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Language, Identity and Serbian Diaspora Engagement

The importance of language maintenance to Serbia and the UK Serb Diaspora.

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Abstract

This research aims to bridge the gap between academic examinations of diaspora engagement and language and identity, through an examination of the Serb diaspora in the UK, its language policies, and routes of engagement with Serbia. It investigates why culture and more specifically language maintenance is important to Serbs in the UK, why it is important for Serbia as a country, and where or whether these views overlap. The history of Serbia and its diaspora make it a unique case study, as the country has been through several identity shifts, is still bidding for EU accession, and is one of a handful of countries in Europe that are economically close to Third World status. How the diaspora is involved in the development of these latter two issues is extremely important, and the nature of said role will depend on the continuation of certain linguistic standards.

Findings showed that language is central to the Serb identity regardless of contextual differences amongst the diaspora; but that these contextual differences have practical implications in terms of language policies and engagement more generally. Although the Serb community in the UK is diverse and dispersed across the country, its members have many common goals that unite them: to improve linguistic standards amongst British Serbs, to strengthen relationships with Serbia, and to help promote a more positive view of Serbia and its people amongst non-Serb communities. Serbia itself is at a crossroads in its relationship with the diaspora and the future of engagement in an official capacity remains uncertain. However, this highlights the issue of power relations in diaspora engagement, and supports more autonomous theories that diaspora communities are very much in control of their own projects, and mainly seek recognition and support from home-country governments.

Word count: 15 309

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

Serbia has a large estimated Diaspora population (3.5 million) considering its home population size (7.5 million) (Lacroix and Vezzoli 2010) and this is further complicated by the numerous identity shifts these groups have experienced. Diaspora engagement with 'home' is significantly dependent on the context of departure and whether or not they intend to return. The Serbian government Recognising the strength and need for engagement with these groups, the Serbian government established its own Ministry for Diaspora (MfD) in 2003 (Lacroix and Vezzoli 2010) that deals with everything from business and finance partnerships, to cultural and language exchanges. It is this latter set of initiatives that I will be examining.

The MfD announced the imminent launch of an online resource project entitled "Every Serb Speaks Serbian" in January 2012 (Anonymous 2012) This was aimed at providing linguistic and cultural resources for institutions educating children in the Diaspora, covering language, history, and traditional and contemporary culture. At the time of writing, political developments in Serbia have meant that the MfD no longer exists in its original form, leaving the future of this and other engagement policies uncertain. It is therefore a unique point at which to examine the history of engagement between Serbia and its UK diaspora, and the difficulties this has entailed; but also language maintenance within this diaspora and the difficulties they have faced amongst themselves.

In examining diaspora engagement, there has been little attention paid to engagement between diasporas and home countries in a European context. Academic examinations of diaspora engagement have also tended to focus more on financial and political engagement, than cultural and linguistic cooperation. Finally, there seems to be a great deal of literature on diaspora engagement, and on language and identity but very little linking the two. I therefore aim to bridge this gap and investigate why culture and more specifically language maintenance is important to Serbs in the UK, why it is important for Serbia as a country, and where or whether these views overlap.

This dissertation aims to address these questions by examining language and identity in the context of the UK Serb diaspora. It will assess whether a desire to maintain these identities is context-dependent and how; explore the reasons why it is important to Serbia that the

language is maintained abroad; examine Serbian government programmes for language teaching in the diaspora and the extent to which these are relevant to or affect the UK; and look at diaspora responses to these programmes.

Literature Review

This literature review will provide a brief survey of existing work on language and identity, diaspora engagement, and the Serbian context. I will begin by outlining some of the key debates around membership and power relations in diaspora engagement policies, before moving on to examine the national and individual importance of language to identity. Specific details of the Serbian context will be incorporated throughout to provide an overview of the background to both my case study and the broader themes.

Diaspora engagement: Forms, motivations and power relations

I will firstly outline some of the key issues surrounding the term 'Diaspora' so that the subsequent discussion of engagement with these groups makes sense. As one of the most contentious terms in academia, it has experienced a number of contextual shifts that vary from group to group, and even within groups. Broadly speaking, originating from the Jewish experience of displacement from biblical times to present day, diasporas can be defined as "ethnic minority groups of migrant origin residing and acting in host countries but maintaining strong sentimental and material links with their countries of origin – their homelands." (Sheffer 1980 in Dufoix 2003: 21)

In terms of these links, a whole host of policy and rights extensions have developed over the last few decades (Gamlen 2006); but the problem with analysing engagement within these groups arises when we consider that not all diasporas organise themselves along national lines, and therefore do not necessarily have a homeland pull (Sheffer 2003). Brubaker (2005) goes as far as to say that the two key qualifying features in deciding whether or not a diaspora can be classed as such are "orientation to a 'homeland' and … boundary maintenance" (Brubaker 2005: 5). This raises questions on the nature of the Serb diaspora, since their relation to a common 'homeland' is extremely complex and the boundaries of their 'group' are often blurred. However, language is classed by many as essential in the formation and maintenance of group boundaries (Anderson 2002; Joseph 2008; Mills 2005); therefore examining diaspora attitudes towards language is essential in assessing their 'pull'.

Diaspora engagement policies usually refer to specific government projects designed to tighten relationships between diasporas and their homelands. They can take many forms and

occur everywhere, from the richest to the poorest countries (Gamlen 2008). The most common form discussed is financial engagement and the role it plays in the economies of developing countries (Merz et al 2007), which is particularly relevant for Serbia with its massive post-war economic and infrastructural problems. But many governments have recently shifted towards reaching out to their communities abroad politically and culturally (Lacroix & Vezzoli 2010), and diasporas themselves often value these things more (Merz 2007).

It is important, considering the complexity of 'diaspora', to think about who governments are tightening relationships with and why. Motivations vary from country to country but Gamlen (2006) outlines three basic principles underlying diaspora engagement policies: 1) 'capacity building' in terms of support and relationship-building 2) 'extending rights' in terms of citizenship and voting rights, and 3) 'extracting obligations' in terms of financial and business investments (p. 22). Lacroix & Vezzoli (2010: 19) state that Serbian policies are strongly connected to Gamlen's first typology of engagement – 'capacity building'. Initially the Serbian government simply "extended legal rights to Serbians abroad allowing them to participate in elections" (Lacroix & Vezzoli 2010: 19) but it has since "embarked on a comprehensive dialogue with its diaspora and is in the process of creating a network of activities to sustain a long-term dialogue with Serbians abroad and their descendents" (Lacroix & Vezzoli 2010: 16). The diaspora had a strong development focus following the wars in the 1990s (Lacroix & Vezzoli 2010), which has since shifted to Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and trade relations work (Lacroix & Vezzoli 2010). Due to a certain degree of mistrust in government efficiency and honesty, there has been even more significant private investment in things such as property amongst the Serb diaspora (Baraulina et al 2007). This would perhaps change if there were greater dialogue between the diaspora and Serbia, something for which language is essential.

There has always been a great deal of artistic and cultural activity among Serbian and other former Yugoslav diasporas, but the announcement in early 2012 of the "Every Serb Speaks Serbian" programme for children in the diaspora (Anonymous 2012) marked a new phase in cultural engagement. The idea was to increase interaction between diaspora language schools and organisations, the Serbian MfD and the Department of Philology at Belgrade University. For the UK these linguistic projects were still in the early stages of development and with the

absorption of the MfD into an office within the larger Department of Foreign Affairs,[1] potentially indefinitely stalled. The Serbian government has, however, provided Summer schools in Serbia for children of the diaspora, and some educational resources to schools abroad (Lacroix & Vezzoli 2010). In terms of schools outside Serbia, the Ministry successfully "co-financed the opening of Serbian language schools in the South African Republic, Switzerland, Albania, Macedonia, Slovenia, and Croatia." (Anonymous 2012: 11) The cost of land, materials, and teachers in most of these areas is significantly less than in the UK, and the extent to which they were 'co-financed' is unclear. The possibilities of something similar in the UK were therefore always going to be dependent on these factors.

Language policies represent a new form of engagement with unclear motivations because whilst financial and political policies seem more overtly beneficial to homeland governments, cultural support arguably benefits diasporas more. There are suggestions of a shift in focus "to support the activities of associations, especially those that seek to rectify the image of Serbia in the world." (Lacroix & Vezzoli 2010: 13) In the previous government's eyes,[2] Serbia's reputation had been shattered since the wars and it saw its populations abroad as a key way to challenge these negative perceptions (Lacroix & Vezzoli 2010: 13). This is useful in conceptualising engagement because as Goffman (1963) notes, stigma can be a boundary definer in terms of group alignment. So in a shared sense of injustice and prejudice, a seemingly disparate group can unite around a common grievance. Desire for membership in certain international bodies can also influence government decisions to interact with their diasporas in this way (Gamlen 2006). Serbia has consistently pushed for EU membership and is bidding for Belgrade to be European Capital of Culture in 2020. However, Todorova (1997) raises the interesting question of whether or not this competing 'Europeanisation' in the Balkans affects identity at home and abroad (Todorova 1997: 58). In other words, by focussing so strongly on EU accession, are Serbs diluting their own distinctive identity?

Academic examinations of motivations and power relations in diaspora engagement policies mainly centre on arguments between theories drawn from the Foucauldian concept of governmentality (Gamlen 2008; Dean 2010), and more autonomous opinions of diasporas (Merz 2007; Sidel 2007). On the one hand, scholars have noted how the increase in diaspora

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[1] Interview: Milos Stefanovic, UK representative to the Diaspora Assembly, 07/08/2012

[2] New government opinion remains to be seen

engagement policies reflects a postmodern "shift in the object of government from territory to population." (Gamlen 2008: 853) By promoting language abroad, for example, they foster relationships and create a level of control through loyalty and identification beyond territorially defined borders (Gamlen 2006). But equally, diasporas are able to make powerful connections outside of home governments (Sidel 2007), and are increasingly reaching out for guidance on many levels (Merz 2007). Robust engagement policies and demonstration of their efficiency in home countries will increase trust levels between diasporas and homelands, and subsequently improve the nature of future relations (Merz 2007). Finally, to draw again on the idea of diaspora members who do not identify with a homeland, émigrés who do not want any connection with these governments will be outside the realms of any form of control. It is therefore naïve to discuss the diaspora as a passive pawn in government power manoeuvres – especially when discussing the Serb diaspora.

This is due in part to its diversity. The Serb diaspora in the UK certainly feels a connection to Serbia, but the many transitions and waves of migration alter how this connection is defined. The three main waves of migration to the UK were, firstly, the political refugees at the end of the Second World War, followed by economic migrants in the 1970s and 80s, and the last and largest was during the wars in the 1990s (Stanojlović 2010). These differed greatly in outlook and identification. Political refugees after World War II were opposed to communism and the foundations of the second Yugoslav state; those who came to fill labour shortages in the 1970s and 80s were, to a large extent, pro-Yugoslav and Tito, and maintained strong economic and personal ties to the country; and the final wave represents perhaps a mixture of the two (Stanojlović 2010) – some disillusioned by the communist "dream", others distraught at its violent collapse. The strength of both trust and influence of the Serbian government is therefore dependent on these contextual differences.

The Serb diaspora has also demonstrated considerable independence. Diaspora organisations have been financially providing for and supporting linguistic and cultural projects for years (Merz 2007). Homeland governments are therefore merely stepping in to assist where there are existing projects and needs. This can be viewed as a reciprocal gesture to make up for the investment diasporas are making in their countries and to ensure further investment in the future, but they can only assist as far as desire for this kind of engagement exists. In countries with significant needs, such as Serbia, reciprocity is hardly an "immoral" motive or controlling device as long as investment reaches the correct places. It is estimated that "there

are about 1,300 Serbian associations today across five continents" (Lacroix & Vezzoli 2010: 12), and in London alone there are 25-30 000 Serbs and around 20 cultural associations (Stanojlovic 2010). There also exists inter-country coordination in various forms, such as the Serbian Unity Congress established in the USA in 1990 (Lacroix & Vezzoli 2010) and the 2006 assembly for Serbian organisations in Munich (Lacroix & Vezzoli 2010). This demonstrates a very large, structured and organised group that already works on the kinds of projects Serbia has engaged with. If there is a desire amongst these groups for recognition and assistance from Serbia then engagement policies would seem to be a positive progression in diaspora-homeland relations. There is a fear that attachment to home countries limits progress in host countries, but Vertovec (2006) argues that this is more a reflection of negative host country attitudes to diaspora and migrants in general.

Language and identity: the national context

On a broad scale, the role of language in the formation of nations and national identity is hotly debated, although undeniably important. Since the onset of modernity, the success of a nation was based on its ability to function as a unit, which required standardised education and in turn, a standardised language (Hobsbawm 1992). Literacy and knowledge of the standardised language was essential to every citizen's livelihood so there was little opposition to its imposition. However, different variants of language were and still are used in different situations, indicating that "it is a literary and not an existential concept." (Hobsbawm 1992: 57) But language can be politicised in an attempt to forge these existential bonds (Hobsbawm 1992).

Bearing this in mind, I would like to explain why Serbia stands out as a unique case study. In the Serbian context, language has been extremely dynamic. Between the 14th and 19th centuries, the different regions in which Serbs lived changed hands between Ottoman and Habsburg rule. This had direct linguistic influences, combined with those linked to the education opportunities abroad and the migratory patterns associated with Empire (Greenberg 2004). In the early 19th century Vuk Karadžić printed the first Serbian dictionary but academics are still undecided on whether he represents an attempt to create a strong Serbian language and identity, or an early form of the Yugoslav ideology (Greenberg 2004). This is because he worked very closely with parallel linguistic movements in Croatia, and the Yugoslav Academy of Arts and Science, which predated the first Yugoslav state (Lampe 2000). After the 1918 establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes came the

first 'standardised' Serbo-Croat (Lampe 2000) but nobody agrees on whether this was ever a single language or equally, if there were ever three individual languages or just dialectical variants of the same (Greenberg 2004). There is an argument that Serbo-Croat always had a stronger identity outside of the former Yugoslavia (paraphrased Greenberg 2004: 17). In other words, non-Yugoslav countries recognised it more as an official language than the people living within these linguistic borders (Greenberg 2004). The collapse of the state in 1940 led to the fragmentation of a universal Serbo-Croat language, with a re-establishment shortly following the end of World War II (Greenberg 2004). The Novi Sad agreement of 1954 stated "that their (Serbs and Croats) language was unified, but that this unity was achieved through compromise and tolerance of local language variations" (Greenberg 2004: 23); and in 1974 "local … language(s) … gain(ed) official status in the constituent republics" (Greenberg 2004: 23). 1991 saw the total collapse of an official joint language (Greenberg 2004) but already by the mid-1960s there had been Croatian and Serbian nationalist attempts to (re)form their own languages (Greenberg 2004).

To expand on this, Balkan languages are an example of '*Sprachbund*', which is a linguistic term for

> languages that are geographically related, being in the same region and often coterritorial, but not genetically related (in the technical linguistic sense of deriving from the same historical source) yet nonetheless, due to prolonged contact, show resemblances in form and structure. (Joseph 2008: 42)

In the former Yugoslavia in particular, these relationships are blurred further. The key question with Serbo-Croat, and its predecessor and successor languages is whether or not they differ significantly enough to be classed as separate languages, or are simply dialects of the same (Jacobson 2008). The individual languages still follow the same structure and rules that are impossible to move away from without changing the language incomprehensibly (Jacobson 2008). The main alterations in Yugoslav successor states have been lexical because this is 'the only open linguistic category' (Jacobson 2008: 36). The redrawing of borders during and since the wars has not corresponded with the linguistic distribution because it is hard to define who speaks what (Greenberg 2004). A Croatian Serb, for example, now more than likely residing within Serbia's borders, may be more familiar with 'Croatian' than 'Serbian' but now must identify and adapt to Serbian linguistic standards (Greenberg 2004:

15). Whether or not this represents a significant adjustment depends on the individual's personal answer to the Serbo-Croat question.

The dynamism of language in the region is due to the fact that language has constantly been used as either a unifying or de-unifying political tool (Jacobson 2008). There has been active intervention by language planners throughout history and their task since 1991 has been to ensure that each of the languages "gain(s) legitimacy as full-fledged standard languages, not a "BCS" (Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian)." (Greenberg 2004: 57) An existential question for each has been whether to maintain historical connections in the language or sever all ties (Greenberg 2004). In Serbia there is a Committee for the Standardisation of Language, "a sub-committee charged with solving all remaining orthographic issues" (Greenberg 2004: 77) and 7 sub-committees in total (Greenberg 2004). However, their goals and achievements so far remain ambiguous (Greenberg 2004). Competition remains between the successor states and Greenberg (2004) suggests that in Serbia in particular there is a drive to standardise because it is felt that it is the only successor language with no unification and that language is a key socio-cultural identifier (p. 84). What this 'standardisation' entails and people's opinions of it remains to be seen. The impacts for the Serb diaspora would also be different than for those living within the former Yugoslavia, due to them being more removed from the geographical context.

Ethnicities and identities in the region have been extremely fluid. Greenberg (2004) cites the following example:

> a Slav of the Muslim faith born in the Serbian Sandžak around 1930 would have almost certainly switched his ethnic identity three times in the course of his life. In his youth, he probably would have self-identified as a Serb, in Tito's Yugoslavia as a Muslim, and after 1992 as a Bosniac. (p. 7)

This extends across the wider Balkan region "where cultural circles and contact zones are fluid and overlap during all historical periods" (Fol 1995: 109); but also in the UK diaspora. Here there is a complex identity interplay between the Serb, Serbian, and British Serb categories (Britić 2012a). In a survey of attitudes towards identity and language, two thirds of Serbs born in the former Yugoslavia did not describe themselves as purely Serbian (Britić 2012a), there are different faith practices among Serbs from different regions (Britić 2011),

and tensions around the terms Serb/Serbian. The latter signifies those from Serbia proper, whilst the former includes everyone else[3] (Britić 2011). When considering the fluidity of language and identity, differing dialects in the home countries are complex enough but once removed, there are two paths they can follow: 1) differences can become more heightened or exaggerated in the diaspora, or 2) they can slide away, allowing people to unite under a common linguistic and identity framework.

Language and identity: the personal context

On a personal level, language can be the primary signifier "of who we are as people and who we align ourselves with into groups." (Joseph 2008: 45) So it is not simply important due to the historical and cultural markers it attributes, but also because of its role in defining the people it allows us to interact or identify with (Joseph 2008). Language and culture are ways for us to explain or justify difference that makes us uncomfortable, instead of discussing these differences on a deeper level (Anderson 2002). It can therefore be an alienating feature of identity, setting you apart from those around you (Anderson 2002) - a marker of 'foreignness' to some extent (Anderson 2002: 121).

There are values and meaning embedded in language (Bokhorst-Heng 1999) that, when living abroad, can serve as a foil or counterpoint to the English or Western values that many feel are corrupting their youth (Bokhorst-Heng 1999). Language use abroad can also form bonds between communities, and a barrier against perceived oppression or ostracisation from host societies (Hewitt 1992; Willis 2002). Some families in Bockhorst-Heng's (1999) study felt that submitting to a language other than your "own" leaves you culture-less – neither one thing nor the other. But as she and others observe, it more often than not makes you something new (Bokhorst-Heng 1999) – a 'hybrid' able to borrow from and understand all elements of your cultural make-up (Iyall Smith 2008). We can accept and interact with multiple languages and facets of identity so in compartmentalising, we display a limited knowledge of how they function (paraphrased Bockhorst-Heng 1999: 172).

Language is essential in maintaining family bonds, as many feel that these can never be strong where linguistic barriers exist (Bokhorst-Heng 1999). In multilingual households, the language children choose to communicate in can even be seen by parents as a personal

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[3] Bosnian Serb, Croatian Serb, British Serb

rejection or source of conflict in familial relationships (Anderson 2002). So it occupies no small space in terms of personal identity in diaspora communities. For children themselves, whilst potentially confusing, language or 'code-switching' is not as important as for their parents, especially in early life (Anderson 2002). They are quite often able to speak comfortably in all of their heritage languages but naturally choose to swap between the words available to them in each, in order to express themselves more fully (Swayne 2011). Swayne (2011) even cites code-switching as 'a form of mental exercise' that is good for brain function and development.

A key issue in terms of language and identity is that of identification versus ascription, the former being how you self-identify and the latter being an identity that is imposed on you by another person or group (Jenkins 1994). These can correlate or contradict official opinions on language, but in all cases can be subjective or manipulated (Greenberg 2004). Connected to this is the linguistic concept of familiarity, which "involves drawing boundaries between what is within your comfort zone and what lies outside of that comfort zone" - just as with identity in general (Joseph 2008: 48). What we judge to be familiar is not necessarily linguistically the most similar (Joseph 2008) and in times of conflict, dialects become a key definer of identity, ethnicity and politics (Greenberg 2004) - nowhere more so than the former Yugoslavia, where

> language has functioned as a means to exert control and influence over societies torn apart by ethnic conflicts. The citizens of these societies are discovering that the language you speak defines your place in society and marks your ethnic identity and even your political orientation. The accent you display lands you a job, or brands you a traitor. (Greenberg 2004: 159)

So people can feel pressured into accepting linguistic standards to prove their loyalty and citizenship (Greenberg 2004). When even within Serbia and different Serb enclaves there exist different dialects and forms of linguistic identification (Joseph 2008), what are the implications for people living outside of these borders?

Additional to politics and identity, there are practical motivations behind language acquisition, and to some extent loss (Wright 2002). Bilingualism can assist with cognitive development – transferring management of multiple languages to management of multiple

skills (Swayne 2011); it can help in understanding other cultural differences (Iyall Smith 2008); and less abstractly, it can open up educational and employment opportunities by providing children with an additional skill. In bi- or multilingual households languages occupy different spaces and serve different functions. Bokhorst-Heng (1999) writes about the Singaporean context but the same can be said for other linguistic groups:

> while English is for *new knowledge*, to support the development of a modern industrial nation, mother-tongue is for *old knowledge*, to keep the people anchored and focused amidst the changes around them. (p. 172)

So there is a belief that home country or additional family languages can allow you to stay grounded, or provide you with cultural traits and sensitivities that you might not otherwise be exposed to. Connected to this is the knowledge that social networks are important to language maintenance (Reynolds 2002). If you have no ties to your home country or people who speak its language, then there is little incentive to retain it. This demonstrates that the importance of language is not always as a personal, cultural identifier and can be linked to more practical everyday concerns.

Methodology

My data was primarily gained through individual interviews, informal discussions and attendance at community events.[4] I incorporated findings from an earlier survey conducted by Britić Magazine (Smiljanić 2012) but was unable to perform my own analysis due to restricted access to the raw data sets. Because of the variety present in the UK Serb diaspora, I designed my research sample to be broadly representative of the 3 main migration waves identified in my literature review, and to have a reasonable split between official and personal responses. This could be seen as an example of 'theoretical sampling' (Eisenhardt 2002), because I wanted to select participants that would test my theoretical hypothesis (Eisenhardt 2002) that these factors would impact language maintenance and its role in identity formation amongst the UK Serb diaspora. I spoke with 21 individuals in total, ranging in age, background and linguistic ability. 6 were officials in some capacity, 4 teachers, and 12 parents.[5] Table 1, detailing parents interviewed, demonstrates my success in encapsulating each of the major migration waves from Serbia or ex-Yugoslavia to the UK.

Name[6]	Place of origin	Children	Migration waves represented	Additional notes
Aleksandar	British born, half-Serbian	2 children <10	2 and 4[7]	Wife is from Serbia so represents 2 waves of migration
Branka	British born, half-Montenegrin	2 children <10	2	
Jelena	Novi Sad, Serbia (half Hungarian)	2 adult children	2	
Ljubica	Serbia	<10	4	
Darko	Croatia	2 children <10	3	

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[4] Community dancing and music events

[5] One official was speaking to me in two capacities – as an official and a parent – so I coded his responses differently. I used his real name for official responses and a fictional name for his personal responses. The total number was, therefore 21.

[6] All names of parents have been changed

[7] Wave 4 is an additional inclusion of the post-war wave, which I have not been examining specifically

Pavle	British born half-Serb/half-Greek	<10	1	
Stevan	British born Croatian-Serb	2 children <12	2	
Tanja	British born Croatian-Serb	1<10	1	
Uros and Sonja	Croatia	<12	3	
Radmila	Serbia	4 adult children	1	
Ivana	Croatia	1 child <12 and an 18 year-old	3	

Table 1: Details of parents interviewed

These, along with my official and teacher interviews,[8] took place over 3 months. I had set myself the goal of 2 – adjusted from my initial allocation of 1[9] - but some key interviewees were unavailable until later in my schedule. I had some personal contacts to begin with but in order to increase the quantity and quality of my data, I identified some of the main umbrella organisations and community service providers in the UK, but more specifically London. My primary official contact was Olga Stanojlović of the Serbian Council of Great Britain, whose role includes significant involvement in the working group on Serbian language teaching in the UK. Due to her connection with this group and the ongoing nature of meetings and coordination, she was able to help me start a 'gatekeeper' or 'snowballing' process (Valentine 1997). I include both technical terms because in helping me to access other language teachers and officials, her role as representative of the Serbian Council helped me to gain access through a well-respected central, or 'gatekeeper', organisation (Valentine 1997). But my subsequent interviews with these language teachers started a process of continual referral, also known as 'snowballing' (Valentine 1997). Although there can be issues of bias in these processes (Valentine 1997), the Council has contacts with such a broad range of people and the community was consistently helpful in expanding my connections, that any initial effects of bias will have been lessened, although by no means eradicated.

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[8] See appendix figure 7

[9] See original research schedule from from my initial proposal, attached at the end of this dissertation (p. 53)

I conducted my interviews utilising a pre-prepared question protocol[10] and captured the information on an electronic recording device, where permission was granted. Participants were provided with an information sheet[11] detailing the project, their access and participation rights, and anonymity agreements where appropriate.[12] Although I had key questions and points I wanted to get out of each interview, they largely followed a semi-structured format, allowing for freedom and diversity in responses, and for ideas to develop more fluidly throughout the research process (Valentine 1997). I altered the questions depending on whom I was talking to, as their roles in the diaspora would determine what questions, or the phrasing of questions asked. Questions were also added and removed as the project progressed based on knowledge gained by increased exposure to the community (Madison 2005). I ensured that they took place in environments that were comfortable and convenient for participants, and safe for all involved. These were mostly cafes, schools, offices and community centres, with one interview taking place in a participant's home. In cafes there was the added disadvantage of noise however, my recording device had an effective noise cancellation setting that, along with volume control, made interviews easy to understand and transcribe.[13] Some official contacts were based outside of London, and even the UK, so here a telephone interview was arranged. There were no significant disadvantages to this, as the speakerphone setting was efficient enough that the sound quality was almost as strong as a face-to-face interview.

My primary focus was London but due to some very strong leads, I expanded my research to include the Bedford community. This, combined with the initial Britić national findings (Smiljanić 2012), meant that I had sound comparison data. Survey data in itself can be superficial and restrictive (Sapsford 1999) especially as I was not the designer of it; but combined with in-depth, more regionally specific data it was ideal to broaden my sample. Bedford was helpful to my research in more specific ways because most of the interviewees I spoke to in London were from or connected to the early migration waves, and most were

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[10] Samples of a parent and official question sheet can be found in appendix figures 4 and 5

[11] A sample informtation sheet can be found in appendix figure 3

[12] I changed all participant names in this report with the exception of respondents in official positions, such as Embassy employees, and Serbian Council and Diaspora Assembly members. Where real names were used, this was agreed to by participants.

[13] A sample transcription can be found in appendix figure 6

from Serbia proper. From meeting with parents at the Bedford school, I was able to gain not only data from Serbs of Croatian origin, but with some from the 1990s refugee group. This enabled me to investigate and compare the complex nature of identity in a situation where your nation-state is not actually your home country, with the groups that were Serbian from Serbia. With some interviews in this group and first generation migrants more generally, there were language issues. Whilst the level of English amongst respondents was high, some questions were misunderstood on a semantic level and my Serbian is not of an adequate level to explain. Some interviews may therefore have benefited from an interpreter or a higher level in my own linguistic skills.

By attending events and conducting some parental interviews at community schools, I was able to observe a more relaxed and informal side to participants and the community in general. I was also able to see how a few of the schools functioned, and how children engaged with each other in a Serbian language environment. Nothing that was said in these settings has been used directly without permission, but it has been able to feed into and inform my general understanding of the community, and the role that language plays in it. This could be classed as an informal ethnographic approach, where I have applied formal modes of analysis to a more informal or 'hanging around' technique (Agar 1980: 137). These observations enhanced and informed my interview, survey and literature review material. Including my official interviews and event attendance, I spoke with around 30 people throughout the research period.

Transcriptions were done using Express Scribe software and were completed on a rolling basis. In other words, I transcribed each recording as soon as possible after the interview had taken place. This was to save work from piling up at the end of my research, but also so that I did not forget significant body language details and nuance (Valentine 1997). In the final stages, I opted to code manually as it helped me to know and analyse my data better. As I only had 21 interviews and 101 codes, it was not difficult to do this without the relevant software.[14] An 'overlap of data analysis with data collection' (Eisenhardt 2002: 15) was employed throughout to allow for flexibility in my research, a strengthening of my theory, and an ongoing process of refinement in my analysis that helped in the final stages (Eisenhardt 2002). My analysis cannot be categorised as impartial due the methods employed

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[14] Transcription code summary data can be found in appendix figure 8

and my own position as a researcher, but this is often the case in ethnographic and, more generally, qualitative research (Madison 2005). As arguments against realist assumptions of 'knowing' a subject through this interactive approach state, it is important to acknowledge that both sides contribute to bias (Hammersley 2002), and "are in partnership and dialogue as they construct memory, meaning and experience together." (Madison 2005: 25)

Findings: Chapter One

The benefits and realities of linguistic engagement

In this opening chapter I will examine the practical motivations and benefits of language maintenance for both Serbia and its diaspora. I will do this by firstly setting out the parameters of Serbian engagement with the UK on language issues so that the subsequent discussion of my findings makes sense, before moving on to discuss these benefits in more detail.

In terms of educational resources, there are multiple engagement routes between the UK and Serbia, of which the MfD and Ministry for Education are only a part. An interesting development since the start of my research is that the functions and functionaries of the MfD have completely altered following the Serbian elections in May, which dramatically reshaped the political landscape of the country.[15] Unfortunately, there is a great deal of opposition amongst the diaspora to the recently appointed head of the new and smaller office, Dubravka Filipovski (Britić 2012c), which will undoubtedly affect future relations and existing engagement projects. At the time of interview however, representatives from the Diaspora Assembly (DA) maintained that this did not signify an end to engagement on language policies:

> It doesn't stop our work and it doesn't stop our links to Serbia and its institutions. It just means that with a new government, with a new parliament, with the new ministries, we'll have to renew our efforts and contacts in order to understand who is the most appropriate to help out.[16]

An additional reason why changes to Serbian government do not overly affect engagement between the UK diaspora and Serbia are because it has never been the single, main organ through which these policies are shaped. The other major players are the Faculty of Philology at the University of Belgrade, Azbukum[17] in Novi Sad and the Serbian Orthodox Church. The first two are in a unique position to assist with diaspora education - the former because of its

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[15] Interview: Milos Stefanovic, UK representative to the Diaspora Assembly, 07/08/2012

[16] Interview: Milos Stefanovic, UK representative to the Diaspora Assembly, 07/08/2012

[17] Abukum is a Serbian language school in Serbia, established to teach Serbian as a foreign language to the significant number of ethnic minorities in the Novi Sad region.

"Serbian as a Foreign Language" (SFL) department, the latter due to its extensive experience of teaching SFL. The Church is also well placed to provide teaching materials, albeit for a specific group of educators, given its long-established connection with its diaspora communities around the world and the educational roles attached to this.[18] The main Serbian assistance outside of resourcing has been planned cooperation in opening a formally recognised Serbian school covering KS1-KS3.[19] However, the school selected for this function was the Church School "Sveti Sava" which decided to pull out, therefore delaying the project.[20] Political developments in Serbia also mean that it is unlikely this would have gone ahead even if the church had remained in the project. These proposals demonstrate, however, the relatively low-cost to Serbia in terms of financial investment. Its engagement so far has been in lending its support and acknowledgement to existing diaspora projects in the UK, and adapting resources already in circulation in Serbia.[21] In looking to adapt an already existing school, there is no extra cost for the physical space or educators, other than potential training sessions.

Due to the economic and political volatility in Serbia, the main initiatives in diaspora language teaching currently taking place are within the UK diaspora itself - with the setting up of the working group on language and the campaign for the reintroduction of Serbian GCSE and A-Level. Teachers from across the UK have been meeting regularly to devise a syllabus for all ages, drawing on experience, expertise and the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) model of language learning. The aim of Serbian involvement in this has been to work on 'harmonising the efforts' at home and abroad,[22] and to come up with some sort of model that could be universally adapted to fit the needs of Serb communities around the world.[23] The main practical issues for the UK diaspora are what routes it trusts most – not from a political, but from a practical perspective - and juggling the needs of the different communities and schools already in existence. Their key aims are structure and recognition,

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[18] An example of Church-provided resources can be seen in appendix figures 1 and 2

[19] Interview: Mirjana Lazić, UK representative to the Ministry for Diaspora 13/07/2012
[20] Interview: Mirjana Lazić, UK representative to the Ministry for Diaspora 13/07/2012
[21] Interview citations for this include Marina Marković, Serbian Embassy 01/06/2012 and Mirjana Lazić, UK representative to the Ministry for Diaspora 13/07/2012

[22] Interview: Marina Marković, Serbian Embassy 01/06/2012

[23] Interview: Olga Stanojlović, Serbian Council 12/06/2012

whether this comes from Serbia, the UK or both. However, the UK diaspora is being shrewd because rather than hoping that one or both of these plans will work out, they are proactively formulating the syllabus and exams so that even if formal recognition cannot be granted, they have a structured programme that parents will have confidence in – based on the GCSE, even if the name is different. This is an important project because currently the standard is felt to not be universally good enough.[24] By bringing together highly qualified teachers within the Serb diaspora, they can help to address this issue.

The rewards of investment in these projects for Serbia are numerous. Through a combination of improved diaspora linguistic comprehension and advances in communication technology, Serbia could draw on the experience, expertise and financial success of its diaspora; but "they (currently) have a language barrier"[25] that needs to be crossed. Remittances contribute significantly to Gross Domestic Product (Lacroix and Vezzoli 2010), and there is a general willingness amongst the diaspora to contribute to the future development and prosperity of Serbia. Considering this and the low cost of existing plans, language policies would seem like a sound investment for the government; and improvements in communication technology drive these costs down even further. Bearing this in mind, Filipović and Putnik (2010) argue that Serbia should establish a "Diaspora University":

> Diaspora University is not necessarily a university as we know it… but rather an emergent property of networking of experts in diaspora, across disciplines, across institutional, cultural or national borders. (p. 74)

Through online coordination between Serbian Universities, businesses, and their diaspora equivalents, there can be a mutually reinforcing "framework designed to enhance the transformation of brain drain into brain grain through brain chain (networks)." (Filipović and Putnik 2010: 77) Considering the significant scale of 'brain drain' in Serbia,[26] this is something it would benefit greatly from. The Jamaican Diaspora Foundation operates under a similar system "through a diaspora skills database, cataloguing skills of diaspora members

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[24] Interview: Marta (teacher) 31/05/2012

[25] Interview: Mirjana Lazić, UK representative to the Ministry for Diaspora 13/07/2012

[26] Cited, for example, by Milos Stefanovic, UK representative to the Diaspora Assembly, 07/08/2012 and Darko (teacher) 28/05/2012

interested in giving back to Jamaica." (Merz 2007: p. 201) Jamaica however does not have to cope with the same level of linguistic barriers between home country and diaspora as Serbia because the official language of Jamaica is English. Before Serbia could think to initiate such a project, there would have to be some kind of investment in raising linguistic standards.

The "diaspora is not only an unexploited national resource… (but also represents) marginalised constituencies" in many cases (Filipović and Putnik 2010: 72). This was noted in relation to the lack of UK recognition in terms of reinstating the Serbian GCSE and A-Level exams, as it was felt that many Serb students, like other minority language communities, were at a disadvantage and this would help them to gain confidence and additional qualifications.[27] Serbian recognition would also help to alleviate any sense of marginalization, due to the symbolic gesture of celebration and inclusion of the diaspora in the country's future. With the recent political developments in Serbia, the progression of this recognition is uncertain but the UK diaspora is already focused on ensuring that they can work independently of the government, allowing them to seek assistance at a later stage but not be reliant on government support. The diaspora could also look to private companies in the region. Telekom Srbja, for example, is working on a communications projects that could undoubtedly have linguistic benefits:

> The Internet portal for our co-nationals in the Diaspora is intended to provide news on events in all spheres of social life in Serbia and the surroundings, the most recent current events in sport, culture, music etc. Through the Internet portal our Diaspora will be able to watch Web TV and to purchase products and services in the so-called Internet shop and to send them to the addresses of their relatives and friends in Serbia. (Lučić 2012: 59)

This would alleviate some of the problems associated with learning Serbian in an English-speaking environment, as lack of access to Serbian cultural media was cited as a significant barrier to diaspora language acquisition.[28] Other private companies may be able to invest in more language-specific ways, allowing an ongoing connection with Serbia outside of official government channels.

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[27] Interview: Olga Stanojlović, Serbian Council 12/06/2012

[28] Interview: Milos Stefanovic, UK representative to the Diaspora Assembly, 07/08/2012

There are many practical motivations for language maintenance for the diaspora as well as for Serbia itself. Outside of familial relations, the main benefits cited were that it provides cultural grounding in today's globalised, Westernised world; it helps with understanding and contributing to multiculturalism; it can act as a protective barrier from social exclusion at home and abroad; and it can help with education and employment. In terms of cultural heritage,

> language is a way of passing on identity, cultural codes, local values – some of which are the same worldwide but some are very specifically Serbian and important.[29]

So it is felt that through language, as noted by Bockhorst-Heng (1999), you can access a different set of values that can be added to Western, or in this case British ones. Many minority language communities feel that the dominant culture has moved away from valuing and respecting family and the home, and that by maintaining their own language alongside the more positive elements of British society, they can maintain a more traditional culture in the space of the home. From a literal point of view, the 'ethnosemiotics' (Schubert 1995) of Serbian language can be seen in the importance attached to words for home and family. Their frequency and adaptability demonstrates the position these things hold in Serbian culture.[30] 'Ethnosemiotics' can be described as the process of not only recognising patterns of signs in language and culture, but "of encoding and decoding (these) signs." (Schubert 1995: 91) The recurring themes of family and home in Serbian can therefore add to the feeling that as well as deterioration in family relationships, language loss can lead to a 'potential loss of family values.' (Mills 2005: 267) As Schubert (1995: 91) notes: "One of the most important mechanisms of culture is the production of codes" and identification with culture is dependent on the incorporation of these codes into a 'narrative of belongingness.' (Anthias 2001: 622)

The benefits of language to living in a multicultural society were raised frequently in interviews. It was felt that there was an opportunity in the UK to share cultures that in many

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[29] Interview: Marina Marković, Serbian Embassy 01/06/2012

[30] Interview: Olga Stanojlović, Serbian Council 12/06/2012

places, Serbia included, there was not; but the only way to participate in this exchange was to connect with all aspects of your own culture:

> London is so multicultural, and we have to live with and understand each other. But if you don't know your own culture, you can't understand others.[31]

This is because by engaging with the idea of being in some way 'Other', you are better placed to understand other people's experience of it. Hybridity allows you to fit into multiple spaces and contexts by providing you with "the ability to negotiate across barriers." (Iyall Smith 2008: 4) However, Anthias (2001) questions this overly celebratory image of globalisation and hybridity, as the translation skills and other benefits are not universally available (paraphrased Anthias 2001: 637). What's more, there is a "post-modern emphasis on difference and identity" rather than practical concerns like equality and inclusion (Anthias 2001: 638). Language in many ways can and does bridge the two, due to all of the other practical benefits discussed in this chapter. There was some debate over how the UK Serb diaspora was or should contribute to multiculturalism. For many, community traditions were felt to be outdated, and the diaspora should focus on more contemporary, hybrid cultures;[32] whereas others felt there was a need to focus on tradition and heritage culture because that is what they are losing, along with the language.[33] This is not, however, a new dilemma:

> One complaint we always made as kids was that we were trying to live and behave in a Serbian society that was sort of from the 1930s, which was the last time they (his parents) were there. So they come over, and they do things… they promote Serbian culture but it's not present day Serbian culture.[34]

Pavle is a second generation British Serb. His father and the community he was raised in were from the first wave of migration at the end of the Second World War, and Pavle felt that by embracing the Serbian culture they had grown up around, they were actually in a way

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[31] Interview: Danica (teacher) 04/06/2012

[32] Interview citations include Stevan and Pavle (parents) 17/06/2012

[33] Interview citations include Tanja (parent) 17/06/2012

[34] Interview: Pavle (parent) 17/06/2012. In this case '…' indicates a hesitation in speech, not that a section of the quote was cut out.

distancing themselves from Serbia itself. This is not surprising given this group's political views,[35] but these are the traditions that have been continued down the generations and represent the 'living in a time warp' dangers inherent in over-diasporisation, highlighted by Anthias (2001: 628).

When discussing social exclusion, it was felt that Serbian language could act as a protective barrier for children. In the UK, it allowed them to access a community in which there would be no prejudice towards their 'foreignness'. Through the social aspect of language learning they would also get "to know that there are other people like (them) … who share the same or similar background."[36] But social exclusion was an issue within the community as well, and more specifically when placed back in a Serbian-speaking country. It was felt that there was only so far you could go in convincing people back 'home' of your Serb identity without the supporting language capability. Protection from negative Serbian attitudes was a key motivation cited by respondents for teaching their children the language.[37] They felt it was their obligation as parents to make sure that they protected their children as far as possible from bullying and social exclusion. Permanent return to Serbia was not necessarily an issue but most of the families retained strong regional ties, either through family or vacationing. Their children would therefore be regularly placed in an environment in which people would expect them to communicate in Serbian. So they needed to be provided with this tool to prevent the ridicule caused by marking themselves as 'outside' the linguistic community borders (Joseph 2008). This relates to Düttman's (2000) concept of recognition in a multicultural context. It is not enough to self-identify as Serb, but external recognition through language comprehension or other cultural markers "incorporate(s) a contingent *I* into the community of a deeply rooted We." (Düttman 2000: 3) As one parent said:

If we're going to sum up why we bring our kids here, it would be so that they're not outsiders.[38]

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[35] As discussed previously, the first significant wave of migrants after the Second World War were political refugees and therefore not connected to or supportive of communist and subsequent structures in the region.

[36] Interview: Darko (parent) 17/06/2012

[37] Interview citations include Ivana, Stevan and Uros (parents) 17/06/2012

[38] Interview: Stevan (parent)17/06/2012

Again, this feeds into linguistic theories, such as Anderson's (2002: 121), that language can act as a marker of 'foreignness.' By providing their children with Serbian linguistic tools, parents feel they are protecting them from being 'foreign' to any of their 'home' identities. The migration patterns caused by wars and long-term economic crisis have meant that a lot of the life trajectories within families have become so diverse that the only thing that binds them is Serbian language. It therefore acts as the catalyst and key definer of broader familial groups and interactions (Joseph 2008) in many Serb diaspora cases, and it would be useful if there were universal access to a certain standard of education in Serbian language for diaspora communities to strengthen these ties.

A final and very important set of benefits in embracing a hybrid identity through language existed around education and employment issues. Almost half of respondents cited the benefits of Serbian to learning other languages.[39] The most obvious benefits are to other Slav languages but also, due to its history and geography, Serbian borrows and adapts words from German, French, Italian, Hungarian, Greek and Turkish (Greenberg 2004).[40] Languages are extremely important for communication between and across communities. Even though globalisation is often cited as a reason for less people learning languages other than English, in reality it is an argument for learning more (Block and Cameron 2002). It is good for business, employment and travel opportunities, and this, it was felt, would only improve with the projected increase in trade with Serbia – either as part of EU accession, or general financial and business investment in the region.[41] It was also stated by some that in today's tough climate, having an extra language on your transcripts might be the thing that gets you noticed by employers or universities. In the case of Serbian, because of its relationship to other languages, it can be particularly useful in all fields. Here is a good example:

> My youngest daughter, she was born in England but she speaks French, Russian, Italian and Spanish, and (her) Serbian is normal, fluent like in English. And now she's (an) A&E consultant, (and for) all Eastern European patients, she's being called because she can understand them more and if you have older patients, they feel much

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[39] 8/21 respondents

[40] Interview: Aleksandar (parent) 26/05/2012

[41] Interview citations include Marina Marković, Serbian Embassy 01/06/2012 and Olga Stanojlović, Serbian Council 12/06/2012

more confident and much more sure they can say what they can say … She took Russian for A level which is usually not something advisable for the medicine because for the medicine you have to have maths, physics, chemistry and biology. But instead of physics, she took Russian literature. But when she went for interview, the professor (was) much more interested in Russian than biology or chemistry. It's something different and nowadays they're … looking for something more you can offer.[42]

The case of Danica's daughter highlights almost all of the key benefits in language, and specifically Serbian language acquisition in the diaspora, because it has helped her both in her chosen career and in gaining a place to study for this career. Danica does, however, admit that it is only a benefit amongst the more generally ambitious. In other words, additional language skills are not the only key to success but in many fields they can significantly assist you in achieving it.

All of the above demonstrates the importance of language to the UK Serb diaspora, and the practical benefits of engagement around language to both Serbia and its diaspora. With the large-scale exit of highly skilled citizens from Serbia for decades, and its considerable economic and development issues, investment in linguistic improvement amongst these groups would see significant returns. For diaspora members equally, the ability to speak an additional language not only helps to maintain and develop a connection to their 'home' identity, but also provides them with a life skill that can benefit them in their new 'host' society.

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[42] Interview: Danica (teacher) 04/06/2012

Findings: Chapter Two

Heterogeneity in the UK Serb diaspora and its implications for linguistic cooperation

This chapter will examine the more emotional elements of engagement and the ability of language to overcome personal differences. The diversity of the UK Serb diaspora significantly impacts the practicalities and possibilities of engagement on language policies, and relationships with Serbia itself. But all differences aside, interviews showed that language, and connecting children to family culture and history was an important area for union.

In reference to the diaspora, "two Serbs, three opinions" is a phrase I heard often in my research; and very accurately encapsulates the diversity in both the diaspora and their responses to questions on language, identity and Serbia. Combined with the personal differences that make language teaching difficult – where people are from, what they consider the language, politics and faith of identity to be - are the practical ones – children of differing levels all in the same class due to shortage of schools and funds. The two main differentiations that came out of my research were between religious and secular community members; and Serbia- or ex-Yugoslavia-born parents, and British Serb parents. The first category of difference relates practically to engagement with Serbia and the structuring of a universal language programme for diaspora Serbs. As mentioned previously, the church school represented the most favourable conditions for the establishment of an official supplementary school in the UK however, they opted out. This has upset some members of the community involved in language instruction but equally, there are some parents who would never even consider sending their children to a church affiliated school:

> They do lessons at the church and I don't want them learning all of that stuff. It's not just the religion they teach them, they teach a lot about the Chetnik way of life and that whole royalist thing and I'm not having it. They can learn that for themselves later. In a more balanced context. Not the way they're going to be taught there.[43]

Regardless of whether or not this opinion is correct, it would significantly impact the results of making the designated school church-based and highlights an element of distrust amongst some members of the diaspora, related to the various migration waves from Serbia or ex-

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[43] Interview: Branka (parent) 26/05/2012

Yugoslavia to the UK. Branka (quoted above) is the child of Yugoslav economic migrants and was brought up identifying with a Yugoslav rather than a royalist or traditionalist mindset, which given its equal status as outcast under the Tito regime became closely tied with the Serbian Orthodox Church. There is a strong belief amongst many members of the Serb diaspora that religion and education should not mix.[44] However this is complex, as many community languages are tied to religious institutions or values (Harris et al 2002; Warner and Wittner 1998). This is usually because religious spaces are the most visible community institutions and have a wider support network through their global religious diasporas (Levitt 2004). Serbia is a relatively small country but the Serbian Orthodox Church has branches around the world due to the large Serb diaspora.[45]

Amongst the more Yugoslav objections to church instruction is the desire to move away from what many view as a closed avenue of instruction. Even those who are religious acknowledge the importance of finding a more universal and open means of accessing a 'Serb' identity.[46] Some believe that having language instruction attached to the church separates out the communities that speak Serbian or, as many still surprisingly view it, Serbo-Croat:

> You know about the war in Bosnia and everything? And all these really severe hostilities – being hostile towards someone who speaks your language, so you understand him, but has a Muslim name. I really have a problem with that because my identification and how I see it as a linguist is through language, rather than through religion.[47]

So there is evidence of a sense of unity in the diaspora and a desire to incorporate all members of the language community regardless of faith, geography or political beliefs. Having spoken to representatives from the church and its school, they seem a lot more open to difference than was implied by these comments but admitted that this was very much

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[44] Interview citations include Marta (teacher) 31/05/2012, Branka (parent) 26/05/2012, Aleksandar (parent) 26/05/2012

[45] Interview: Father Dragan Lazic, Head of the Serbian Orthodox Church in London, 20/07/2012

[46] Interview: Stevan (parent)17/06/2012

[47] Interview: Marta (teacher) 31/05/2012

dependent on who was in charge at any given time.[48] So as Levitt (2008: 774) states, it is important "to distinguish between the public politics of religious communities and what its individual members believe." The church may be seen as a closed community due to its Orthodox focus but individual members, especially in the language school, may be more open to difference and cooperation. However, in teaching language the reverse is true for both sides – individual beliefs have to be set aside if a coherent programme and policy for language instruction amongst the British Serb diaspora is to be achieved.

Many Yugoslav, or children of Yugoslav migrants spoke fondly of the height of diaspora engagement during this period. There was more money, which translated into officially recognised schools that followed the same curriculum as schools in Yugoslavia. However, some church affiliated people had other opinions of what diaspora engagement meant under Tito's rule:

> They didn't have a Ministry for Diaspora before. They just had agents they sent to kill people outside the country. They used to kill so many people… and a church in those days would be looked upon like an enemy of the country.[49]

Differing views on historical engagement by no means represent a fundamental contemporary rift, as Yugoslavia no longer exists so the difference of opinion is not related to the current state of affairs. It does mean that the church has a long history of organising itself and that there are a strong number of diaspora members who look to it as their primary source of support. This is not surprising as religion often influences how rooted people are in host countries (Levitt 2008), and acts as a meeting point for diaspora members where they can find information about practical life issues as well as spiritual guidance (Levitt 2008). With already the largest Serbian language school in the UK, the church sees its main links for improving diaspora education as coming from pre-existing religious networks.[50] This does not exclude cooperation with the broader working group on language in the UK but it has given them more freedom than other parties to pull out; highlighting the key issue in

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[48] Interview: Danica (teacher) 04/06/2012

[49] Interview: Danica (teacher) 04/06/2012

[50] Interview: Father Dragan Lazic, Head of the Serbian Orthodox Church in London, 20/07/2012

organising around language instruction in the Serb diaspora, which is that everyone has a common goal in wanting to improve the availability and quality of Serbian language instruction but nobody agrees on how it can be achieved. The church was receptive to Serbia's newfound but temporary willingness to help, yet ultimately opted out of its scheme and still values religious over secular routes of engagement. This decision is contradicted in Serbian Orthodox churches in other countries. South Africa, for example, saw the establishment of the first MfD recognised supplementary school based in an existing church school in 2009 (Ministry of Religion and Diaspora 2009). Equally, some secular people would like an officially recognised supplementary school but would be hesitant about it existing within a religious space, even if this were the most feasible option.

All of the above can be linked back to academic ideas on membership groups and what these are based on (Lacroix & Vezzoli 2010). Although most respondents were proudly Serb, what this meant to each was highly complex. It is certainly not a collective national identity because many people in the Serb diaspora define themselves as Yugoslav, or are Bosnian or Croatian Serbs. Due to the events of the 1990s, national boundaries for Croatian Serbs were complicated further:

> (I)t's a post-war kind of Croatia that I think their relationship towards is really funny. And they find it kind of difficult to attach their kids to that because then kids see Serbia as their homeland, which is not the homeland of their parents − it's really funny. I mean it's not funny, just complex, you know, in the sense of migration.[51]

In Croatia, many Serb homesteads were eradicated in the mid-1990s during Operation Storm (Glenny 1996), when Croats began taking back Serb-controlled areas and the Serbs in these areas were forced to leave, and many massacred on exodus (Glenny 1996). This is not to say that there are no Serbs living in Croatia again now but their location and general demography has shifted dramatically. So Croatian Serbs to a large extent exist within Sheffer's (2003: 73) 'State-less' diaspora category because although they feel a connection to Serbia, it is not their home country. The redrawing of borders in Bosnia and Herzegovina had similarly complicating results for Bosnian Serbs. Orientation to a 'homeland' is therefore complex for the broad 'Serb' ethnic group, but orientation to the language is less so. Also, through exile and inclusion within the wider Serb community, it has not been too difficult to transfer a

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[51] Interview: Marta (teacher) 31/05/2012

sense of national loyalty to the country they view as their representative on a global scale – Serbia.

In this same way, it should be noted that "language policies (in the former Yugoslavia) are not really national, they just seem so because they (ex-Yugoslav countries) are all working individually now."[52] This is an interesting point because in reality it is difficult for any policy around language in the former Yugoslavia[53] to be national when their language history is so intertwined. Here it is important to point out that many respondents still referred to the language as Serbo-Croat, and even those who distinguished between the individual national languages perceived them as variants of the same. This raises issues of recognition and self-identification because

> (s)peaker awareness is important, since it means that these divisions are not just the result of linguists imposing fine distinctions of a technical nature on these speech communities but rather that they are characteristics that are salient to ordinary speakers. (Joseph 2008: 45)

The Serb diaspora seems to largely superficially accept national linguistic distinctions, but retains a belief in linguistic unity with the broader ex-Yugoslav region.[54] So language policies are national in the sense that they have to be now out of necessity, but are not nationalist in the sense of trying to instil a 1990s-style nationalist sentiment in the Serb diaspora. Also, we may view language policies within countries as political but the type of language engagement that has been occurring between Serbia and the UK diaspora cannot be seen in the same terms. This is because the primary motivation and organisation is coming from the diaspora itself, and is largely independent of Serbia.

On a more personal level, the significant waves of migration had less impact on whether or not language was central to identity and therefore important to maintain, than on why and

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[52] Interview: Marina Marković, Serbian Embassy 01/06/2012

[53] Excluding Kosovo and Slovenia. There are Kosovan Serbs but the other major language in the country, Albanian, is not very similar to Serbian at all. Slovenian is similar but never in the same way as the Serbia-Bosnia-Croatia-Montenegro link.

[54] Many respondents joked that the separation of national languages benefited them by making them polyglots overnight.

how it was maintained. Language was seen as integral to family connections but this was dependent on first or second-generation status, and also the broader familial context and duration of time in the UK. For first generation Serbs, it was felt that it would be 'unnatural' to speak to their child in a language other than Serbian: "It's my mother tongue, it's the language I dream in, think in, feel most comfortable in."[55] This illustrates Greenberg (2004) and Joseph's (2008) points about language defining social groups and the people we feel comfortable with. Regardless of fluency in other languages, the mother tongue will always be the most comfortable form of communication for any person. In a similar way, family is the group that we generally feel most comfortable with in terms of our ability to express ourselves openly in their company. It is therefore logical to assume that it would be strange, although by no means impossible, to have a strong familial bond without a linguistic connection (Bockhorst-Heng 1999).

Some parents even expressed a degree of hurt when their children opt to speak English to each other, viewing it as almost a personal rejection (supportive findings in Anderson 2002). Amongst second-generation Serbs, there was a personal attachment to their own understanding, or lack of, which they carried over to their children. In other words, some felt regret at not having learnt correctly themselves and therefore wanted their children to learn formally.[56] Others enjoyed their learning experience so much that they wanted to share it with their children.[57] There was an element of this amongst first generation migrants too, as sending children to Serbian language school was viewed as a form of shared experience through recreating the Serbian classroom in a UK environment.[58] This is due in part to a sense of alienation from the British education system and a desire to continue familial and cultural narratives of identity (Ali 2003).

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[55] This was a hypothetical response from Marina Marković of the Serbian Embassy, preceded by: 'I cannot speak from personal experience but I know that if I had a child, it would be absolutely essential for the child to learn Serbian because otherwise it wouldn't fully understand me, my background, a key side of my cultural identity. I would not want to talk to my child in English. It wouldn't be natural. That child would be my family and my family language is Serbian.'

[56] Interview citations include (parents) Branka 26/05/2012, and Tanja and Pavle 17/06/2012

[57] Interview citations include Aleksandar (parent) 26/05/2012

[58] Interview: Marta (teacher) 31/05/2012

Personal circumstances[59] were also seen as a significant obstacle to language maintenance in the diaspora but this is why it is felt that teaching is so vital to the continuation of the community. Some viewed circumstances as a reason to let go, others saw them as further motivation to place their children under formal language instruction. Even amongst first-generation Serbs, there was a sense that the longer the time away or the more children there are in a family, the more need there is for formal teaching:

> (T)he school is a great help because you get lazy over the years. I have 3 children and I was very active with teaching the eldest but then it sort of drops off a bit.[60]

Many respondents felt that language maintenance was not always their top priority, but knew they would regret it later if they did not put in some effort early on. Not teaching children Serbian was viewed as a lost opportunity at a point in development when a child can really absorb linguistic skills,[61] but also as a personal loss.[62] One parent became very emotional when talking about her experience with her eldest child, who did not learn due to personal circumstances[63] and a lack of schooling options at the time. She is now really determined that her youngest child learns correctly, but will always feel pain and regret over her first experience of diaspora language maintenance.[64] This experience highlights Wright's (2000: 8) understanding of the emotions embedded in language and specifically mother tongue language, due to its role as the primary 'carrier of identity.'

I spoke to an equal number of first and second generation parents and it was felt amongst the latter group that language policies coming from Serbia, or even the reintroduction of UK

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[59] By 'circumstances' I mean socio-economic status or the linguistic capabilities of parents. In the case of refugees, many would not have learnt English with the intention of ever living in an Anglophone environment so perhaps have to focus on their own language education. They may also have to work a lot and be unable to afford lessons for their children, or have time to research these options.

[60] Interview: Darko (parent)17/06/2012

[61] Interview citations include Pavle (parent)17/06/2012

[62] Interview citations include Ivana (parent)17/06/2012

[63] They were refugees so she was emotionally too stressed to focus on language teaching, and needed to work long hours to get by financially.

[64] Interview: Ivana (parent) 17/06/12

exams for Serbian, might have more benefits for the former. This is contradicted by official Ministry reporting on previous language support projects in South Africa (Ministry of Diaspora and Religion 2009). The assistant Minister at the time - Vukman Krivokuća – stated that

> preservation of … national identity through Serbian language learning is very important, especially for the third generation diaspora in their attempt to establish partnerships with the homeland and maintain national affiliation. (Ministry of Diaspora and Religion 2009)

Additional to a perceived lack of support, second generation migrants generally felt that their children were at a disadvantage because they did not speak as much Serbian at home, had fewer immediate relatives, and had not learnt the language in a formal way themselves:

> I just learnt Serbian through listening. I didn't go to school, I didn't learn to write it, I didn't do any of those things. So whatever I misheard as a child, I carried through to adulthood and therefore my language isn't correct, which has given me a lack of confidence to teach (her daughter).[65]

This was a key reason for most second-generation migrants to send their children to a formal teacher – that they lacked confidence or a proper understanding of the grammar. However, differences of opinion existed amongst first generation migrants too, depending on economic and other contextual differences. One lady I spoke to, a refugee from Croatia, felt that there was ignorance amongst the newer and economically better off migrants about language instruction:

> (I)f parents choose "home schooling", it just doesn't work and demonstrates maybe a certain attitude towards education. In Serbia, you can just speak it at home because they're learning all of the structural stuff at school. In England, they'll be learning English. So if you want your child to understand the grammar etc. you need that extra help.[66]

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[65] Interview: Tanja (parent)17/06/2012

[66] Interview: Ivana (parent) 17/06/2012

One thing that is important to note here is the complexity of Serbian grammar. It is essential to the fluency of the language and unlikely to be picked up easily in an English-speaking context without substantial explanation. Whether this comes from a teacher or a parent is irrelevant but many migrants, and teachers felt that a lot of parents were naïve in their belief in their ability to teach through speaking alone. There were also some negative attitudes towards the latest migration waves' general attitude to language:

> I'm shocked at the newer generations of parents who speak to their children in English or – even worse – a mixture! But (*laughs*) perhaps it is to help with their own English.[67]

Although a light-hearted and sympathetic criticism, it is an attitude shared by many in the established British Serb diaspora. This seems to reflect my general understanding that attitudes to language in this diaspora are constantly changing and cannot really be isolated to one cause. Jelena (quoted above) is from the second migration wave but only spoke Serbian at home, another parent from the same wave only spoke English at home.[68] The same differences can be found in most of the major waves and opinions on who speaks what at home vary dramatically. It therefore seems that contrary to Baraulina et al's (2007) findings, diaspora attitudes to engagement on any level are personally and not politically motivated. Whilst political developments in the region certainly affect the UK diaspora, they view their identity and motivations for cultural and linguistic maintenance as external to this. Baraulina et al's research (2007) discusses the German Serb diaspora and is more focused on financial ties and engagement, but many of my respondents claimed that being able to contribute to the future and development of Serbia was a major incentive for improving language amongst the diaspora, regardless of differences in personal background.

An area of total agreement amongst the UK Serb diaspora is not whether or not they trust Serbian government motivations, but rather whether or not they trust in its ability to deliver.[69]

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[67] Interview: Jelena (parent) 25/05/2012

[68] Taken from general conversations with Anna (second generation, half-Bosnian Serb)

[69] 10 respondents stated a serious lack of expectations of Serbian government assistance happening.

Distrust has been a significant feature of the Serb diaspora since the first major wave of migration, predominantly comprised of political refugees from Yugoslavia. Most respondents felt that Serbia was close to Third World status and were therefore understanding but sceptical about relying too much on government support. Additional to this was the perception of corruption around the funds that do exist – "it just goes missing."[70] The political context is quite different in that the recent change in government has stalled and potentially erased any existing plans:

> It's really much harder to have consistency in Serbia. The individuals change all the time, opinions change and the organs themselves change.[71]

Quite simply, there is a general feeling amongst the UK diaspora that the Serbian government is not in a position to meaningfully engage on these policies. If anything significant is going to happen, it is largely accepted that it has to develop primarily from within the UK community; but also with the help of some non-governmental bodies in Serbia.[72] Here we see a diaspora that is in control and taking responsibility for its own projects, and whilst there is an element of Gamlen's (2006) 'capacity building' typology, the erratic nature of government engagement means that diaspora language policies are still largely diaspora-centred. In terms of the governmentality debate (Gamlen 2008), my research on engagement between the Serbian government and the UK diaspora on language policies highlights the tendency of these theories to oversimplify homeland-diaspora power relations, and overestimate the organisational and practical abilities of governments. The important question for Serbian diaspora engagement is that if it is supposed to "encourage emigrants to feel part of the nation," (Collyer 2006: 838) how do ongoing setbacks affect this?

From my research, it is clear that the diaspora is not looking for or expecting significant material support, but it would like to feel that its symbolic relationship with Serbia is strengthening. It may have to continue with non-governmental ties for the time being in order to achieve this. In terms of existing UK-based projects, what is certainly evident from all of

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[70] Interview: Marta (teacher) 30/05/2012

[71] Interview: Stan Smiljanić, Britić Editor and Organiser of the Bedford Community School 17/06/2012

[72] Examples outlined in opening section – Azbukum and the Faculty of Philology at Belgrade University

the above is that the British Serb diaspora fits the theory that identities in diasporas can create not only hybrid individuals, but 'hybrid diasporas' (Werbner 2002 in Mills 2005: 261). This makes the creation of language policies complex but by no means impossible.

Findings: Chapter Three

Language and visibility in the diaspora

My final chapter will examine ideas of (in)visible diasporas and the role language can play in asserting and strengthening identity. It was strongly felt amongst respondents that language was the primary way of reasserting and redefining a Serb identity in the face of ever-increasing assimilation. As the single universal identifier of said identity, it at the very least represents a means of accessing the various forms of Serb culture.

Many minority ethnic groups[73] feel the threat of heritage loss and community erosion, but for Serbs it seemed of particular concern due to their status as a largely 'invisible other'. They recognised the positives in this but regretted the significant cost. Language is the main way of asserting their identity and creating a space in which that identity can live. However language itself is not the main Serb cultural identifier because "probably half, or at least a significant number of people who speak the language are not Serbs and some of them really hate Serbs as well";[74] therefore the question of what the language in itself signifies is not simple to answer. This highlights Hobsbawm's (1992) notion that whilst language is important to nationalism, it does not define the nation or subsequently, the diaspora. The way in which it can define the diaspora is that it allows people to access the other things that make up a Serb identity – religion, literature, history, food and culture. All of these can be accessed without Serbian language but crucial elements get lost in translation (Mills 2005: 267).

Language also allows for diversity in choosing how you identify as 'Serb', as there are a number of different ways; and it is central to maintaining strong communities, which subsequently maintain strong diaspora identities (Richards 2008). In his work on a Brooklyn neighbourhood steeped in West Indian culture, Richards (2008) discusses the benefits of access to 'home country' culture in 'host country' communities for diaspora descendants. In this specific neighbourhood, young people removed from the West Indies were so surrounded by its culture, that maintaining that identity did not require leaving Brooklyn (Richards 2008). British Serbs feel like anything similar they might have had is slowly fading out. The

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[73] I generally reject the term 'minority' because not all minorities are a numerical minority. The majority UK population in the UK is considered to be White British only in the sense of its historical position as such. I therefore accept the term in this context for practical purposes.

[74] Interview: Stevan (parent)17/06/2012

community dancing and music events still seem very strong to me as an outsider,[75] but I am told that they used to be more common and widespread – now being mainly confined to London.[76] The benefits of maintaining culture and language in communities are mutually reinforcing, as access to home country culture is good for language acquisition and vice versa (Mills 2005). People learn through culture, music and cinema because it makes language come alive and the experience of learning more enjoyable.

This ties in with the social benefits of language maintenance. There was a strong social aspect attached to language learning. It was felt that in knowing the language, children were broadening their horizons, making Serbian friends in the UK, and that it helped with the social aspects of church.[77] These benefits are also mutually reinforcing, as by widening the circles in which children speak Serbian, parents are widening the opportunities to improve language acquisition. Many parents acknowledged that speaking at home was really important but as one teacher pointed out:

> (T)he language that they speak is closely connected to the family surroundings and as soon as you put them outside of the house, they just switch to English because obviously … English covers any social interaction ... So parents in some cases are not even aware of that. They come to me and say that my child speaks fluent Serbian and the child doesn't.[78]

This was an additional reason why teaching language in the diaspora is so important – to supplement learning at home – but also demonstrates the importance of social interactions to language acquisition (Reynolds 2002). Writing about the Pakistani/Urdu community in Sheffield, Reynolds (2002) notes how language is context-dependent, and maintenance and fluency are dependent on said context. Language maintenance is tied up in social networks

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[75] I attended a Serbian folk dancing and music event on 16/07/2012. It was held at the Church community centre and was packed. Everybody there was communicating in Serbian.

[76] Interview: Pavle (parent)17/06/2012

[77] Serbian does not necessarily help with religious services, as many are in Old Slavonic (Serbian variant). This is not to say that it would not help at all but for a person removed from, or raised in a non-Serbian environment, with no specific knowledge of the church language, comprehension would be limited.

[78] Interview: Marta (teacher) 30/05/2012

and Reynolds (2002) outlines 3 levels of ties within them: 'exchange' defines your close ties; 'interactive' refers to the frequency of encounters; and 'passive' is used to define long-distance or infrequent ties (Reynolds 2002: p. 146) Who falls into which category can significantly affect language maintenance (Reynolds 2002). The same is true of all linguistic diaspora communities throughout the world, including the Serbs. This is why expanding the networks in which Serbian is spoken for a child ensures a deeper linguistic tie and stronger maintenance in the long-term. Connected to the maintenance of culture and social networks is the issue of mixed marriages. Traditionally, Serbs married within the community – not always, but often. Now there is not as much opportunity to do so. It was religious, early wave respondents who observed this and perhaps the development is therefore a reflection of the more secular views of the later Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav migrants. Mixed marriages are on the increase but from speaking to various parents and teachers, this could be a positive development in terms of language learning at least, because adult learning of Serbian has increased and in many cases, the non-Serb parent takes more interest in the children's language instruction than the Serb parent.[79]

The dominance of English is an obvious and in many cases accepted feature of UK diaspora life. Along with resourcing difficulties, it was cited as the primary obstruction to Serbian language acquisition. This is due to the obvious reason of it being the primary language outside of the familial context but also because there is pressure on all minority language communities to use English, which spills over into the private domain as a marker of commitment to "Britishness" (paraphrased Mills 2005: 254). There is a perception of minority languages as 'anti-modern' (paraphrased Mills 2005: 255) and therefore ostracised, which is acknowledged by members of the Serbian working group acting to get recognition of a syllabus for GCSE and A-Level:

> I think there's almost indirect discrimination against community languages because the awarding bodies are commercial organisations and obviously it's expensive to set up a new exam, and it's not feasible in commercial terms to set up a community language as a new exam because the demand isn't big enough. I just got a letter from AQA saying that they would need to see in the first year 16 000 entries and then in

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[79] Taken from interviews with 3 parents (Branka, Aleksandar, Pavle), 2 teachers (Vesna, Danica) and 1 official (Olga Stanojlović)

subsequent years 3000 ... Now to me, that means that no community language will ever meet those criteria so it means there can never be a qualification for a community language.[80]

The working group is part of the Serbian Council, an organisation set up to promote Serb culture and rights within the UK. Serbian language has been identified as an important right whose needs are not being met, supporting arguments that it is a key method of expressing identity (Hewitt 1992). As community coherence increases, so too does the desire for linguistic rights (paraphrased Hewitt 1992: 188). In other words, as the Serbian community grows in size and/or coordination, its desire and ability to campaign for its rights – of which language plays a significant part – becomes greater. A GCSE and A-Level programme may not be seen as a 'right' but it is felt that the British education system is placing unreasonable expectations on Serbian and other minority community languages. However, it was largely felt that this should be a motivation factor to increase language learning and use at home, whilst it has currently bred an apathetic attitude amongst the UK Serb diaspora. It also lowers the expectations of parents as we progress further down the generations. Most second-generation Serbs interviewed did not expect their children to be fluent. This is not necessarily a bad thing but officials and teachers believe that it is possible for anyone to achieve fluency with the right amount of motivation and effort from both sides.[81] It is hoped that the GCSE and A-Level campaign will challenge apathetic attitudes to language learning.

There were many comparisons made with other diaspora communities during the course of my interviews. The three most common were Polish, Greek Orthodox and Jewish. It was felt that all three of these managed to maintain identity in their communities better than the Serbs. According to interviewees, other Orthodox communities receive more financial support from their governments,[82] which is why they have been able to set up more official schools and community institutions. With Jewish and Polish communities in the UK, it was simply felt that they had an admirable dedication to their culture that, in the former case especially, was able to exist more comfortably alongside a British identity:

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[80] Interview: Olga Stanojlović, Serbian Council 12/06/2012

[81] Interview citations include Olga Stanojlović, Serbian Council 12/06/2012 and Marta (teacher) 30/05/2012

[82] Although with Greece, I am unsure of how true this would be now.

I admire them (Jewish communities) and I think that's why they're so successful all over the world. Because they're able to accept the culture where they live… but they're always Hebrew. And they don't boast about it. They don't talk about it. But they practice it… (and) they help each other so much, and hats off to them.[83]

Serbs on the other hand were seen as not necessarily disinterested in their community's survival, but unable to unite in the same way. The reasons cited were numerous and varied from person to person. Some say it is a case of money, some say size but most cited a lack of organisation. For the UK this can be partly explained by the fact that the Serb community here is much older than in other countries and came in more waves;[84] and as Sheffer (2003: 1) notes: "until the late twentieth century, wherever possible … many members of such groups (diasporas) tried hard to conceal their ethno-national origins." However, it could also be due to the circumstances of arrival, at least in the initial waves. The pre-Second World War migrants would have arrived in very small and sporadic groups – both temporally and geographically[85] – so there would not have been a large enough number in any one place to build a community around. The first significant wave after the Second World War were political refugees, accepted on the basis that they would go wherever they were assigned to by the British government, to fill whatever labour gaps existed (Stanojlovic 2010). This would have caused significant time and financial constraints that would have detracted from any cultural goals. They most likely wanted to fit in and work as hard as possible to improve their children's future prospects. Perhaps this attitude has been continued down the generations, or perhaps it is the diversity in the Serb diaspora that makes it difficult to decide what 'community' they are trying to preserve and strengthen.

In terms of the Polish and Greek communities, I am unsure of why they would be more organised than Serbs outside of size and funding reasons, but for the Jewish community I would say that the longevity of their position in British society would be a key factor; along with a shared history of oppression and prejudice. This is not something, from what I heard in

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[83] Interview: Danica (teacher) 04/06/2012

[84] Interview: Milos Stefanovic, UK representative to the Diaspora Assembly, 07/08/2012

[85] Interview: Milos Stefanovic, UK representative to the Diaspora Assembly, 07/08/2012

my interviews, that the Serb diaspora has experienced; and as Goffman (1963: 68) states: "The decoding capacity of the audience must be specified before one can speak of visibility." People are very conscious of Jewish, Polish and to a lesser extent Greek communities; and the first two have experienced a great deal of discrimination on racial or religious grounds. Most British people are unaware of Serb communities and if they have been victimised, it would probably be as part of the broader 'Eastern European' group. Adorno and Horkheimer (2007) argue that a problem specific to the Jewish situation is that they are a target of extreme racism because they are neither different nor the same. Jews' status as an indefinable race creates many problems, as how can the term 'Jewish' be explained? Sander L. Gilman (2007: 295) states that "race is a constructed category of social organisation as much as it is a reflection of some biological reality." Whilst Matthew F. Jacobson (2007) believes that it is not as simple as questioning whether or not Jews fit in racially with their, historically white, countrymen; but rather "what have been the historical terms of their probationary whiteness?" (Jacobson 2007: 306) In other words, racial separateness becomes more apparent during times of discrimination on other grounds.

British Serbs share a similar experience of being simultaneously the same and 'Other', albeit in a less overtly attacked way; and the idea of 'probationary whiteness' (Jacobson 2007: 306) is certainly something that could be discussed in relation to the perceptions and representations of the wars in the 1990s. This global, political prejudice was something that they could unite around:

> I think everyone feels there is a sense of unity because of everything that's unfolded. And a reasonably strong sense of injustice as to what's happened to Serbia and the portrayal of the crisis. So I think a lot of people feel aggrieved and feel at the same time togetherness as a result of that.[86]

This fits theories that displacement and prejudice lead to stronger attachments to a homeland and a sense of global community (paraphrased Weiner and Richard's 2008: 113), which could counteract the disunity and lack of a common Serb identity to a certain extent. Being a largely invisible community, it is not that Serbs experienced direct prejudice themselves – although perhaps at the time they did – but a wider sense of injustice was felt in relation to

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[86] Interview: Aleksandar (parent) 26/05/2012

prejudiced opinions of Serbia itself, demonstrating strong ties to a 'mother country'. The Britić census (Smiljanić 2012) revealed that "1 in 5 British Serbs feel victimised or threatened" and "in the 1990s … Serbs commented that they were glad that they could not be outwardly identified in the street." (Britić 2012b) Todorova (1997) proposes an interesting theory of Balkan stereotypes being a contemporary extension of the Orientalist theme. She believes one "of the central characteristics of the general balkanist discourse (is) the ambiguity ('ni européenne, ni asiatique')" (Todorova 1997: 47) and states that even within the Balkans there is a sense amongst some of being 'a-national', a category ascribed to them to some extent by decades of European 'Othering' and Imperial rule (Todorova 1997: pp. 51-52). Like persistent academic representations of 'The Orient', media and political representations throughout history of events in the Balkans has led to an identity crisis within it (Todorova 1997: 19). 'Ambiguity' is certainly a feeling that many of my respondents expressed in terms of what being 'Serb' meant to them.

There still exists a dichotomy in the Serb diaspora between maintaining their own community quietly and wanting to promote the positive Serb cultural elements to the wider UK society. This "move between cultural and social mixing on the one hand and social and cultural closure on the other" (Hewitt 1992: p. 189) is common amongst many diaspora communities. However, language and community are a good way to combat negative opinions and stereotypes because without them, it is impossible to contribute to the debate. So even with a complex and superficially detached attitude to the 'homeland', Serbs do have a significant diaspora-defining orientation to Serbia (Brubaker 2005), and concern for its image and future. This political interest is what makes language comprehension amongst the diaspora even more important, as it is essential to democratic processes (Wright 2000). Continued diaspora connection therefore requires continued or even improved linguistic comprehension (Wright 2000). And through this democratic dialogue between 'homeland' and diaspora, a reasserting and redefining of the 'Serb' identity can take place.

Conclusion

This dissertation has built on and linked existing work on diaspora engagement, and language and identity through an examination of the UK Serb diaspora. A broad cross-section of interviews demonstrated that language was central to the Serb identity regardless of contextual differences amongst the diaspora; but that these contextual differences have practical implications in terms of language policies and engagement more generally. It has also highlighted the fragility of official diaspora engagement policies with Serbia, as most believe that the government lacks the funds, organisation and in some cases honesty to do so effectively.

Chapter One examined the practical motivations and benefits of language maintenance for both Serbia and its diaspora; and the current parameters of Serbian engagement with the UK on language policies. With the large-scale exit of highly skilled citizens from Serbia for decades and its considerable economic and development issues, investment in linguistic improvement amongst diaspora groups would reap significant returns. For diaspora members equally, hybridity and the ability to speak an additional language not only helps them to maintain and develop a connection to their 'home identity', but provides them with a life skill that can benefit them in their new 'host society' too.

I moved on to explore more emotional elements of engagement in Chapter Two, and the ability of language to overcome personal differences. The diversity of the UK Serb diaspora significantly impacts the practicalities and possibilities of engagement on language policies, and the relationship with Serbia itself; but all differences aside, interviews showed that language, and connecting children to family culture and history was an important area for union. The diaspora is suspicious of Serbia's ability and not its motivations for engagement; but it would like to feel that its symbolic relationship with Serbia is strengthening. Overall the findings of this chapter demonstrated that despite significant differences, the ability to engage with Serbia and a 'Serb' identity was a strong motivation for linguistic improvement.

My final chapter examined ideas of (in)visible diasporas and the role language can play in asserting and strengthening identity. It was strongly felt amongst respondents that language was the primary way of reasserting and redefining a Serb identity in the face of ever-

increasing assimilation. As the single universal identifier of said identity, it at the very least represents a means of accessing the various forms of Serb culture. There still exists a dichotomy in the Serb diaspora between maintaining their own community quietly and wanting to promote the positive Serb cultural elements to the wider UK society. This political interest is what makes language comprehension amongst the diaspora even more important, as it is essential to democratic processes (Wright 2000). Continued diaspora connection therefore requires continued or even improved linguistic comprehension (Wright 2000).

In sum, despite the diversity and distribution of the Serb diaspora in the UK, there remain many common goals that unite members. These are to improve linguistic standards amongst British Serbs, to strengthen relationships with Serbia, and to help promote a more positive view of Serbia and its people amongst non-Serb communities. Language is seen as the common thread that binds these things, therefore highlighting its centrality to identity and engagement. Serbia itself is at a crossroads in its relationship with the diaspora and the future of engagement in an official capacity remains uncertain. The benefits of such engagement are undeniable but the lack of commitment to these projects underlines the autonomy and organisation of the diaspora itself; contradicting theories that diaspora engagement policies represent an extension of control beyond territorially defined borders (Gamlen 2006). Serbian government recognition of UK-based projects would be a great symbolic gesture but in terms of anything more, the diaspora is aware that it will have to look elsewhere for now.

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Initial Proposal 27/02/2012

An examination of contemporary Serbian diaspora engagement

Introduction

Serbia has a large estimated diaspora population (3.5 million) considering its home population size (7.5 million) (Lacroix and Vezzoli 2010: p. 10) and this is also complicated by the numerous identity shifts these groups have experienced. Community organisations abroad have gone from 'Yugoslav' to 'Croatian', 'Serbian', 'Bosnian' etc. Of course, there have always been these specific categories within the broader Yugoslav identity but their importance has shifted with events back 'home'. The Serbian government recognised the strength and need for engagement with these groups abroad, and established its own Ministry for Diaspora in 2003 (Lacroix and Vezzoli 2010: p. 19) that deals with everything from business and finance partnerships, to cultural and media exchanges. It is this latter set of initiatives that I would like to investigate further.

It is about to launch an online resource project entitled 'Every Serb Speaks Serbian', which is aimed at providing language and cultural resources for institutions educating children of the diaspora (in relation to things about history, traditional and contemporary culture etc.). There is currently funding for Serbian language schools (for the diaspora) abroad and summer schools in Serbia, so this project will add to an already quite developed system. There are also specific cultural policies to fund, promote and include diaspora in cultural/artistic engagement e.g. screenings of films from the Yugoslav National Film Archives to international diaspora community groups, and Ministry support for diaspora films like "Here and There". This is not the only Serbian institution getting involved - Telekom Srbija, the largest telecommunications firm in the region, is launching an online entertainment service exclusively for diaspora communities to make them more 'connected' to culture and events in Serbia.

The value of this research is that in examining diaspora engagement policies, there has been a great deal of focus on developing countries in the global south and little attention paid to those in the European context. Added to this is Serbia's current position within Europe - it is

still bidding for EU accession and now for Belgrade to be the Capital of Culture 2020. It is really pushing for an image change and, arguably, diaspora engagement plays a strong role in this. The former Yugoslav countries present a relatively unique example too, as at one point the diaspora would have been unified under the 'Yugoslav' label, which has subsequently broken off into different community organisations. Finally, given the time that has passed since the wars and the shift from a 'Yugoslav' to 'Serbian' identity, it would be interesting to examine how the most recent wave of migrants and their children relate to this latter identity and the government's attempts to strengthen it.

Aims, objectives and research questions

- To examine the form, aims and focus of contemporary Serbian diaspora engagement
- To assess the extent to which it has changed and what has caused this shift - both ideologically and technologically
- To examine (mainly the UK Serbian) diaspora responses to these programmes
- What model of citizenship does Serbian diaspora engagement follow? Ethnic/Open etc.
- What is Serbia's view of its diaspora? Has it changed?
- Who is it engaging? i.e. is it maybe only reaching the people who were already engaged and perhaps not helping Serbia move forward with its goals?

Methodology

This will consist of qualitative analysis of home country policies (Serbian Ministry for Diaspora, Telekom Srbija) and the responses of the host country groups they are aimed at (Serbian Council of Great Britain and the community centre in Ladbroke Grove will be my starting points). Whilst not huge, the Serbian population in the UK is estimated to be the 6th largest in the world (Lacroix and Vezzoli 2010: p. 11) and for ease of access (language, existing knowledge of people and associations within the UK) it makes sense to study this particular group. I will specifically be looking at London but perhaps as the overall UK Serbian population is relatively small and not overly dispersed, visits could be made to other places nearby e.g. Oxford and Cambridge (engagement with student groups perhaps?). As diaspora engagement in the Serbian context seems to have a lot to do with altering its image and European accession, it would also be beneficial to study group responses in a European country.

Perhaps due to improved communication technology and its pivotal role in diaspora engagement, a comparison group either in a non-EU country (the US) or the largest EU community (Germany) could be made. However, Germany would present problems on two fronts: 1) Language and 2) there have already been studies of Serbian groups in Germany (although only one that I can find). I would also like to participate in some of the engagement-related activities e.g. film screenings, language classes, meetings etc. to get a sense of how they are run, people's responses to them, how my own experience/interpretation differs and so on.

Months	Tasks
Mid-April to June	Literature review Presentation preparation (mid-April to 3rd May) Start work with the UK diaspora community
June	Main data collection i.e. interviews
July I	Data analysis
July II and August I	Dissertation drafting
August II and September	Dissertation editing

Literature/resources to explore

I will mostly be using literature on diaspora identity and engagement policies - examining how useful the term is and what makes people either connect with or reject their "home" country identity; but also the many reasons and ways in which governments use their populations abroad for better or worse. I have already examined some government texts on Serbia's approach to its diaspora and a couple of comparative reports on diaspora engagement policies across several different countries. Below is a list of texts I am either currently reading or plan to use:

Baraulina, T. et al (2007), *Egyptian, Afghan, and Serbian diaspora communities in Germany: How do they contribute to their country of origin?*, Hamburg Institute of International Economics, Migration Research Group: Hamburg

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'Diaspora', Consulate General of the Republic of Serbia in the USA, available at http://www.scgchicago.org/english/diaspora.htm (accessed 19/02/2012)

Serbian Ministry for Religion and Diaspora website, http://www.mzd.gov.rs/Eng/Default.aspx (accessed 19/02/2012)

Auto-critique

The final project did not differ considerably from my initial proposal. The only significant changes were that it focused slightly more on the diaspora than on policies coming from Serbia itself due to the nature of engagement between the two; and language became the main focus over other cultural engagement policies because I needed to narrow-down my scope, and it stood out as a unique and symbolic core of engagement.

I learnt fairly early on that language policies for the Serb diaspora in the UK were mainly developing from within the diaspora community. This is why there was not a great deal of information available online or in written form from the Serbian MfD. My reliance for more structural information on language projects was therefore mostly on my interviews, which did include Embassy officials, and those working with the Diaspora Assembly and the now non-operational MfD. The absorption of the MfD into the larger Office of Foreign Affairs was clearly a significant turning point in my research. However, knowledge of the instabilities inherent in the Serbian political and economic system, and the history of engagement thus far had already changed the direction of my project. I was therefore prepared for a development of this sort and in many ways it contributed well to my examination of the practical issues of engagement between Serbia and its diaspora.

Methodologically I expanded my research outside of the London focus, but the Bedford comparison group was invaluable. I did not however, attend as many events as I would have liked. Although not directly related to my research, the insight into the community obtained through informal interactions was significant. With more time, the project may also have benefited from speaking to newer generations of migrants and those who speak English to their children. However, it would be difficult to know how the recruitment of this latter group could be achieved. Most first generation Serbs do speak Serbian at home so finding those who do not would probably be a matter of luck. Overall, I stuck to my schedule extremely well. Some parts ran over but some were completed ahead of time, therefore balancing each other out. Certain interviewees were difficult to set a date with, however this is to be expected with any research project because people lead busy lives. I only allowed reasonable run-over time for interviews with key figures in the community that I knew were essential to my research. Otherwise I was strict with my cut-off date of the beginning of July. The Serb community proved extremely helpful and I unfortunately had more offers for interviews than

I had time to complete. Therefore again, more time may have allowed for more richness and depth of data by allowing me to accept all of these interview invitations.

Appendix

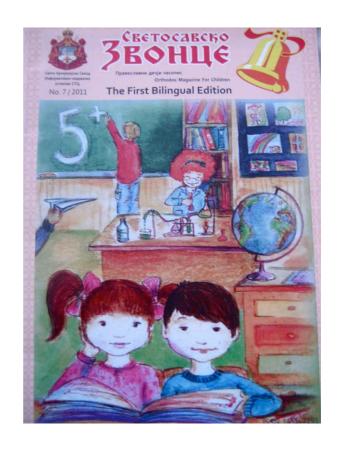Sample teaching materials

Information sheet

Interview protocols

Transcription extract

Participant tables

Transcription codes

Figures 1 and 2: The first bilingual Orthodox magazine for children that the Church of St Sava School is going to introduce as a teaching resource.

<u>Figure 3: Participant information sheet</u> (Printed on UCL Geography Department paper)

<u>Language, identity and Serbian diaspora engagement</u>

I would like to invite you to take part in my research project investigating language, identity and Serbian diaspora engagement, with a specific focus on the UK communities. It will examine the role of language in shaping identity, and the many ways of being Serb or Serbian that exist in the UK. Connected to this, it will explore the different reasons for choosing to maintain the Serbian language in families living in the UK. I want to combine personal opinions on the importance of language and the resources already available with official responses, to see where/whether these ideas overlap.

The reasons for choosing the Serbian language are diverse. The different waves of migration, points of origin, and forms of the language make it a very complex and varied case study. I am also interested in the Serbian Ministry for Diaspora and Religion's language policies, whether/to what extent they will affect teaching in the UK, and what diaspora opinions on this involvement are.

The project will involve official and personal interviews. I will be talking to key figures in Serbian language instruction in the UK to get their opinions on why language maintenance is important in the diaspora, and what their views on Serbian Ministry involvement are.

The personal interviews will allow me to get an insight into why people at an individual level choose to maintain the language (or not) in their own families. I am looking for parents from a variety of backgrounds – the more varied, the better – as an additional part of my project is to see if these differences affect motivations for maintaining Serbian language in families. I hope to have completed all interviews by July and to have transcripts of interviews available by this point. The final piece of work will be completed by 10th September 2012.

All data will be confidential and used only for the purposes of this project. Your responses can be anonymised, if you wish. You have the right to withdraw from this study at any point, refuse to answer any question you do not want to, and can terminate the interview at any point. Access to a transcript of your responses and the final report will be available, if desired. I can be contacted on c.whelan.11@ucl.ac.uk, charlottewhelan@gmail.com, or 07980 790714.

This project has been approved by the Geography Department and Migration Research Unit at UCL as part of my MSc programme.

Figure 4: Question protocol for interviews with Diaspora Assembly members

1. What does Serbian language mean to you and why is it important that it is maintained amongst the UK diaspora?

2. What is your role in this? Would you like this role to change in any way?

3. What do you think the main challenges to teaching Serbian language in the UK are?

4. Do you think that you have to speak Serbian in order to identify as a Serb (or are there other more important identity factors)? If so, do you have to be fluent?

5. Would the importance of maintaining the language, in your opinion, be different for people depending on their personal history – region of origin, time of departure, whether they are first/second generation Serb etc?

6. Would you like more involvement from Serbia itself?

7. What is your knowledge of Serbian Ministry policies on diaspora language learning?

8. What are the working relationships between diaspora members and the Ministry like? How do you think/hope these working relationships will evolve?

9. Do you think the recent elections in Serbia might affect any discussed plans/policies?

10. Do you think Serbian or UK assistance/recognition is more important? i.e. Would you like to see the reintroduction of a Serbian GCSE and A Level, or would some sort of formal recognition/syllabus from Serbia itself be more important? Or are neither important, if it is more of an identity question?

11. Why do you think language maintenance in the diaspora would benefit Serbia itself?

12. What do you think motivates parents to send their children to a school rather than teaching the language at home? What are the benefits of formal schooling?

13. Are you pleased with the current number of children in the diaspora learning Serbian in a school environment? If not, how do you think this could be promoted or improved?

14. Are any countries doing better than the UK in terms of structured Serbian language teaching amongst the diaspora? If so, how?

15. Is there much coordination on language teaching between different diaspora groups i.e. the US, UK, Australia, Germany etc?

16. Do you think it's more important for language initiatives to come from diasporas themselves than Serbia?

17. Do you think the numbers learning Serbian in a school environment will improve or worsen as the number of second/third/fourth generation Serbs (i.e. not born in Serbia and maybe not even born to parents who were born in Serbia) increases? Is this a problem in your

eyes, or are you more concerned with supporting the teaching of children whose parents have come over from Serbia, rather than future generations of British Serbs?

18. What are your hopes for the future of Serbian language teaching in the UK?

Figure 5: Question protocol for parental interviews

Can you explain to me a bit of the context of your connection to the Serbian language?
- ➢ First/second/third generation Serb/Serbian?
- ➢ Serb or Serbian?
- ➢ Context of departure
- ➢ Possibility of return?
- ➢ Ongoing engagement with Serbia or other parts of former Yugoslavia?

What role does Serbian play for you now that you are in the UK?
- ➢ Family communication?
- ➢ Business?
- ➢ Religion?
- ➢ Some core essence of identity?
- ➢ Cultural interest?

Why is it important to you that the language is maintained in your family?

Do you think that you have to speak Serbian in order to identify as a Serb (or are there other more important identity factors)? If so, do you have to be fluent?

What are your hopes for your children in terms of language – do you expect them to be/are they already fluent? Do you just want them to be able to communicate easily in Serbian?

Are you satisfied with the availability/quality of Serbian language teaching in the UK/your local area?

How would you like it to improve or is this irrelevant to you (if you teach your children at home)?

Do you think Serbian or UK assistance/recognition is more important? i.e. Would you like to see the reintroduction of a Serbian GCSE and A Level, or would some sort of formal recognition/syllabus from Serbia itself be more important? Or are neither important, if it is more of an identity question?

How would you feel about involvement from the Serbian Ministry for Diaspora in the structuring/resourcing of language teaching in the UK?

Figure 6: Transcription Extract

Vesna (Teacher)16/05/12

Key

… = unclear on recording

(?) = unclear

Transcript

M: Could you just tell me a bit about your school and the families you teach?

V: Yes, I teach here Serbian language for 4 years but I had a gap because I had a baby. Yes, of 1 year. But usually we learn because we've got kids and they're not speaking Serbian at all, then some children can speak a little bit and some can speak very much, very good Serbian. And then it's different, you know, for all of them. And now we start to make the group programme for all of them. For all Serbian children here in the UK. Which has to be good one. Probably we will see. And we need to adjust programme for all of them because now we have them in the one group. Me, for example, I have one group and in it, 11 kids, and 3 of them don't speak Serbian at all. And then, you know … Yes, I teach children from 3 years up to 11 years, is the oldest one now. And we got 2 groups. 1, I work with them. It's a small group 3-6 year-old children. And another one 6, or more 7-11. And the older ones, you know, they learn how to read, how to write Serbian letters – first Latin, then Cyrillic. You now, write stories, grammar, everything. The small ones, they more learn through the games. I play with them, you know. Colour in something, flash cards, some sounds with letters but they don't write at all, you know. They just practice ... I just use everything I can find. You know, we got a lot of books from Serbia but sometimes, usually, we have to make our own sheets for them and games with them. We do, in Serbia, just recently they start to make some things for the children that don't speak Serbian at all, you know, Serbian as a second language because in the past, you couldn't find any books, any flash cards.

M: Yeah, I'm really interested in that side of it because it's quite unique for a country to be providing those kinds of resources.

V: Yes because we need them and luckily it's going to happen something this year – hopefully. During the Easter holidays, a couple of us get to Serbia and we have meetings with some from organisations, and the Ministry of education, the ministry for diaspora and then they will help us. And also, we help them. Because we got experience here, how to teach our children Serbian because it's different, you know, even if you teach Serbian as a second language in Serbia is different from here because you're surrounded by Serbian and here it's English surroundings. And it's really, really different. And now Milica and me, we especially want to make a good programme for the small kids – non-speaker/speakers as well. And then Milica and other people they want to make Serbian GCSE, Serbian exam – yes. Because it's useful. GCSE and A-Level, yes. Because it used to be, in 90s or something, Serbian GCSE. Hopefully, we will see.

M: Do you think that would be useful for people? To get some sort of qualification out of it. Or is the language itself enough?

V: YES (emphatic). Because, you know, I told them - some of the parents – that we are. Anyway, it is far away, you know. We have to do a lot of things to get permission to have GCSE because it's not up to us, you know. We have to programme but we need verification and everything, you know, in the government. And then we'll see. But they are interested (the parents). And yes, I do notice that. They even happy for their children if we can make the programme for all of them. It's hard work anyway. Because now, you know, we try to connect Serbian with English because here they got, you know, it's perfected system, English as additional language and we start to follow their system and then somehow find a way for the Serbian language. Which is not hard because for all of the languages, you need the same things.

M: Do you find that a lot of the parents are people who have come over from Serbia or are they people who are, I don't know, maybe they're second generation themselves?

V: Yes, most of them are second generation, to be honest. And we've got parents, you know, who their parents teach them Serbian but they've been born here. Their mother tongue is English, not Serbian. They speak some Serbian but not very well. And for them, it' hard to teach. But surprisingly we got some children, I got, and they're brother and sister and they didn't speak a lot. Nothing much at all, nothing. And then they will start to speak some Serbian to each other. But to be honest, if we want our children to speak Serbian, they have to practice at home. You know, because in 2 hours, it's not too many.

M: But, I mean, it's good that there's still that momentum. People, like, even when they're born here

V: Yes, they're interested. And I don't know that, Because a lot of people her, not just Serbian people, not just second generation, a lot of foreign people, they want to learn Serbian. And I don't know why…

(Brief conversation about my learning Serbian)

… and somehow there starts to be interest in the language. I'm happy. And finally, I think our country, Serbia, is going to help us. Because in the past, no, no, nothing. Because I don't know if you know or not, in Serbia we haven't got European framework for Serbian language yet. And they do now something … one for adults. But they don't have anything for children. They now just start to do something. We will see also the Faculty of Education in Serbia. They promise us, to make together with us, some programme in the summer. We will see. Because of that, we really rush to make or own then to see, you know, how they will respond. You know in the beginning, we will for sure make some mistakes but we just need to try. Because probably you know, for all diaspora people – one part GCSE/one part for the small children (?)

M: And do you think the number of Serbian teaching available has increased recently? Or, I mean, when would you say it kind of expanded? It just seems to me from some initial research that there are quite a few schools dotted around the UK.

V: It's quite a few schools really. But if you want to have proper school, you need children. And sometimes it depends because London – it's huge. It depends where the schools are because the parents don't want to spend 2 hours travelling to have a lesson. And yes we got

Reading school, Bedford, and Leicester one, and others I don't remember. But 2 in London, yes. Big one in our church. 130 students. It's like proper school. Just Sunday but it's proper school.

M: Is it attached to like Religious education as well>

V: Oh, yes. A little bit. Which I don't mind.

M: Oh no, no. A lot of languages are taught like that – connected to church.

V: It's good to teach through our cultures, traditions. We also teach something about cultural issues. You know, we sing our songs.

M: So you think that's an important element of the language?

V: Yes. It is really. It is.

M: And often it's the best way to have it. Connected to something like church because it's an institution people trust and are going to anyway.

V: Yes. We also speak about our writers, culture, about history, something. Yes. Not a lot but we do. Especially, you know, if it's connected with language. Serbian language.

M: Is that something you'd like to introduce more – history, literature, things like that?

V: Yes. Because they want to know anyway. But again, you have to have some special way to explain to them, you know. Modern way. Not just to tell them or, you know, to put book in front of them and tell them "just read". You have to make it interesting. Especially for small ones, yes.

Figure 7: Participant Tables

Details of parents interviewed

Name	Where are they from	Age of children	Migration waves represented	Additional notes
Aleksandar	British born, half-Serbian	2 children <10	2 and 4	Wife is from Serbia so represents 2 waves of

				migration
Branka	British born, half-Montenegrin	2 children <10	2	
Jelena	Novi Sad, Serbia (half Hungarian)	2 adult children	2	
Ljubica	Serbia	<10	4	
Darko	Croatia	2 children <10	3	
Pavle	British born half- Serb/half-Greek	<10	1	
Stevan	British born Croatian-Serb	2 children <12	2	
Tanja	British born Croatian-Serb	1<10	1	
Uros and Sonja	Croatia	<12	3	
Radmila	Serbia	4 adult children	1	Came over with parents at the end of WWII in her early teens. Married within the British Serbian community.
Ivana	Croatia	1 child <12 and an 18 year-old	3	

Details of teachers interviewed

Name	School	Where are they from?	How long in the UK?
Vesna	Serbian Society School	Serbia	4 years
Marta	Bedford School	Montenegrin parents but raised in Belgrade, Serbia	3 years
Danica	Church School	Central Serbia	35 years
Darko	SSEES	Trebinje, Hercegovina (RSK)	20 years

Details of officials interviewed

Name	Role/Organisation	Where are they from?
Marina Marković	Serbian Embassy	Serbia
Olga Stanojlović	Serbian Society	British-born Serb
Mirjana Lazić	UK Representative to the Diaspora Assembly	Serbia
Father Dragan	Head Priest, Church of St Sava, London	East Serbia
Stan Smiljanić	Britić Editor and Organiser of the Bedford Community School	British-born Serb
Milos Stefanovic	UK Representative to the Diaspora Assembly	Serbia
Father Milan	Orthodox Priest	Serbia

Figure 8: Transcription Codes

Transcription Codes	Parent	Teacher/Official	Total
Differing Levels		2	2
Programme Practicalities	1	5	6
Resourcing Difficulties		5	5
Serbian Assistance	5	12	17
Positive about Serbian Assistance	1	6	7
Mutual Aid	1	4	5
Intrusion of English	3	6	9
Examinations	9	5	14
Parental Attitudes	2	3	5
Language History	3	2	5
Parental Backgrounds		1	1
Motivations for Learning		1	1
General Interest in Serbian		1	1
Serbian Education		1	1
Parental Involvement		2	2
Culture, Tradition and History	4	5	9
School Practicalities		2	2
Bicultural Families		1	1
Community	4	4	8
Vacation Return	7	4	11
Heritage Loss	4	2	6
Parental Regret	4	1	5
Family Relations	5	4	9
Anti-Religion	1	2	3
Intergroup Suspicion	1	1	2
Pro-Yugoslav	3	1	4
Help with Other Languages	4	4	8
Broaden Horizons	2		2
Generational Shift	5	4	9
Difficult to Maintain	1	1	2
Differing Expectations	3	2	5
Lack of Options	1	3	4
Differing Education Levels of Migrants	1	2	3
Central to Identity	6	4	10
Non-Serb Parent Stronger Influence	1	1	2
Protective Barrier	5		5
Serbian Financial Issues	2	3	5
Easy Assimilation	2	2	4
Financial Incentives	2	4	6
Togetherness	1	1	2
Dialects		2	2
Benefits of Teaching	6	2	8
More Serbo-Croat	1	1	2
Bosnian		1	1
Duration of Time Away		1	1
Westernisation of Language		1	1
Gender Differences		1	1
Life Gets in the Way	2	1	3
Better Abroad		1	1
Unreasonable Expectations		1	1

Theme			
British Education		4	4
Double Standards		2	2
Benefit Society		2	2
Multiculturalism	3	2	5
Cultural Relations	5	1	6
Church + Education	1	1	2
Anti-Yugoslav	1	1	2
Career Prospects	4	5	9
Worse Abroad	1	1	2
Community Comparisons	3	4	7
British Government		2	2
School Dreams		3	3
Political Context	2	5	7
Negative about Serbian Assistance	4	6	10
Two Serbs Three Opinions	2	4	6
Lack of Structure	2	5	7
Minority Language Position	1	3	4
Online Technology Benefits		2	2
Coordination Routes		3	3
Family Ties	4	2	6
Serbian Ties		1	1
Brain Drain	1	2	3
Self-Organisation	1	3	4
Recognition	3	3	6
Church Conflicts	1	3	4
Inter-Diaspora Communication		2	2
Government Focus		1	1
Mixed Marriages	2	3	5
Reasons for Migrating		1	1
No Future		1	1
Serbian Financial Ties		1	1
Poor Standards		1	1
Migration Waves	3	3	6
Complex Identity	1	1	2
Social Aspect	5	1	6
Momentum		1	1
Attitudes in Serbia	4	1	5
Opposition to Outsiders		1	1
Same Everywhere		1	1
Inter-Community Marriage	2		2
No Home (to go back to)	3		3
Wasted Opportunities	3		3
Explore/Embrace Identity	3	1	4
No English (at home)	2		2
Context-Dependent Identity	1		1
Benefit Serb(ian) Parents	3		3
Old Fashioned Diaspora Values	1		1
Other Identity Factors	2	1	3
Benefits of Religion	1	1	2
Return	1		1
Adapting to Environments	1		1