Herausgegeben von

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Das Baltikum im

sprachgeschichtlichen Kontext

der europäischen Reformation

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The Choice of a Symbolic Codifying Work in the History of Standard European Languages

1. INTRODUCTION. Einar Haugen played an outstanding role in theorizing the history of standard languages. In 1966 he discerned four aspects of language development that are "crucial features in taking the step from 'dialect' to 'language', from vernacular to standard"[1]. These four aspects were described as follows: "(1) selection of norm, (2) codification of form, (3) elaboration of function, and (4) acceptance by the community" (Haugen 1972, 252). Many linguists have accepted these features and used them with slight modifications in their research of the history of various standard languages. Haugen set these four aspects into a scheme (Haugen 1972, 252):

[1] Einar Haugen, *The Ecology of Language*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1972 (first published in 1966), 252.

1 SCHEME

	Form	Function
Society	Selection	Acceptance
Language	Codification	Elaboration

According to this scheme, the language codification aspect is to be understood and described as preeminently related to the *language* (not to the society) and to the *form* (not to the function). Put another way, codification is the *most formal linguistic aspect* in the development of a standard.

There are many histories written of individual standards, but there are not so many comparative standardology works. In this article I intend to discuss certain particularities of language codification history (basing myself on European standard languages): critical (final) codification, codifying genres, means of symbolical

codification (grammars or dictionaries), and the relation of symbolical codification to early or late dialect selection standards or to the language structure itself. In this article I will speak primarily about the codification of the written variety of a standard language.

2. CRITICAL CODIFICATION. In early periods of standard language development we can see obvious fluctuation in orthography, phonology, morphology, and other layers of language. The speech community that uses a maturing standard language accepts this variation as natural and unavoidable. As long as it does not acquire easy means to verify the linguistic form/code under consideration, it does not have the means to control this variation. Actually the concept of *codification* encompasses not only the common knowledge (habits, skills) of a community—their understanding of which form/code is appropriate to use and which is not—but also the possibility to access and easily verify it. Availability of conventional codes makes a community able to unify orthography, phonology, morphology, and other strata of the standard (at least up to the level that is comprehended as uniform by the community: "The orthography and the grammar must find acceptance by a significant avant-garde within the community if they are to have validity and authority"[2]).

We know that the codification of form is a process that lasts for a considerable length of time in the development of most standard languages. However, the intensity of codification those languages undergo is different in various periods of development. Accordingly, we can discern a certain *period* in every language of the most fruitful codification efforts that might be referred to as *critical (final) codification* of a standard. In this period the codes for a standard are ultimately made conventional (agreed upon) and are made easily available for everyone to verify.

Critical (final) codification of a written standard at work might be demonstrated by the influence of written orthography on standard pronunciation. For instance, for historical reasons (to express palatalization) prescriptivists require pronouncing cluster of letters <lio> in Lith. *biblioteka* as two syllables [li-io], but in most cases speakers of standard Lithuanian pronounce it monosyllabically as [l'o] with the palatalized [l'], since this pattern of palatalization <li> is very common in *written* Lithuanian. English patterns might be those from John E. Joseph's book: Engl. *author* originally was pronounced [ɔtər], now is being pronounced [ɔθər] (Joseph 1987, 67).

[2] John Earl Joseph, *Eloquence and Power. The Rise of Language Standards and Standard Languages,* London: Frances Pinter (Publishers), 1987, 65.

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3. GENRES AND SYMBOLS. As it was mentioned above, a community needs certain means to facilitate the access and the verification of a code. Those means most often are related to certain concrete, specially developed *literary genres*.

One of the most influential "genres" that helped European communities find standard codes was the Christian Bible. Such a large and prestigious text, which was amply published even in early periods of European standardization (during the Renaissance), rendered codified forms in many languages. It was, however, quite tricky to identify an exact form/code in the Bible, primarily because there could not possibly be all the words or forms extant. If present but rare, they might be lost in the vastness of the text. And if present and frequent, they might be spelled inconsistently within the same Bible translation and thus create confusion. For these reasons, the Bible was not the most convenient means of codification. Because of its importance and popularity, however, it certainly served as a *certain* codifying text in the Renaissance period.

While using the Bible, a speech community still lacked the potential to simply spot any form/code of a standard at once. Vernacular grammars and dictionaries were the genres popular for this purpose in Europe from at least the Renaissance period on. They supplied the codification process with a much higher potential. If one learns how to use a dictionary or a grammar, one can trace the formal standard code under consideration in most cases.

A grammar is usually organized in a way that everyone can find morphological, syntactic, and in large measure pronunciation (phonetic, phonological) codes there. Dictionary structure normally helps reader to find a word and to detect the spelling of some of its forms. By default, the structure of grammars and dictionaries serves learning and confirms particular standard forms/codes.

If everyone who tries to detect a precise code uses the same source (the same grammar or dictionary), everyone spots the same place in the same book and deliberately or inadvertently transfers the same code onto others. Thus, in terms of both convenience of organization and of code dispersion, dictionaries and grammars were for centuries the most convenient code fixers and eliminators of variation. They were the major sources that helped scattering uniform codes.

Communities produce myths about their language codification. Usually users of different standard languages pick out a particular dictionary or a particular grammar that they consider of crucial importance for the codification of their language. It might occasional-

ly happen that users don't know which one is more important. Sometimes they attribute the same weight to both dictionary and grammar.

These dictionaries and grammars become *symbols* of the standard language. Although there may be many various dictionaries and grammars in the history of a particular standard language, usually one concrete work gets the glory of being responsible for major critical codification. This grammar or dictionary becomes "responsible" for the *symbolical* codification of a standard.

Evidently, each major symbolical codifying work in European tradition substantiates the concept of *the period of critical (final) codification.* Thus, it is plausible to assume that a symbolical codification work is created in the period of critical codification and that it simply forces us to call the period *critical*.

4. RESULTS OF A CRITICAL CODIFICATION PERIOD. After a symbolical work is published and accepted as such by a community, the history of the codification of a standard language becomes dividable into at least two parts: (1) before critical codification and (2) afterwards.

(1) Codification before the critical period is usually of an occasional, not mandatory nature for a community. At that time some evident variation in orthography, phonology, and morphology is still acceptable. A speech community qualifies the extant variation as merely customary. Codification status might be labeled as *partly uniform*.

(2) The tolerance for variation crucially diminishes after a speech community generally accepts the possession of a finally codified standard language and collections of codes for everyone to check his/her spellings are available. Anything that mismatches those collections of codes easily becomes labeled *an error*, an erroneous spelling.

In the second phase of codification, the rise of community's conscious understanding that it possesses a *uniform* standard language (even if in practice only a minority of that community might be able to use it) is of crucial importance. The feeling of owning a standard is being acquired at that time.

5. LANGUAGE STRATA. Which *language strata* are the primary candidates for early codification? Codification of which language layers is a minimum for a speech community to start believing it possesses its own standard language? Which linguistic layers are

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less apparent to the speakers of that community and could be regarded as unimportant for standard language representation? In other words, what measure of variation will a community tolerate as permissive within a standard language and how much uniformity is obligatory?

Joseph speaks about the *uniform orthography* of an arising standard, which "constitutes the codification of its phonological and morphophonological structure" (Joseph 1987, 65). He also mentions that "the writing of one or more grammars constitutes the codification of its *syntactic* and *morphosyntactic* structure" (Joseph 1987, 65). Joseph does not pursue the goal, however, of making a precise registration of the features that are being codified in a grammar or a dictionary in practice. He only ascertains that "the compilation of dictionaries, as well as grammars, codifies the language's lexical-semantic structure" (Joseph 1987, 71–72).

The dispersion of standard codes depends on the *practical* usefulness and feasibility of a grammar or a dictionary to codify certain standard features.

Primarily I would like to note that sociolinguistically (not only linguistically) we can discern certain layers that are *more noticeable* by a community as a subject for codification than others. To grasp standardization as final and irrevocable, a community has to acknowledge that the variation in certain (noticeable for it) layers of the written language have been eradicated. Noticeability of language layers by community might be sketched like this:

2 SCHEME. *Noticeability of codified language strata*

LAYERS	NOTICEABILITY
Lexicon	
Orthography	+
Phonology	+
Morphology	+
Syntax	

Lexicon is a very important stratum of language and the most perceptible for a speaker of a speech community. It is not an obvious symbol of standard stability, however, since it is an open system, unlike most of the other strata. "Closed systems, with their limited inventories, are much more readily codified than open systems" (Joseph 1987, 72). "Codification of vocabulary is bound to progress most slowly, and cannot be completely achieved, because of the open-ended nature of the lexicon"[3].

[3] Ralph Penny, *Variation and change in Spanish*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, 202.

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Syntax is also a layer whose variation is not as easily perceptible for a community as that of orthography, phonology, and morphology. Hence the blurred nature of standards in syntax might not hinder speakers from believing that their language has been codified (without taking into consideration syntactic variation).

Three other structural language layers–orthography, phonology, and morphology–seem more salient to an average language user. These strata have always been the object of *questione della lingua* in the history of many standard languages. As Anthony R. Lodge claims, "The most obvious feature of variability in late medieval written French was *spelling*"[4].

It is evident that namely these three layers are *the most noticeable* for speakers as those responsible for the standardization of a language. They are pivotal for a contemporary speech community to comprehend codification.

In certain measure, both grammars and dictionaries are ready to give answers about codes from different language layers. Although it is generally accepted that these genres codify different language layers, the objects of their codification to some degree coincide:

3 SCHEME. *Codification of language strata by genres and noticeability*

CODIFICATION OF:	GRAMMARS (search by contents)	DICTIONARIES (search by alphabet)
Lexicon		+
Orthography	**+**	**+**
Phonology	**+**	**+**
Morphology	**+**	
Syntax	+	

The scheme demonstrates that the two crucial standardization strata, which are codified in both grammars and dictionaries, are orthography and phonology. Thus, spelling is the most obvious layer that is being codified by both genres. I think here we need *to add* phonology and phonetic peculiarities, which sometimes are simply inseparable from the orthography (the difference is that the orthography represents a written variety and the phonology–a spoken one).

On the other hand, the scheme also makes it evident that morphology is more obviously codified by grammars than by dictionaries. It is much easier for a reader to find morphological codes in a grammar than in a dictionary, though it would not be true to maintain that dictionaries do not codify morphology at all.

[4] Anthony R. Lodge, *French: from Dialect to Standard*, London, New York: Routledge, 1993, 164.

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[5] A. G. Shirokova, G. P. Neshchimenko, "Stanovlenie literaturnogo iazyka Cheshskoi natsii", *Natsionaljnoe vozrozhdenie i formirovanie slavianskich literaturnych iazykov*, Moskva: Nauka, 1978, 26.

[6] George Kurman, *The Development of Written Estonian*, Bloomington: Indiana university; The Hague: Mouton & Co, 1968, 42.

[7] Heinz Kloss, *Die Entwicklung neuer Germanischen Kultursprachen seit 1800*, Düsseldorf: Pädagogischer Verlag Schwann, 1978, 243–244; Andrew Robert Linn, "Ivar Aasen and V. U. Hammershaimb: Towards a Stylistics of Standardization", *Saeprent frå Ivar Aasen-studiar* 1, Bergen, 1998, 108, 111–116.

[8] Jonas Palionis, *Lietuvių rašomosios kalbos istorija*, Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla, 1995, 234–235.

[9] Andrew Robert Linn, *Constructing the Grammars of Language. Ivar Aasen and Nineteenth Century Norwegian Linguistics*, Münster: Nodus Publikationen, 1997, 95–97; Linn 1998, 94, 101–104.

[10] Duncan Wilson, *The Life and Times of Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, 1787–1864*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970, 98–113, 114–130; Radoslav Katičić, "The Making of Standard Serbo-Croat", *Aspects of the Slavic Langue*

6. CONCRETE SYMBOLICAL GRAMMARS AND DICTIONARIES. In this context I want to return to symbolical codifying books and try to understand the reasons why some speech communities have elevated a grammar as its standard language symbol, and some—a dictionary.

Turning to particular languages and basing myself on the histories and other texts written by scholars on these concrete languages, I can distribute concrete symbolical codifying books in the histories of different standard languages as follows:

Grammars:

Czech—Dobrovský's Grammar in 1809[5];

Estonian—K. A. Hermann's Grammar in 1884[6];

Faroese—Venzel Ulrik Hammershaimb's Grammars in 1854 and especially in 1891[7];

Lithuanian—Jonas Jablonskis' Grammar in 1901[8];

Nynorsk (New Norwegian)—Ivar Aasen's Grammars in 1848 and especially in 1864[9];

Serbian—Vuk Stefanović Karadzić's Grammar in 1814[10];

Slovenian—Jernej Kopitar's Grammar in 1809[11].

Dictionaries:

English—Samuel Johnson's *A dictionary of the English language* in 1755[12]; Noah Webster's *An American dictionary of the English language* in 1828[13];

French—*Dictionnaire de l'Académie* in 1694. Anthony R. Lodge primarily registers important codifying French dictionaries and only then–grammars. The most important, according to him, is the Academic Dictionary[14];

Spanish—*Diccionario de autoridades* in 1726–1739 published by the *Real Academia Española* (Penny 2000, 203).

7. RELATION TO EARLY OR LATE DIALECT SELECTION STANDARDS. From the very first glimpse it is obvious that the grammars

Question 1, ed. by Riccardo Picchio & Harvey Goldblatt, New Haven: Yale Concilium on International and Area Studies, 1984, 287–290.

[11] O. S. Plotnikova, "Stanovlenie slovenskogo literaturnogo iazyka v period natsionaljnogo vozrozhdenija", *Natsionaljnoe vozrozhdenie i formirovanie slavianskich literaturnych iazykov*, Moskva: Nauka, 1978, 338, 345–348.

[12] Dick Leith, *A Social History of English*, London, New York: Routledge, ²1997 (¹1983), 50–56.

[13] David Simpson, *The Politics of American English, 1776–1850*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1986, 52–56.

[14] Lodge 1993, 153; Jacques Chaurand, *Nouvelle Histoire de la Langue Francaise*, Lonrai: Editions du Seuil, 1999, 244–246.

registered here as national symbols of standard language belong to those languages that had selected a dialectal basis for their standard comparatively late (i. e. they belong to late dialect selection languages[15], Romanticism period or later). Those that have dictionaries as their codifying symbols are the standard languages that selected their dialect earlier, in Renaissance period or even before.

This is just a tendency, though, not a rule. There are exceptions. Polish had both a grammar and a dictionary that were very important for their language codification: *Grammatyka* of by Onufry Kopczyński[16] and Bogusław Linde's dictionary *Słownik języka Polskiego* in 1806–1812[17].

Nevertheless the tendency is quite strong. Dictionaries are generally larger than grammars and take more time to compile, especially those that can be called critical symbolical codifying dictionaries. Early dialect selection standards generally had more time to mature such a dictionary. Late selection standard languages were developing very rapidly and were rushing to codify everything; it was quicker to create and propagate a grammar.

8. RELATION TO A LANGUAGE STRUCTURE. Having said this, I would like to pose a question: if, in a standard language history, the choice of attaching a strong symbolical meaning to either a grammar or a dictionary depends on the language's linguistic structure, can't it be said that the choice depends on linguistic, not social features of standard development?

In the history of Lithuanian standardization, different ideas were expressed on the primacy of a dictionary or a grammar. Dionizas Poška (1756–1830) claimed that priority should be accorded a dictionary: "You cannot write a grammar before the dictionary is published, because this would be a construction of walls without a foundation"[18]. Lowland Lithuanian Bishop Juozapas Arnulfas Giedraitis (1757–1838) was of the opposite opinion; he wanted "to have a Lithuanian grammar written first [not a dictionary], so that basing the elaboration of the Lithuanian language on it would be possible, since the language is corrupted a lot by peculiar and old phrases taken mostly from Polish"[19].

It is not quite clear why these two cultural avant-gardists of the beginning of the nineteenth century had such opposite ideas. I expect that other language communities might have had different discussions on the subject, depending on many factors, the language type or structure, among others. A grammar may suffice for critical codification of synthetic languages, but for more analytical

[15] See also: Giedrius Subačius, "Two Types of Standard Language History in Europe", *Res Balticae* 8, Pisa, 2002, 131–150.

[16] Cf. Onufry Kopczyński, *Gramatyka dla szkół narodowych na klassę III: przedrukowana*, Warszawa: w Druk. Xięży Piiarów, 1813; Onufry Kopczyński, *Gramatyka dla szkół narodowych na klassę II: przedrukowana*, Warszawa: w Druk. Xięży Piiarów, 1816; Onufry Kopczyński, *Grammatyka dla szkół narodowych na klassę I: na nowo przedrukowana* w Warszawie roku 1816.

[17] Samuel Bogumił Linde, *Słownik języka polskiego* 1–6, Warszawa, 1807–1814.

[18] Dionizas Poška, *Raštai*, parengė Dominykas Urbas, Vilnius: Valstybinė grožinės literatūros leidykla, 1959, 488–489.

[19] Aldona Prašmantaitė, "Žemaičių vyskupas J. A. Giedraitis – Naujojo Testamento vertėjas", *Senoji Lietuvos literatūra* 3. *Devynioliktan amžiun įžengus*, Vilnius: Pradai, 1994, 208, 227.

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ones, like English, and for those that have a certain evident distance between pronunciation and orthography (like English or French), a dictionary might be a much more convenient means for critical codification.

It is surely possible to find many reasons why the symbol of English codification became Johnson's and Webster's dictionaries; of French codification—*Dictionnaire Academique*; and of Lithuanian—Kriaušaitis' (Jablonskis') grammar.

Nevertheless, if not the only reason, but one of many, I would emphasize the *structure of language* itself. If we return to the layers that are the most noticeable in codification (cf. the scheme 2. above), we will see that dictionaries codify orthography and phonology the best and that grammars, in addition to these features, are very convenient for morphological codification.

The user of English, because of its quite simple morphological structure but quite complicated spelling system, needed a dictionary for codification purposes more than a grammar. The same is true of French. The user of Lithuanian, with its ample collection of morphologically expressed grammatical features, needed a grammar more. In addition, a user with a Lithuanian grammar did not need to use a dictionary as frequently, since Lithuanian spelling is much more phonetically motivated. He/she could feel safer spelling a word without a dictionary than an English language user. The English user needed a dictionary for spelling; he/she did not have as great a need to verify morphological forms, the object of a grammar.

We seldom speak of linguistic rather than social factors in the standardization process. This is one of those rare occasions: the choice of a codifying genre apparently depends to some degree on the structure of a language itself, in addition to social factors such as the time period when the codification occurred.

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