

THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN THE BUILDING OF CROATIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY IN ISTRIA: EXEMPLIFIED BY SEVERAL ISTRIAN 19TH- AND 20TH-CENTURY PERIODICALS¹

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In this paper, we address the building of Croatian national identity in several Istrian newspapers of the 19th and 20th century, from the earliest publishing enterprises to 1955. This was a time of complex political circumstances and changes in the Istrian region, when an important role in the process of language planning and in language policy was played, among others, by publications that influenced the formation of the public language: *Naša sloga*, *Hrvatski list*, *Pučki prijatelj*, *Istarska riječ* and *Hrvatski glas*. Texts dedicated to bilingualism and trilingualism, Germanization and Italianization of language in education, administration, post offices, seafaring, railway, Church, and other forms of both public and private communication reflect clearly the language policy of the period of building Croatian national identity. In the atmosphere marked by the general dissolution of cultural institutions (schools, people's associations, libraries, societies, and journals) in both Croatian and Slovene – which helped the assimilation of the local population considerably – the emergence of publications in Croatian was extremely important for the language. Additionally,

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they were an important source of information and familiarization of the population with legal regulations concerning the status of the Croatian language, whereby these media became a powerful tool of spreading the rhetoric of the ruling parties that created or tried to influence the linguistic reality and practices.

1. INTRODUCTION

Media is an important and indispensable factor in creating and enhancing cultural identity of a particular social group, especially in an area where the situation is complex after centuries of influence of the Italian and German language, their cultures and civilizations. Texts focusing on language policy, language and identity, as well as social bilingualism and multilingualism have an important role in sociolinguistic research. In this paper, we will be dealing with such texts from the corpus of Istrian 19th- and 20th-century periodicals. The wide range of subjects allows us to reconstruct the status of language, the connection between language and people, the role of language in society, and its impact on the reader's language. These periodicals are therefore an indispensable resource for research on the importance of language in the process of building Croatian national identity in Istria. Since these periodicals were published after 1869, this paper essentially covers the field of historical sociolinguistics, a relatively new linguistic discipline which is based on interdisciplinarity and utilizes knowledge and experience of sociolinguists, historical linguists, and historians. The most frequent methodological issue detected in the field of historical sociolinguistics, recognized by William Labov in his *Sociolinguistic Patterns* in 1972, are the so called bad-data sources, incomplete or decontextualized texts, as well as other similar factors that we address through interdisciplinary approach, assisted by corpus linguistics and social history. (Hernández-Campoy and Conde Silvestre 2012) To better understand the issue of linguistic identity, language policy, and national identity, we need to establish a dialogue between the past and present in linguistic research and improve interpretation of language in a particular time and throughout a particular period in a particular social and geographical area. Taking into account the inherent ambiguity of the lexeme *identity*, the paper aims to exemplify the meaning of *national affiliation and acknowledging and accentuating that affiliation*. What is more, *Veliki rječnik hrvatskoga standardnog jezika* (Eng. The Complete Dictionary of the Standard Croatian Language 2015) supplements the notion of *nation* with movement, group, organization, and religion, distinguishing its meaning from other meanings, profiles, and the selves, as well as from the distinguishing properties or fact of recognizability. The notion of identity can indeed be studied from different aspects and disciplines (e.g., Korunić 2005), and it is also often associated with the notions of memory and remembrance (Gillis 2006), as well as cultural memory (Glušac and Mikić Čolić 2020). The Culture of Remembrance is the memory that forms a community and, according to Halbwachs, it is socially conditioned, and it cannot be created or maintained without social interaction. (Assman 2006: 48)

The notion of *identity* is very often mentioned both in relation to language² and to nationality – two seemingly very distant realities. However, it will oftentimes be evident that these two have a very strong and, we might say, unbreakable bond. It is therefore no surprise that Smith (2003: 92) believes that cultural identity also needs to be included in the definition of nationalism.³ The cultural identity of every nation is based on the fundamental development of national culture, standard language and literature, art and science and, consequently, the institutions that support those values. (Korunić 2005: 97) Wright (2010) considers that nationalism appeared almost at the same time as the appearance of language policy and language planning, and he links it to a tendency to unify two basic language functions: communication competence and building a group identity. If we define language policy as a “group of rational and mostly institutionalized procedures that a society uses to affect language forms of public communication and create a conscience of those forms in its participants”⁴ (Škiljan 1988: 8), they actually pertain the sphere of public communication, but they also, given their role and purpose, frequently affect private communication. “The fundamental linguistic means for carrying out language policy is language planning, which covers status planning, corpus planning, and adoption of language.” (Granić 2009: 24) Furthermore, it must be kept in mind that national identity affirmation strategies are related to every area, so it can also be observed in art (Prelog 2020). We find this connection interesting because precisely *that* art and *those* artists are covered in Istrian periodicals. If “the notion of national identity includes specific properties of a particular social group and the sense of belonging to that group”⁵ (Novak 2008: 147), media are certainly a good way to express this phenomenon, and since in the period covered in our research newspapers only started appearing in Istria, it makes them all the more significant for researching and grasping the importance of language, both its use and teaching, as a contributing factor to the building of Croatian national identity in Istria.

² For example, Wright (2010: 223) considers language to be a component of identity. We will mention the notion of public language which refers to the use of language in public communication, i.e., the way in which language appears in that field of human life. (Škiljan 2000: 3)

³ Speaking about nationalism, we have to mention *Sporna zajednica* (Katunarić 2003) which points out new theories on nation and nationalism, beginning with a theoretical overview all the way to specific examples from history and contemporary society.

⁴ Croatian original: “skup racionalnih i uglavnom institucionaliziranih postupaka kojima neko društvo utječe na jezične oblike javne komunikacije i na formiranje svijesti svojih sudionika o tim oblicima” (All translations by T. F. C. and V. V. M.).

⁵ Croatian original: “pojam nacionalnog identiteta obuhvaća specifična obilježja određene društvene zajednice i osjećaj pripadnosti toj zajednici”.

2. ISTRIA AND THE CROATIAN LANGUAGE

Language is “one of the most powerful features of identity, of both an individual and a nation” and “the most recognizable and strongest connection between individuals who speak the same language, use it to exchange knowledge, and to identify themselves as a group.”⁶ (Bratulić 2011: 11) Croatian identity has since very early on been expressed in various languages and scripts; hence, Brozović (1985: 2) discusses a very complex situation arising from interwoven relationships between Kajkavian, Chakavian, and Shtokavian dialects and the use of three scripts (Cyrillic, Glagolitic, and Latin whose graphic solutions were taken from Italian, Latin, German, Hungarian, Czech, and Polish graphic features) and the coexistence of a phonological and morphonological orthographic principle and their various combinations. The path Istria went down in the course of its history was difficult and complicated. The frequent switching between Italian and Austrian rule, including a short-lived French rule in the 19th century, affected the status of the Croatian language, all the more so because people were largely uneducated and illiterate, so the fight for equality remained pure wishful thinking, a desire the disenfranchised citizens of Istria never managed to fulfil. Centuries of occupation and affiliation with different state structures resulted in a very complex linguistic situation consisting of Istro-Venetian and Istro-Romanian dialects, Croatian dialects, Slovenian dialects, and three standard languages: Croatian, Italian, and Slovene. (Milani-Kruljac 1988)

In the middle of the 19th century, an organized struggle began in Istria for the preservation of Croatian national identity and language, where media played an important role. “Language is considered as one of the main factors of (ethnic) identity as language occupies one of the leading places in an ethnic group or people.” (Ashrapova et al. 2019: 45) In the territory where the coexistence of the impoverished locals and Italian classes was arranged so that the latter ruled everything, the clergy, as the only members of intelligentsia at the time, set out to finally provide the Istrian rural community with some basic education. The primary goal was to work towards the Croatian language becoming the official language in schools, administration, and political life, and also to give economy a boost. From Trieste, a major cultural centre at the time, revival ideas started spreading into Istria, where, as early as mid-19th century, Croatian and Slovenian intellectuals (among others) started gathering. Back in 1848, *Slavjansko društvo* (Eng. Slavic Society) started publishing the *Slavjanski rodoljub* (Eng. The Slavic Patriot) magazine

⁶ Croatian original: “jedno od najsnažnijih obilježja identiteta, i osobe i naroda” and “najprepoznatljivija i najsnažnija veza među osobama koje govore istim jezikom, jezikom razmjenjuju spoznaje, u njemu se prepoznaju kao zajednica”.

and, in 1849, the *Jadranski Slavjan* (Eng. The Adriatic Slav) magazine featuring a few articles in both the Croatian and Slovene language. In 1854, Bishop Juraj Dobrila issued his prayer book *Otče, budi volja tvoja* (Eng. Father, Thy Will be Done) which became important in many ways, not only as a religious text, but also as a means of spreading literacy and educating local people. The establishment of the first reading room in Kastav in 1866 and the appearance of periodicals – the calendar *Istran* (Eng. The Istrian), the first journal in the Croatian language in Istria in 1869, and *Naša sloga* (Eng. Our Unity), the first newspaper published in the Croatian language in Istria in 1870, followed by *Pučki prijatelj* (Eng. The Folk Friend), *Hrvatski list* (Eng. The Croatian Newspaper), *Istarska riječ* (Eng. The Istrian Word), and *Hrvatski glas* (Eng. The Croatian Voice) helped establish and strengthen cultural identity and present an overview of the development of linguistic identity and language policy, which will be presented in more detail below. An intense battle for linguistic equality within the framework of the national revival in Istria had also been lead in the Poreč parliament since 1893 “primarily for the right to use the Croatian language at sessions, when submitting motions and writing minutes in that language.”⁷ (Cetnarowicz 2014: 167) All this finally demonstrates that language has been an important segment in building Croatian national identity in Istria.

3. ISTRIAN PERIODICALS IN THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY

The 19th century was a turning point in the formation of language, the time when the sense of national identity was on the rise and when nations and national states started forming. In these circumstances, language became a desirable and strong element of cohesion. (Wright 2010) At that time, more substantial processes of language planning and language policy appeared, with journals playing an important role as they contributed to the shaping of public language. They bear witness to the times of their publishing and serve as a source of information on every area of human activity. In a whirlpool of very complex political changes, Istrian revivalists and priests, headed by Bishop Juraj Dobrila, had a very hard time fighting for publishing texts in the Croatian language because Italian and German were considered the official languages⁸. However, their work resulted in the publishing of *Istran*, a calendar issued in Ljubljana in 1869 (first year) and in 1870 (second year) in the Croatian language, edited by a priest and distinguished

⁷ Croatian original: “prvenstveno za pravo na korištenje hrvatskog jezika tijekom sjednica, predaju interpelacija i pisanje zapisnika na tom jeziku”.

⁸ The predominant language of administration was German until the 1860s, after which Italian took over.

persona in the cultural and political domains, Franjo Ravnik. The associates engaged during the first year were Juraj Dobrila, Petar Studenac, and Medo Pucić, and in the second year Matko Laginja, Vjekoslav Spinčić, Vinko Zamlić, and Ivan Lučić. The calendar issues included texts on various relevant topics and gave an overview of the weekly and monthly events and developments of the particular year. (Polić and Strčić 2015: 29-36) What followed was the publication of several newspapers, among which was also *Naša sloga*, which proved to be a valuable resource when it came to the promotion of revival ideas and the spread of literacy among Istrian people. The first edition of this four-page biweekly was published on 1 June 1870 in Trieste, mostly owing to the efforts of Bishop Dobrila, as well as other eminent public officers and priests, including Antun Karabaić, its first editor, Mate Bastijan, Mate Ujčić, and Tomo Padavić. After Karabaić, the editors-in-chief were Andrija Novak, Lovro Testen, Karlo Kiršjak, and Matko Mandić. From July 1899 until 1915 the newspaper was printed in Pula and edited by Matko Mandić, Stiepo Gljivić, Josip Hain, and Jerko Mahulja. Throughout its 45 years of publication, the newspaper represented a valuable source of information on political, social, economic, agricultural, sociological, cultural, linguistic, and other circumstances present in this area. Another important newspaper was *Hrvatski list*, a Croatian-language Istrian daily published in Pula from 1 July 1915 until 18 December 1918 in Josip Krmpotić's printing house, edited by Josip Hain, Ivan Markon, and Lovro Scalier. In addition to the standard sections covering war reports, regional, local, political, and other news, there were *casually inserted* articles on the relationship towards the Croatian language after Istria was annexed to Italy, even though the Italian authorities censored the articles that did not fit their agenda and even though some issues have not been preserved. Another newspaper worth mentioning was *Pučki prijatelj: Ilustrovani poučno-gospodarski list* (Eng. The Folk Friend: Illustrated Educational and Economic Magazine) (later: *Poučno-gospodarski list*, Eng. Educational and Economic Magazine), published as the journal of the Croatian catholic movement in Istria. Launched by Bishop A. Mahnić in 1899, it was published in Krk (1899–1911), Pazin (1911–1920), and Trieste (1920–1922 and 1924–1928). The title itself indicates that its primary concern were not linguistic issues; however, it is very clear from various articles it included what the attitude was towards the Croatian language and what kind of role language plays in preserving Croatian national identity. In that regard, another interesting publication is *Istarska riječ: Tjednik za pouku, gospodarstvo i politiku istarskog naroda* (Eng. The Istrian Word: Weekly Magazine for Education, Economy, and Politics of the Istrian People) printed in the *Edinost* printshop in Trieste and resulting from the merging of two journals: *Pučki prijatelj* and *Stara Naša sloga* (Eng. The Old Our Unity). The fact that issuing newspapers in Croatian was not only difficult, but also prohibited at the

time, makes this publication an important contribution to the cause of preservation of the Croatian language. E. Radetić wrote that during the time printing content in Croatian was prohibited, the fight for “mother tongue went underground. Croatian and Slovenian newspapers had to be brought to Istria by secret channels so that people could read in their mother tongue, something they genuinely yearned for.”⁹ (Radetić 1944: 204) This newspaper was published from 11 January 1923 until 10 January 1929. The editors-in-chief were Ivan Marija Micheluzzi and Ivan Stari, and the publishers were Dr Stojan Brajša and Ivan Stari. *Istarska riječ* included two supplements published every 15 days – *Mladi Istranin* (Eng. The Young Istrian) aimed at young people, and *Narodni gospodar* (Eng. The Master of the Nation), catering to the rural community. Among various informative and political news there were also many literary pieces, discussions in the Chakavian dialect, which were popular in Istrian periodicals in general, and numerous articles indicating how political circumstances can affect a language.¹⁰ The perception of language and questions of identity after World War II were explored in *Hrvatski glas*, the weekly issued in Buje from 1947 until 1955, edited by Ivan Turković, Ratko Perić, Anton Petretić, Dr Ljubo Prosen, and Borivoj Tadić, which contained texts written by amateur journalists. The magazine was first printed in Trieste, then in Kopar, and finally in the Pula City Printing House, after which it transferred *its share* to *Glas Istre*.

By analysing newspapers published in Istria from 1870 to 1955, we intend to pinpoint the texts demonstrating the role of language in building Croatian national identity over the course of about a hundred very turbulent years in this area.

4. THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN BUILDING CROATIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY IN ISTRIAN PERIODICALS

The appearance of printed media in the Croatian language in the second half of the 19th century is a major step forward in terms of keeping track of social-political relationships on the peninsula. Since this is a century of the formation of nations (Bašić and Baričević 2022: 359), the appearance of the Croatian language in Istria in the public domain and in the media is clearly in close connection with the establishment of Croatian national identity, which contributes to national integration processes in

⁹ Croatian original: “materinsko slovo postaje podzemna. Hrvatske i slovenske novine moraju se od tada dovoditi u Istru tajnim kanalima, da bi narod ipak mogao pročitati svoju materinsku riječ za kojom je toliko žudio.”

¹⁰ For more examples of articles, please see: T. Fonović Cvijanović and V. Vitković Marčeta: “O istarskoj riječi kroz jezik i pravopis” (soon to be published).

Istria. Offering a wide selection of texts on the role and position of the Croatian language in society, mostly in schools, administration, and churches, of texts on language policy, on the relationship between language and identity, and on social bilingualism and trilingualism, newspapers help redefine the importance of the role language plays in building Croatian national identity. Below are some specific examples demonstrating this point.

Following the discontinuation of the *Istran* calendar (which at one point also featured a short discussion on the Croatian language in Croatian schools, on insufficient knowledge of the Italian language, the teaching language at the time, and on the inadequacy of teachers in schools in the early seventies (Fonović Cvijanović 2022: 269), in June 1870 in Trieste, the first newspaper in the Croatian language – *Naša sloga* – was launched. The notion of identity is not mentioned *per se* in newspapers, but the manner (in addition to abundance) and the frequency of use of terms such as language and nationality, as well as the connection between them compels us to consider the significance of the language of the newspaper and the language in the newspaper in the building of Croatian national identity. *Naša sloga* reports on legal provisions which are supposed to regulate the status of the Croatian language. In reference to this, the best-known article is *Članak XIX temeljnih carevine zakonah od 21 decembra 1867*. (Eng. Article XIX of the Basic Imperial Law of 21 December 1867) which lays down the law on language: “All national groups of a country (empire) shall enjoy equal rights, and each group shall have an unalienable right to preserve and cultivate its nationality and language. All national languages shall be equal in schools, offices, and public life. In countries (regions) where several national groups reside, public education institutions must be arranged so as to provide each of these groups the necessary assistance to acquire education in their language, without forcing them to learn another national language.”¹¹ (NS¹² 4/1871, 13; Fonović Cvijanović and Vitković Marčeta 2020: 35; Vitković Marčeta 2022: 37) After its publication, this law appeared and was quoted in many other issues of *Naša sloga*, which is no surprise knowing that playing the role in the national integration (Dabo and Šetić 2020) was one of the main goals of this newspaper. The articles which focused mainly on the law itself mention the in-

¹¹ Croatian original: “Sva narodna plemena u državi (carstvu), uživaju jednaka prava, i svako pleme ima nepovredljivu pravicu, čuvati i gojiti svoju narodnost i jezik. Priznava se jednakost svih zemaljskih jezika u školi, uredu i u javnom životu. U zemljah (provincijah), u kojih prebiva više narodnih plemenah, imaju biti narodna učilišća tako uređena (organizovana), da se svakomu od tih plemenah dadu potrebne pomoći za izobraziti se u svojem jeziku i nesmiju se siliti na učenje drugoga zemaljskoga jezika.”

¹² Quotes from journals will be indicated with the initial letter of the title of the journal, its number, year of issue, and page.

stances of its violation and indicate specific examples of the Italianization of schools, the position of the Croatian language in public and state institutions, offices, and administration, and of the Italianization of toponyms. (Fonović Cvijanović and Vitković Marčeta 2020) The issue of identity and language can also be observed in all the different ways employed to praise everything Croatian (and Slovene) and refer to it in a positive tone, as opposed to the way everything Italian was regarded. The Croatian language is also often described as *our* language or *mother tongue*, etc. – in contrast to the attributes or names used to describe Italian, such as *barbaric*, *foreign*, or *unknown*. (Vitiković Marčeta 2020) Interestingly, the impact of language is also visible in commercials: for example, they often indicated “Served in Croatian”¹³ (NS 50/1910, 4; 7/1911, 4), or the languages of correspondence were listed, including *Croatian* (NS 32/1912, 4; 13/1913, 3), plus some examples where something Croatian is considered a *specialty*¹⁴ (NS 58/1903, 3). The issue of national identity in connection with language was apparently also raised in the years when censuses were taken because one of the items in the questionnaire was in fact a question about language, specifically, about the language of communication. *Naša sloga* was quite committed to instructing the public on how to give answers which would not be misinterpreted. This is explained in articles where people were warned to pay attention to the actual language listed there and the options they were given to choose from as apparently these were constructed so as to trick an educated citizen into choosing Italian: “In some of the places within the Osor municipality, fathers were not even asked about their language of communication, *Italian* was automatically entered into the field about the language of communication. Or they were asked about the language they used at work, outside the house or outside their place of dwelling, and, if they answered that they sometimes spoke Italian on those occasions, the census-taking officials wrote down *Italian* – not only for the father of the family, but for his wife and children, with whom he never spoke anything but Croatian, and who don’t even speak Italian - as the language of communication.”¹⁵ (NS 7/1911, 1) Since national identity can also be perceived in art and through key developments in Croatian modern art and their protagonists (Prelog 210: 254), it is interesting that *Naša sloga* also writes about their endeavours. For

¹³ Croatian original: “Poslužuje se hrvatski”.

¹⁴ Croatian original: “specialitetom”.

¹⁵ Croatian original: “U pojedinim mjestih mjestne občine Osor nije se otčeve obitelji u obće pitalo koji im je obćevni jezik, već jednostavno talijanski u rubriku o obćevnom jeziku napisalo, ili se ih je pitalo kojim se jezikom u svojih poslovih služe, kojim govore jezikom kad se nalaze izvan kuće, ili izvan svog mjesta, te ako su na to odgovorili, da kadšto u tim slučajevima talijanski govore, tada su popisni komesari talijanski jezik, i to ne samo za otca obitelji, već i za njegovu suprugu i za njegovu djecu, s kojom negovori nikada drugačije negoli hrvatski, i koja neznaju talijanski, kao obćevni jezik unesti.”

example, there is a mention of Bukovac's decoration and his being invited to England (NS 30/1908, 4), his participation in an exhibition at Sušak (NS 47/1901, 3), as well as information on the painter Oton Iveković (NS 48/1908, 1; 35/1903, 3), etc. *Sloga* also regularly reported on different anniversaries, including *Proslava četiristogodišnjice hrv. umjetne (!) književnosti u Zagrebu* (Eng. Celebration of the 400th Anniversary of Artificial (!) Literature in Zagreb). (NS 92/1901, 1) The article particularly praised Marulić and also briefly mentioned Šenoa. Finally, we must mention *Rječnik hrvatskoga jezika i družbe sv. Ćirila i Metoda za Istru* (Eng. Dictionary of Croatian Language and of the Society of St. Cyril and Methodius for Istria), whose title clearly associates Istria with the Croatian language, although, in reality, their connection was not confirmed: "So much has been written about the Dictionary of the Croatian Language assembled and elaborated by Dr F. Iveković and Dr Ivan Broz that anything we might say in their praise would be redundant. With this work, Canon Iveković not only demonstrated beautiful and exemplary perseverance in his mature age, but also displayed a level of proficiency in Croatian you can acquire only if you commit to a serious study of the language at an early age. He gathered all of his great knowledge of Croatian in a monumental dictionary which crowned his tremendous efforts. This is an indispensable dictionary for every intelligent Croat. A Croat who finds no love in their heart for their beautiful language cannot be called intelligent, no matter how educated they might be."¹⁶ (NS 59/1907, 3) This quote clearly demonstrates the connection between people and language, and the need for every person to appreciate and love their language, and the mention of a Croat implies the element of national identity as the link between the two.

After *Naša sloga* was discontinued, *Hrvatski list* was launched in Pula. Its printing was suspended from 29 March until 6 April 1918, and Italian government banned it after the Italian army marched into Pula. This was a wartime newspaper, less assertive than *Naša sloga* and full of white, censored parts. The majority of articles, unsurprisingly, pertained to the war situation and the resulting difficulties, but there are plenty of decent texts on bilingualism and trilingualism, Germanization and Italianization of language in different spheres. The process of Italianization of toponyms, which spread

¹⁶ Croatian original: "O Rječniku hrvatskoga jezika što su ga skupili i obradili dr. F. Iveković i dr. Ivan Broz, pisalo se već toliko, da bi svaka naša riječ u njegovu pohvalu bila suvišna. Ovim svojim djelom nije kanonik Iveković pokazao samo divnu, uzornu upravo ustrajnost u visokoj svojoj dobi, već je ujedno pokazao takovo poznavanje jezika hrvatskoga, kakovo se stječe samo ozbiljnim poučavanjem za mladih dana. Sve to veliko znanje hrvatskog jezika skupio je u monumentalnom rječniku, kojim je sjajno okrunio golemi svoj trud. Bez ovoga rječnika ne će moći biti niti jedan inteligentan Hrvat, a inteligentnim ne možemo zvati nijednoga Hrvata, makar kako bio obrazovan, ako u srcu nema ljubavi za svoj lijepi jezik."

through Istria in the upcoming decades causing almost all Croatian names, whether of places, or personal names and surnames to suddenly get an Italian form, is another peculiarity that received ample coverage in the newspaper. The notion of identity is not mentioned directly, but rather implied in the texts on nationality. There is a text which is interesting in this regard; it comes from a German book by an anonymous author titled *Istrien – historische, geographische und statistische Darstellung* from 1863 published in order to “stimulate interest among the wider public and the decisive factors in the country”¹⁷ in Istria: “This is what the distinguished author has to say about the nationality and the language of the people in Istria: Istria is a Slavic country, which is why most people speak a Slavic language, albeit with different dialects. It is considered that only about three tenths of people speak Italian, and mostly in coastal cities. (...) even though the censuses from 1880, 1890, 1900, and 1910 show unnatural downward and upward spikes in both nationalities, especially in the western counties, where the municipal authorities created Italian nationals overnight... on paper.”¹⁸ (HL 340/1916, 2) Thus, for example, the article *Hrvatski jezik* (Eng. The Croatian Language) highlights the issue of the inequality of the languages in court: “A few months ago, a state attorney in Pazin started submitting his motions to the courts in German. In doing so, he seems to be forgetting that his motions are not only for the investigating judges, but also for his clients. We hope that, since the government abandoned the intention to impose the state or intermediate language, the state attorney’s office will also spare us the imposition. Courts, of course, submit their motions to the state attorney’s office in national languages, which is certainly the right and lawful thing to do.”¹⁹ (HL 670/1917, 3) Just as in the other Istrian newspapers at the time, there were numerous comments about linguistic issues and the situations imposed thereby, but the conclusion was always that it was the use of the Croatian language in public communication that was obstructed the most. (Fonović Cvijanović and Vitković 2014)

Pučki Prijatelj: Ilustrovani poučno-gospodarski list (later *Poučno-gospodarski list*)

¹⁷ Croatian original: “širu javnost i odlučujuće čimbenike u državi”.

¹⁸ Croatian original: “Evo što veli uvaženi auctor o narodnosti i jeziku pučanstva u Istri: Istra je slavenska zemlja, zato je i jezik većine stanovnika slavenski, ali sa raznim narječjima. Uzimlje se, da samo oko tri desetine pučanstva govori talijanski i to većinom samo u gradovima na morskoj obali. (...) akoprem se kod popisa pučanstva iz god. 1880, 1890, 1900 i 1910 može viditi neprirodnih skokova u porastu ili padanju jedne ili druge narodnosti, osobito u zapadnim kotarima, gdje su talijanski općinski organi stvarali preko noći Talijane.....na papiru.”

¹⁹ Croatian original: “Ima par mjeseci, da je državni odvjetnik u Pazinu počeo postavljati sudovima svoje predloge u njemačkom jeziku. Pri tom čini se, da slavnoisti zaboravlja, da su njegovi predlozi i za stranke a ne samo za istražne suce. Nadamo se, da pošto je i vlada napustila misao o oktroiranju državnog iliti posredovnog jezika, da će nas i državno odvjetništvo poštediti oktrojima. Sudovi dakako postavljaju državnom odvjetništvu svoje predloge u zemaljskim jezicima. I pravo i zakonito čine.”

focused primarily on Christian and social subjects; however, upon closer inspection, its other, but equally important role comes to the fore: striving to preserve the mother tongue in administration and law. For example, the column *Istrom uzduž i poprijeko* (Eng. All Across Istria) in the news from Altura reads the following: “This reminds me of our famous delegate. That little man is a hard-core pro-Italian. He does all his files in Italian only. It seems like this isn’t a 100% Croatian village, but a place in southern Italy. Isn’t there anyone among us to put an end to this cheeky little man? People! Fear no one, insist on your rights! Our mother tongue is Croatian. Even an Alturian delegate must comply with this, because he works for us, peasants, and not the other way around.”²⁰ (PP 27/1911, 212-213) Another example can be found in the text *Dopisnica. Uprave i uredništva*. (Eng. Postcard. Managements and Editorial Boards.) which indicates that the common language of communication in postal services is German because the envelope said “abgereist, wo!” (PP 3/1900, 24), and issue number 3 from 1914 said that there are many illiterate people, and that this was a problem that would hopefully be dealt with by organizing literacy courses. (PP 3/1914, x) The article *Za naš jezik* (Eng. For our Language) presents a statement given by the representatives of the Croatian and Slovene agricultural class, Fran Flego, J. Grašić, Dr. M. Laginja, I. Mahulja, Jos. Pangerc, P. Mate Polonijo, and Viktor Tomičić at the General Assembly of *Zemaljsko poljodjelsko Vijeće za Istru* (Eng. National Agricultural Council for Istria) requesting, among other things, for the “county agricultural council to be, in linguistic terms, a corporation fostering complete equality for both nationalities of the county, that is, Italian and Slavic (Croatian and Slovenian)”²¹, which has not been implemented so far (PP 2/1912, 9), and are asking to allow for the foundation of cooperatives “whose official language would be Croatian or Slovene in each judicial district where there aren’t any yet.”²² (PP 2/1912, 10). In order to prevent the Italianization of names, surnames, and toponyms that was carried out through administrative, legal-judicial, and political channels (Parovel 1993: 22), as well as of various crematonyms, such as the names of public taverns, an article was written titled *Ponovno iz Altura - O nazivima gostionica* (Eng. Once Again from Altura - On

²⁰ Croatian original: “Tom prigodom ne mogu, a da se ne sjetim i našega slavnoga delegate. Taj vam je čovuljak upravo zagriženi Talijanaš. Sve spise rješava samo u talijanskom jeziku. Po tomu se čini, da smo ne u čisto hrvatskom selu, već negdje u južnoj Italiji. Zar nema nijednoga među našim ljudima, koji bi tom drzovitom čovuljku stao na prste? Ljudi! Ne bojte se nikoga, pa tražite svoje pravo! Naš materinski jezik je hrvatski. Taj jezik mora poštovati i alturski delegat, jer je on radi nas seljaka, a ne mi radi njega.”

²¹ Croatian original: “da pokrajinsko poljodjelsko Vijeće ima biti u jezikoslovnom pogledu korporacija posve jednakopravna za obje narodnosti pokrajine, to jest talijanske i slavenske (hrvatsko-slovenske).”

²² Croatian original: “sa hrvatskim ili slovenskim poslovnim jezikom u svakom sudbenom kotaru, gdje takove još ne opstojе.”

the Names of Taverns): “We are proud to be Croats, but, in our all-Croatian village there is a board with an inscription: Osteria al Nesazio. Do not let them walk all over you! What is this Italian inscription for? Who makes most profit for the owner? We do, Croats. So, this tavern owner should put up a Croatian board (...) We are warning him about this, and you, folks, don’t let our beautiful Croatian language be neglected and spurned.”²³ (PP 31/1911, 245)

During Italian occupation (1918–1920) and after the Italian annexation (1920 and later), it was forbidden to issue political newspapers in Croatian, so a few of them published at the time were quickly phased out. In such circumstances, *Pučki prijatelj* was issued on and off, followed by *Stara Naša sloga*. The two were merged to form the evening paper called *Istarska riječ* printed on Thursdays. Ever since the first issue, the texts bear witness to the gap between what the Italian authorities had promised and their actions aimed at denationalization, which is demonstrated by the article *Nova godina - novo razočarenje* (Eng. A New Year - A New Disappointment): “When the Italian army occupied our territories, Italian state officials and other important people promised us the world in Italy: equality of our language, free national economic development, opening of all the schools, autonomy, etc. (...) However, we were really disappointed when we realized that our most sacred national rights were stamped upon outrageously, how our intelligentsia had been persecuted, our language banished from all public offices, our homes burned down, our peasants intimidated, etc.”²⁴ (IR, 1/1923, 1) This situation, they believed, could only be countered by joint forces: “Our position is terrible. However, we must not lose our spirits. (...) People! If they continue to undermine our language, let it finally find shelter in our homes where our language and our literature must live forever to lift our spirits and encourage us to make it through the hard times. The more they try to force our language out, the more we should cherish it.”²⁵ (IR, 1/1923, 1) Being

²³ Croatian original: “Ponosimo se, da smo Hrvati, a u našem se čisto hrvatskom selu koči (!) tabla s natpisom: Osteria al Nesazio. Ne budimo svačija metla! Čemu taj talijanski natpis? Tko daje onomu krčmaru najviše dobitka? Mi Hrvati. Stoga bi morao dotični krčmar metnuti hrvatsku tablu (...) Upozorujemo na to onoga krčmara, a vi, seljaci, ne dajte, da se naš lijepi hrvatski jezik zapostavlja i prezire.”

²⁴ Croatian original: “Kad je talijanska vojska zaposjela ove naše pokrajine, onda su nam talijanski državnici i ostali uplivniji ljudi obećivali zlatna brda u Italiji: jednakopravnost našeg jezika, slobodni nacionalno-ekonomski razvitak, otvorenje svih škola, autonomiju itd. (...) Ali smo se ljuto razočarali, kad smo vidjeli, kako se na nečuveni način gazi po našim najsvetijim narodnim pravima, kako se proganja našu inteligenciju, zatvara škole, tjera naš jezik iz svih javnih ureda, pali domove, zastrašuje seljaštvo itd.”

²⁵ Croatian original: “Naš položaj je strašan. Ali usprkos svega toga mi ne smijemo klonuti duhom. (...) Narode! Ako počnu naš jezik još i više proganjati, tada nek mu bude zadnje utočište na tvom domaćem ognjištu, gdje mora uvijek da živi naša riječ i naša knjiga, koja će nas bodriti i poticati na ustrajnost u našim teškim danima. Što više nam proganjaju naš jezik, to više treba da ga ljubimo.”

aware of the importance of newspapers as a medium in the fight against assimilation, Italian fascists tried to destroy them: "Last Saturday, at night, when 'Edinost' already closed, a group of some twenty or thirty fascists in civilian clothes came in front of the printing house. First, they started shouting and yelling on the street against the 'Edinost' newspaper, after which they broke all the glass surfaces on the door on the ground floor. Then they broke in and shattered all the glass in the management board's office. They even pushed through to the machinery but failed to damage it at all because they were blocked by five royal carabinieri officers."²⁶ (IR 14/1923, 4) There is an interesting article titled *Domaći govor i škola* (Eng. The Local Language and School) which provides a comment on the school reform implemented by minister Gentile, as well as on many other topics, such as the relationship between the standard language and dialect: "Just as a plant whose root is buried deep in the ground from which it feeds, so the national, standard language moves, progresses, lives, and is renewed in local dialects. Anyone who would want to pull this national, standard language out from the bottom of its dialects would be cutting the tree of the people's language at its roots. (...) The dialect brings the mother into school: she stands by her child and helps them through the harshest moments; the dialect also brings grandma's stories and fairy tales into school; in this way, the life and the history of individuals are grafted into the life and history of a people and of mankind"²⁷ (IR 3/1924, 1), then the minister's behaviour towards Croatian and Slovenian children in schools, that is, on the inequality of the Italian and Croatian language and the efforts invested in killing off the language spoken by the people: "We, Croats and Slovenians from Istria and the entire Julian March have decided to undersign all of this. We strongly believe that we are people to the extent we are Yugoslavians, and we are Yugoslavians to the extent we are Chakavians, Kajkavians, and Shtokavians. We are asking that our children be allowed to bring their dialects to school, as it will be easier for them to think, speak, and write in the standard

²⁶ Croatian original: "Prošle subote po noći, kad je bio list 'Edinost' već zaključen, došla je pred tiskaru 'Edinosti' skupina od dvadesetak ili tridesetak civilno odjeljenih fašista. Na ulici su najprije počeli galamiti i kličati protiv lista 'Edinost', našto su porazbijali sva stakla na vratima u prizemlju. Zatim su prodrli u unutarnost tiskare, gdje su isto porazbijali sva stakla na pisarni vodstva tiskare. Već su bili prodrli i do samih strojeva, ali ih nisu mogli ni najmanje oštetiti, pošto ih je tu zadržala petorica kr. karabinijera."

²⁷ Croatian original: "Kaošto (!) biljka, što ima svoj korijen duboko u zemlji i iz nje vadi sebi hranu, tako se i narodni, književni govor kreće, napreduje, živi i obnavlja se u lokalnim narječjima. Tko bi htio, da taj narodni, književni govor otkine iz dna njegovih dijalekata, taj bi do korijena odsjekao stablo narodnoga govora. (...) S dijalektom ulazi u školu – majka: ona stoji djetetu uz bok i pomaže mu u trenucima najveće smetnje; s dijalektom ulaze u školu i bakine priče i bajke; život i povijest pojedinaca ucijepljuju se ovim putem u život i povijest naroda i čovječanstva."

language of our nation (...) It would also be a good idea for the mothers to enter the schools with their children, for their kind speech to help them when they feel insecure. We would also like for our grandmothers' stories and fairy tales to enter the schools together with our dialect. (...) However, Minister Gentile is against this. He acts as if what applies to Italians does not apply to nations of the third and fourth category. The intent behind his reform was to take everything from Slavs and give it to Italians. Minister Gentile is abolishing our classes and replacing them with strictly Italian ones. His intention is to annihilate our language completely, to make it disappear, to cut down the tree of Yugoslavian people at its root, and go through with the assimilation Mussolini has announced. (...) All these seemingly liberal and philanthropic gentlemen can eliminate our language from schools, churches, courts, municipalities, and all public offices - they can exterminate it completely from their institutions, but they will not make it all the way down to its roots. Because the root of both our language and Italian lies at the bottom of its dialects which reach deep, much deeper than these gentlemen think. So, as long as there are dialects, there will be roots, and as long as there are roots, we will survive - we surely will."²⁸ (IR 3/1924, 1) We learn about the fact that children, if they did not know the Italian language, were also physically punished in a letter from Krnica: "As we already know, school authorities have unlawfully introduced Italian in schools. They sent us teachers from Italy. These wretches cannot speak a word of our language, just as our children cannot speak a word of theirs. They nevertheless demand that our children speak Italian. Since our children cannot meet their demand, because they don't speak, as we already mentioned, a word of their language, they are often physically

²⁸ Croatian original: "Mi Hrvati i Slovenci Istre i čitave Julske Krajine gotovi smo, da potpišemo sve ovo. I mi držimo, pače i ispovijedamo, da smo mi ljudi u toliko u koliko smo Jugoslaveni, a Jugoslaveni smo u toliko, u koliko smo čakavci, kajkavci i štokavci. I mi tražimo da s našom djecom udje u škole i njihov dijalekat, po kome će lakše naučiti misliti, govoriti i pisati u književnom jeziku naroda našega (...) I mi bismo radi, da s našom djecom udju u škole njihove majke, da im sa svojim milim govorom pomažu u trenucima zabune. I mi bismo željeli, da nam u školu s našim dijalektom udju i priče i bajke naših baka. (...) Ali ministar Gentile toga ne će. Po njemu – što vrijedi za Italijane, ne smije da vrijedi za narode treće i četvrte kategorije. On je svojom reformom htio, da Italijanima dade sve, što će Slavenima da oduzme. Ministar Gentile ukida naše razrede i zamijenjuje ih čisto italijanskim. Njegova je namjera, da naš jezik posvuda istrijebi, da ga nestane, da stablo jugoslavenskoga naroda posiječe do korijena, da se time izvrši po Mussoliniju nagovješteno djelo asimilacije. (...) Sva ta na papiru liberalna i čovjekoljubiva gospoda mogu trijebiti naš narodni jezik iz škola, iz crkve, iz sudova, općina i iz svih javnih ureda – mogu ga iz tih svojih lokala istrijebiti sasvim, ali do korijena mu ipak ne će doći. Jer korijen našemu kao i italijanskom jeziku leži na dnu njegovih dijalekata, a ti dijalekti sežu duboko, mnogo dublje nego li gospoda misle, a jednako duboko seže i korijen našemu jeziku. I tako dok bude dijalekata bit će i korijena, dok bude korijena bit će i nas – hoće."

punished by teachers.”²⁹ (IR 2/1924, 3) In *Istarska riječ*, many texts in Croatian tried to confront the assimilation politics of Italian authorities, and places which helped greatly in preserving Croatian national identity were churches, although this will also change in the upcoming years due to the prohibition of religious education in churches (IR 15/1923, 4) and frequent violent outbursts towards priests (IR 2/1923, 2). The efforts to eliminate Slavic national features were greatly obstructed by ancient Slavic names and surnames as well as toponyms, the symbols of origin and belonging to Slavic people: This “problem” was soon to be tackled in various ways³⁰. In line with legal decisions and decrees, it was forbidden to give “funny, as they said, and non-Italian names”³¹ (Radetić 1944: 155), or it was required to change registers of births retroactively. (Radetić 1944: 155) Such events were also reported on by *Istarska riječ*. For example, a memo sent from Brgudac to a peasant called Antun Sanković prevented him from naming his child Miloš. Threatening him with *carabinieri* and explaining that Italian does not spell *Miloš*, but only *Milos*, they advised him to select an Italian name from the Italian calendar which he refused to do; therefore, after a discussion, they finally agreed to name the child Branko (IR 12/1925, 2). Encouraged by the example of the peasant from Brgudac, they tried to fight it in numerous ways, in any way they could: “We are fighting for our rights by legal means, and our municipal secretary is treating us without any concern for either law or decency. It would be better if our municipal secretary sent carabinieri to deal with those trouble-makers from Radoš, and not bother with an honest and diligent man like Mr Antun Sanković from Brgudac. And this is why we, people of the municipality, declare that whenever the first son is born, by God’s grace, we will give him the beautiful, popular name Miloš. The second son will be named Bogdan, and so on: Dušan, Nadan, Dragovan, Milenko, Slavko, Milovan, Ljubomir. And our daughters will be named: Danica, Dragica, Nevenka, Slavka, Vera, Bosiljka, Zorka, Milka. Finally, we will search for more and more beautiful names for our dear chil-

²⁹ Croatian original: “Kako je već poznato, školske vlasti su i kod nas protuzakonito uvele italijanski školu. Učitelje poslale su nam iz Italije. Ti nesretnici ne znaju niti jedne riječi progovoriti u našem jeziku, kaošto (!) ni naša djeca u njihovom. Usprkos toga zahtijevaju, da naša naša djeca govore italijanskim jezikom. Budući da naša djeca ne mogu da udovolje njihovom zahtjevu, je ne poznaju, kako spomenusmo, njihovog jezika, bivaju često puta nadareni učiteljskim šakama.”

³⁰ As early as in 1919, the Italianization of toponyms and anthroponyms commenced in the annexed area of the Adriatic (Parovel 1993: 19), and under a legal decree under number 800 of 29 March 1923 it was actually implemented because the decision came into force on the change of Croatian and Slovenian names of places into the Italian version, which was later also applied on Croatian and Slovenian Christian names (Mezulić and Jelić 2005: 23) and on surnames.

³¹ Croatian original: “smiešna, kako rekoše, i netalijanska imena”.

dren. We will find those names in the beautiful book: Narodnom koledaru ‘Franina i Jurina’.”³² (IR 14/1925, 3) Until *Istarska riječ* was discontinued, different laws and decisions were brought which mandated changes of surnames, laid down sanctions for those who disobeyed, and from the 15th to the 39th issue in 1928, lists were published with changes of surnames into the Italian form under the column *Promijenjena (!) prezimena* (Eng. Change of surname).

To include the northern regions as well and wrap up a century (or more) of fighting and searching for our own identity in Istria, we will also mention the Buje weekly called *Hrvatski glas* which appeared after World War II. Namely, the issue of language was very clearly reflected in the journal itself. At that time, after years of Italianization, not very many locals spoke Croatian, so the appearance of *Hrvatski glas* made quite an impact on sociolinguistic reality. (Čolak et al. 2019) The opening article “*Hrvatski glas*” još jedno oružje u borbi za demokraciju (Eng. “Croatian Voice”, Another Instrument in the Fight for Democracy) (HG 1/1947, 1) presented a short description of the difficult socio-political situation in the Buje area in those years, underlining the problem of Italianization of “Croatian names and surnames”³³, banning “Croatian from use in public and private life”³⁴ and, in the end, “forcing Croats to send their children to Italian schools because they were not allowed to have their own”³⁵ (HG 1/1947, 1). On the other hand, newspapers show that the people’s liberation struggle relied on none other than teachers and schools. Opening of new schools in Croatian and dedication to equality of language also served as means of fighting against fascism. Although the issue of the equality of three languages - Slovene, Croatian, and Italian - was, as they said, resolved “back during the liberation war”³⁶ (HG 1/1947, 1), many articles show that it was not the case and that the issue of language often reflected on the issue of identity. For example, newspapers contain

³² Croatian original: “Mi se zakonitim putem branimo za naša prava, a naš općinski tajnik postupa s nama nezakonito i neuljudno. Bolje bi bilo, kada bi naš općinski tajnik pozivao karabinijere na neke radoške nemirnjake i intrigante, a ne na našega poštenoga i marljivoga čovjeka, kao što je gospodin Antun Sanković iz Brguca. I radi toga izjavljujemo, mi općinari, da ćemo kod prvoga sina, što nam ga bude Bog dao, nadjeti mu lijepo i prekrasno narodno ime Miloš. A drugome Bogdan i sve tako redom: Dušan, Nadan, Dragovan, Milenko, Slavko, Milovan, Ljubomir. A našim hćerkama: Danica, Dragica, Nevenka, Slavka, Vera, Bosiljka, Zorka, Milka. I na koncu ćemo sve ljepša i ljepša narodna imena tražiti za našu predrugu dječicu. Ta imena naći ćemo u prekrasnoj knjizi: Narodnom koledaru ‘Franina i Jurina’”.

³³ Croatian original: “hrvatskih imena i prezimena”.

³⁴ Croatian original: “upotrebe hrvatskog jezika u javnom i privatnom životu”.

³⁵ Croatian original: “prisiljavanje Hrvata da šalju svoju djecu u talijanske škole, jer im svoje nisu dozvoljavali”.

³⁶ Croatian original: “još u toku oslobodilačkog rata”.

many examples of the prohibition of the Croatian language in the public and also of sanctions applied in the case of non-compliance: burning down the property, persecution, and even death. All the methods used to carry out the planned denationalization are described in detail in many articles, such as the one titled *Denationalization, persecution, and arson - means of liberal Italy, Italy in Yugoslavian countries*, and the text *Terror, Economic Destruction, and Prohibition of Croatian*, which reads as follows: "At that time, Croatian was banished from all public offices. Its use was prohibited in taverns and public places. Any declaration of Croatian national affiliation, any such mention, would be met with atrocious terror, murder, arson, and persecution. People's names and surnames, as well as place names were changed by force. The idea was to wipe out any trace of Croatian identity from Istria and the Buje area".³⁷ (HG 1/1949, 2) For the purpose of complete annihilation of national and cultural identity awareness, names and surnames were changed in different ways, together with the names of places, streets, villages, hills, rivers, and valleys: "The same thing happened to the Ribarić family: One of them became 'Riveriani', the other 'Ribari', and the third brother was renamed 'Pescatori' (...) The surname of a purely Croatian family from Krasica was changed from Jugovac to 'Meriggioli', Zlatić to 'Slati', Jurjević to 'Giorgi', and so on. Any opposition was met with force. (...) Places, streets, villages, hills, rivers, and valleys were renamed in a similar fashion. The names of the deceased were also chiselled out of the tombstones because the 'ić' ending hurt the occupier's eyes as it irrefutably proved that Istria was the land of our grandparents - Croatian and Slovenian land."³⁸ (HG 152/1952, 2)

Unlike pre-war newspapers, *Hrvatski glas* was *more aware* of the role of language in the issue of national identity, which is, for example, evident from the text titled *Let Us Pay Utmost Attention to Raising National Awareness of the Buje Area*, which clearly shows the difficult position Croats were in and how oppressed they were by the so called "padrone", and, when it comes to language, it shows that the language

³⁷ Croatian original: "Hrvatski jezik bio je tada isključen iz svih javnih ureda. Njegova upotreba zabranjena je u lokalima i na javnim mjestima. Na svaku izjavu hrvatske nacionalne pripadnosti, na svaku izgovorenu riječ, odgovaralo se strahovitim terorom, ubijstvima, paležom i progonima. Započelo je i nasilno mijenjanje imena mjesta i imena te prezimena ljudi. Htjelo se je izbrisati svaki trag hrvatstva u Istri i na Bujštini."

³⁸ Croatian original: "Isto se dogodilo Ribarićima: Jedan je postao 'Riveriani', drugi 'Ribari', a treći rođeni brat zvao se 'Pescatori' (...) Čisto hrvatska familija kao Jugovac u Krasici prekrštena je u 'Meriggioli', obitelj Zlatić u 'Slati', Jurjević u 'Giorgi' i tako redom. Što nije išlo milom išlo je ricinusom. (...) Na isti način prekrštena su imena i nazivi mjesta, ulica, sela, brda, rijeka i dolina. I imena mrtvih isklesana su sa nadgrobnihih spomenika, jer je ono 'ić' bolo oči okupatoru i nepobitno dokazivalo da je Istra zemlja naših pradjedova – hrvatska i slovenska zemlja."

of those dubbed Šćavi did not only have a subordinated role, but was in fact completely excluded from public life. Some relief from this could come from the Croatian educational associations which had an important role in raising national awareness among local population: “An important contributor to the raising of national awareness so far have been 26 Croatian educational societies. (...) These societies cultivate the Croatian language and songs, and, in general, we can say that they are becoming more effective on a daily basis as centres of folk culture. They would certainly be even more successful in their work and the raising of national awareness among Croats in the Buje area if the Sub-Association of Croatian Educational Societies in Buje had a more detailed work plan from the very beginning and if it had been thoroughly acquainted with the issue and manner of raising national awareness. (...) The duty of the Sub-Association of Croatian Educational Societies is to deal with a specific issue - raising national awareness in the future. This is what all the Croatian educational societies and, rightfully so, the Croats from the Buje area expect. This is the only way for the Sub-Association to fulfil its very important role in raising cultural and national awareness and healing the very painful wounds from the past inflicted on our people.”³⁹ (HG 26/1949, 1)

5. CONCLUSION

The media are undoubtedly an important factor when it comes to observing the social reality in the area of Istria; they represent a significant link, among others, in reconstructing the very complex issue of linguistic identity and language policy, and finally national identity. Centuries of coexistence with various nations and cultures in that small area, social-political changes, and the national integration process resulted in a very complex linguistic situation. Newspapers in Croatian, every single one of them, from *Naša sloga* to *Hrvatski glas*, reported very vividly on everything that was

³⁹ The entire article was printed in capital letters in the newspaper. “Važnu ulogu u podizanju nacionalne svijesti odigralo je dosad i 26 hrvatskih prosvjetnih društava. (...) Društva njeguju hrvatsku riječ i pjesmu, i uopće se za njih može reći da svakim danom postaju sve bolja žarišta narodne kulture. Uspjeh u pogledu rada i nacionalnog osvješćivanja Hrvata Bujštine bio bi nesumnjivo još bolji, da je Podsavez hrvatskih prosvjetnih društava u Bujama, odmah u početku detaljnije razradio plan rada i u potpunosti se upoznao problematikom i načinom podizanja nacionalne svijesti. (...) Zadatak je Podsaveza hrvatskih prosvjetnih društava da se u budućnosti pozabavi problemom – podizanja nacionalne svijesti. To očekuju sva hrvatska prosvjetna društva, to s punim pravom očekuju Hrvati Bujštine. Samo tako moći će se reći za Podsavez da je izvršio važnu ulogu u kulturnom i nacionalnom osvješćivanju i otstranjivanju teških rana prošlosti, koje su nanešene našem narodu.”

happening with the Croatian language and the Croatian people, from the passing of the law on language which advocated the equality of all national languages to the prohibition of its use in schools and churches, public institutions, and media, as well as different situations in which local people were exposed to violence, deprivation of their rights, and denationalization. This certainly culminated in frequent attempts at eliminating ancient Slavic names, symbols of origin and belonging to the Slavic nation. Newspaper articles warned about many injustices, created a positive ideology for the Croatian language which favoured the overall social and political situation. They are also a valuable source of information necessary when analysing the Croatian linguistic standard in Istria which, due to all the indicated social and political circumstances, could not keep pace with its development in the other parts of Croatia. However, the deep roots of both standard language and dialects could not be pulled out owing to the togetherness and unity that has kept the people together for centuries, defying prohibition and violent methods.

The issue of language and identity is closely linked to the issue of social and political activity and the choice of language. Istrian newspapers, as this paper clearly demonstrates, played a crucial role in the entire process. On the one hand, this is obvious from the very fact that these were issued in Croatian, which demonstrates their importance in spreading literacy among Istrian people who, deprived of any content written in their mother tongue, were largely illiterate when the publishing started. On the other hand, there is a significant and quite frequent range of topics related to language as well as nationality which it was often associated with. A positive approach to everything that was Croatian and local, especially the appearance of schools and the use of Croatian in public places, additionally strengthened the establishment of Croatian national identity in Istria through language.

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SOURCES

- Naša sloga* (1870 – 1915)
- Hrvatski list* (1915 – 1918)
- Pučki prijatelj* (1899 – 1928, intermittently)
- Istarska riječ* (1923 – 1929)
- Hrvatski glas* (1947 – 1955)

ULOGA JEZIKA U IZGRADNJI HRVATSKOGA NACIONALNOG IDENTITETA U ISTRI: S PRIMJERIMA IZ ODABRANE ISTARSKE PERIODIKE U 19. I 20. STOLJEĆU

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SAŽETAK

U radu se osvrćemo na tekstove odabranih istarskih glasila koja su tematizirala jezik, a imala su ulogu u oblikovanju hrvatskoga nacionalnog identiteta u Istri u 19. i u prvoj polovici 20. stoljeća, od prvih nakladničkih pothvata do 1955. godine. Vrijeme je to vrlo složenih političkih prilika i mijena na istarskome području, a važnu ulogu u procesima izgradnje hrvatskoga nacionalnog identiteta imaju i glasila koja utječu na oblikovanje javnoga jezika: *Naša sloga*, *Hrvatski list*, *Pučki prijatelj*, *Istarska riječ* i *Hrvatski glas*. Iz tekstova o dvojezičnosti i trojezičnosti, germanizaciji i talijanizaciji jezika u školstvu, administraciji, pomorstvu, poštama, željeznici, crkvi te u drugim oblicima javne, ali i privatne komunikacije može se iščitati važnost jezične politike vremena u izgradnji hrvatskoga nacionalnog identiteta. U ozračju posvemašnjega gašenja kulturnih institucija (škola, narodnih domova, knjižnica, društava i novina) na hrvatskome i slovenskome jeziku, što je uvelike pripomoglo odnarođivanju domaćega stanovništva, pojava publikacija na hrvatskome jeziku bila je višestruko važna za hrvatski jezik. Također, važan su izvor informacija i upoznavanja stanovništva sa zakonskim odredbama kojima se pokušava regulirati status hrvatskoga jezika čime ovi mediji postaju snažnim alatom u mijenama jezične prakse.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI:

hrvatski jezik, Istra, jezična politika, hrvatski nacionalni identitet, periodika

