyntactic patterns
Vocabulary	Subject-matter oriented review of the vocabulary covered in the lesson
Intentional competence	Account of strategies in “doing things with words,” e.g., introducing oneself, taking leave of somebody, etc.
Norms	Spelling and pronunciation conventions, e.g., lowercase spelling of the days of the week
Interactive drills	Multiple choice, fill-in-the-blanks, listening comprehension and other problem-solving tasks with open-ended completion time and no results stored on the server
Interactive lesson texts	Multimedia lesson texts with glossary entries, inflectional data, and other comments attached to every word form in the text.
Quizzes	Multiple choice, fill-in-the-blanks, listening comprehension and other problem-solving tasks with limited completion time and results stored on the server

In addition to the components enumerated in Table 1, summary grammatical tables, lexical and intentional minimum lists, chat rooms, etc. are accessible from multiple points in the course. The same is true of external links, primarily in the cultural competence

section. Finally, drills are accessible not only from their respective section but also from other elements of the course.

Exemplary fragments of Cultural competence, Grammar, Vocabulary, Intentional competence, and Norms sections are provided in Appendix 2. The remaining three sections will be discussed in turn.

Interactive drills include a wide range of tasks presented in several different formats. The tasks include monolingual and bilingual lexical selections, selection of appropriate morphosyntactic forms, demonstrating listening and reading comprehension, using the most appropriate communicative device, demonstrating the ability to follow directions, etc. Formats include fill-in-the-blanks, multiple choice, clicking on the appropriate area, etc. Examples of such drills used in the hybrid course design are available at: <<http://www.public.asu.edu/~dsipka/S1EX.HTM>>. Sample lesson one of the off-server version of this project <<http://www.asu.edu/clas/reesc/scr101>> (password scr1) offers further examples of such drills. The full version of the course, accessible to students by providing their password, is at <http://cli.la.asu.edu/scr101>. It should be noted that the order of assignments is generated randomly, which provides an electronic equivalent of shuffling a stack of vocabulary cards (i.e., each user encounters a different sequence of L1 words for which she/he is asked to provide L2 equivalents). Finally, it is worth mentioning that lesson texts feature ensuing drills related to the content of each particular lesson.

Quizzes employ identical drill formats, yet in this case the user has a limited time to complete the task and the results are stored on the server. Appendix 3 provides an example of the quiz used in lesson one, along with its immediate evaluation and information stored on the server.

Lesson texts are central to the design of this project. All lessons follow the unified format of a clickable text. The idea of a clickable text entails the capability to obtain various information about all word forms in the text by clicking on the word. In its present design, the information is obtained in four smaller windows encircling the text. The upper two of the four windows contain a bilingual glossary entry and the inflectional tag respectively. Further clicking on the glossary entry provides possible forms of inflected

words in a new window. The lower two windows contain information about lexical relations (e.g., female equivalent of a masculine noun, etc.) and information about variant markedness. Clickable text additionally features the capability of listening to the audio recording of the text. Appendix 4 offers an example of such clickable text.

Cognizant of the labor-intensive manner of developing lessons in the clickable text format, we have created an accompanying authoring tool which creates clickable text lessons and extracts all lexical items used in the text. The authoring tool is available for perusal at <http://cli.la.asu.edu/clitext.html>. Other similar tools are available at the CLI server services page, with plans in place to add numerous additional authoring tools.

Limitations

The principal limitations of this course are sparse human-to-human interaction and limited exposure to interactive real-life situations. The course thus remains skewed toward reading and writing skills with moderate coverage of listening comprehension and in particular speaking skills. Although there are devices, such as chat rooms (as a surrogate of a direct communication), depositing recordings of one's pronunciation on the server for instructor's review, etc., aimed at alleviating this situation, the only real answer to this problem is realization that, at a higher level of instruction, the participant has to engage in in-class or study abroad immersion learning experience. Another possible, although partial, solution involves contacts with native speakers in the learner's environment. Returning to our parameters discussed above, we can be confident that several years from now technological parameters will no longer present a hurdle, as full audiovisual direct communication will become ubiquitous. However, institutional parameters (i.e., desire for cost effective use of the instructor's time) and various user-related parameters, such as the desire to study at one's own pace, will continue to limit this project in the field of spoken communication.

Other limitations are specific for this project and possible to overcome in a short period of time. These limitations include the not

so attractive aesthetic side of the graphical interface and the moderate quality of the sound recordings.

Follow-up Development

Once this project has been tested (primarily during the 2003 summer CLI) and offered as a course at ASU (probably in the spring of 2004), the following lines of further development will be followed:

- a) monitoring and updating the existing Serbo-Croatian course,
- b) developing similar courseware for other less commonly taught languages at the CLI,
- c) measuring effectiveness of particular segments of the course and comparing it to results obtained in a traditional in-class setting,
- d) establishing a hub for screened on-line assessment of proficiency levels in Serbo-Croatian, using the CLI chat server to anonymously connect an evaluator from anywhere in the world with equally dispersed test takers.

Conclusion

The case of Serbo-Croatian e-offering at the Arizona State University Critical Languages Institute (CLI) demonstrates that, all challenges notwithstanding, on-line delivery of a less-commonly taught language can be used as an effective addition to traditional educational encounters. Concurrently, Serbo-Croatian e-learning objects offer a viable model and ready-made templates for other CLI languages. It is, however, of crucial importance to remain cognizant of the limitations stemming from the sparsity of human-to-human interactions and from technological considerations. E-learning of less commonly taught languages should assume a more prominent role in both instructional and research cycles in anticipation of a steady growth of both demand for such delivery and technological capabilities. Experiences from the ongoing Serbo-Croatian project, once their assessment has been conducted, can offer insight into both impending challenges and tangible advantages of e-learning for less commonly taught languages.

Appendices

Appendix 1

General Description of the Consonants vs. Additional Link for Sophisticated Users

a. General Description (fragment)

<p>Principal rule of reading is one-to-one correspondence between characters and sounds.</p>	<p>This means that every character is always pronounced in the same manner and that every sound is represented with one character only. For example, g is pronounced [g] as in the English 'go' in all of the following words: grad 'city,' gen 'gene,' gimnazija 'high school.' At the same time, there is no other character which represents the same sound.</p>
<p>B, b</p>	<p>Serbo-Croatian B is pronounced in a less tense manner than its English counterpart. <u>Click here to hear it</u></p>
<p>C, c</p>	<p>Although the c sound exists in the English language (e.g., blitz [blic]), it is never used at the beginning of a word. <u>Click here to hear it in the initial position</u></p>
<p>Č č and Ć ć</p>	<p>In the English language there is only one sound between these two Serbo-Croatian (ch as in cherry). The č sound is harder than its English counterpart while the ć sound is softer. Harder means that your tongue has to be stiffer and it has to press against the palate with a limited surface. Softer means that your tongue has to be sloppier and press against the palate with a</p>

	wider surface. Click here to see the position of the tongue. Click here to hear č. Click here to hear ć.
D, d	Serbo-Croatian D is pronounced in a less tense manner than its English counterpart. In addition, Serbo-Croatian is a dental sound whereas its English counterpart is pronounced by pressing the tongue against the lower palate. In order to pronounce the Serbo-Croatian D correctly, one has to lower the tongue and press it against the upper teeth. Click here to see the position of the tongue. Click here to hear it

b. Additional Link for Sophisticated Users (fragment)

Contrastive remarks: There are substantial differences between the two consonant systems. The following table illustrates English approximates of Serbo-Croatian consonants.

Spelling	IPA	English Equivalent	Example
ć	ɕ	ɕ	baba
č	tʃ	t+s	cipela
č	tʃ	tʃ	car
ć	t	tʃ	car
d	d	d	dat
dž	dʒ	dʒ	džak
đ	ɟ	dʒ	đak
f	f	f	film
g	g	g	gar
h	h	h	hit

Appendix 2

Exemplary Fragments of On-line Course Components (Fragments)

a. Cultural competence

LEARNING OBJECTIVES


- [INTRO]
- [CULTURE]
- [GRAMMAR]
- [VOCABULARY]
- [SKILLS]
- [NORMS]
- [TEXT 1]
- [TEXT 2]
- [TEXT 3]
- [TEXT 4]
- [DRILLS]
- [QUIZ]

Help


MAIN MENU


LOGOUT

capital of Republic of Srpska is Banja Luka (also spelled Banjaluka, literally: Bey's pasture). English not yet available for Sarajevo and Banjaluka, look at the pictures now and read it upon completion of the course.




Insignia of the Republic of Srpska (original spelling Republika Srpska).





Insignia of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (original spelling: Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine)



Religious affiliation

Religious affiliation of Serbs, Croats, and Bosnian Muslims is almost perfectly correlated with ethnicity. Serbs are affiliated with the Serbian Orthodox Church, Croats belong to the Croatian Catholic Church whereas Bosnian Muslims adhere to the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina (English not yet available for the Islamic Community page, look at the pictures now and read it upon completion of the course). A considerable number of people in each of the three confessional communities does not engage in religious practices. Each of the communities features elaborate rituals, some of which will be mentioned throughout this course.

Differences in attitudinal and behavioral patterns

An astute observer will undoubtedly notice numerous differences in the patterns of daily life between the American and Serbo-Croatian speaking cultures. Major differentiating features of the region can be summarized as follows:

1. Lesser social stratification than in the USA
2. Stronger community and kinship ties than in the USA
3. Lesser awareness of the law in public life than in the USA

b. Grammar (presentation and drills)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- [INTRO]
- [CULTURE]
- [GRAMMAR]
- [VOCABULARY]
- [SKILLS]
- [NORMS]
- [TEXT 1]
- [TEXT 2]
- [TEXT 3]
- [TEXT 4]
- [DRILLS]
- [QUIZ]

Help

MAIN MENU

LOGOUT

Noun Patterns and Their Major Exceptions

To recapitulate, three major patterns of nominal inflection are as follows:

Gender	Singular	Plural	Example
masculine	U (of)	a	Sg. prozor 'window' Pl. prozori 'windows'
feminine	a	e	Sg. žena 'woman' Pl. žene 'women'
neuter	o/e	a	Sg. selo 'village' Pl. sela 'villages'

Although most nouns follow these defaults, there are small groups of nouns which breach the gender vs. inflection type correspondences, and also those which form the plural in a different manner.

In this lesson we will mention two irregular inflectional patterns:

- feminine nouns ending in a consonant (i.e., with 0 suffix)
- masculine nouns ending in -an -a

Feminine nouns ending in a consonant should be remembered on a case-by-case basis. Most of them ends in -st, but there are also regular masculine nouns with the same sequence at the end. For example, kost 'bone' is feminine, most 'bridge' is masculine. The nouns themselves have the masculine endings in the nominative (subject case) singular and plural. However, all adjectives and adjective pronouns attached to them have the feminine endings. Hence:

Gender	Singular (adjective noun)	Plural (adjective noun)	Example
feminine	a 0	e i	Sg. velika kost 'big bone' Pl. velike kosti 'big bones'

Masculine nouns ending in -an -a should also be remembered on a case-by-case basis. They typically denote masculine

LESSON 1

[RETURN]
[CULTURE]
[GRAMMAR]
[VOCABULARY]
[SKILLS]
[PRACTICE]
[TEXT 1]
[SKILLS]
[QUIZ]

Help

MAIN MENU

LOGOUT

Verb to be Drills

- Make sure to set your encoding to Central European (Windows) and your keyboard to Croatian or Slovene.
- Write in your answer and press the Answer button to get the evaluation.
- Press the Refresh button to redisplay the table of pronouns.

Ja student.
I am a student.

Answer

Correct

One tu.
They (group of females) are here.

Answer

No, type: still men to get the answer.

Ona tamo.
She is there.

Answer

c. Vocabulary

LESSON 1

[RETURN]
[CULTURE]
[GRAMMAR]
[VOCABULARY]
[SKILLS]
[PRACTICE]
[TEXT 1]
[SKILLS]
[QUIZ]

Help

MAIN MENU

LOGOUT

(female)

- spatial designations:

ovo 'this (close to the speaker)', to 'that (close to the listener)', ono 'that (distant from both interlocutors)',
ovde 'here (close to the speaker)', tu 'there (close to the listener)', ondje 'there (distant from both
interlocutors)

- verb to be:

biti 'to be', sam '(I) am', si '(you) are', je '(he/she/it) is', smo '(we) are', ste '(you) are', su '(they) are'

- pragmatic operators:

aha 'oh (when capturing the import of conversation)', zdravo 'hi!', dovidjenja 'bye', dobar dan 'good day'

Please note that in the structure of the Serbo-Croatian vocabulary there is a system linking masculine and feminine profession names. In the English language professions are only seldom marked by gender as in actor (male) vs. actress (female). This gender division is much more common in Serbo-Croatian. This means that more vocabulary items should be learned. There are however two facilitating issues with this regard. First, in many cases the masculine form is neutral. You can thus say *On je profesor*. 'He is a professor (masculine form of the word)' and *Ona je profesor*. 'She is a professor (masculine form of the word)' while the feminine form remains reserved for females. This means that one should first learn the masculine form and be able to function with that form alone. Learning the feminine form should come thereafter. Secondly, the feminine form is derived from the masculine using a limited set of suffixes. The two suffixes found above -ica: *professorica* 'female professor', and -kinja: *studentkinja* 'female student' are among the most productive ones. One should learn them as devices to derive a feminine profession from masculine one.

Serbo-Croatian - English Vocabulary Drill | English - Serbo-Croatian Vocabulary Drill

d. Communicative Skills

LESSON 2

[INFO]

[CULTURE]

[GRAMMAR]

[VOCABULARY]

[SKILLS]

[NOTES]

[TEXT 1]

[TEXT 2]

[TEXT 3]

[TEXT 4]

[DIALOG]

[QUIZ]

[Help]

[MAIN MENU]

[LOGOUT]

Lesson Two, Communicative Skills

The communicative skills for this lesson includes the following:

- Expressing features and qualities:

[noun][verb to be][noun] Marko je profesor 'Marko is a professor', [noun][verb to be][adjective] Soba je velika. 'The room is big'

- Expressing possession:

[demonstrative][verb to be][possessive pronoun][noun] To je moja olovka. 'That is my pencil', [noun][verb to be][possessive pronoun] Olovka je moja. 'He/she/it is...'

- Asking about professions, ethnic and religious background:

Ko si ti? (informal) Ko ste Vi? (formal) 'Who are you?' - expected answer is either name or profession, Šta si ti? (informal) Šta ste Vi? (formal) 'What are you?' - expected answer is nationality, ethnic or religious background

More precise manners of asking these questions will be covered later in the course

- Asking general questions:

Da li [verb to be][pronoun][noun/adjective] Da li je on profesor? Da li je ona visoka? 'Is he a professor? Is she tall?', [verb to be] li [pronoun] [noun/adjective] Jesu li oni studenti? Jesu li one visoke? 'Are they students? Are they tall?'

e. Norms

LESSON 1

[INFO]

[CULTURE]

[GRAMMAR]

[VOCABULARY]

[SKILLS]

[NOTES]

[TEXT 1]

[DIALOG]

[QUIZ]

[Help]

[MAIN MENU]

[LOGOUT]

Lesson One, Norms

The most fundamental rule of Serbo-Croatian spelling is a 1:1 correspondence between the characters (or character sequences in the case of the Latin *ij, nj* and *dž*. One character is thus read in the same manner regardless of its position, and there is only one character (or character sequence) representing each sound. This is formulated by the following rule stated by the 19th century Serbian linguist Vuk Karadžić:

Read as it is written, write as you hear it.

This is quite different than the English situation, where characters become different pronunciation depending on their context and even concrete lexical item. Compare the following examples where the same character has different sound values in English while it remains stable in its pronunciation in Serbo-Croatian:

English	Serbo-Croatian
car c=[k]	car 'tsar' c=[ts]
cent c=[s]	cent 'cent' c=[ts]

More information about Serbo-Croatian sounds as well as their sound clips are available in the section about the [SOUNDS]

In addition to this general difference, there are numerous other minor differences, in particular in with regard to the spelling. Two of such differences are present in this lesson:

- The pronoun 'I' is never capitalized unless it is at the beginning of the sentence

Appendix 3

Example of a Quiz and Its Evaluation (Fragments)

a. Questions

LESSON 1

[HOME]

[CULTURE]

[GRAMMAR]

[VOCABULARY]

[SKILLS]

[NOTES]

[TEXT 1]

[SKILLS]

[QUIT]

[Help]

[MAIN MENU]

[LOGOUT]

5. The character č is pronounced as English:

☒ ch as in charm

☐ s as in pleasure

☐ sh as in shy

B. Fill in the appropriate forms

Ja [sam] profesor. 'I am a professor'


Ona [je] studentkinja. 'She is a student'

To smo [mi]. 'That are we'

Ko [su] oni? 'Who are they'

Ko [si] vi? 'Who are you'

C. Set you keyboard to Croatian or Serbian Latin. Press the arrow to listen to the sound clip. Type in the words as you heard them on the tape.



Word 1: []

Word 2: []

b. Evaluation

LESSON 1

[HOME]

[CULTURE]

[GRAMMAR]

[VOCABULARY]

[SKILLS]

[NOTES]

[TEXT 1]

[SKILLS]

[QUIT]

[Help]

[MAIN MENU]

[LOGOUT]

Answer C1 correct

Answer C2 correct

Answer C3 wrong! The correct answer is: deda

Answer C4 correct

Answer C5 correct

You had 12 correct out of 15 questions, 80 %

Your score in this course is 12 correct out of 15 questions, 80 %

CORRECT ANSWERS:

A. Check the appropriate choices

1. Serbo-Croatian is the first language of:

☐ Serbs, Croats, and Bulgarians

☐ Serbs, Croats, and Slovenians

☒ Serbs, Croats, and Bosnian Muslims

2. Check the incorrect sentence:

☐ Ja sam tu.

☒ Oni ste ovde.

☐ Vi ste tamo.

c. Stored results

Left: Fri Apr 4 06:44:12 2003

Q1 seen Fri Apr 4 09:38:29 2003

11+

12+

13+

14+

15+

16+

17+

18-

19-

110+

111+

112+

113-

114+

115+



Q1 submitted Fri Apr 4 09:42:09 2003 You had 12 correct out of 15 questions, 80 %

Left: Fri Apr 4 09:44:12 2003

Appendix 4

Example of a Clickable Text (Fragments)

a. Main lesson page

<p>LESSON 1</p> <p>←</p> <p>[BACK TO MAIN MENU]</p> <p>←</p> <p>Click on the word in the text to get explanations</p> <p>This lesson's characters are: Milan, male, age: 18, student; Jelena, 40, professor, and Nada, 19, student</p>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; border-bottom: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 10px;"> student, a # m, I student university level only Noun Masculine Nominative Singular </div> <h3 style="text-align: center;">Lesson One, Text One</h3> <p style="text-align: center;">[Click here to hear this text] [Click here for the English translation]</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 30%;"> <p>Zdravo!</p>  <p>Zdravo!</p> <p>Informal</p> <p>ti</p> <p>= you one person Informal</p> </div> <div style="width: 40%; text-align: center;"> <p>Milan: Zdravo! Ja sam student.</p> <p>Jelena: Zdravo! Ja sam profesorica.</p> <p>Nada: Ona je profesorica a on je student.</p> <p>Jelena: Dobar dan! Ko ste Vi?</p> <p>Nada: Dobar dan! Ja sam Nada.</p> <p>Jelena: Ah! A šta ste Vi?</p> <p>Nada: Ja sam studentinja.</p> <p>Milan: I ja sam student.</p> <p>Jelena: Dovidenje! Nada: Dovidenje! Milan: Zdravo!</p> </div> <div style="width: 30%; text-align: right;"> <p>Dobar dan!</p>  <p>Formal</p> <p>Vi</p> <p>= you group of people formal</p> <p>Vi</p> <p>= you (pluradano) one person or group of people formal</p> </div> </div> <p>Soba</p> <p>Ovo je soba. To je krevet. Ono je prozor. Tu je stolica. Tamo je stola. Ovdje je lampa.</p>
<p>student is a male university-level student studentkinja (Serb)/studentica (Cro) is the female equivalent</p>	<p>There are no regional differences</p>

b. Additional window with inflectional forms

Your inquiry **student** (dictionary form) yielded the following:

student

student *nominative singular masculine noun*
 studenta *genitive singular masculine noun*
 studentu *dative singular masculine noun*
 student *accusative singular masculine noun*
 studente *vocative singular masculine noun*
 studentom *instrumental singular masculine noun*
 studentu *locative singular masculine noun*
 studenti *nominative plural masculine noun*
 studenta *genitive plural masculine noun*
 studentima *dative plural masculine noun*
 studente *accusative plural masculine noun*
 studenti *vocative plural masculine noun*
 studentima *instrumental plural masculine noun*
 studentima *locative plural masculine noun*

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