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Christians, Jews and Muslims in the Ottoman Balkans

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In Search of the Historical Linguistic Landscape of the Balkans: the Case of Judeo-Spanish in Belgrade

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University of Kragujevac

1. Introduction

Judeo-Spanish represents the language of the *Sephardim*,¹ who, after the expulsion from Spain (1492) and Portugal (1497), scattered throughout the Mediterranean and settled in greatest number in the urban areas of the Ottoman Empire (Constantinople, Salonika, various cities in Asia Minor, Belgrade, Sarajevo, Monastir, Skopje, Sofia, and so on), or the “Orient”. Besides the denomination *Judeo-Spanish*,² it is also known as *Djudezmo*, *Judezmo*, *Espanyol*, *Shpanyol*, *Djudio*, *Djidio*, *Ladino*³ in the Orient, and *Haketiya* in North Africa.

* This article is part of the project “Dynamics of the structures of the contemporary Serbian language” (178014), financed by the Serbian Ministry of Education and Science (2011-2014).

1 The ethnonym *Sephardi(c)*, derives from the Hebrew word *Séfarad*, Biblical toponym (Obadiah 1:20), which in the late Middle Ages became the Hebrew name of the Iberian Peninsula. According to Diaz-Mas, it designates the descendents of Spanish Jews exiled from the Iberian Peninsula in the fifteenth century or those who assimilated to them. Paloma Diaz-Mas, *Los sefardies. Historia, lengua y cultura*, 3rd edition, Riopiedras Ediciones, Barcelona 1997, pp. 23-25.

2 *Judeo-Spanish* (Germ. *Judenspanisch* or *Judisch-spanisch*) is an academic term introduced by the first philologists interested in this language (Moritz Grünwald, Max Grünbaum, Josef Subak, Max L. Wagner, Kalmi Baruch, and others). Soon enough, this denomination became common not only among scholars, but also among Sephardic intellectuals in general.

3 The written variety of the language of the Sephardim is called *Ladino* (< *latinum*) or *Judeo-Spanish calque* (Haïm Vidal Sephiha, 1979) and designates the specific language of texts translated from Hebrew and of Sephardic religious literature in general.

The language the exiles brought with them to the Ottoman Empire had a medieval Castilian/Spanish base that during and after the expulsion experienced a number of influences and interference from other Romance varieties from the Iberian Peninsula (Portuguese, Andalusian, Leonese, Aragonese, Catalan, etc.).⁴ After passing through deep leveling, this language continued to develop independently from the Peninsular Spanish, in specific historic and social circumstances, due to which it succeeded to be maintained in the Orient for more than four centuries. All that time Judeo-Spanish was subject to the influences of languages of other ethnic groups with which the Sephardim were in contact, but it was not replaced by any of them before the twentieth century.

The present paper deals with the extra-linguistic history of Judeo-Spanish in Belgrade from the sixteenth to the twentieth century. It also seeks to place its history in a broader framework of the language history of Belgrade and of the Balkans in general, a task which in itself is not easy since the latter usually consists of only sporadic accounts of the linguistic practices of different ethnic and religious groups that lived in Belgrade/the Balkans in the past (Tsintsars, Greeks, Turks, Armenians, Serbs, Sephardic Jews, etc.).⁵

Our corpus is based on available historical documents, mainly articles from the Jewish press and other publications, such as memorials of Jewish associations, written by Sephardic intellectuals at the end of nineteenth and in the first half of the twentieth century, and various documents archived in the Archive of Serbia and Jewish Historical Museum in Belgrade.

In the past, studies of Balkan linguistics and Romance/Hispanic linguistics in concentrated in general on *intra-linguistic* characteristics of particular language(s) of the Balkans; thus far they have failed to provide an *extra-linguistic* or social context in which those languages were used in the Balkans. As a result, we are still lacking a holistic and systematic reconstruction and analysis of the linguistic history of this zone as well as of the long-lasting multilingualism from the past and its consequences.⁶ In

4 Ralph Penny, *Gramática histórica del español*, trans. by J. I. Pérez Pascual and M. E. Pérez Pascual, Editorial Ariel, Barcelona 1993, pp. 22-23.

5 I am grateful to Dr Biljana Sikimić, Dr Michael Studemund-Halévy and Dr Ana Štulić Etchevers for their comments on various issues of Balkan linguistics and Judeo-Spanish and for providing me materials on these subjects.

6 Jouko Lindstedt, "Linguistic Balkanization: Contact-induced change by mutual reinforcement", in D. Gilbers, J. Nerbonne and J. Schaeken (eds.), *Languages in Contact. Studies in Slavic and General Linguistics*, vol. 28, Rodopi, Amsterdam – Atlanta 2000, p. 231.

the above-mentioned studies, synchronic, as well as diachronic, the language of the Sephardim was either almost completely neglected or was not analyzed systematically in its Balkan social context. Therefore, the main goal of this paper, based on written testimonies on the Sephardic community in Belgrade, is to give some guidelines for sociolinguistic analysis of Judeo-Spanish as a participant in the language history of Belgrade/Balkans. At the same time, we also argue that there is a great need for placing the linguistic history of Judeo-Spanish, as well as the history of other languages of the Balkans, in a much broader perspective.

2. Theoretical and methodological framework

2.1. The language history

Language history, as an area of research, studies the extra-linguistic, social development of languages in the course of their history. It is interested in the social context in which languages emerge, are used, or cease to be used. As such it contrasts with the other diachronic linguistic discipline, known by its traditional academic term as *historical grammar*, which is concerned with internal linguistic development or functioning of the language on its different levels (phonology, morphology, syntax, vocabulary, etc.) through time.⁷

Both aspects of diachronic language study noted are involved in more up-to-date studies of *diachronic* or *historical linguistics* and, in particular of *historical sociolinguistics*, concerned not only with the analysis of internal language changes, but also with their social context so as to give a more complete account of the development of languages through their history.⁸ The tendency cited for diachronic (socio)linguistic studies is in accordance with the concept of the *ecology of language*,⁹

7 Penny, *Gramática* (Note 4), p. 1.

8 David Crystal, *Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*, Wiley, Hoboken, NJ 2009, pp. 142, 229. Ivana Vučina Simović and Jelena Filipović, *Ethnic identity and language shift in the Sephardic community of Belgrade*

9 “An ecolinguistic approach highlights the value of linguistic diversity in the world, the importance of individual and community linguistic rights, and the role of language attitudes, language awareness, language variety, and language change in fostering a culture of communicative peace”. Crystal, *Dictionary* (Note 8), p. 162.

introduced by E. Haugen¹⁰ for indicating “the study of interactions between any given language and its environment”. Yet, data on individual and societal language use was usually missing in mainstream linguistic studies in the past.¹¹

The studies of language history of particular areas could benefit from the use of the term “linguistic landscape”. It is a metaphor used, according to Gorter, with many different interpretations. The most interesting one for us is the linguistic landscape as “an overview of the languages that are spoken” in a certain zone:

In this more or less loose sense of the word linguistic landscape can be synonymous with or at least related to concepts such as linguistic market, linguistic mosaic, ecology of languages, diversity of languages or the linguistic situation. In those cases linguistic landscape refers to the social context in which more than one language is present. It implies the use in speech or writing of more than one language and thus of multilingualism. Sometimes the meaning of linguistic landscape is extended to include a description of the history of languages¹²

2.2. Multilingualism and bilingualism in the past

Multilingualism (plurilingualism) refers to “a speech community which makes use of two or more languages, and then ... to the individual speakers who have this ability”¹³ in their repertoire. It can be an *internal* characteristic of a speech community, when various languages are used for communication within the community, or *external* if “an additional language [is] being used to facilitate communication with other nations”.¹⁴ Bilingualism, similarly to the multilingualism, refers to a “community or individual in command of ... two languages”.¹⁵ The notion of bilingualism is sometimes included in the concept of multilingualism, but normally they contrast.

10 Einar Haugen, “The Ecology of Language”, in Alwin Fill and Peter Mühlhäusler (eds.), *Ecolinguistics Reader: A Selection of Articles on Language, Ecology and Environment*, Continuum International Publishing, London 2001 [1972], p. 57.

11 Ibid.

12 Durk Gorter, “Introduction: The Study of the Linguistic Landscape as a New Approach to Multilingualism”, in Durk Gorter (ed.), *Linguistic Landscape. A New Approach to Multilingualism*, Multilingual Matters, Clevedon, Buffalo, Toronto 2006, p. 1.

13 Crystal, *Dictionary* (Note 8), p. 318.

14 Ibid.

15 Idem.

Braunmüller and Ferraresi¹⁶ remind us that multilingualism (either individual, societal, or functional) represents “the default case” in European language history, a fact that has been overlooked until recently, owing to the political climate in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the reigning ideology of “one state-one nation-one language”. The same authors insist that the study of multilingualism in history does not have only documentary value: “It allows us to gain considerable insight into some linguistic phenomena which have still not been completely understood, as it is the case with language change”.¹⁷

Multilingualism was frequent in European history because the knowledge of different languages was “a necessary precondition for mastering the various tasks in everyday life”.¹⁸ Nevertheless, the linguistic competence required in multilingual communication in the past was not high. It was expected to be just enough to assure a successful interethnic communication, mainly in the domain of labor.¹⁹

One of the linguistic consequences of prolonged multilingualism is the creation of linguistic areas (Germ. *Sprachbund*). According to the definition presented by Thomason, a linguistic area represents “a geographical region containing a group of three or more languages that share some structural features as a result of contact rather than as a result of accident or inheritance from a common ancestor”.²⁰ In this paper we deal with some questions related to the first and the most studied linguistic area so far in modern linguistics, the Balkan Sprachbund, and to the place of Judeo-Spanish in it as a “language of the Balkans” and as a “Balkan language”.²¹

16 Kurt Braunmüller and Gisela Ferraresi, “Introduction”, in Kurt Braunmüller and Gisela Ferraresi (eds.), *Aspects of Multilingualism in European Language History*, John Benjamins, Philadelphia 2003, p. 1.

17 Ibid., pp. 1-2.

18 Idem, p. 3.

19 Idem.

20 Sarah Grey Thomason, “Linguistic areas and language history”, in D. Gilbers et al. (eds.), *Languages in Contact. Studies in Slavic and General Linguistics*, 28, Rodopi, Amsterdam, Atlanta 2000, p. 311; idem, *Language Contact. An Introduction*, Georgetown University Press, Washington D.C. 2001, p. 99.

21 In present-day Balkan linguistics the dichotomy between the terms “language of the Balkans” and “Balkan language” has become widely accepted. The first term refers to the languages that occur within the geographic boundaries of the Balkans, while the other is reserved for those considered to be the members of the Balkan Sprachbund.

The recent theoretical and methodological advances in Balkan linguistics refer to the origins of the Balkan linguistic area. Namely, as Mišeska Tomić explains, the common features some Balkan languages share are not due to the existence of “a single substrate” in the past, but should rather be considered a result of “a shared drift”,²² “a typological phenomenon which developed through convergence of dialects in a multilingual environment”.²³

On the basis of a series of “convergent tendencies” in the morphosyntax of the members of the Balkan Sprachbund, Balkanologists claim that “the epicenter” of Balkanization is to be found south of the lakes Ohrid and Prespa, in the area where Macedonian, Greek, Aromanian, Albanian and Romani are spoken. Lindstedt mentions two more languages of the same area, Turkish and Judeo-Spanish.²⁴

2.3. Processes arising in language contact situations relevant for this paper

Language Shift (LS) is “the change from the habitual use of one language to that of another”.²⁵ The dynamics of LS normally vary from one case to another and may include only some language domains and some of the speakers instead of all.²⁶ The main precondition for language shift is the existence of a contact situation between

22 Lindstedt, “Linguistic Balkanization” (Note 6), pp. 231-246.

23 Olga Mišeska Tomić, “An integrated areal-typological approach. Local convergence of morphosyntactic features in the Balkan Sprachbund”, in Pieter Muysken (ed.), *From Linguistic Areas to Areal Linguistics*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam 2008, pp. 186, 190-191. Mišeska Tomić emphasizes that in Balkan Sprachbund analysis the methodology of “making parallel lists of convergent phenomena, and perpetuating a picture of uniformity” (while completely neglecting the time of data collection), which used to be one of the main methodological procedures in the past, should be replaced by “an integrated areal-typological approach”. The same author argues that this approach should also take into account “sociolinguistic factors and dialect variation”. Mišeska Tomić, “An integrated areal-typological approach”, p. 190.

24 Mišeska Tomić, “An integrated areal-typological approach” (Note 23), p. 217; Lindstedt, “Linguistic Balkanization” (Note 6), pp. 234.

25 Uriel Weinreich, *Languages in Contact*, The Hague 1953, p. 68, cit. from Susan Gal, “Language shift”, in Hans Goebel *et al.* (eds.), *Contact Linguistics. An International Handbook of Contemporary Research*, vol. 1, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin 1996, p. 586.

26 Crystal, *Dictionary* (Note 8), p. 269; idem, *Language Death*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2000, p.17; Michael Clyne, *Dynamics of Language Contact: English and Immigrant Languages*, Cambridge University Press, West Nyack 2000, p. 20.

at least two languages, whereby the use of one of them is endangered for being the language of a social group that does not have power nor equal access to the important societal resources (normally defined in sociolinguistics as the “minority/ethnic” group and the opposing “majority” group). It is also necessary for there to exist a certain degree of bilingualism within the group whose language is experiencing the shift.²⁷ Although the process of language shift existed in all historical periods and in all parts of the world, its study did not begin before 1950s and 1960s.²⁸

Language Maintenance, a term closely related to the one of language shift and used as its antonym, represents, conversely, a situation in which a speech community does not pass over to the use of majority language/variety, but continues—normally without planning²⁹—to use its own language, although there are sufficient conditions for its shift. This phenomenon is characteristic not only of the languages that are completely “sane”, but also of those that are experimenting with different phases of language shift.³⁰

Among the social and political factors that influence the process of language maintenance/shift,³¹ the origin of the contact situation is of great importance,³² as it

27 Christina Bratt Paulston, *Linguistic Minorities in Multilingual Settings. Implications for language Policies*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam, Philadelphia 1994, p. 13; Willem Fase et al., “Maintenance and Loss of Minority Languages. Introductory Remarks”, in Willem Fase et al. (eds.), *Maintenance and Loss of Minority Languages*, John Benjamins (*Studies in Bilingualism*), Amsterdam, Philadelphia 1992, p. 3.; Kenneth Hyltenstam and Christopher Stroud, “Language maintenance”, in Hans Goebel et al. (eds.), *Contact Linguistics. An International Handbook of Contemporary Research*, vol. 1, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin 1996, p. 568.

28 Gal, “Language shift”, p. 586 (Note 25)

29 The organized efforts, of individuals as well as groups, towards language maintenance belong to the field of *linguistic regeneration*.

30 Hyltenstam and Stroud, “Language maintenance”, p. 567 (Note 27); Jelena Filipović, *The Social Power of Words: Essays on Critical Sociolinguistics* [in Serbian], Zadužbina Andrejević, Belgrade 2009, p. 98.

31 Edwards suggests a typology of factors based on three types of questions concerning ethnic minority groups. These can be used for an analysis of contexts in which those processes occur. John Edwards, “Sociopolitical Aspects of Language Maintenance and Loss: Towards a Typology of Minority Language Situations”, in Willem Fase et al. (eds.), *Maintenance and Loss of Minority Languages*, John Benjamins (*Studies in Bilingualism*), Amsterdam, Philadelphia 1992, pp. 37-38.

32 Paulston, *Linguistic Minorities*, p. 10 (Note 27).

provokes different outcomes. Namely, the practice has shown that in the conditions of the migration of an individual or a family, which is willing to move and is usually induced by economic interests, the shift of the ethnic language is fast and is usually completed in three generations of speakers (rarely in less than three).³³ In the cases of annexation, colonization, or secession, language shift lasts much longer, sometimes for several hundred years,³⁴ because in such cases a whole ethnic group becomes a part of new country, with all its “social institutions of marriage and kinship, religious and other belief and value systems still *in situ*, still more or less intact”.³⁵

Language loss/attrition represents a case when an individual or a group “lose certain language skills”, which, finally, disables the use of that language.³⁶ Similar to the previous phenomenon, *language death* is produced when an ethnic language is in the terminal phases of loss and, finally, ceases to be used in a particular speech community.³⁷ Both processes can occur abruptly or gradually, for which different metalinguistic expressions can be used.

33 Idem, p. 11.

34 Paulston, *Linguistic Minorities*, pp. 10-12 (Note 27); Willem Fase et al., “Maintenance”, p. 7 (Note 27); Francisco Gimeno Menéndez and María Victoria Gimeno Menéndez, *El desplazamiento lingüístico del español por el inglés*, Cátedra (Lingüística), Madrid 2003, p. 27.

35 Paulston, *Linguistic Minorities*, pp. 10-11 (Note 27).

36 Michael Clyne, “Towards a Systematization of Language Contact Dynamics”, in J. A. Fishman et al. (eds.), *The Fergusonian Impact. In Honor of Charles A. Ferguson on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, vol. 2, *Sociolinguistics and the Sociology of Language*, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin, New York, Amsterdam 1986, pp. 488-489; Kees de Bot, “Language loss”, in Hans Goebel et al. (eds.), *Contact Linguistics. An International Handbook of Contemporary Research*, vol. 1, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin 1996, p. 579.

37 Wolfgang Dressler and Ruth Wodak-Leodolter, “Introduction”, in Wolfgang Dressler and Ruth Wodak-Leodolter (eds.), *Language Death, International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 12 (1977): 5-6; Clyne, “Towards a systematization”, pp. 487-488 (Note 37); Chaim Rabin, “Language Revival and Language Death”, in J. A. Fishman et al. (eds.) *The Fergusonian Impact. In Honor of Charles A. Ferguson on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, vol. 2, *Sociolinguistics and the Sociology of Language*, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin, New York, Amsterdam 1986, p. 551.

3. Judeo-Spanish as a “language of the Balkans” or a “Balkan language”

Even though Judeo-Spanish was spoken within the Balkan geographic boundaries from the sixteenth century, the Balkanologists have not paid it more than minor and sporadic attention. It has been mentioned only from time to time as one of the languages of the Balkans, while in the studies of areal linguistics pursuing common Balkan linguistic features, Judeo-Spanish has been often completely neglected.³⁸ In other words, not many authors have recognized Judeo-Spanish as a “Balkan language”, and, if they have, they never equalized its “membership” in the Balkan Sprachbund with that of the other Balkan languages. At best, it has been referred to as “a peripheral Balkan language”,³⁹ in opposition to the “core” or “classical Balkan languages”:

The ‘Balkan Sprachbund’ features spread in those languages which have been spoken since the early middle ages—the Slavic languages Macedonian, Bulgarian and Serbo-Croatian, the Eastern Romance languages Romanian, Aromanian and Megleno-Romanian, Albanian, Modern Greek, the Balkan Romani dialect, and to some extent in Judeo-Spanish and Turkish.⁴⁰

The languages and language groups of the Sprachbund are Albanian, Greek, Balkan Romance, Balkan Slavic, and Balkan Romani. (...) In addition to these five language groups, Ladino (Judezmo) and various forms of Balkan Turkic (such as Rumelian Turkish and Gagauz) have adopted some areal features; I will have to take them into account at a later stage of exploration.⁴¹

While the sporadic findings of Balkanologists on the “Balkanness” of the languages of the area mostly regard their morphosyntactic features, the interest of Romanist

38 Marc A. Gabinskij, “Die sephardische Sprache aus balkanologischer Sicht”, *Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie* 112, 3 (1996), p. 438.

39 Olga Mišeska Tomić, “The Balkan Sprachbund properties. Introduction”, in Olga Mišeska/Mieseska Tomić and Aida Martinović-Zic (eds.), *Balkan Syntax and Semantics*, John Benjamins, Philadelphia 2004, p. 6.; Andreas Amman and Johan van der Auwera, “Complementizer-headed main clauses for volitional moods in the languages of South-Eastern Europe. A Balkanism?”, in Olga Mišeska Tomić/Mieseska Tomic and Aida Martinović-Zic (eds.), *Balkan Syntax and Semantics*, John Benjamins, Philadelphia 2004, p. 307.

40 Mišeska Tomić, “An integrated areal-typological approach”, p. 184 (Note 23).

41 Lindstedt, “Linguistic Balkanization”, p. 231 (Note 6).

and Hispanic scholars⁴² has been generally limited, when Balkan areal features in Judeo-Spanish are concerned, to lexical borrowing, especially to the loanwords from Turkish. Studies of Turkish loanwords that Judeo-Spanish shares with non-Turkish Balkan languages, as well as the loanwords from the latter, are usually sparse.⁴³

Few researchers have emphasized the Balkan character of Judeo-Spanish and/or analyzed some its features in the Balkan Sprachbund context. Some of them have stressed the Balkanness of Judeo-Spanish by using different names for it: Peter M. Hill and Michael Studemund-Halévy,⁴⁴ engaged in the abundant Ottoman Turkish vocabulary in Judeo-Spanish, address this variety as “Balkan Spanish”, while Marc A. Gabinskij employs the denomination “Balkansephardisch”.⁴⁵

Hetzer⁴⁶ argues that Judeo-Spanish is not typologically a Balkan language, because it does not possess most of the features that are considered to be the main ones in the process of “linguistic Balkanization” of core Balkan languages. Still, it shows some of Balkan linguistic convergences on the morphosyntactic, phraseological and lexical level.^{47, 48}

42 The first studies on the language of the Sephardim were mostly carried out among the Romanist and Hispanic linguists from different European universities. Aldina Quintana, *Geografía Lingüística del Judeoespañol: Estudio sincrónico y diacrónico*, Peter Lang (Sefardica 3), Bern 2006, p. 3. The interest of Romanists in Judeo-Spanish gradually decreased from the 1940s (ibid), while it progressively gained more attention among Hispanists all over the world.

43 Gabinskij, “Die sephardische Sprache”, p. 438 (Note 39).

44 Peter M. Hill and Michael Studemund-Halévy, “A Dictionary of the Ottoman Turkish Elements in the Languages of South-Eastern Europe: Its significance for the Study of Balkan Spanish”, *Estudios sefardies* 1 (1978), pp. 342-345.

45 Gabinskij, “Die sephardische Sprache”, pp. 438-457 (Note 39).

46 Armin Hetzer, *Sephardisch: Judeo-español, Džudezmo. Einführung in die Umgangssprache der südosteuropäischen Juden*, Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden 2001; idem, “Outlines of the current state of Sephardic”, in N. Sobolev, A. and A. Ju. Rusakov (eds.), *Языки и диалекты малых этнических групп на Балканах: Тезисы докладов на Международной научной конференции*, Nauka, Sankt-Peterburg 2005, pp. 236-250.

47 Marc A. Gabinskij, *Sefardskij (evrejsko-ispanskij) jazyk. Balkanskoe narečie*, Chişinău 1992; Gabinskij, “Die sephardische Sprache”, pp. 438-457 (Note 39); Marc A. Gabinskij, “Positiver Effekt einiger negativer Angaben (zur Frage der Balkanismen als angeblich gemeinsephardischer Neuerungen)”, *Judenspanisch* 2 (*Neue Romania* 19), (1997), pp. 243-255.

48 Hetzer, *Sephardisch*, pp. 91-93 (Note 47); idem, “Outlines”, p. 242 (Note 47).

The results of the studies conducted so far lead to the conclusion that the changes in the language of the Sephardim, induced by language contact with other Balkan languages, are either unilateral⁴⁹ or are less present than the convergences between other languages of the Balkans.⁵⁰ However, as the knowledge of “linguistic Balkanization”⁵¹ is still partial and limited in its scope, the findings that Judeo-Spanish is only marginally a Balkan Sprachbund member, if a member at all, have to be confirmed on firmer ground in the future. Gabinskij argues that Balkan linguistic features are scarce in this variety, but the study of “general allo-Balkan linguistic specificities of Sephardic language” that is only emerging, should be continued in the future for the benefit of general linguistics.⁵²

4. Judeo-Spanish in The language history of Belgrade

Our starting point in this paper is that with the help of adequate historical documents it is possible to reconstruct at least some facts about linguistic practices and multilingualism/bilingualism among various ethnic groups in the Balkans in the past. This important topic has been often neglected in historical (socio)linguistic studies in general. Of course, the same lack is observed in the studies of Judeo-Spanish that, until recently, also focused on its internal features.⁵³ We argue that the extra-linguistic characteristics of Judeo-Spanish not only give testimony to the existence of this language in the Balkan social context but are also an indispensable factor in every solid linguistic analysis.

49 This is the formulation that Busse has recently used. Winfried Busse, “Contacts linguistiques”, in Winfried Busse and Michael Studemund-Halévy (eds.), *Lexicologia y lexicografía judeoespañolas*, Peter Lang (Sephardica 5), Bern 2011, p. 30.

50 Gabinskij, “Die sephardische Sprache”, pp. 438-439 (Note 39).

51 Lindstedt, “Linguistic Balkanization”, p. 234 (Note 6).

52 Gabinskij, “Die sephardische Sprache”, pp. 438-440 (Note 39).

53 The recent tendency is observed in Hetzer, “Outlines”, pp. 236-242 (Note 46), where due attention is paid to both external and internal linguistic features of Judeo-Spanish through its history.

4.1. Judeo-Spanish in Belgrade in the Oriental period

4.1.1. The Sephardim in multiethnic Belgrade

During the Turkish period (1521-1867), the life of the population in Belgrade, regardless of its ethnic and religious background, was very patriarchal, traditional, and religious.⁵⁴ At the time, Belgrade was a multiethnic and multilingual city, in which groups of different ethnic and religious origin—Turks, Serbs, Sephardic Jews, Roma, Greeks, Tsintsars and Armenians—coexisted. They settled in the city's four quarters (Turk. *mahalle/ma'ale*) divided by their religion: in two of them lived only a Muslim population, in one lived Muslims and Jews, and one was mostly Christian.⁵⁵

The area in Belgrade where the Sephardim lived was called *Jalija* (Turk. *jaly* “sea shore or river bank and/or empty space, lea”⁵⁶) or *Jewish Ma'ale*. From the 1530s until the 1870s, almost all Jewish inhabitants lived in this zone located on the bank of the Danube, regardless of their economic and social status.⁵⁷ As in the Orient in general, the Sephardim were gathered in Belgrade within the Jewish Community. Headed by a committee, which was elected every Jewish New year by respected men, the Community could make various decisions on its own related to daily and religious life of its members. The same body represented its members before the authorities and distributed and collected tributes.⁵⁸

From the time of their settlement in the Balkans, the Sephardim were mostly involved in trade. Until the 1870s, the majority of them were poor, as the Sephardim

54 Ivana Vučina Simović, “Judeo-Spanish and language attitudes among the Sephardim: Toward a typology of language maintenance/ language shift” [in Serbian], Ph.D. dissertation, University of Belgrade, Belgrade 2010, pp. 103-109.

55 Nataša Mišković, *Bazaars and Boulevards. The World of Everyday Life in 19th-Century Belgrade* [in Serbian], Muzej grada Beograda, Belgrade 2010, p. 163.

56 Jennie Lebel, *Until “The Final Solution”: The Jews in Belgrade 1521-1942* [in Serbian], Čigoja, Belgrade 2001, p. 435.

57 Tihomir R. Đorđević, “The Jews in Serbia during the first reign of prince Miloš (1815-1839)”, [in Serbian], *Godišnjica Nikole Čupića. Izdaje njegova Zadužbina*, vol. 35, Izdanje Čupićeve zadužbine, Štamparija Mirotočivi, Belgrade 1923, pp. 203-204; Lebel, *Until “The Final Solution”*, p. 17 (Note 57).

58 Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue, *Historia de los judios sefardies: De Toledo a Salónica*, traducción José Luis Sánchez-Silva, Abada, Madrid 2004, pp.105-109; David A. Alkalaj, “Sephardic Community in Belgrade during the 1860s” [in Serbian], *Jevrejski narodni kalendar* (1937-1938), year 3, Belgrade, pp. 101-112; Tihomir R. Đorđević, “The Jews”, p. 205 (Note 58).

were typically “shopkeepers, pedants, craftsmen, apprentices, greengrocers, junkmen and only some were moneychangers and carriers”.⁵⁹ There were also Sephardim working as clerks in the Ottoman administration until the year 1824, when Christians took their positions.⁶⁰

4.1.2. *Judeo-Spanish and other ethnic languages in the Ottoman Belgrade*

As in the Ottoman Empire as a whole, each ethnic group in Belgrade spoke its own language. Turkish was the official language, but it did not represent a lingua franca among different groups. During the Ottoman rule, the situation was rather one of stable multilingualism “with stable prestige relations among the languages”.⁶¹

Lindstedt claims that multilingualism in the Balkans, similar to the situation found in other parts of the world (e.g., India), was characterized by “radical structural convergence” and mutual “intertranslatability” between various languages, related or not among themselves. The mentioned features actually represent multilingual strategies arising from the frequent need of the coexistent ethnic groups to communicate.⁶² A comment made by Gustav Weigand at the end of nineteenth century about multilingual Monastir/Bitola reveals what such phenomenon was like:

Es ist klar, daß in einer Stadt mit so verschiedenen Nationalitäten auch eine große Vielsprachigkeit herrscht; das Türkische und Bulgarische [= Macedonian] ist [sic] fast gleich verbreitet, die Aromunen, wenigstens die Männer, können außer ihrer Muttersprache bulgarisch und griechisch, die meisten auch türkisch und albanesisch; viele verstehen selbst das Spanische [= Ladino/Judezmo], das, wie sie wohl fühlen, viele Wörter mit ihrer Sprache gleich oder ähnlich hat. Daß in Gesellschaften zugleich mehrere Sprachen gesprochen werden, ist ganz gewöhnlich.

[It is obvious that extensive multilingualism prevails in a city with so many different nationalities; Turkish and Bulgarian [= Macedonian] are almost equal in expansion; Aromanians, at least the men, speak not only their mother tongue,

59 Aron Alkalaj, “The Purim in the Jewish Ma’ale”, *Jevrejski almanah 1954*, Belgrade [1954], p. 146.

60 Tihomir R. Đorđević, “The Jews”, p. 205 (Note 58); Vidosava Stojančević, “Ethnic composition of the population 1815-1830”, in Vasa Čubrilović (ed.), *History of Belgrade. Nineteenth century*, vol. 2 [in Serbian], Prosveta, Belgrade 1974, p. 521.

61 Lindstedt, “Linguistic Balkanization”, pp. 238-239 (Note 6).

62 Idem, pp. 239-240.

but also Bulgarian and Albanian; there are many of them who actually understand Spanish [= Ladino/Judezmo], the language which, as they certainly feel, has the same or similar words as their language. This is quite common in the societies in which several languages are spoken at the same time.]⁶³

There were two crucial social and political factors for the long-lasting maintenance of ethnic languages and continuance of multilingualism in the Orient in general, among the Sephardim in Belgrade in particular. The first is due to the political and administrative system of the Ottoman Empire, *millet*, which divided the population into religious communities⁶⁴ and allowed non-Muslim vassals a specific kind of cultural, religious, and judicial autonomy within their own communities and the right to maintain their own identity in exchange for fulfilling the obligation of paying all kinds of tributes.⁶⁵

The other factor that contributed to the continuation of the same linguistic practices for centuries is associated with the fact that Sephardim, as did the other groups, moved within their own “cultural zone” (Germ. *Kulturbereich*).⁶⁶ Namely, they maintained extensive social, cultural, and trade networks⁶⁷ with other Sephardic communities in the Orient, while they kept less close relations with their neighbors of different ethnic and religious background.

In general, external multilingualism was highly valued among the Balkan population during the Turkish rule, while internal multilingualism or shift to other languages (the

63 Gustav Weigand, *Die Aromunen: Ethnographisch-philologisch-historische Untersuchungen über das Volk der sogenannten Makedo-Romanen oder Zinzaren*, vol. I, Johann Ambrosius Barth (Arthur Meiner), Leipzig 1894-95, p. 6, cit. from Lindstedt, “Linguistic Balkanization”, p. 239 (Note 6). [Translation by I. V. S.]

64 Lindstedt, “Linguistic Balkanization”, pp. 238 (Note 6).

65 Harriet Pass Freidenreich, *The Jews of Yugoslavia. A Quest for Community*, The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia 1979, p. 14; Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue, *Historia de los judíos sefardíes: De Toledo a Salónica*, traducción José Luis Sánchez-Silva, Abada, Madrid 2004, pp.100-103.

66 Benbassa and Rodrigue, *Historia*, pp. 14-15 (Note 66).

67 Besides the Jews, the same kind of network was also common among Greeks, Armenians, Ragusan (Dubrovnik) subjects, and others. Radovan Samardžić, “Belgrade in International Trade in the 16th and 17th Centuries” [in Serbian], in Vasa Čubrilović (ed.), *History of Belgrade. Antiquity, Middle Ages and New Age* [in Serbian], vol. 1, Prosveta, Belgrade 1974, p. 365.

official Turkish or the languages of the neighbors) was not. As the ethnic language was considered to be the integral part of group's identity, staying with it meant, at the same time, keeping a social and ethnic barrier toward "the others".⁶⁸ For this reason, Judeo-Spanish represented the only language of communication in the Sephardic family and society in Belgrade. This language was, according to Kalmi Baruch, the "product" of the long-lasting Sephardic "social and cultural life" maintained in the Orient.⁶⁹ The knowledge of languages other than Judeo-Spanish did not make any changes in language choice within the Sephardic family or community:

En djeneral nuestros korelidjionarios de Oryente ambezan la lengua del pais por sus menesteres komersiales, por sus relaciones de kada punto kon sus konsivdadenos. Ma nunca pensan de konverzar en kaza otra avla mas ke el djudio espanyol ke se izo, en alguna suerte, komo lengua materna i nasionala.

[In general, our compatriots in the Orient learn the language of the country owing to their commercial needs, owing to close relationships they keep with their fellow countrymen. But, they never think of conversing at home in a language other than Judeo-Spanish, which became, somehow, like mother tongue and national language.]⁷⁰

In one of his lectures, Kalmi Baruch attributed the maintenance of Sephardic language and traditions in the Balkans for four centuries to the "persistence" and "conservative character" of life in Jewish quarters in the past:

Through the spiritual walls of our Sephardic ghetto, few things could come out, or come in. For the same reason, our language, especially the one from the books, Ladino, was maintained on the same level of development as we brought it from Spain.⁷¹

68 Lindstedt, "Linguistic Balkanization", pp. 239-240 (Note 6).

69 Kalmi Baruch, "La lingwa de los sefardim", *El mundo sefardí* 1, 1 (1923), Vienna, pp. 20-25, transcription from Max L. Wagner, *Caracteres generales del judeo-español de Oriente*, *Revista de filología española*, Anejo XII (1930), pp. 111-112.

70 Samuel B. Elias, "Puede lašon hakodeš ser una lengua avlada?", *El amigo del pueblo* 9 (June 1889), year I, Belgrade, p. 1 [transcription and translation by I. V. S.].

71 Kalmi Baruch, "Sephardic language and literary creations" [in Serbian], *Jevrejski glas* 15-16 (105-106) (11 April 1930), year 3, Sarajevo, p. 7 [translation I. V. S.].

In such surroundings, Sephardic women played the main role in keeping the ethnic language and customs in Sephardic families and society. This fact can be easily explained by the social position of women in the traditional Sephardic society. The patriarchal way of life negated from women the possibility of gaining any direct social power and the right of free movement out of their homes and the Jewish quarter. They were also denied, in Belgrade until 1864, the possibility of receiving any formal education. All the restrictions noted directed women towards the ethnic culture and monolingualism. In this way, willy–nilly, they transmitted the language and traditional culture to their numerous offspring, and thus assured their continuance for centuries.⁷²

Hebrew was used together with Judeo-Spanish, and it had a special status among the Sephardim for being the traditional language of the Jewish faith, philosophy, literature, and education. It was the language dominated by Jewish men, and only by the more educated ones (most often rabbis), while women were not obliged to know it nor to be literate in it. For the educated Sephardim, Hebrew “was what Latin was to the wise men and writers in Europe in the past centuries” (“para nuestros sabios i literatos fué el ebreo akeo ke fué el latín para los sabios de evropa en los siglos pasados”).⁷³

In the traditional Jewish communal schools for boys, often called *Talmud Torah*, Hebrew and the basics of the religious literature were the only subjects, taught in the students’ maternal language, Judeo-Spanish. Although the latter was the language of instruction, it was not studied in any way. Namely, at a time when religious rituals and customs were of crucial importance, for individuals as well as for the whole community, the prestige of Hebrew was much higher, not only among the rabbis, but also among the laymen.

In the Oriental period, interethnic cultural and social relations and multilingualism in the Balkans were limited to particular domains of life, especially the domain of labor, and, to some extent, the domain of public administration and jurisdiction. In other domains, the groups held themselves socially and, usually, also linguistically apart. In such conditions, the multilingualism was only external and restricted mainly

72 Jelena Filipović and Ivana Vučina Simović, “La lengua como recurso social: el caso de las mujeres sefardies de los Balcanes”, in Paloma Díaz-Mas; María Sánchez Pérez (eds.), *Los sefardies ante los retos del mundo contemporáneo. Identidad y mentalidades*, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid, pp. 261-262, 267.

73 Baruch, “La lingwa”, p. 109 (Note 70).

to the public sphere and to the male population, as only the men had access to this sphere at the time.⁷⁴

The most important meeting point for men of different ethnic origin in Belgrade was the *bazaar* (Turk. *çarşı*), the social and economic center of every Oriental city. Its streets and shops were “the place of exchange, communication and production”, similar to Middle European market squares. The people came to the *çarşı* not only for business, but also to commune and hear the latest news.⁷⁵

Other public spaces in Belgrade in which trade and communications took place, were the numerous inns (Turk. *hans*) situated near the *çarşı*.⁷⁶ The owners of the hans were Turks, Tsintsars, Serbs, Jews, Ragusans, or Bosnians, but the guests were merchants of diverse origin. The regular guests of these premises were carriers or shippers (Turk. *kiridji*). They were skilled money and goods transporters, but also carriers of news and mail, who traveled for their business all around the Ottoman Empire. The locals used to come to the hans to meet these travelers and to do business with them.⁷⁷

Besides Judeo-Spanish and Hebrew, the use and knowledge of local languages (Turkish, Serbian, Greek, Aromanian, Armenian, etc.) among the Sephardim was considerable but, as we have already stressed, only among Sephardic men and in certain domains. The functional distribution of Judeo-Spanish with other languages spoken in Belgrade has not been studied enough as yet.

In the domain of labor, the Sephardic men used Judeo-Spanish for communication among themselves, for bookkeeping and for business correspondence. For the necessity of doing business with non-Sephardic individuals, they learned other languages spoken in the Balkans, especially Turkish, as it was the official language of the Empire. According to Kalmi Baruch the influence of Turkish was great in Judeo-Spanish, but the same was true for other languages of the Balkans:

[E]l treser elemento komponente del lenguaže de los sefardes, kual eôó profundamente sus raizes en nuestra idioma, es el turko. la unidad politika, ke duró asta la mitad del siglo pasado kon el turko komo lengua del estado de una parte, de

74 Lindstedt, “Linguistic Balkanization”, pp. 239-240 (Note 6).

75 Mišković, *Bazaars*, p. 164. (Note 56).

76 Hazim Šabanović, “Commercial buildings” [in Serbian], in Vasa Čubrilović (ed.), *History of Belgrade. The Antiquity, Middle Ages and New Age* [in Serbian], vol. 1, Prosveta, Belgrade 1974, p. 377.

otra nuestra kultura material ainda asta atrás pokos desenios idéntika kon la de los turkos, fué reformando el lenguaže, dando entrada a ekspresiones korrientes en el país. lo mezmio se ___ i en otras lenguas del balkán, el serbo i el búlgaro. no kere ser dičo ke los sentros sefarditas, onde el turko es la lengua de la kai ___ e, tienen su lenguaže más de elementos turkos.

(The third element that forms the language of the Sephardim, and which took root in our language, is the Turkish. The political unity that lasted till the middle of the past century, with the Turkish as the state language, on the one hand, and our material culture that was still several decades ago identical to that of the Turks, on the other, were changing the language, by allowing entrance to expressions common in the country. The same thing was perceptible in other languages in the Balkans, in Serbian and Bulgarian. This does not mean that the Sephardic centers where Turkish is the language of the street have more Turkish elements in their language”.)⁷⁸

In the domain of labor, in which trade was the most common profession, the Balkan Sephardim had to learn not only Turkish, but also Italian. The loanwords from Italian give evidence of such influence on Judeo-Spanish: “All merchant cities in the Balkans had a vivid trade exchange with Italy, especially with Venice. Almost all Sephardic centers are familiar with some of Italian words (*dunke, ačitar, impiegado, perikolo*)”.⁷⁹ Knowledge of Greek was also widespread among the Sephardic men, because during the Oriental era it was one of the main languages of trade.⁸⁰ With the strengthening of Serbian political and cultural autonomy in the nineteenth century, the Sephardim in Belgrade progressively learned Serbian.

Although the Sephardim knew other languages, testimonies can be found showing that members of other groups also learned to speak and write in Judeo-Spanish in order to work with the Sephardim, as was mentioned by Weigand regarding Monastir.⁸¹ There are also other testimonies of this phenomenon in Sarajevo and Belgrade. In the

77 Mišković, *Bazaars*, pp. 164-165 (Note 56).

78 Baruch, “La lingwa”, p. 110 (Note 70) [translation by I. V. S.].

79 Kalmi Baruch, “The language of the Sephardim” [in Serbian], *Spomenica “La Benevolencije”*, Belgrade 1924, p. 74 [translation by I. V. S.].

80 Max L. Wagner, “Espiguelo judeo-español”, *Revista de Filología Española*, 34 (1950), p. 13.

81 Weigand, *Die Aromunen*, p. 6 (Note 64).

article “The Position of Bosnian Jews during Turkish Rule”,⁸² Samuel Pinto provided data on correspondence in Judeo-Spanish in solitreo between Jewish and Muslim merchants in Sarajevo. David Alkalaj testified that Serbs in Belgrade who worked for Sephardic craftsmen as auxiliaries and apprentices learned the language of their employers. From the same source, we learn that Sephardic merchants and craftsmen communicated with Turks and Tsintsars in Belgrade in Turkish, but mostly in Judeo-Spanish.⁸³

4.2. Judeo-Spanish in Belgrade in modern times

Modernity and the creation of nation states in the Balkans during the nineteenth and at the beginning of centuries brought changes not only in the political and social situation in the area, but also put an end to the long-lasting multilingualism and the preconditions for linguistic convergence of Balkan languages. In the new conditions, the spreading of common Balkan linguistic features was reduced to a modest degree. Namely, contact-induced language changes started to be unilateral, as they affected mostly the languages of the minorities living within the new nation states.⁸⁴

The modernization of the national Serbian state (1818-1867) was relatively fast, owing to the fact that its elite imposed as an imperative the need to become modern and Westernized as quickly as possible. Soon enough, the entire population of Belgrade experienced deep ideological, social, political, and linguistic changes. The Sephardic community, as well as the other minority groups in Belgrade, was obliged to adapt progressively to the modern way of life and work and also to the emerging Serbian cultural and linguistic milieu.⁸⁵

At first, only the younger and more well-to-do Sephardim felt the desire to integrate socially and economically into the majority Serbian society. Later on this phenomenon became widespread among the Sephardim in Belgrade. At the same time, a strong

82 Samuel Pinto, “The Position of Bosnian Jews during Turkish rule” [in Serbian], *Jevrejski almanah 1954*, Belgrade [1954], p. 57.

83 David Alkalaj, “From the past of our community. The first cultural pursuits of our youth: Societal school for the education of Serbian-Jewish youth. A contribution to the history of Belgrade Jews” [in Serbian], *Vesnik Jevrejske sefardske veroispovedne opštine* 11 (1 November 1939), year 1, Belgrade, p. 5.

84 Lindstedt, “Linguistic Balkanization”, pp. 238-240. (Note 6).

85 Vučina Simović, “Judeo-Spanish”, pp. 120-122 (Note 55).

belief was spreading among the Sephardic group in Belgrade that the knowledge of colloquial Serbian was no longer good enough for their social and economic mobility. Therefore, the Sephardic youngsters from Jaliija decided in 1872 to organize a “Societal school for the education of Serbian-Jewish youth”.⁸⁶ According to David Alkalaj from Belgrade, this school, in which Serbian language and grammar were taught, was also accessible to uneducated Serbs and to the members of other ethnic groups, such as Greeks and Tsintsars, who wanted to improve their “poor knowledge” of Serbian.⁸⁷

As a result of integration into majority group and the adoption of various ideologies of modernity,⁸⁸ Judeo-Spanish, like the languages of other minority groups in Belgrade, began to retreat gradually before Serbian, the official and majority language.⁸⁹ The following paragraph written by Samuel B. Elias testifies that this phenomenon was already advanced at the end of 1880s:

Nuestros hermanos de Serbia (...) se esfuerzan de adoptar los usos y costumbres de sus compatriotas Serbos, viven en buenas relaciones con ellos, practican mas mucho la lengua del pais que sus propia idioma. – En los conciertos, en los bailes, en sus conversaciones los Judios emplean el Serbo; mesmo en sus casas, muchos de ellos hablan solo la lengua del pais.

(Our brothers from Serbia (...) are striving to adopt practices and customs of their Serbian compatriots, they live in good relations with them and they use more of

86 Archive of Serbia, *Ministry of Education*, No. I r. 71/ 1873, n° 113.

87 Alkalaj, “From the past”, p. 5 (Note 83).

88 Among the set of ideologies of modernity, the ideology of national states and national languages was the one that had the crucial impact on the shift of Judeo-Spanish in Belgrade. Namely, the speakers of this language were strongly convinced that the use of the majority and, what is more important, standardized language, meant acceptance of the modern way of life and a main condition for the social and economic mobility of every individual. Vučina Simović, “Judeo-Spanish”, pp. 270-275 (Note 55).

89 The shift did not begin at the same time in all domains of language use, and it did not have the same dynamics in all of them. In the domains of labor, education, army, and public relations and administration, Judeo-Spanish began to shift to Serbian between the 1840s and 1860s. However, within the family, oral tradition, religion, Sephardic literature and press, the Jewish quarter and Jewish community and charitable and cultural associations the language shift to Serbian began mostly in the last two decades of the nineteenth century and at the very beginning of the twentieth, while it strongly took root between the two wars. Vučina Simović and Filipović, *Ethnic Identity*, pp. 51-112 (Note 8).

the language of the country than of their own language. – At concerts, at balls, in their conversations, the Jews use Serbian; the same happens in their homes, many of them speak only the language of the country.)⁹⁰

The changes brought by the modern way of life affected the entire linguistic repertoire of Belgrade Sephardim, foreign languages included. Among the latter, the knowledge of Balkan languages was gradually decreasing, while the use of modern international languages was growing fast. Sephardim in Belgrade were following the modern trends in foreign language learning and were showing the most interest in German⁹¹ and French, and, to a lesser degree, in Italian and English.⁹²

4.3. The loss and death of Judeo-Spanish

The Judeo-Spanish speech community of Belgrade, already weakened by the prolonged language shift, was almost completely destroyed during the first years of Nazi occupation. According to Jennie Lebel,⁹³ approximately 94% of the total Jewish population of Belgrade perished in the Holocaust. The physical destruction of the majority of its speakers led to almost complete loss and death of Judeo-Spanish. We know of only a few Sephardic families in Belgrade who after the war maintained their ethnic language as means of communication. They principally came to Belgrade from other parts of the Balkans, where Judeo-Spanish was better preserved than in Belgrade. Since their number was so small, this was not sufficient for language revival in their community.⁹⁴

90 Samuel B. Elias, “Novitades Israelitas”, *Luzero de la Paciencia*, 6 (1st/13th February 1888), year 3, Turmu-Severin, pp. 83-84 [translation by I. V. S.].

91 David Haim, better known by his nickname, Davičo, and his sons, maintained from 1822 till 1830 a business correspondence in German with Serbian prince Miloš. Isak Alkalaj, “Archive materials on Jews in Serbia“ [in Serbian], *Jevrejski almanah za godinu 5688 (1927-1928)*, year 3, Vršac, *Savez rabina Kraljevine SHS*, 1927, pp. 22-25.

92 Jewish Historical Museum in Belgrade, Survey *My Family* [in Serbian], 1979-1980, cit. from: Vučina Simović, “Judeo-Spanish”, pp. 120-122 (Note 55).

93 Lebel, *Until “The Final Solution”*, p. 336 (Note 57).

94 According to the survey *My Family*, the informants who came to Belgrade after the World War II from other Sephardic communities of Yugoslavia used Judeo-Spanish much more in their parents’ home before the war (65% bilingual in Serbian and Judeo-Spanish, 22% monolingual in Judeo-Spanish, 13% monolingual in Serbian, 4% monolingual in Italian) than the informants who were originally from Belgrade (32% bilingual in Serbian and Judeo-Spanish, 21% monolingual in Judeo-Spanish, 42% monolingual in Serbian, 5% monolingual in German). Nevertheless, they all indicated Serbian or Serbo-Croatian as

5. Conclusions

The present paper has offered a sociolinguistic approach to the history of Judeo-Spanish and, at the same time, it has questioned the possibilities and needs for placing its study in a broader context of Belgrade and the Balkans in general. The sociolinguistic history of the Balkan Peninsula gives us enough reasons to believe that there were many centers of Balkanization in the urban areas in the past, such as Belgrade, where different ethnic and linguistic groups lived in prolonged and, more or less, close contact. We can assume that preserved historical documents in different Balkan languages could reveal a great deal of data on their coexistence and also on some of their linguistic convergences.

In our focus of attention were two basic deficiencies of Balkan and Romance/Hispanic linguistics when the study of Judeo-Spanish and of other languages of the Balkans in the past are concerned. In the first place, these studies were missing descriptions of the contexts in which these languages were used. This lack was common to language studies in the past in general. Secondly, and as result of the previous deficiency, the disciplines mentioned have failed so far to provide a general and systematic analysis of the effects of the prolonged multilingualism/bilingualism that existed in the Balkan area. A more systematic research on Balkan language history could be beneficial not only from documentary point of view, but also as an important issue for general linguistics, historical linguistics, and sociolinguistics.

Unlike previous Balkan linguistic studies, future studies on language history of Balkan cities, should not leave aside the language of the Sephardim, one of active participants in the Balkan historical “linguistic landscape”. Furthermore, the recent theoretical and methodological advances in Balkan linguistics, which relate to the origins of the features some Balkan languages share, speak in favor of the existence of “Balkan Spanish” which was not only a recipient, but also, a more or less active member of the Balkan Sprachbund.

We are aware that the suggested endeavors require long and tiresome interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary studies made by groups of experts. The brief account on the language history of the Sephardic community in Belgrade represents our modest contribution to these goals.

the only language spoken in their homes at the time of the survey. This provides evidence that the ethnic language loss after the war happened in all informants' families despite the differences in origin and earlier language use. Jewish Historical Museum in Belgrade, Survey *My Family*, 1979-1980.