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*Formes brèves et modernité*

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Walter Zidarič

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LANGUAGE CONTACTS AND GREETINGS:  
SOME CROATIAN EXAMPLES

Vesna Deželjin

Université de Zagreb (Croatie)



**Résumé :** Les salutations sont un acte de communication fondamental lors duquel le sujet parlant veut intentionnellement se présenter aux autres ; en même temps, c'est aussi la façon de prêter attention à la personne saluée. Lorsque quelqu'un salue, il ne montre pas seulement ses émotions (exprimant la cordialité, la réserve, l'hostilité) au regard des autres, mais aussi sa situation sociale (déterminant son niveau de formalité). Les salutations se réalisent verbalement ou non verbalement. Leur choix dépend de plusieurs facteurs : la culture, la situation dans laquelle on se trouve, la relation entre les personnes concernées. Les salutations verbales sont en général des locutions figées très brèves qu'on ne peut pas transformer en introduisant un autre élément à l'intérieur de l'unité composée. Les salutations, appartenant au niveau de la langue courante, changent, et leurs changements révèlent des variations historiques et sociales d'une communauté. Cet article analyse les résultats de l'enquête auprès des élèves de plusieurs écoles secondaires croates de Zagreb, Split et Rijeka. On peut remarquer que cette population utilise une grande diversité des formules de salutations. Notre étude s'appuie sur l'usage de quelques salutations atypiques employées activement par les locuteurs croates de tous âges. On peut diviser ces salutations en deux groupes distincts – les formules traditionnelles et les formules modernes – qui se sont avérés tout aussi indispensables. Les éléments linguistiques incorporés dans la langue croate résultent de changements complexes qui se sont produits au cours des siècles sur le territoire de l'actuelle République de Croatie grâce aux contacts entre les variétés régionales croates et les autres langues présentes dans cette région, à savoir l'italien, l'allemand et le hongrois. Les autres salutations, ainsi que de nombreux emprunts dans le croate moderne, devront être traités comme des mots d'emprunt de luxe plutôt que des mots d'emprunt réellement nécessaires.

**Mots clés :** les salutations verbales, la langue croate, le contact entre les langues, les mots d'emprunt.

*Abstract:* Greeting is a basic act of communication in which a person intentionally makes his/her presence known to others; at the same time, it is also a way of showing one's attention toward the person being greeted. By greeting, we reveal not only the emotional relationship (determining whether we will be cordial, distant, hostile) that we have with other people, but also our relative social status (determining our level of formality or informality). Greetings can be verbal or non-verbal, and the choice between the two depends upon a series of factors, such as culture, situation, and the relationship between the persons who exchange greetings. Verbal greetings are generally short, fixed linguistic expressions whose components usually cannot be additionally elaborated or substituted by

some other element. Greetings, as a part of everyday language, change and reveal historical and social variations in a community. This paper discusses the results of a survey conducted among the last-year pupils at several secondary schools in Zagreb, Split, and Rijeka. They show a large variety of greeting formulas in use among that population. The paper focuses on the use of some non-standard greetings also used actively by other Croatian speakers of all ages. These greetings can be divided into two distinct groups – traditional formulas and modern formulas – both of which have proved to be equally vital. The linguistic elements that have been incorporated into the Croatian language are the result of complex changes that have taken place over centuries on the territory of the present Republic of Croatia and language contacts between all Croatian varieties and other languages present in the area, namely, Italian, German, and Hungarian. Other greetings, as well as many other foreign elements in modern Croatian, are to be treated as “luxury” loanwords rather than as really necessary loanwords.

**Keywords:** verbal greetings, Croatian language, language contacts, loan-words.

## INTRODUCTION

Greetings, as a linguistic issue, have been discussed by many scholars and on various occasions. This is understandable, since a greeting is a basic ritual to indicate either the beginning or the end of a situation in which two or more people meet (Renzi, 1995; Canobio, 2003). This definition implicates a verbal greeting, even though there are numerous non-verbal greetings as well, and the choice is governed by a number of factors, such as situation, culture, relationship between the participants in the communicative act, and medium of communication. The communicative value of a greeting may depend upon kinetic appearances (e.g., mimics, gestures, body position), perceptive features (feelings of sympathy, antipathy, empathy), physical characteristics (touching, shaking hands), ritual movements (kissing, waving hands), and status symbols, important when age and education regulate forms of greetings (Pintarić, 2002, p. 121). Apart from all these parameters, another significant quality of a verbal greeting is its form, stable and unchangeable in synchrony, which means that it cannot be modified or combined with other words, so that the greeting *Good morning!* cannot be altered or reinforced by saying *\*Good pleasant morning!*<sup>1</sup> Therefore, verbal greetings can be treated as formulas, culturally embedded, traditional, and easily recognizable. Moreover, very often, greetings, even if they come from different languages, but are in use in the same geographical area, are formed with words that express the same meaning. For example, in Europe, regardless of the language spoken, wishing someone a good day or good night, is a common greeting formula. On the other hand, speakers of languages whose cultures have not historically

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<sup>1</sup> Because this article speaks about greeting habits and tendencies in the Croatian speaking area, Croatian examples will be cited from now on.

been in contact will use greetings that communicate very different concepts and meanings<sup>2</sup>.

#### HYPOTHESES AND AIMS OF THE PAPER

Since a greeting can be observed and analysed as any other complex linguistic expression or multiword phrase of a language, we start with the hypothesis that it is subject to change over time. Greetings that are widely used today may not have been so frequent a few decades ago – in some cases, they may not have existed at all, or they may have been reanimated, etc. The causes of such changes in the typology and form of greetings are varied. In fact, every greeting formula which is perceived as deviant from what would be expected mirrors in a very specific way certain historical and social variations that the community of speakers has been exposed to. This is the second hypothesis from which I start. Specifically, this paper deals with greetings used among Croatian language speakers in Croatia and aims to examine a variety of greetings used when there is a relationship of equality or symmetry between interlocutors as well as to detect to what extent the presence and longevity of certain formulas in the speech community can be seen as a consequence of extra-linguistic, especially social, factors and/or of language contact.

#### METHODOLOGY OF THE INQUIRY AND RESPONDENTS

On this occasion, I will present data that have been collected in three different surveys in which possible answers were not suggested.

The first one was conducted ten years ago among Croatian teenagers (Deželjin and Mildner, 2009). At the time we studied the use of greeting formulas because we wanted to compare our results to those obtained a decade before in a similar research conducted upon a student population (Bratanić, 1999). There were 210 high-school respondents (Deželjin and Mildner, 2009) distributed among four major Croatian cities, namely in Osijek (53 students), Rijeka (30 students), Split (45 students), and Zagreb (82 students). Our respondents, who were sixteen or seventeen years old, had to fill in an open-ended questionnaire designed for that particular occasion and indicate all types of greeting formulas they would use during the day at the moment of meeting or leaving their friends, parents, teachers, and familiar elderly people (Cf. Questionnaire). On this occasion, I will focus my attention only on data related to informal social situations and relations, and in particular to those that that involve friends and the family.

Two years ago, I conducted a similar inquiry but among university students attending the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zagreb and at the same-named faculty at the University of Rijeka, whose age varied from eighteen to twenty-three years. On that occasion, there were fifty respondents in Zagreb (40 females and 10 males) and 26 respondents in Rijeka (20 females and 6 males) who were asked to fill in a

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<sup>2</sup> Let's quote only a few examples: in Nepali, an informal greeting, equivalent to *Hello!*, means *What is it?* or *How is it?*, while in Sinhala, by greeting a person, the speaker wishes her/ him a long life. In Jamaican patois a person can be greeted by saying *What's going on?*

similar type of questionnaire and to indicate greeting formulas they used in informal situations with friends and members of their family.

In this paper, the high-school pupils and university students will be treated together, as young speakers.

My third group of respondents consisted of sixty-four people between forty and sixty-five years of age who have a university degree. These respondents, referred to as senior speakers in this paper, provided me with answers concerning only their habits in greeting people whom they consider socially equal to themselves in informal situations. They were asked to fill in a simplified version of the Questionnaire that was given to young subjects and their answers were collected in 2015 and 2016.

### SURVEY RESULTS

The analysis of questionnaires filled in either by high-school students or by university students shows that, on the whole, they use a rich collection of greetings with their friends, including various forms of verbal language, body language, or combinations of the two. According to the data provided by my high-school respondents, it turns out that the males, among themselves, frequently shake hands or wave, slap the other person on the shoulder(s), hug the other person, and even lightly punch the other in the stomach, while the females mostly wave hands, smile, kiss, and hug when greeting a female friend. The corpus of verbal formulas consists of 122 distinct items. The array of verbal greetings is quite heterogeneous (cf. Table 1) because there are formal formulas, which can also be uttered in formal situations and with a distant interlocutor, such as *Dobro jutro* ('Good morning', 11 occurrences) and *Dobar dan* ('Good day', 28 occur.), used at the moment of meeting, and *Laku noć* ('Good night', 29 occur.), used when parting in the evening. However, these formal formulas are occasional and common among high-school pupils only when parents or other close relatives are greeted. Apart from these, high-school and university students frequently greet their friends by using quite unexpected informal utterances, such as questions<sup>3</sup> and numerous and rather creative phatic expressions that only call the attention of the interlocutor (*Alo!*, *Eeeej*, *Eha!*, *Ejla!*, *Hej!*, *Oj!*, *Papa!*) Quite often, there are also expressions that recall, partially or entirely, informal greetings borrowed from other languages and then adapted to Croatian or only acclimated (Gusmani, 1993) into Croatian. Consequently, young Croatian speakers greet each other not only with expressions from contemporary colloquial English, such as *Haj* < *Hi!*, *Helou* < *Hello*, and *Bai-bai* < *Bye-bye!*, *Yoo-hoo!*, *Yowussap* < *Yo, what's up?*, but from other languages, such as Czech or Slovak *Ahoj*, 'hello' and 'bye', the Hawaiian word *Aloha!*<sup>4</sup>. My high-school respondents also cited three greetings that can be considered as half-way between formal greetings and the above-mentioned highly informal and heterogeneous greetings,

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<sup>3</sup> Questions that replace a real greeting formula mostly inquire on the interlocutor's activities or plans at the moment of meeting. Hence, my respondents quoted *Di si?*, *Ej šta ima?*, *Di si kompa?*; *Jesi se naspava?/naspavala?*, etc. There are 86 questions in my corpus and this is the most numerous category in it (Deželjin and Mildner, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> As is known, in Hawaiian the word *aloha* means 'affection, peace, compassion, and mercy', but when communication became better and the islands more easily accessible, the word has come to be used as a greeting meaning either 'Hello!' or 'Bye!'

namely, *Bok!* / *Bog!* < *bog* (literally, 'God'), used in all four towns, *Čao*<sup>5</sup> < *Ciao*,<sup>6</sup> and *Servus!*<sup>7</sup> (All three of which are equivalent to both 'Hi!' and 'Good-bye!' in English), which are present and well embedded in Croatian tradition.

According to the answers found in the university students' questionnaires, it turns out that they usually combine verbal greetings with the most common types of non-verbal greetings (shaking hands, tapping, waving). The results also reveal that phatic interjections are somewhat less common and that traditional salutations, that are suitable in formal situations as well, such as *Dobro jutro!* ('Good morning', 32 occur.), *Dobar dan!* ('Good morning', 52 occur.), *Dobra večer!* ('Good evening', 38 occur.), *Laku noć!* ('Good night', 38 occur.), *Doviđenja* ('Good-bye', 'So long', 14 occur.), and *Zbogom* ('Good-bye', 'Adieu', 4 occur.), are often exchanged even among young respondents. However, a part from the already quoted *Bai-bai* (< *Bye-bye!*) and *Baj*, the most common informal greetings among both sexes are *Bok/Bog* and *Čao*, convenient at the moment of meeting or leaving a person. Each formula was found to be more appropriate than the others in a particular region; those students from Zagreb and/or from north-western parts of Croatia greet their friends, parents, and relatives with *Bok!* (18 occur.) in all situations. Students from eastern Croatia or from the Adriatic coast and from continental Dalmatia use the variant *Bog!* (25 occur.).

The greeting *Čao!* (14 occur.) proved to be used only occasionally and only by female students at the University of Rijeka who were originally from that town<sup>8</sup> or its vicinity.

As far as the senior respondents were concerned, they usually disliked the sole use of non-verbal forms of greeting, even in informal situations, and preferred either combinations of non-verbal and verbal greetings or use verbal formulas alone. If a combination of two systems is in practice, males usually shake hands or wave (especially when physically distant from their interlocutors) while pronouncing a verbal greeting, whereas females prefer hugging and kissing together with some kind of verbal greeting. The range of verbal greetings comprises a few formulas adequate in formal situations and numerous utterances that vary from truly informal greetings to terms that can replace them and which include phatic expression, questions, and interjections, all quite similar to those used by young respondents. As expected, the most frequent informal greeting is

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<sup>5</sup> Since many respondents are aware of the origin of this greeting formula, some of them put it down in the questionnaire in its orthographically original form. However, from now onward, only the adapted form will be quoted in the paper.

<sup>6</sup> According to Boerio's dictionary of the Venetian dialect, the form *sc'ao* /ʃfao/ is used to greet a close friend, its value corresponding to some other Italian salutations: namely, *Addio!*, *Salve!*, *Fatti con Dio!*, *Buon di!*, *Buon giorno!* and *Buona notte!* (Boerio, 1998, p. 624), which respectively correspond to 'Good-bye!', 'Hi', 'May the Lord be with you!', 'Good morning', and 'Good night'. The Venetian greeting, which recalls the ceremonial Latin greeting formula *Servus tuus!*, became common in most parts of Northern Italy and spread from there throughout the Apennine peninsula.

<sup>7</sup> *Servus*, as well as the Italian *Ciao!*, recalls the Latin *servus tuus*, as well. According to lexicographic sources (Hausen *et al.*, 2005, p. 1554; Kunhel-Rezum *et al.*, 2007, p. 1535; Duden, 1980, p. 168), this greeting came into use in the Habsburg Monarchy and is still common in Austrian German and in southern parts of Germany. It spread, especially in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, to other communities and languages that were influenced by Habsburg culture, i.e., to Hungarian (*Szervusz/ Szervusztok*), Romanian (*Servus*), Polish (*Serwus*), and continental Croatian varieties. In Habsburg Zagreb and in the local Croatian dialect, the variant *Serbus!* was perhaps even more frequent and can still be heard today.

<sup>8</sup> There were only thirteen students, out of twenty-six, who had grown up in Rijeka, and nine were girls.



*Bok!*, especially if a person is a native Kajkavian speaker or has been living in Zagreb for many years. This is followed by *Čao!* (27 occur.), especially at departure and if at least one of the interlocutors is linguistically related to the Adriatic coast and its dialectal variants. Eleven senior respondents born in Zagreb or its surroundings, as well as three who were born elsewhere but grew up in Zagreb, underlined the greeting formula *Servus!* ('Hi!', 'Bye!'), acceptable either when encountering a person or saying good-bye to her/him.

There are four examples of *Zdravo!* < *zdravo*, 'healthy'<sup>9</sup> ('Hello!', Hi!, 'Hi there!'), put forth by both sexes of senior respondents. Among other informal expressions, there can be noticed those of the English origin (*Haj!* < 'Hi!', *Helou* < 'Hello!'), which are used mostly by females.

### GREETING FORMULAS AND LANGUAGE CONTACTS

Although the aim of each survey was to investigate sociolinguistic changes in greetings, there is one aspect that should be discussed first: greetings can be a reflex of language contact, either past or present, that occurred on a certain territory.

In a global society, foreign elements borrowed from other languages and cultures document the intense communication that occurs among speakers of different languages. The Croatian language as used today, with all its horizontal and vertical varieties, has been strongly influenced especially by English language and culture – as have many other languages in today's globalized world. This tendency has been stimulated also by the fact that the language of the young is always well-disposed toward trendiness; at present, this means the language used in films, music, and other types of free-time entertainment coming from the English speaking area.

Two salutations, *Čao!* and *Servus!*, on the other hand, reflect the exposure of Croatian<sup>10</sup> to other languages and cultures in the past. As mentioned above, the former salutation, Italian in origin, reflects the strong and centuries-long influence of Venetian<sup>11</sup> and/or Italian<sup>12</sup> that was exercised in all the Croatian-speaking territories along the Adriatic coast and that still can be perceived in the morpho-syntax and particularly in the

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<sup>9</sup> This greeting, formally an adverb meaning 'healthy', expresses a speaker's wish for good health of a person met and hence corresponds to the Latin greeting *Ave!* This has been well documented in the Croatian language tradition (Anić *et al.*, 2002, p. 1487; Jojić *et al.*, 2015, p. 1756).

<sup>10</sup> The standard Croatian language is based on three dialectal groups, i.e., on the most widespread Štokavian dialect group (which serves as the basis of [Standard Serbian](#), [Bosnian](#) and [Montenegrin](#)), on the Čakavian dialect group, and on the Kajkavian dialect group. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Croatian intellectuals and scholars made their first attempts to provide a Croatian literary standard. They chose the Neo-Štokavian dialect as the basis of the future standard language and to serve as a supraregional *lingua franca*. Consequently, the other two dialectal groups, Čakavian, spoken along the Adriatic coast and on the islands, Kajkavian, typical of central Croatia and of its capital, as well as other Štokavian vernaculars lost much of the prestige they previously had, as confirmed by the centuries-long and rich literary traditions in the Čakavian and Kajkavian dialects.

<sup>11</sup> The long lasting presence of Venetians in the eastern Adriatic is confirmed either by a language variant known as Colonial Venetian (Bidwell, 1967) or also Colonial Triestine (Doria, 1987) abundantly documented by Italian dialectal vocabularies such as Boerio (1989), Doria (1987), Miotto (1991) or by those of loanword in the Croatian language (Anić and Goldstein, 1999).

<sup>12</sup> Originally Venetian, and hence dialectal, greeting formula *s'ciao*, entered many other Italian dialects and became the most used Italian greeting formula *ciao*, that later on spread and, as a cultural loanword, entered many other languages.

lexis of the Čakavian and Štokavian varieties spoken in that region. After 1945, the impact of Italian almost disappeared, and even later, when relations between the states of Italy and Yugoslavia were re-established, Italian remained the second language and has never regained the power it had until the Second World War. Consequently, the greeting *Čao!*, although it is still vital, has faced certain changes, mainly concerning its narrowed domain. As the results show, young speakers living in territories where it was common are not inclined to use this greeting as frequently as the older generations did. Despite the presence of an Italian minority in Rijeka, for instance, as well as frequent contacts with the Italian culture and language, this greeting formula has been withdrawing from the language of the young because its use has not been stimulated by concrete and effective extra linguistic factors which characterize situations of tight daily foreign language interaction.

The use of the greeting *Serbus! / Servus!*, emblematic of the Habsburg influence, has also been in steady decline. The collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy in 1918 brought about a new social and political order, which weakened the results of centuries of language contact between German and Croatian. Moreover, this tendency continued and faced almost a complete split after the Second World War, when all elements, even linguistic ones, that could have been reminiscent of the past and of the foreign domination, had to be eliminated. However, this tendency did not affect the Croatian vernaculars spoken in northern parts, much less the Kajkavian dialects, which have remained almost unchanged and have preserved many Austrian German loanwords, among which *Servus* is only one. But the life of a word is closely related to its users, so that over the years *Serbus! / Servus!* has become limited to older speakers who still recall the time when they or elderly members of their families used to greet each other and their friends with that salutation.

#### GREETING FORMULAS AS SOCIOLINGUISTIC DATA

Language contacts' issues, observed on this occasion on the example of greetings used by two distinct age groups, are important because they signal changes in the status of a certain language in regard to other languages. At the same time, the same data reflect their status of preference or rejection within a certain group of speakers.

Even though the three presented inquiries were carried out on different occasions and under different circumstances and severe critical observations concerning the respondents' age, origin, social position, professional status, and education might be made, my results, apart from having confirmed some hypotheses, have brought about some new facts that in the future should be checked on a larger scale and with far more respondents.

At this point, it is useful to reflect on the use of three informal formulas common to all respondents, namely *Bok! / Bog!*, *Čao!*, and *Servus! / Serbus!*

As said above, the use of the traditional salutation *Čao* (< *ciao*, 'Hello') proved not to be in use by Split teenagers when greeting each other.<sup>13</sup> *Čao* appears to be falling into disuse in other coastal areas, as well: in Rijeka it is only marginally present, and if it is used, it would be exclusively among females. Moreover, the Split high-school respondents

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<sup>13</sup> According to the results of the questionnaire, only two out of forty-five Split teenagers used that greeting when meeting elderly male well-acquainted neighbours who used the same formula themselves.

not only neglected the once highly frequent and locally recognizable Čao!, but preferred to greet their friends in an unusual manner, usually replacing a greeting with a kind of a question about his current plans, always expressed in the local vernacular (cfr. n. 2).<sup>14</sup> Quite surprisingly, Čao, as a non-native greeting in northern Croatia, proved to be very popular with high-school students in northern parts of Croatia, i.e., in Osijek. Since there is no evidence of its embedment in northern and north-eastern Croatian, corresponding mostly to Štokavian dialectal variants, active use of this salutation can be seen as a modish sign, and a possible stimulus for its use among my respondents could be found in the fact that some of them attended classes in the Italian language and thus quoted it. On the other hand, this word (*ciao*), being well-known and widely used in many languages and cultures, can be considered an international greeting.

As a matter of fact, a preferable friendly salutation among high-school pupils of both sexes in Osijek is *Bog! / Bok!*; moreover, they also use it to greet their parents and close neighbours of all ages. Most of the high-school respondents in Rijeka greet their parents by saying *Bok!*, too, which is rather curious, since this salutation was not commonly used in Rijeka before 1990. Moreover, my University students' data confirmed that students from Štokavian or Čakavian-speaking communities use this greeting in formal situations and with socially superior interlocutors,<sup>15</sup> as was shown for the first time almost twenty years ago (Bratanić, 1999). On the basis of these facts, there are at least two observations to be made concerning this greeting: (a) there is parallel use of two phonetic variants, i.e., *Bok!* and *Bog!*, and (b) *Bok!*, a greeting primarily typical of the Zagreb area and generally of the north-western Kajkavian dialect group, appears in areas where it has never been used before.

That *Bok!* has been typical of the Zagreb region, and still is, can be seen in its orthographical form, which reflects its pronunciation, that is, with a voiceless velar occlusive at the end, preceded by a short descending round back vowel, [bòk]. Scholars agree that the form *Bok* is a Kajkavian reflex of the South Slavic as well as standard Croatian word *bog* ('God', Anić *et al.*, 2002, p. 131; Jojić *et al.*, 2015, p. 100), pronounced with a long ascending round back vowel and a voiced velar occlusive [g] at the end. Moreover, on the basis of my auditory perception, most of my senior respondents living in Zagreb, either those who are Štokavian speakers or those who are Čakavian speakers and should therefore say *Bog!* [bó:g] and not *Bok!*, [bòk], show a peculiar pronunciation characteristic: while their ascending rounded vowel is still quite long, their final occlusive has become voiceless almost in all cases.

At least three dictionaries – one of standard Croatian (Jojić *et al.*, 2015), one of a variety spoken in Zagreb and its surroundings (Mutavdžić, 2016, p. 36),<sup>16</sup> and one of a

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<sup>14</sup> These questions, as well as many other examples of greeting formulas that I'm focussing on in this paper, i.e., those addressed to coevals or to elderly people and/or family members, are always dialectally marked. In this case, we are dealing with the Split dialectal vernacular. For some examples cf. n. 3.

<sup>15</sup> Another important conclusion that is not part of this discussion but needs to be pointed out concerns the use of the greeting *Bog!* to greet people who do not have the same social status. That is, students from parts of Croatia in which other greetings have long traditions of use often use *Bok!* erroneously. Not being well acquainted with the history and pragmatic value of the greeting, they use it in formal situations, to greet elderly people or professors.

<sup>16</sup> The Author claims that the etymology of the greeting *Bok!* has been obscure, but that it might be associated to the Austrian greeting formula of the Habsburg period *mein Bocken\** (literally *my bow* = 'my

variety spoken in yet another Kajkavian urban centre, Varaždin<sup>17</sup> (Lipljen, 2013, p. 80), cite the greeting *Bok!*. On the other hand, there are many dictionaries of the Croatian language, such as one of standard Croatian (Anić *et al.* 2002), several dictionaries of non-urban Kajkavian vernaculars (e.g., Šatović and Kalinski, 2012; Finka, 1984), and some older dictionaries of Croatian (Šulek, 1874-1875), that do not include the greeting *Bok!* at all. On the basis of these facts and taking into account the indicated diatopic changes that *Bok!* has undergone, it can be said that all this signals some significant changes in the Croatian community. It is obvious that this salutation has surpassed its original geographical area of use, which once was limited to the Zagreb area, and this leads to the conclusion that a traditional Zagreb (and thus urban Kajkavian) greeting has spread out and during the last twenty-five years has entered very distant and non-affiliated Croatian dialectal vernaculars. At the same time (or as a consequence of these diatopic redistributions), its position on the 'formal - informal' continuum has been altered (Bratanić 1999). This change, i.e., the adoption and acclimatization (Gusmani, 1993) of the most frequent informal greeting of the Zagreb language variety into other Croatian dialects was possible because of complex and well-known changes<sup>18</sup> in Croatian society, which, with the help of mass-media, turned the linguistic variety spoken in the Croatian capital into the most prestigious variety in the country. This is the reason why *Bok!* could have overcome other traditional greeting formulas, *Čao!* in the first place, which, consequently, has gradually retreated and fallen out of broad use. This fact would seem satisfactory enough to explain the popularity of *Bok!*, not only in Osijek but above all in Rijeka and Split, whose dialects have not been only distinct from the Kajkavian of Zagreb, but for many centuries, and precisely up to 1945, had been exposed to a strong, first Venetian and then generally Italian, supremacy. In addition, the spreading of the Zagreb variant greeting has been enabled also by the fact that in all Croatian dialects, and in particular in all rural vernaculars, exist traditional greeting formulas containing the word 'god'<sup>19</sup>.

The use of these three informal greetings was quite surprising in some areas or at least by this generational group of speakers.

The use of *Servus!*, cited by a few high-school<sup>20</sup> and university respondents from Zagreb, as well as by a number of my senior Zagreb interlocutors<sup>21</sup> is another relevant

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respect'), which was abbreviated to *bokn\** and then to *bok*. The Author does not quote any source, and in my opinion, this hypothesis is not reliable.

<sup>17</sup> The town of Varaždin is the biggest and the most important urban and university centre in the entire region to the north of Zagreb, where Kajkavian dialects are spoken and which was exposed to Austrian German influences for centuries.

<sup>18</sup> As the capital of the independent Republic of Croatia, Zagreb has also become a prestigious cultural and social centre, whose domination can be perceived in divulgation of *Bok!* as well.

<sup>19</sup> Let us mention *Bog daj/ Bog daj sreću!*, though used mainly as an answer to an incoming greeting, and the already mentioned *Zbogom!*, as a departure salutation. Cf. Anić *et al.* 2002: 131; Finka, 1984, p. 173; Šatović and Kalinski, 2012).

<sup>20</sup> The greeting *Servus!*, has been set forth by four high-school students (two females and two males) originally from Zagreb. Three of them (two females and one male) use this greeting sometimes with their grandparents because their elderly like that formula, hardly heard nowadays. The male respondents reported to use the same greeting on rare occasions also with their very close friends, since, as they explained, it signals a profound and long lasting friendship with a person of the same age who must have in common the same place of birth, i.e. be a Zagreber.

sociolinguistic datum. Even though the revival of this somewhat old-fashioned greeting formula, suitable at all moments of the day, is hardly to be expected, since it would be used only among friends who grew up and got old living continually in Zagreb, the fact that very young informants mentioned it and declared that they use it is not to be ignored. The young respondents use it primarily for pragmatic reasons: they want to please their grandparents, who, being emotively involved with the greeting, love to hear it and appreciate it, or they are eager to manifest overtly their local patriotism, and this shows that the word has still got its greeting potential.

The reason that has caused and led to an increasingly rare use of the greeting *Zdravo!* is of a different nature. The respondents who quoted this formula, which has almost perished, too, confirmed a common assumption that this formula fell in disuse for political reasons. According to them, *Zdravo!* used to be the obligatory Partisan and communist' greeting in socialist Yugoslavia. Therefore, an average Croatian speaker would consider this formula nowadays, quite erroneously, to be the most representative sign of the former and for many reasons loathsome political system, and, governed by such opinions and feelings, would neglect this greeting rather intentionally. It is so even though this greeting has been well eradicated in Croatian tradition since it had been in use even long before the Second World War and the following several-decades-long communist period in Yugoslavia (and thus in Croatia), as proved by one of the most frequent Roman Catholic prayers to the Virgin Mary that begins with the same word.<sup>22</sup> It is obvious that no Croatian Catholic today would reject this word nor this prayer because of the word, but this fact, nevertheless, can hardly alter the highly negative connotations of the pleasant and positive salutation *Zdravo!*, and stimulate its revival.

## CONCLUSIONS

It has been confirmed that greetings, like any other linguistic element, can be studied from various points of view and that they are also subject to diverse extra-linguistic changes. Therefore, the greetings, verbal and/or non-verbal, cited by Croatian-speaking respondents from two different age groups of speakers, turn out to be quite heterogeneous and unpredictable, and there are many forms that traditionally would not be considered as greetings, but have come into use mostly thanks to younger speakers and their openness to innovation and trendiness. Consequently, there are a high number of foreign greetings (particularly those borrowed from English-speaking communities) that young Croatian respondents use to greet a person perceived as socially equal. This phenomenon can be explained as a sign of better accessibility of foreign languages and cultures to high-school pupils in main urban centres. At the same time, preference for certain types of greetings usually leads to the gradual withdrawal of the others, and, eventually to a complete disuse of the latter, as well as to the new redistribution of some greetings. This type of variation can be traced on the example of *Čao!*, which enjoyed frequent use until recently, which many high-school Croatian speakers in coastal towns have neglected, while their coevals in the continental town of Osijek, exposed only to

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<sup>21</sup> Five respondents felt the need to point out that this greeting is used only with people known from childhood and who were born in Zagreb.

<sup>22</sup> This is the prayer known as *Zdravo Marijo* . . . ('Hail Mary...').

German and Hungarian linguistic influence in the past, actively use that greeting, a reasonable explanation of this choice being the trendiness of those young speakers. The social prestige of a certain linguistic variety can also be decisive for the use (or lack of use) of a greeting, as proved by the overall use of *Bok!*, otherwise traditionally restricted to the Croatian capital and its broader surroundings. Despite the modest number of respondents, the results show that this greeting has become embraced by both young and elderly speakers even when it is not a traditional heritage of their mother-tongue. Finally, the results have confirmed, as expected, that the difference in age between young and senior speakers can also cause differences in greetings, since the young are more creative, as proved by “new” types of greetings, especially when non-verbal forms are concerned. However, the use of certain old-fashioned greetings that have all but died out by both types of speakers confirms that, in informal situations, the choice is mostly governed pragmatically, i.e., by the addressee’s identity and by the speakers feelings.

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**Table 1**  
Greeting-formulas - types and number of occurrences at the moment of meeting and departure

<i>Type</i>	<i>Meeting</i>			<i>Departure</i>
Formal	Dobro jutro ('Good morning'), 107 occ.  Students - 43 occur; Seniors – 64 occur.	Dobar dan ('Good morning'), <b>144</b> occ.  Students - 80 occur. Seniors – 64 occur.	<i>Dobra večer!</i> ('Good evening'), <b>121</b> occur. Students – 67 occur. Seniors - 64 occur.  <i>Laku noć!</i> ('Good night') <b>131</b> occur Students – 76 occur Seniors – 64 occur.	<i>Dovidenja</i> ('Good-bye', 'So long'), <b>78</b> occ. Students – 14 occur. Seniors - 64 occur. <i>Zbogom</i> ('Good-bye', 'Adieu'), <b>66</b> occur. Students – 0 occur. Seniors – 59 occur.
Questions ( <b>86</b> different items)	Di si? Kako je? Kak ide? Kak je? Šta ima? Jesi se naspava?	Šta se radi? Novo? Šta se zbiva? Šta mi radiš?		
Phatic expressions	<i>Aaj!, Alo!, Eeej, Eha!, Ejla!, Halo-halo!, Hej!, Jee!, Ju-hu!, Ku-ku!, Oj!, Ooo!, Uuuu!, Vau!</i> -18 items			<i>Pa-pa!</i> (53 occur., students 47; seniors - 6); <i>See you!</i> (17 occur.) <i>Ajde!</i> (9 occur.), <i>Čmok!</i> (7 occur!, seniors)
Informal greetings, English	<i>Haj &lt; Hi!</i> , 67 occur., <i>Helou &lt; Hello</i> , 71 occur., <i>Yoohoo!</i> , 29 occur., <i>Yowussap &lt; Yo, what's up?</i> , 22 occur.			<i>Bai-bai &lt; Bye-bye!</i> , (57 occur., students); <i>Baj</i> (82 occur., students – 73, seniors - 9)
Informal greetings, other languages	<i>Ahoj</i> , 5 occur. <i>Aloha!</i> 2 occur.			
half-way between formal and highly informal	<i>Bok!</i> 73 occur./ <i>Bog!</i> 84, occur. total 157 occur Students - 33+60 occur. Seniors - 40+24 occur.	<i>Bok!</i> 73 occur./ <i>Bog!</i> 84, occur. total 157 occur Students -33+60 occur. Seniors - 40+24 occur.	<i>Bok!</i> 73 occur./ <i>Bog!</i> 84, occur. total 157 occur Students -33+60 occur. Seniors -40+24 occur.	<i>Bok!</i> 73 occur. / <i>Bog!</i> 84 occur., total 157 occur. Students -33+60 occur. Seniors - 40+24 occur.
	<i>Čao &lt; Ciao!</i> , 38 occur. Students – 14 occur. Seniors – 24 occur.	<i>Čao</i> , 38 occur.  Students – 14 occur. Seniors – 24 occur.		<i>Čao</i> (41 occur. )  Students – 14 occur. Seniors – 31 occur.
	<i>Servus!</i> ('Hi!', 'Bye!'), <b>18</b> occur. Students – 5 occur. Seniors – 13 occur.	<i>Servus!</i> ('Hi!', 'Bye!'), <b>18</b> occur. Students – 5 occur. Seniors – 13 occur.		<i>Servus!</i> ('Hi!', 'Bye!'), <b>18</b> occur. Students – 5 occur. Seniors – 13 occur.
	<i>Zdravo!</i> < <i>zdravo</i> , 'healthy' ('Hello!', Hi!, 'Hi there!') <b>4</b> occur. (seniors)			<i>Zdravo!</i>  Seniors – 4 occur.

## Questionnaire

(High-school and university students)

Upitnik

Molim upiši podatke koji se traže i odgovori što preciznije možeš na postavljena pitanja!  
(Please, fill in all fields! Be as precise as possible!)

Godina rođenja (Year of birth):

Spol (Sex): Ž(F) M(M)

Mjesto rođenja (Place of birth):

Broj članova tvoje obitelji (Number of people in your family):

Zanimanje majke (Mother's profession):

Zanimanje oca (Father's profession):

Imaš li neku vanškolsku aktivnost? (Do you have any hobbies?) DA (Yes) NE(No)

Koju? (What are your hobbies?):

Da li pozdravljaš? Odgovori s DA / NE! (Do you greet other people? Answer Yes /No!)

- 1) prijatelja/e (a friend/ friends)
- 2) roditelje –ujutro kad se probudiš (parents, when you wake up in the morning)  
– uvečer prije spavanja (before going to bed )
- 3) prijatelje roditelja (your parents' friends):
  - 1) ako se sretnete (when you meet)
  - 2) ako ih sretnoš, a oni te ne primijete (when you see them but they do not notice you)
- 4) nastavnika/e,
  - a) bivše (your ex-teacher/s):
    - 1) ako se sretnete (if you meet)
    - 2) ako ga/ih sretnoš iako te on/i ne primijeti/e (if you meet, but he/she/ they fail/s to notice you at first )
  - b) sadašnje (actual teacher/s):
    - 1) ako se sretnete (if you meet)
    - 2) ako ga/ih sretnoš iako te on/i ne primijeti/e (if you meet, but he/she/ they fail/s to notice you at first )
- 5) susjede (neighbours):
  - 1) kad se sretnete (when you meet them)
  - 2) kad ih sretnoš iako te oni ne primijete (when you meet them but they fail to notice you at first)

Ako je odgovor DA, kako pozdravljaš? (If your answers are YES, what form/s of greeting do you prefer?)

- |        | UJUTRO<br>In the morning | U TOKU DANA<br>During the day | UVEČER<br>In the evening |
|--------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1)     | _____                    | _____                         | _____                    |
| 2)     | _____                    | _____                         | _____                    |
| 3.1)   | _____                    | _____                         | _____                    |
| 3.2)   | _____                    | _____                         | _____                    |
| 4.1.1) | _____                    | _____                         | _____                    |
| 4.1.2) | _____                    | _____                         | _____                    |
| 4.2.1) | _____                    | _____                         | _____                    |
| 4.2.2) | _____                    | _____                         | _____                    |
| 5.1)   | _____                    | _____                         | _____                    |
| 5.2)   | _____                    | _____                         | _____                    |

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