ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN A NON-ALIGNED NATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GRAMMAR TEXTBOOKS IN 1950s YUGOSLAVIA

DANIEL RUSSO
UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DELL'INSUBRIA

daniel.russo@uninsubria.it

Abstract: This paper aims to examine how English language education developed during a crucial period in Yugoslavian history, namely Yugoslavia's detachment from the Eastern bloc after the so-called Tito-Stalin split in 1948. At that time, Yugoslavia became a founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement, thus establishing a delicate and precarious equidistance from both the United States and the Soviet Union. This process of repositioning on the world's geopolitical stage had a profound impact on foreign language teaching in Yugoslav schools. In the 1950s, Russian lost its status as the predominantly taught foreign language, becoming an optional language on a par with French, German and Italian - which had existing traditions in various regions – as well as with English, which lacked an established presence.

The paper concentrates specifically on English grammar books, which at the time functioned as the primary teaching tools in Yugoslavian secondary schools. In this context, there was little distinction between English language books and grammar books, as grammar, taught through the grammar-translation method, remained the core of language education throughout the period. In particular, the study analyses Milan Stanković's *Gramatika engleskog jezika* (1955) – which was the primary English textbook used in secondary schools throughout Yugoslavia for decades – and Rudolf Filipović's *An Outline of English Grammar* (1956). By comparing these two textbooks, which embody two markedly different conceptions of grammar instruction, the paper explores the pedagogical tensions between traditional approaches and emerging structuralist influences in a socialist and officially non-aligned educational framework. The study offers valuable insights into how educational materials reflected broader ideological, methodological, and institutional dynamics. It also contributes to the historiography of English language teaching in Yugoslavia, offering a historical perspective on how ideological positioning and pedagogical priorities influenced the development of English teaching in the region.

Keywords: English language teaching; English grammar; grammar books; ideology; Yugoslavia; Milan Stanković; Rudolf Filipović; Tito-Stalin split; 20th-century language education.

1. Historical background and impact on English teaching in Yugoslavia

The ideological divide that developed between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in the late 1940s lies at the core of the ideological context of foreign language education in Yugoslavia in the 1950s. This section will provide an overview of the major incidents that had an impact on the specific foreign language policy that distinguished Yugoslavia from the other Eastern Bloc nations.

In the late 1940s, ideological tensions between the Soviet and Yugoslav communist parties culminated in the so-called Tito-Stalin split (Crnković 2020). Initially, Tito had proposed a confederation of Balkan nations, a concept Stalin supported, likely with the intention of reducing Tito's influence in the region. However, disagreements escalated, and the Cominform, the international organisation of communist parties, formally condemned Yugoslavia in 1948 (Perović 2007). Stalin may have expected a swift removal of the Titoist leadership, as had occurred with other defiant Eastern European communists. Yet, the Yugoslav case was different. As Bešlin (2011) notes, the absence of the Red Army in Yugoslavia was crucial: unlike its neighbours, Yugoslavia had liberated itself from Nazi-Fascist occupation without Soviet military support. The cohesion of the Titoist leadership also played a key role in resisting Soviet pressure (West 1994).

International dynamics further strengthened Tito's position. Western powers, particularly the US and UK, supported Yugoslavia as a buffer against Stalin. The Greek Civil War was instrumental in this strategic alignment. During the Greek Civil War, Britain and the USSR had agreed that Greece would remain under British influence. Tito's support for Greek partisans strained this balance, prompting Stalin to refrain from intervention so as not to jeopardise relations with the UK (Niebuhr 2017). By the early 1950s, Yugoslavia began articulating a distinct socialist path rooted in self-management and non-alignment. Initially a form of decentralisation, self-management marked a shift in the Communist Party's rhetoric, reflected in its renaming to the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (SKJ) in 1952 (Obradović 2013). Economically, the 1954 Trieste Agreement signalled an opening to Western markets (Čolaković 1963). Internationally, Yugoslavia emerged as a leading force in the Non-Aligned Movement, a grouping formed to represent countries that distanced themselves from both the Western and Soviet blocs. As Dinkel (2019) notes, Tito's leadership granted him a unique diplomatic position, receiving support from both sides while aligning with newly independent postcolonial states in Asia and Africa.

Domestically, however, the educational system remained fragmented. The decentralised nature of Yugoslavia's education policy resulted in inconsistent implementation of reforms across provinces (Georgeoff 1982). These disparities were especially evident in L2 education, which lacked uniformity in both structure and content (Perišić 2017). Prior to World War II, English was not widely taught, with German and Italian prevailing in former Austro-Hungarian areas, and French more common in Serbia. English instruction was largely confined to elite institutions and urban centres (Georgeoff 1982; Perišić 2017). After the war, Russian became the dominant foreign language, reflecting Yugoslavia's initial alignment with Soviet ideology. The Soviet-style educational

system promoted Russian while fostering suspicion toward Western languages (Bancroft 1974). Yugoslav students at all levels of education were supposed to study Russian as the main second language, and L2 school materials reflected this pan-Slavic link with a marked pro-Russian orientation (Ćetković 2015, Klipa 2011). However, the Tito-Stalin split radically altered this linguistic hierarchy. Textbooks of Soviet origin or translated from Russian were gradually replaced by those written by Yugoslav authors and scholars, and Russian became an optional language in schools of all grades, on a par with French, German, Italian and English. While the other languages had existing traditions in various regions, English lacked an established presence.

To meet the growing demand for English instruction, Yugoslavia rapidly restructured its educational resources and teacher training programmes. This included updating textbooks and retraining foreign language teachers, many of whom had been trained in Russian or German. The aim was to increase the number of qualified English teachers and improve instructional quality. As Mammadova (2019, 2021) has argued, Yugoslavia's swift transition in language policy prefigured similar reforms in post-Soviet countries in the 1990s, though Yugoslavia's context in the 1950s was more politically autonomous. Unlike in the USSR, Russian never became a de facto second language in Yugoslavia, nor did it dominate internal communication or instruction (Davydova 2019).

This paper analyses two English grammar books for secondary schools published shortly after the Tito-Stalin split – Milan Stanković's *Gramatika engleskog jezika* (1955) and Rudolf Filipović's *An Outline of English Grammar* (1956) – to examine how English language education developed during this formative period. Despite the higher pedagogical quality of Filipović's work, it was Stanković's textbook that became the standard grammar book in Yugoslavian secondary schools. This contrast offers valuable insights into how educational materials reflected broader ideological, methodological, and institutional dynamics.

Before delving into the structural and pedagogical differences between the textbooks, Sections 2 and 3 will contextualise the authors and their works within the educational and political environment of the time.

2. Rudolf Filipović

Rudolf Filipović (1916-2000) was a pivotal figure in Germanic studies and the founding of English studies in Yugoslavia and later Croatia. With a career spanning more than sixty years, his contribution had particular resonance in the academia of the former Yugoslavia between the 1980s and the 1990s, i.e. precisely during the complicated and painful process that led to the break-up of the country.

Born in Zlatar and raised near Varaždin, he studied German and French at university, graduating in 1940. After World War II, he received a British Council scholarship to study phonetics and phonology in Sheffield and London. In 1945, he was appointed assistant professor of English at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb, earning a doctorate in 1948 on the influence of English on 19th-century

Croatian literature. A member of the International Phonetic Association from 1946, he introduced the first university-level course on English phonology in 1947, initiating a broader expansion of phonological studies at the University of Zagreb.

Filipović's early publications include *Engleski izgovor* (1956), and an English-Serbo-Croatian dictionary (1955) that went through 26 editions. He became an associate professor in 1957 and was appointed the first head of the Department of English in 1961. As director of the Institute of Linguistics, he led key projects on the influence of English on Serbo-Croatian and other European languages, with major works on language contact and contrastive analysis, such as *The Phonemic Analysis of English Loan-Words in Croatian* (1960), *Kontakti jezika u teoriji i praksi* (1971), and *Teorija jezika u kontaktu* (1986). His research had a broad impact within the Yugoslav linguistic community.

Elected to the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts (JAZU) in 1973, Filipović also twice presided over the Faculty of Philosophy and became president of the Societas Linguistica Europaea in 1976. He sat on editorial boards of national and international journals, including *Studia Romanica et Anglica Zagrabiensia*, and received numerous distinctions, among them the Order of Labour, the Božidar Adžija Prize, and the Order of the Croatian Danica. After retiring from the University of Zagreb in 1983, he continued his academic work at the Academy, publishing his final book on Anglicisms in Serbo-Croatian in 1990.

2.1. *An Outline of English Grammar* by Rudolf Filipović

In 1947, Filipović was tasked with organising the first institutionalised English course at the University of Zagreb. He ensured that instruction followed modern methods grounded in Bloomfield's structuralism (Vilke 2007). The course was modelled on the American Army Specialised Training Program (ASTP), a World War II initiative that provided technical and language training to young officers at 227 US universities. At a time when Yugoslavia's educational infrastructure was still being established, this model provided an innovative alternative to the prevailing German/Austrian grammar-translation approach, which was dominant in Croatia and Slovenia and largely unfamiliar in Serbia. Although influential in parts of Croatia, it was never incorporated into the national curriculum.

The results of this innovative approach are evident in his grammar for secondary schools, *An Outline of English Grammar* (1956). An earlier version of the grammar book had already appeared as a booklet in 1954; however, it consisted of a mere 100-page collection of lecture notes without exercises, which differed significantly from the 1956 edition. While the 1956 edition initially received little attention in the 1950s, it was rediscovered more than a decade later, gaining prominence in the late 1960s and especially in the 1970s. Subsequently, it was reprinted in eighteen editions over nearly thirty years with few changes and amendments. In Filipović's output, this is considered a minor work; it is not mentioned in any articles about the author or even in obituaries,

but it was indeed significant within the historical and educational framework of the time.

The preface (Filipović 1956: 3), one of the few texts in Serbo-Croatian in the book, provides insight into Filipović's teaching model. The author explains that he wrote this English textbook to facilitate the teaching of grammar in secondary schools. He aimed to achieve two main goals in this work: first, to present English grammar in a language that is as accessible as possible to secondary school students, using simple and uniform English "without many variations" [1]. Notably, the book exclusively employs British spelling and vocabulary, with no mention of diatopic variations of English, and it avoids grammatical terms that are unfamiliar to the students. Second, he sought to explain the grammatical phenomena of the English language "in a manner akin to that used by secondary school grammars of the Croatian or Serbian language". Interestingly, Stanković, in his preface, stated practically the same two objectives, but focused more on the second goal, whereas this grammar emphasises the first primarily.

In the second paragraph of the preface, Filipović notes that he primarily employs terminology commonly found in English grammars. However, he provides additional explanations when the syntactic differences between English and Serbo-Croatian become particularly intricate. He advises students to refer to the dictionary included in the final section of the book to look up not only the vocabulary used in the text but also any English grammatical terms that may be unfamiliar to them. The book is structured into the following sections: alphabet, sounds, nouns, adjectives, numerals, articles, pronouns, "pronouns or adjectives" (i.e. determinants), adverbs, verbs, conditional clauses, "sequence of tenses" (i.e. "tense agreement"), direct and indirect speech. There are three appendices: a list of auxiliary and modal verbs, a list of irregular verbs, and a dictionary.

3. Milan Stanković

The author of *Gramatika engleskog jezika/Grammar of the English Language* (1955) remains a relatively enigmatic figure, with limited biographical information available. The only insights come from the textbook itself, which identifies him as an English lecturer in the Veterinary Medicine Department at the University of Belgrade. He collaborated on educational initiatives with Radoslav Horvatović, an English lecturer in the Medicine course, and Anka Bogićević, a secondary school teacher in Belgrade, who were active within the academic and educational landscape during the 1950s and 1960s, leaving behind traces of their contributions to the publishing industry[2]. Horvatović authored a specialised English course for students of Medicine, Pharmacy, and Dentistry (1966), reflecting the growing demand for ESP resources in Yugoslav higher education. In contrast, Anka Bogićević is a well-documented figure who played a prominent role in English language teaching. She developed a widely adopted series of

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[1] The citations within this paragraph originally appear in the Serbo-Croatian language in the primary text and have been rendered into English by the author of this paper for the purpose of comprehension.
[2] Data from The State Archives of Serbia, https://arhivsrbije.rs/ (last accessed on 20 April 2021).

English textbooks for secondary schools, tailored to meet the diverse needs of students at different levels and curricula. Such collaborative efforts and educational contributions underscore the dynamic and evolving landscape of English language teaching during this period in Yugoslavia.

3.1. *Gramatika engleskog jezika* by Milan Stanković

In the foreword, Stanković (1955: 3) outlines the objectives behind the book, stating that there had been a "long-standing need within Yugoslavian secondary schools for a comprehensive English grammar textbook that would render the intricacies of the English language accessible to students"[3]. This urgency stemmed from the "increasing demand for English language teaching materials", driven by the rise of ESL learners. In response, a detailed grammar book was required to meet curricular demands more thoroughly.

Stanković explains that his book was "meticulously designed to cater to the multifaceted needs of both students and teachers", with its "systematic organisation of English grammar into comprehensive and self-contained units, aligning seamlessly with the curricular requirements of secondary education". Each unit offered explanations of "forms, categories, types, meanings, and usage" to provide students with a holistic understanding and to encourage independent learning. The structure also supported "efficient revision of topics".

To enhance comprehension, the book includes numerous "illustrative examples", intended "to enable grammar knowledge to evolve naturally, progressing from familiar concepts to more advanced and from simpler to more complex subjects". Special attention is given to "grammatical challenges unique to Serbo-Croatian-speaking students" and the "disparities between English and Serbo-Croatian grammar", with detailed explanations clarifying these contrasts.

The foreword also acknowledges the importance of phonology in English language teaching. Recognising differences between the English and Serbo-Croatian sound systems, Stanković saw it as vital for students "to familiarise themselves with key features of English phonology, including vowels, diphthongs, consonants, stress, pitch, and intonation". He encouraged learners to absorb these features "by engaging with illustrative examples" and noted they could "have fun while mastering the English sounds on their own".

To aid pronunciation, Stanković adopted an innovative strategy, explaining vowels "from sound to letter" and consonants "from letters to sound". This method, he argued, had "practical utility, as it facilitated learners in identifying the requisite characteristics of a sound that piqued their interest".

Structurally, the textbook is divided into two parts: the first explores "phonetics" (although it effectively addresses phonology) and orthography, while the second navigates the terrain of morphology and syntax. The initial part comprises a relatively concise 30 pages, juxtaposed with the more substantial second part, which spans 211 pages. The latter section further subdivides into distinct thematic categories, encompassing nouns, adjectives, articles, numbers, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, interjections, and

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[3] Citations in brackets translated from Serbo-Croatian.

sentences (syntax). Importantly, all explanations and instructions are presented in Serbo-Croatian (specifically the Serbian variant in the Latin alphabet), with examples thoughtfully translated into Serbo-Croatian to facilitate students' comprehension.

4. Research questions and analysis

This section presents a comparative analysis of Stanković's and Filipović's grammar books, focusing on the following aspects: phonology[4], morphology, syntax, and the content of the examples presented in the text. The research questions pursued in the analysis are: 1) What role did English language teaching materials play in promoting ideological narratives in 1950s Yugoslavia? 2) How did Filipović's and Stanković's English grammar books reflect differing linguistic policies in post-Tito Yugoslavia? 3) In what ways did the political context of the Tito-Stalin split influence the development and adoption of English language teaching materials in Yugoslavia? 4) How did the internal educational traditions of Yugoslavia shape the content and methodology of Stanković's English grammar book? 5) What factors contributed to the long-term adoption of Stanković's grammar book despite its qualitative shortcomings compared to Filipović's work? 6) How did the examples and exercises in Filipović's and Stanković's grammar books reflect Yugoslavia's positioning as a non-aligned nation during the Cold War?

4.1. Phonology and orthography

In Stanković's grammar book, this section opens with a comprehensive overview (1955: 5-10) of the distinctive nature of human language, contrasting it with animal communication and highlighting the differences between spoken and written forms. This reflection leads to a discussion of the complexities of English spelling, illustrated with examples such as "cough," "Hough," "hiccough," and "plough." The irregularity is attributed to the mismatch between the 26 letters and approximately 40 phonemes in English (*ibid.*: 6), in contrast to the more phonetic Serbo-Croatian orthographies. The following paragraph introduces the International Phonetic Alphabet, applied to non-rhotic British English (though no mention is made of other English varieties). This is followed by a description of the speech organs involved in sound production (*ibid.*: 8-10), including diagrams of vowels and articulatory features, thus combining elements of articulatory phonetics and phonology.

Vowels, further categorised into front, central, and back vowels, are expounded upon on pages 10-13, while diphthongs are examined on pages 13-17. Consonants occupy a substantial portion of the initial section of the grammar, spanning from page 10 to 24. This section presents a comprehensive list of English alphabet letters, along with a few digraphs such as "ch", "gh", and "th",

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[4] While phonology is not strictly part of grammar in a narrow linguistic sense, it was a standard component of mid-20th-century English grammar textbooks for L2 learners, aiming to support accurate pronunciation and reinforce structural competence (Howatt and Widdowson 2004).

offering multiple possible phonetic representations and accompanying visual aids that illustrate the positions of the speech organs involved in their articulation. Notably, the paragraph discussing orthography makes no reference to American spelling. The "sound-to-letter" approach is implemented here by offering orthographic representations of the same sound, e.g., /ʃ/ in "fish", "niche", "sure", and "passion".

One of the most intriguing sections in this initial part of the book concerns stress, intonation, and pitch. While the representation of word and sentence stress generally follows standard visual conventions, the treatment of pitch stands out for its creative application of the Serbo-Croatian pitch accent system to English. This is exemplified in "They arrived yèsterday", where the short stressed vowel with a falling tone is denoted by the Slavicist phonetic symbol /ȅ/, and in "Can you còme with me?" (*ibid.*: 27), where the short stressed vowel with a rising tone is represented by the Slavicist phonetic symbol /ò/.

The initial section wraps up with a brief note on punctuation. While it outlines the fundamental standard usage of punctuation marks, the examples provided seem to deviate from these descriptions by incorporating typical Serbo-Croatian punctuation conventions into English sentences. For instance, the use of a dot for ordinal numbers and the consistent replacement of inverted commas with inward guillemets. Given the text's high level of specificity and the abundance of phonetic intricacies it contains, it raises the question of how a secondary school student could genuinely "enjoy mastering English sounds independently," as boldly asserted in the foreword (*ibid.*: 3). The author employs a comparative-contrastive approach, using possessive pronouns to facilitate discourse: the pronunciation of "their" (British English speakers) is juxtaposed with "our" pronunciation (Serbo-Croatian speakers).

Filipović's phonology section begins with an insightful comparative observation highlighting the phonetic orthography in Serbo-Croatian, where each letter of both the Latin and the Cyrillic alphabets corresponds to a single sound, and conversely, each sound is consistently represented by a single letter. However, in the case of English, he notes a mismatch between pronunciation and spelling, as the number of distinct sounds exceeds the number of available letters, leading to frequent inconsistencies in how sounds are represented in writing. According to him, this incongruity between letters and sounds results in the potential for English spelling to be misleading and inconsistent. Occasionally, a single spelling may be employed to denote multiple sounds, and conversely, one sound may possess various spellings.

To convey the pronunciation of English words accurately, the Phonetic Alphabet is introduced (which he presents as a novelty). He organises the English phonological inventory into three functional categories for learners whose native language is Serbo-Croatian. The first category encompasses sounds that possess counterparts in Serbo-Croatian, enabling learners to employ their native phonetic equivalents for corresponding English sounds due to the absence of any substantial divergence between them (e.g. /iː/, /uː/, /b/, /g/, /m/, /n/, /f/, /s/, /z/). The second category comprises sounds that share equivalents in Serbo-Croatian but exhibit distinct phonetic qualities in English, thereby setting them apart from their Serbo-Croatian counterparts (e.g., /p/, /t/, /k/, /l/). Lastly, the

third category includes sounds that lack direct counterparts in Serbo-Croatian (e.g. /θ/, /ð/, /w/). Only the third group is described in detail, with explanations of the articulatory mechanisms, to support accurate pronunciation. This categorisation holds particular pedagogical significance for learners, as it focuses on the most challenging sounds for Serbo-Croatian speakers. This is in contrast to Stanković, who dedicates over 50 pages to phonetic descriptions of sounds that are largely intuitive for individuals whose mother tongue is Serbo-Croatian. As in Stanković's book, the pronunciation model aligns with Received Pronunciation (RP), as indicated by the phonetic transcriptions. However, there is no explicit reference to regional variation or to issues such as rhoticity.

4.2. Morphology and syntax

In Stanković's grammar book, the sections on morphology and syntax are the most prominent, both in terms of page length and the number of units. This section initiates with an exploration of the disparities in morphology and syntax between the two languages under consideration. Serbo-Croatian is characterised as a highly inflective language, marked by a complex system of word endings and suffixes, while English is described as being more analytic in nature, relying on word position to convey grammatical relationships. This initial reflection sets the stage for the examination of noun morphology. According to Stanković, English nouns are categorized into four genders: masculine (e.g., "son, father, brother, husband, poet"), feminine (e.g., "girl, mother, sister, wife, daughter, hostess"), neuter (e.g., "knife, table, money, pencil, house, motor-car, lamb, sheep"), and common gender (e.g., "child, parent, neighbour, person, friend"). The author introduces an exception to this categorization, noting that certain words, such as "ship, machine, car, aeroplane", are classified as both neuter and feminine, and certain animals, like "lion, elephant, bull", as masculine, while others, including "lamb, mouse, calf", are designated as feminine.

Furthermore, Stanković elucidates that common gender words can transition between masculine and feminine through the addition of specific nouns or pronouns before or after them, exemplified in phrases like "boy/girl friend" and "servant-man/woman". The use of the term "maid-servant" recurrently throughout the text in sentences such as "The maid-servant carried away the basket" aims to convey the feminine word "*služavka*" in Serbo-Croatian, while "woman-doctor" is employed in three instances to translate "*lekarka*" in Serbo-Croatian.

Addressing irregular plurals, the author introduces words like "cow" and "brother", presenting their plural forms as "kine" and "brethren" without highlighting the historical or specific contexts in which they are used. Nevertheless, the regular forms "cows" and "brothers" surface in later examples within subsequent units. Finally, the unit focusing on noun morphology concludes with an exploration of English "noun declension", encompassing six cases: nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, vocative, and instrumental. The singular declension pattern is outlined, exemplified by phrases such as "a pen, of a pen, to a pen, a pen, oh pen, with a pen", while the plural declension pattern follows suit, as seen in "pens, of pens, to pens", and so forth. Detailed

explanations of all the cases are furnished within subunits, with specific attention given to the "German genitive" (indicated by the possessive 's) and the "accusative of extension", elucidated through sentences like "He lived ten years" and "We walked four miles".

The section concerning adjectives in Stanković's work exhibits relatively few distinctive features, with the exception of the comprehensive coverage of comparatives and superlatives (Stanković 1955: 54-71). The author delineates a clear division between two formation types: the "Germanic way", denoting synthetic comparatives/superlatives in -er and -est, typically applied to "short adjectives with Germanic roots," and the "Romance way", encompassing analytic comparatives/superlatives using more and most, typically used for "long adjectives with Latinate origins" (*ibid.*: 66). However, this initial distinction becomes immediately contentious in subsequent pages, as adjectives of Romance origin, such as "poor", "brief", "fine", "simple", and "gay", are categorised as Germanic, while "wretched" is placed in the section dedicated to adjectives of Romance origin.

The unit dedicated to verb conjugation constitutes a substantial portion of the work (*ibid.*: 108-191). A fundamental division is established between active and passive conjugation, serving as the foundational framework for the unit. Notably, each tense is explicated in both its active and passive forms. Nevertheless, a potential challenge arises as the discussion of past participles is deferred to the latter part of this unit, potentially introducing inconsistency in the treatment of passives for learners. Furthermore, the differentiation between simple tenses and continuous tenses is elucidated within the context of the contrast between perfective and imperfective verbs, drawing parallels with the distinction found in Serbo-Croatian and other Slavic languages.

In the context of future tenses, the discourse primarily encompasses the usage of "will" and "shall" (analogous to "would" and "should" for conditionals), with the "be going to" construction being conspicuously omitted. In contrast, subjunctives receive thorough coverage, extending even to literary sentences like "I do not like him though he be an honest man," thereby presenting a comprehensive exploration of this grammatical aspect. Gerunds or -ing forms are called *glagolska imenica* "verbal nouns", which is a category of the Slavic verbal conjugation system that only partially applies to English -ing forms.

On the other hand, Filipović's approach to grammar aligns with the conventions observed in grammar books published in both the United Kingdom and the United States, emphasising a standardised and widely accepted framework for English language instruction (Howatt and Widdowson 2004: 113). Within this overarching structure, the book's sections encompass nouns and articles, adjectives, numerals, pronouns, adverbs, verbs, conditional clauses, and direct and indirect speech, each topic elucidated in a progressive manner. Although Stanković's textbook has a superficial structural resemblance to Filipović's, a notable distinguishing feature of the latter is its incremental approach. This pedagogical method supports effective learning by gradually guiding learners through the complexities of English grammar. Each chapter begins with the fundamental concepts of the respective grammatical notion and progressively advances to cover more intricate and nuanced aspects. This

systematic progression ensures that learners build a solid foundation before exploring the intricacies of each grammatical category. This pedagogical approach is particularly beneficial for individuals new to the English language or those seeking to systematically reinforce their grammar skills.

Throughout the Morphology and Syntax section, Filipović includes exercises at the end of each subsection, allowing learners to actively apply the grammatical principles just introduced. These practical, structure-based activities reinforce comprehension and support the consolidation of newly acquired knowledge.

In the realm of nouns and articles, Filipović provides a comprehensive exploration of these essential components of English grammar. Learners are guided through the various types of nouns, including common, proper, countable, and uncountable nouns. The distinctions between articles (definite and indefinite) are thoroughly explained, emphasising their critical role in specifying and generalising nouns. This foundational understanding of nouns and articles sets the stage for learners to navigate more complex grammatical constructs. As the book progresses, learners encounter chapters dedicated to adjectives, numerals, pronouns, and adverbs, each offering a detailed examination of their respective functions and usage within the English language.

The section on verbs stands as a pivotal segment within the book, encompassing a comprehensive study of verb forms, tenses, and their usage. Filipović provides learners with a thorough understanding of how verbs function in English sentences, including the distinctions between regular and irregular verbs, modal verbs, and the usage of auxiliary verbs.

Filipović's grammar book for secondary schools was strongly influenced by British scholarly sources on English grammar from the 1940s and 1950s, notably A.S. Hornby's *A Guide to Patterns and Usage in English* (1954) and C.E. Eckersley's *A Comprehensive English Grammar* (1948). While he relied on these established pedagogical frameworks, Filipović adapted them to meet the specific needs of Serbo-Croatian learners. His approach was not a simple transfer: he incorporated explanations and examples tailored to his audience's linguistic background and educational context. Particular emphasis was placed on syntactic features that proved especially challenging for Serbo-Croatian speakers, such as the use of articles and verb tenses, which diverge significantly between the two languages.

4.3. Contents of the examples

Filipović's grammar compendium features a substantial corpus of 1,798 examples, meticulously distributed across its 183 pages, with approximately ten examples per page, as illustrated in Figure 1. The composition of these examples conforms to the conventional topics observed in educational materials designed for secondary school students, aligning with pedagogical criteria of the time (Howatt and Widdowson 2004: 81). The assortment of examples encompasses a diverse range of thematic areas, with a particular focus on geographical and scholastic contexts.
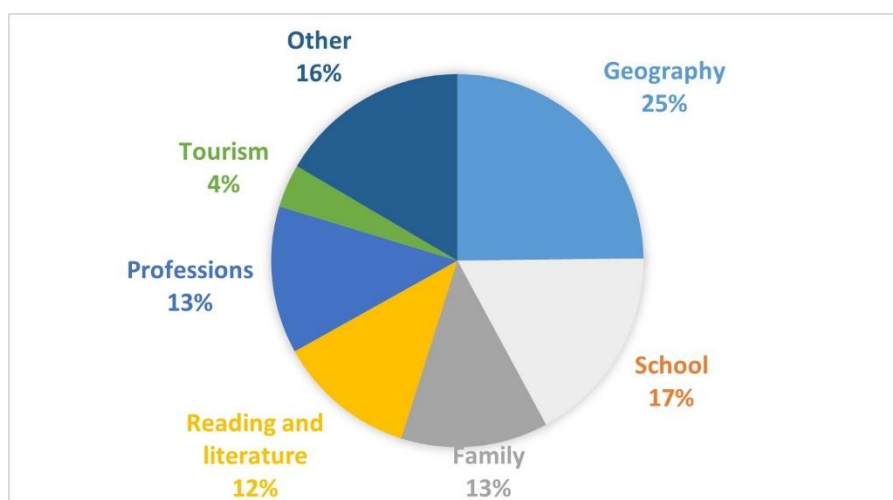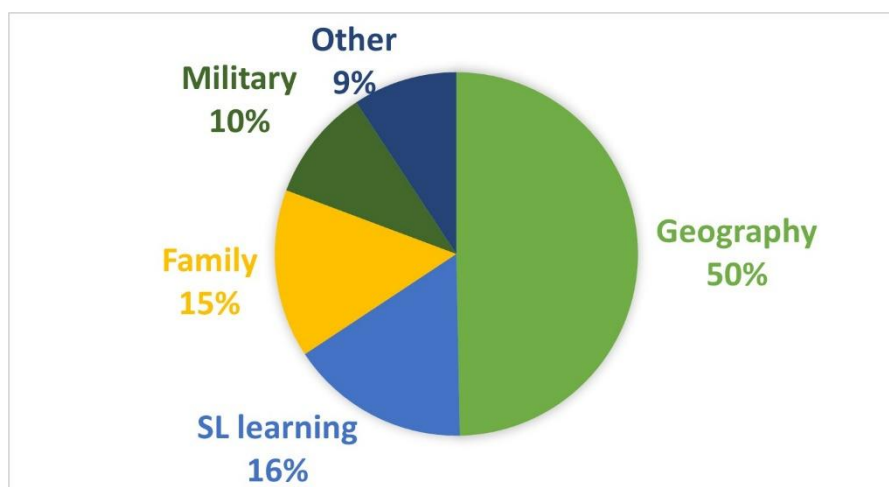
Figure 1. Examples in Filipović's grammar book classified by topic

The geographical examples predominantly revolve around references to either Yugoslavia or Britain, with only a limited number of exceptions, encompassing eight instances related to Italy, Austria, Germany, and France. In contrast, the scholastic domain introduces learners to the quintessential activities associated with the classroom environment, including teaching, studying, homework, and school excursions.

A noteworthy aspect of Filipović's approach is the inclusion of numerous examples featuring common professional roles reflective of the sociocultural landscape of 1950s Yugoslavia. These include occupations such as postmen, shoemakers, butchers, farmers, doctors, and tailors, offering learners a contextualised view of the era's working life. Notably, the examples display a conscious effort toward gender balance, defying stereotypes by depicting women not only in domestic roles but also as professionals, such as doctors and officers, thus promoting more equitable representation in line with contemporary Socialist values (Perišić 2017: 291).

The literary dimension of the examples within the grammar book is equally distributed, dividing its focus between references to British and Yugoslavian literature. British literary figures such as Shakespeare and Dickens are thoughtfully incorporated into the narrative of the examples, serving as points of reference and cultural enrichment. Concurrently, Yugoslavian literature is celebrated through references to authors like Marinković and Šenoa, reinforcing a sense of national identity and literary heritage. Intriguingly, however, the grammar book abstains from referencing authors from other English-speaking regions or countries, curating a selection that reflects the cultural and linguistic paradigms used by the author as a reference.

Stanković's grammar book boasts a substantial collection of 2,214 examples spread across 241 pages, averaging approximately ten examples per page (Fig.2).

Figure 2. Examples in Stanković's grammar book classified by topic

This textual abundance provides an opportunity for a nuanced examination of the book's content and the ideas conveyed through these concise phrases and sentences. The examples within the book are primarily designed to instruct students on phraseology, encompassing both phrases and complete sentences, with a limited number of adjacency pairs. Surprisingly, despite their quantity, the lexical content of the examples is rather limited, with repeated words persisting from the initial pages to the concluding ones, lacking any discernible progression commensurate with language proficiency development.

The text's richness enables the identification of four predominant semantic domains in the examples: geography, military terminology, second language acquisition, family, and platitudes. These semantic domains are dispersed throughout the units, with no overt dominance of specific areas within particular grammar topics. Notably, the geography-related semantic domain takes precedence, constituting nearly half of the examples. However, the geographic references extend primarily to Yugoslavia and the United Kingdom, with only sporadic mentions of Italy, Greece, and France. The content tends to remain quite generalised, with only two instances characterising Yugoslavia as a Socialist nation under Marshal Tito's leadership, and a few others involving references to the British monarchy. Notably, the grammar book refrains from introducing examples featuring other English-speaking countries.

The second and third most prevalent semantic fields, comprising over one-third of the examples, pertain to the themes of language instruction and learning foreign languages, as well as familial relationships, which are conventional areas in second language educational materials. Conversely, military terminology constitutes a less conventional semantic field in L2 education materials, yet it accounts for nearly 200 examples in the textbook. This phenomenon can be attributed to two factors: the recent memories of World War II during the mid-1950s and the prominent role of the army in Socialist Yugoslavia, where the military establishment held substantial influence within the ruling class of the

League of the Communists of Yugoslavia. This influence is evident in the fact that the country's leader, Tito, was commonly referred to as "the Marshal".

An additional observation pertains to the quality of the linguistic examples, with instances of clumsiness, ambiguity, or antiquated (if not outright erroneous) sentences occasionally surfacing, such as "Maid-servant carries away the basket" and "There is no one but agrees to it".

In summary, both textbooks adhere to the grammar-translation method, which was the dominant approach to foreign language instruction in Yugoslavian schools during the mid-20th century. This approach emphasised the learning of grammar rules through the explicit teaching of categories, types, and definitions, often accompanied by translation exercises from and into the learners' mother tongue. As stated in the foreword, both authors framed grammar as the cornerstone of English language education, reflecting the broader pedagogical assumption that mastery of grammatical structure is a prerequisite for language competence. However, while Filipović's grammar book adopts a gradual and carefully sequenced presentation of topics, this progression is largely absent from Stanković's textbook. In the latter, grammatical topics are introduced abruptly, often explained only in subsequent chapters. A contrastive approach is also evident, with English constructions at times adapted to mirror Serbo-Croatian structures through literal translation. While this can aid learners in recognising cross-linguistic parallels, it occasionally results in unidiomatic or grammatically dubious examples, such as: "I have time enough", "The boy and a bigger one have taken the ball", "There is no one but agrees to it", "It is not the fine coat makes the gentleman", "I do not know when he will come", "He works hard he may win a prize", "My brother lives in house yonder".

5. Discussion

Numerous studies over the past two centuries have demonstrated that foreign language teaching materials for Soviet learners (particularly those focused on English) played a pivotal role in promoting Communist ideologies. This influence manifested in multiple ways: either overtly, through the dissemination of Soviet propaganda, or more subtly, by portraying the Western world, especially the United States, as fundamentally unjust or socially flawed. Scholars such as Vogel (1959), Zevin (1977), Shafiyeva and Kennedy (2010), Antonova (2019), Davydova (2019), and Mammadova (2019, 2021) have investigated this intricate network of influences, highlighting the complex and multifaceted ways in which language teaching resources contributed to the spread of political and ideological messages.

This study engages with that body of research by analysing the grammar books of Filipović and Stanković, with the goal of determining whether and how these materials reflect or depart from the ideological frameworks commonly found in Soviet-era English instruction. In particular, this research seeks to understand whether these Yugoslavian grammar books aligned with, resisted, or negotiated the ideological imperatives of their time, and how they addressed the broader political and cultural contexts in which they were produced.

In pedagogical discourse, Vogel (1959) notably highlighted the strong emphasis on grammar in Soviet second language curricula. This observation is supported by Mammadova (2019, 2021), who argues that, during the Soviet era, English instruction was largely centred on teaching grammar and reading comprehension. Students were expected to master grammatical rules thoroughly, rules that often remained fixed in memory, much like mathematical formulas.

At the same time, scholars from the former Yugoslavia, such as Ćetković (2015) and Klipa (2011), have shown that Yugoslavian teaching methods of the same period were also shaped by this Soviet influence. A strong focus on grammar as a foundation for reading comprehension remained central. However, unlike their Soviet counterparts, Yugoslav materials generally avoided overt ideological messaging, maintaining an appearance of neutrality. Still, as Hodges (1967) pointed out in his essay on "the end of ideology" in Western societies, the absence of overt propaganda does not mean ideological influence is absent. Rather, such influence may take subtler forms, embedded within educational content in ways that shape students' perspectives and worldviews without explicit messaging.

A closer examination of the grammar books authored by Filipović and Stanković reveals two distinct approaches to L2 teaching in mid-20th-century Yugoslavia. Filipović's grammar book reflects a strong influence from British teaching materials and adopts a pedagogical strategy aimed at addressing the specific challenges Serbo-Croatian speakers face when learning English. This is evident in his targeted focus on problematic phonemes and grammatical structures. By contrast, Stanković's grammar book departs from the conventions of contemporary English teaching literature, both in Western contexts and within the Soviet Bloc (Davydova 2019). This divergence in methodology may explain the differing levels of reception and adoption of the two books in Yugoslav secondary education. One could argue that, by presenting English grammar through a framework modelled on the teaching of Serbo-Croatian grammar, Stanković sought to make English feel less "foreign" and more familiar to his Yugoslav student audience.

Although both grammar books were published within a short time frame between 1955 and 1956, they originated from markedly different contexts and produced contrasting outcomes. Filipović's grammar, written in Zagreb by a prominent university professor of English, was grounded in contemporary teaching methodologies. It followed a clearly structured progression, moving from simpler to more complex grammatical concepts. In contrast, Stanković's book, published in Belgrade, the capital of Yugoslavia at the time, and authored by a relatively unknown English lecturer, lacked a coherent methodological foundation. Moreover, the presentation of grammar topics in Stanković's work appeared unsystematic and counterintuitive, with numerous instances of unclear, ambiguous, or even incorrect sentences hindering effective language acquisition (Russo 2024). Despite these marked differences and the clear qualitative superiority of Filipović's grammar book, it was Stanković's publication that prevailed as the most widely adopted English grammar textbook in Yugoslavian curricula for several decades, whereas Filipović's grammar book was rediscovered only in the late 1960s.

The analysis of these grammar books also provides insights into the state of Yugoslavian education in the 1950s, following the Tito-Stalin split. During this period, the Yugoslavian educational system, particularly in the realm of second language education, exhibited a deliberate effort to distance itself from the Soviet paradigm, although it did not wholeheartedly embrace Western educational principles. When juxtaposing Stanković's grammar with coeval Western and Soviet English grammars (Bancroft 1974, 1975; Antonova 2019), a distinct methodological divergence becomes apparent.

In Stanković's grammar, the foundational model did not stem from external influences but was rooted internally within the Yugoslavian educational tradition. This internal perspective becomes evident when examining the book's table of contents, which reveals a discernible connection to the prominent grammar of the Serbo-Croatian language for secondary education, as authored by Stevanović (1954). This Serbo-Croatian grammar served as a reference point within Yugoslavia for many years, establishing a linguistic metalanguage that secondary students were already acquainted with. Consequently, the English grammar in Stanković's work was explained through the lens of the Serbo-Croatian grammar tradition (Russo 2024). This internal focus explained the book's notable emphasis on the case system and the aspectual classes of verbs and genders, all distinctive attributes of Serbo-Croatian grammar. These concepts were already embedded in the linguistic repertoire of secondary students, facilitating their comprehension.

Furthermore, the examples chosen for the grammar textbook underscored a strong emphasis on Yugoslavia and its positioning in the international arena. The book conveyed the notion that Yugoslavia occupied a unique role as a non-aligned nation where English, representing the Western Bloc, held a position of equal prominence with Russian, the language of the Eastern Bloc. Consequently, English teaching assumed a vital role in educating younger generations in Yugoslavia, equipping them to navigate a new paradigm of international relations (Burns 1993).

The analysis of English grammar books authored by Filipović and Stanković offers a lens through which to examine the evolving educational landscape in Yugoslavia during the 1950s. While seeking to distance itself from overt Soviet influences, Yugoslavia embarked on a journey to craft an educational system that retained elements of its linguistic tradition while aligning with contemporary international relations. Stanković's grammar textbook, despite its qualitative shortcomings, emerged as a representation of this unique pedagogical approach, where the Serbo-Croatian linguistic tradition played a pivotal role in shaping the teaching of English. The nuances and complexities of this educational paradigm continue to serve as a valuable point of reference for researchers exploring the intersection of language instruction, ideology, and international relations in post-World War II Yugoslavia.

While this study is historically focused on Yugoslavia, it is important to acknowledge how its educational legacies continue to resonate, albeit indirectly, in the post-Yugoslav states. Following the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the successor countries progressively restructured their foreign language teaching systems, moving away from the grammar-translation paradigm that had long

characterised the socialist educational model. In alignment with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), these countries adopted communicative and learner-centred approaches that prioritise language use over grammatical abstraction. This shift reflects both a pedagogical evolution and a broader ideological reorientation toward European integration and internationalisation. As Ćalić (2021) argues, such transitions in language education policy also reflect complex negotiations of identity and linguistic normativity within the region, especially in contexts where the legacy of Yugoslavian language policies still intersects with emerging multicentric ideologies.

Although this study is set in the educational context of 1950s Yugoslavia, its findings hold broader relevance for present-day discussions about grammar instruction. As Mammadova (2019) notes, contemporary learners often approach grammar with reluctance or limited formal knowledge, calling for pedagogical models that are both accessible and functionally meaningful. By contrasting Filipović's methodologically informed and learner-oriented approach with Stanković's traditional model, this paper highlights historical tensions (which remain pertinent today) between prescriptive and descriptive methods, as well as between structural rigour and communicative relevance. These insights may contribute to ongoing conversations on how grammar can be taught effectively in increasingly diverse and pragmatic educational settings.

While this paper has focused on the pedagogical and ideological dimensions of L2 education in 1950s Yugoslavia, it also offers a broader reminder of how language teaching has historically been shaped by political, institutional, and cultural forces. Although Yugoslavia no longer exists, understanding how language education once served the goals of self-management and non-alignment can shed light on the enduring interplay between language policy and ideology. Such historical insights contribute to contemporary discussions by highlighting that grammar teaching, far from being politically neutral, often reflects broader societal priorities, a lesson that remains relevant in today's multilingual and geopolitically diverse classrooms.

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