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ELECTRONIC CORPUS OF SEBIAN LANGUAGE FROM 12TH TO 18TH CENTURY

In the mid 1950s at the Institute for Experimental Phonetic and Speech Pathology, Prof. Đorđe Kostić, at that time the director of the Institute, initiated a project of machine translation and automatic speech and text recognition. Professor Kostić, who directed this project, was of the opinion that the problem of automatic text and speech recognition could not be solved algorithmically and that a probabilistic approach is more plausible. However, a probabilistic approach required compilation of an annotated corpus that will provide precise probability estimates of all aspects of language – from phonology to syntax. This was the impetus that brought to the compilation of the *Corpus of Serbian Language*. The Corpus is diachronic, encompassing the Serbian language from the 12th century to the contemporary language, with 11 million words, each word being manually annotated for its grammatical status.

There were two principal aspects of this project. On the one hand, it was necessary to build up the system of annotation, while on the other hand the corpus had to be representative in order to provide reliable probability estimates.

The annotation implied that each word from the corpus should be defined in terms of its grammatical (i.e. morphological status). Available grammars of the Serbian (Serbo-Croatian) language did not seem to satisfy this requirement because at some instances they could not provide a strict specification for each word from the corpus (e.g. constituents of some complex verb tenses). In order to solve this problem a team of linguists expanded the repertoire of standard grammars, building up a system of annotation that distinguished about 2500 grammatical forms.

In order to properly represent the contemporary Serbian language, the Corpus encompassed five functional styles of written language: novels and essays (126 books), poetry (215 books), daily press (Politika), scientific texts (136 books) and political texts. Each sample consisted of about one million words: in sum, the sample of contemporary Serbian language consisted of about five million words. This, however, was just one segment of the Corpus. As noted, the Corpus is diachronic, divided into five periods. In addition to the sample of the contemporary language it includes the Serbian language from 12th to 18th century, Serbian language of 18th ct. and the first half of the 19th ct., complete works of Vuk St. Karadžić, and Serbian language of the second part of the 19th century.

The Corpus was manually annotated at the level of inflected morphology with several stages of text preparation and annotation. The final goal was to compile a series of frequency dictionaries that would serve as a probabilistic basis for automatic speech and text recognition

and machine translation. The compilation of frequency dictionaries consisted of 27 distinct operations. Here we outline the most important ones.

a. A4 sheet of paper was divided into 16 frames and within each frame a word from a book was transcribed. For each given word, its page and line numbers in the original book were specified.

b. Once the whole text was transcribed and lines and pages annotated, each word was specified for its grammatical status (Figure 1).

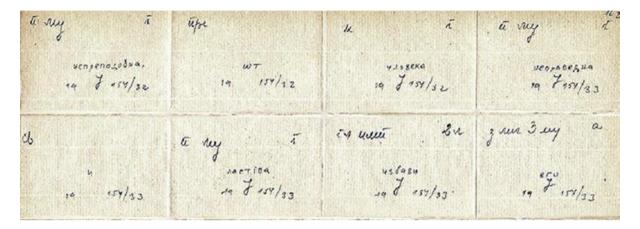


Figure 1: Part of A4 sheet divided into 16 frames with each word within a frame being annotated for its grammatical status, page and line in the book from which it was excerpted.

c. Grammatical annotation was subsequently monitored by a group of linguistic experts that randomly sampled about 10% of each text. In cases where there was more than a 2% error rate, the grammatical annotation was repeated until the required criterion was reached. Sometimes the procedure had to be executed three or four times to reach the required standards.

d. Once grammatical annotation was complete, the compilation of series of frequency dictionaries could be initiated. The A4 sheet was cut into 16 frames – one frame for each word. Word frames were then sorted into alphabetical order.

e. Different grammatical forms (i.e. frames) for each word were sorted according to a specified order (e.g. for the word HOUSE, for example, all nominatives singular were put together, then all genitives singular etc.).

f. For each word, the frequencies for each grammatical form were counted, as was the total the number of the occurrences of a word entry (e.g. HOUSE appeared 15 times in the nominative singular, 5 times in the genitive singular etc., The word HOUSE, irrespective of its grammatical form (i.e. word entry) appeared 75 times.).

g. The obtained frequency counts were transcribed into a specialized form and then typed on an A4 sheet. In its final form each frequency dictionary had two distinct versions: one with word entries and grammatical forms for each word being sorted by alphabetical order and the other, with word entries sorted by rank frequency.

From 1957 to 1962 more that 400 collaborators participated in this project. In 1962 the project was suspended for reasons that were not scientific. By that time more than 27,000 pages of various frequency dictionaries had been compiled. In 1996 through mutual efforts of the Institute for Experimental Phonetics and Speech Pathology and the Laboratory for Experimental Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade the whole material

was digitalized and thus preserved. A new project, titled *Quantitative Description of Serbian Language Structure*, was initiated with a single aim to finish what had been terminated in the early sixties and to start a systematic statistical and mathematical analysis of the Serbian language based on materials from the project initiated by Prof. Kostić.

In the last fifteen years a seven volume *Frequency Dictionary of Contemporary Serbian Language* has been published by the Institute for Experimental Phonetics and Speech Pathology and the Laboratory for Experimental Psychology and eight volumes of frequency dictionaries of the Serbian language from 12th to 18th century, published by Službeni glasnik. The latter will be described in more detail in the forthcoming text.

Annotated corpus of Serbian Language form 12th to 18th century

Sample: The sample of the Serbian written language from 12th to 18th century consists of about 450.000 words compiled from 18 literary works by seven authors, one manuscript by anonymous authors and vast private and official correspondence of Serbian kings and noblemen. The language and orthography are in their original form, i.e. in Serbian-Slavonic. The whole material has been transferred into an electronic format.

The sample consists of two distinct types of material: a. the lives of Serbian saints (hagiographies), and b. the old Serbian charters and letters. There are also several examples of Serbian medieval church poetry.

Since almost all preserved hagiographies are included in the sample, this means that all significant authors of that period are represented in the Corpus (St. Sava, Teodosije, Domentijan, archbishop Danilo II, Stefan the First-Crowned, patriarch Pajsije and Grigorije Camblak). The lives of saints constitute a distinct genre of the Serbian medieval written literature, and present an interesting (although not always reliable) historical source as well as precious testimony of the Serbian literary language in the period between the 12th and the 18th centuries.

In the second part of the 19th century Đura Daničić, reputed Serbian philologist and expert on the old Serbian literature, edited and published manuscripts of the most prominent Serbian medieval authors (Domentijan, Teodosije and archbishop Danilo II). Daničić not only published those manuscripts, but through comparing the available medieval transcripts, had standardized the Serbian-Slavonic orthography. The material that constitutes the sample is in the most part based on Daničić's editions as well as on the editions of Janko Šafarik, Stojan Novaković and the extensive editorial endeavor of historian Vladimir Ćorović (St. Sava and Stefan the First-Crowned).

The old Serbian charters and letters encompass written documents that span five centuries of Serbian history. They include correspondence and charters of Serbian kings and noblemen, as well as contracts and other administrative documents and could be treated as valuable and reliable historical source. Unlike the lives of Serbian saints, the language in which they were written (also Serbian-Slavonic) is much closer to the Serbian vernacular of that period. The old charters and letters were collected and edited at the beginning of the 20th century in their original form by Ljubomir Stojanović, one of the most prominent Serbian philologists. The material in the Corpus is based on those editions. The list of manuscripts that constitute the sample of Serbian medieval written language is given in the Appendix.

Transcript and grammatical tagging of the material was carried out in the mid 1950's by Prof. Đorđe Sp. Radojičić, at the time the utmost expert in the medieval Serbian literature and the Serbian-Slavonic language, and by a group of experts in Serbian-Slavonic from the University of Novi Sad.

The grammar (i.e. the inflected morphology) of Serbian-Slavonic is somewhat different from the grammar of the contemporary Serbian language, although those differences are not as great as might be expected given a time interval of almost eight centuries. The most conspicuous and common differences are in grammatical number (e.g. dual, which does not exist in contemporary Serbian language), use of participle and some pronouns. The constraint in the grammatical tagging of Serbian-Slavonic was that no radical change of coding system is permissible in order to enable comparisons with the contemporary language. Therefore, the system of tagging for the contemporary language has been projected on Serbian-Slavonic, with few minor changes that do not disturb the overall system.

Work in progress 2002–2012: In 2002 at the Laboratory for Experimental Psychology a group of experts for Serbian-Slavonic, with professor Đorđe Trifunović as a chief consultant, started the project of transfering hand written grammatically annotated Serbian-Slavonic texts into electronic format, with subsequent lemmatization that was not finished in the early sixties. This was the basis for compilation of frequency dictionaries and construction of application that enables various kinds of text analyses to be described in the forthcoming paragraphs. Up to now eight volumes of frequency dictionaries have been published by Službeni glasnik:

- Domentijan: *The life of St. Simeon and the Life of St. Sava* (three volumes 3100 pages)
- Teodosije: *The Life of St. Sava* (one volume 1250 pages)
- Archbishop Danilo II: *The Lives of Serbian Kings and Archbishops* (two volumes 1733 pages)
- Vitae Canon Chronicles (writings of St. Sava, Stefan the First-Crowned, Grigorije Camblak, Patriarch Pajsije, count Đorđe Branković and Founding charter of Hilandar) /two volumes 2921 pages/

Dictionary for each author includes the original Serbian-Slavonic text, grammatically annotated and lemmatized text (Figure 2), frequency dictionary with lemma frequency and frequencies of all forms for a given lemma. The frequencies are given as raw frequencies, proportions and \log_2 transform of raw frequencies (Figure 3).

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	ANDENTH	ANEHTH	ta mes 301	G	ce	з покајср

Figure 2: Page of dictionary with grammatically annotated and lemmatized text

Frequency dictionaries are divided into several segments: a. lemmas and forms of lemmas given in alphabetical order with their respective frequencies, b. lemmas given by rank frequency, c. lemmas given by rank frequency within part of speech (e.g. rank frequency for nouns, verbs, adjectives etc.), d. frequencies of onomastic terms, and e. frequency of grammatical forms.

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одредница/облик	rpa	матички облик	F	Р	- log ₂ (p)
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потастахь	гл	aop 1Л J	2	,000026	15,2311
пръставити се	гл		14	,000180	12,4397
пръставити се	гл	инф	1	,000013	16,2311
пръстави се	гл	аор ЗЛ Ј	7	,000090	13,4397
пръставиль се	гл	рп плп 3Л Ј му	1	,000013	16,2311
пръставльша се	гл	при про г Ј му	1	,000013	16,2311
пръставльшинхь се	гл	при про г М му	1	,000013	16,2311
пръставльшоу се	гл	при про д Ј му	3	,000039	14,6462
пръставление	и		51	,000657	10,5718
пръставление	и	нJср	3	,000039	14,6462
пръставлънина	и	r J cp	1	,000013	16,2311
пръставленина	и	r J cp	16	,000206	12,2451
пръставлении	И	дЈср	21	,000271	11,8494
пръставлению	И	дJcp	2	,000026	15,2311
пръставление	и	aJcp	7	,000090	13,4397
пръставлении	И	л Ј ср	1	,000013	16,2311
пръстанати	гл	88 - 2 8	2	,000026	15,2311
пръстан	гл	при сад н Ј му	2	,000026	15,2311
пръстоль	И		109	,001404	9,4762
пръстоль	И	н Ј му	3	,000039	14,6462
пръстоли	И	н М му	1	,000013	16,2311
пръстола	И	гЈму	12	,000155	12,6554
πρτεσολογ	и	д Ј му	9	,000116	13,0736
прѣстоль	и	а Ј му	65	,000837	10,2225
пръстоломь	и	инс Ј му	1	,000013	16,2311
пръстолъ	и	лЈму	18	,000232	12,0736
пръстоупити	гл	10	3	,000039	14,6462
пръстоупити	гл	инф	2	,000026	15,2311
пръстоупивь	гл	при про н І му	1	000013	16 2311

Figure 3: Page of frequency dictionary with raw lemma frequencies, raw frequencies of all forms for a given lemma, frequencies given as proportions, and log₂ transforms of raw frequencies

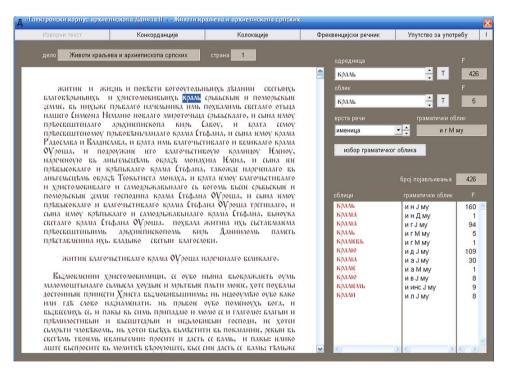


Figure 4: Panel with the original Serbian-Slavonic text and windows with lemma frequency, form frequency, grammatical status of a form and all forms of a given lemma in given text.

Frequency dictionaries are accompanied by CD with application that allows for number of different types of search and analyses. The application has four panels, each of them being devoted to a particular type of analysis.

The first panel offers the original Serbian-Slavonic text that can be scrolled and searched for lemma, grammatical form of lemma or grammatical form per se (Figure 4).

In the second panel the user can get concordances for the selected lemma, form of lemma or grammatical form, i.e., all sentences where the selected lemma, form of lemma or grammatical form appears. For each selected item from the list of concordances, the full sentence is available, with page number of the book from which the selected item was excerpted. Lemma frequency, form frequency, form's grammatical status and all the forms of the selected lemma in a given text are also available (Figure 5).

	Изворни текст Ко	нкорданције	Колокације	Фреквенцијски речник		Упутство за употребу	
К 1		краль	срыбыскыне и	1	краль	⊻ T	426
K 1 K 1	прьеоеѣньчанааго Стефана, и сына емоу	краліа Краліа	Стефана, и сына имоу Разослава и	-	облик		
C 1		Крална	оVроша, и подроужин	HT.	-		400
K 1	и кобпькааго	КОЛЛІА	Стефана, такожде		краль	- 10	160
K 1	земли господина	Краліа	Стефана ОУроша, и сы	INA	врста речи	граматички об	
K 1		крална			именица	ин Ј	MV.
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C 1		краліа	Стефана ОУроша.		избор граматичко	ofinera	
K 2		краліа	ОУроша нареченааго		изоор траматичко	- O DOMINIKA	
K 4		кралы	,оть нигоже прозебоше				
K 4		краль	,въторыи Владиславъ			426	Тражи
K 4		краль	и третии великыи сь				
C 4		краль	оурошь.				426
K 5 K 5		краль	кралиевьствовавь вь				
K 6		Краль	Владиславь оть		облици	граматички облик	F
K 7		КРАЛИ	БЛАГОВОЛЕНИИЕМЬ		краль	инЈму	160
K 7		Краль	ОУрошь.		краліа	индму	1
K 7		Краль	ОУ рошь непокольбимо	010	Кральа Краль	игЈму	94
	()		> <	>	Кралияь	игМму	5
	онтекст				Кралю	иг Мму ид Јму	109
	очбо благочьстивыи и хри	столюбивый колан	KAAJMGAARD OTD OCHORAHM	4	Краліа	иајму	30
	здвиже божьствьногю црьк				Краліє	иаМму	1
	вже положи тело велика.				кралю	ИВЈМУ	8
	авьнааго града Трьнова, идъя				краліємь	и инс Ј му	9
				- 1	крали	илЈму	8
				- 1			
				- 1			
				- 1			
				- 1			
				- 1	108		

Figure 5: Panel with the list of concordances, the full sentence for a chosen item, lemma frequency, form frequency, grammatical status of a form and all forms of the selected lemma in a given text

The third panel offers collocations (i.e. the word that precedes or follows the target word) for each lemma, grammatical form of a lemma or grammatical form per se (Figure 6).

Collocations are ordered by rank frequency and for each word-word combination. It is possible to get the whole sentence as well as a grammatical specification for each word pair. Collocations could be selected by several criteria: a. particular lemma that precedes or follows the target word, b. part of speech (e.g. nouns, prepositions) preceding or following the target word, and c. grammatical form preceding or following the target word.

The fourth panel offers frequency dictionary with number of possible ways of sorting lemmas and grammatical forms of lemmas (Figure 7). Lemmas and grammatical forms of lemmas could be sorted by alphabetical order, with their respective frequencies. Likewise, it is possible to sort only lemmas by rank frequencies or to get rank frequencies of lemmas within part of speech (e.g. rank frequencies for nouns, verbs, adjectives etc).

The application offers specification of frequency range, for example, it is possible to extract 5% of most frequent words, or 10% of most frequent nouns etc. The application is still in developing stage. The final version will offer graphs and some elementary statistics.

Изворни т	екст Конкорданције	Колокације	Фреквенцијски речни	Упутство за употребу
Ж 1	благочьстивь	краль	107	
Ж 45	пръкысокь	краль	96 ^{0Дредн}	ица
Ж 1	христолюбивь	Краль	47	
XK 58	благовърьнь	краль	13	
Ж 1	великь	краль	8 врста р	
Ж 1	самодрыжавьнь	краль	б приде	B 🔽 🗹
JK 183	младь	краль	6	
Ж 1	прьвовъньчань	краль	4 изб	ор граматичког облика
Ж 1	кръпькь	краль	4	
Ж 118	славьнь	краль	2	
Ж 179	боголюбивь	краль	2 2 2 2	
张 143	БЛАЖЕНЬ	краль	2	\mathbf{U}
X 227	зьлолысльнь	краль	1	друга реч
XK 1	СКЕТЬ	краль	1 одредн	
X 142	светородьнь	краль	1	
X 229	соутемоудрынь	краль	1 Кралі	. 1
JK 58	срыбыскы	краль	1 врста р	101114
X 228	окрыстыны	Краль		
X 131	милостикь	краль	1 имени	ца 🗾 🗖
			изб	ор граматичког облика
			број ко	покација 304 Тра

Figure 6: Panel with collocations ordered by rank frequency

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одредница/облик				одредница		
господь	И		513			
богь	И		453 💻			
краль	И		426			
ZEMAHA	И		258	именица	* *	
господинь	И		213			
сила	и		211	Hopon co	аматичког облика	
житин	И		210	nooop (p	amatur akor bosinika	
царь	И		208			
дьнь	И		208			
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мъсто	И		192	-	нице са облицима	
любы	И		191	- odbedi	нице са ослицима	
црькы	И		177			
дрыжава	и		173		- поређај ———	
връме	и		171	💿 азбучн		
сынь	И		168	🕒 азбучн		
сръдьце	И		156	💿 по ран	гу фреквенција	
Христось	и		153			
ИМЕ	И		149			
слава	и		145	пронађено		
тбло	И		144	1921		Тражи
доуша	и		142			<u> </u>
отьць	И		140	број појављ		
отьчьствин	и		133	20045		
atano .	И		128	20040	, 	
CAORO	и		128			
EOAHA	И		123	Избо		cera —
градь	и		120			
пръосвештеныи	И		117	04: 0%		
роука	и		115		100	
владыка	И		114		-	_
родитель	И		112	до: 100%	6	
пръстоль	И		109 🐷			

Figure 7: Panel with frequency dictionary

At this point each frequency dictionary has its own application restricted to a single author or group of authors. Once the whole sample of the Serbian language from 12th to 18th century is lemmatized and frequency dictionaries being published, the whole period will be available within a single application, allowing cross-referencing and direct comparison of different authors at the level of vocabulary and morphology (grammar). This, on the other hand, is a good basis for compiling a Serbian-Slavonic dictionary since concordances for each lemma are available at hand, thus offering an insight to all possible meanings of a given lemma. This, however, is beyond the scope of the current project.

APPENDIX

List of manuscripts that constitute the sample of the Serbian written language from 12th to 18th century

The Old Serbian Charters and Letters, Collected by Ljubomir Stojanović, Belgrade, 1929.

Teodosije: The Life of St. Sava, Edited by Đura Daničić, Belgrade 1860.

Domentijan: The Lives of St. Simeun and St. Sava, Edited by Đura Daničić, Belgrade 1865.

Archbishop Danilo II: *The Lives of Serbian Kings and Archbishops*, Edited by Đura Daničić, Zagreb 1866.

Stefan Prvovenčani: *The Life of Simeon Nemanja*, Vladimir Ćorović: Svetosavski Zbornik 2, pp. 1–76.

Grigorije Camblak: *The Life of Stefan Uroš*, Janko Šafarik: Glasnik Društva srbske slovesnosti 11, 1859, pp. 43–94.

The Writings of St. Sava, Vladimir Ćorović: Belgrade – Sremski Karlovci, 1928.

Patriarch Pajsije: *The Life of Emperor Uroš*, Ilarion Ruvarac: Glasnik Srpskog učenog Društva 5, Vol. 22, 1867, pp. 209–239.

Anonimous: *The Life of Joachim from Sarandapor*, Stojan Novaković: Glasnik Srpskog učenog Društva 5, Vol. 22, 1867.

Excerpts from *The Chronicles of Despotes Dorđe Branković*, Stojan Novaković: Glas Srpskog učenog društva 33, 1872 pp. 242–264.

Encomium to St. Simeon and St. Sava, Đorđe Sp. Radojičić: Južnoslovenski filolog 21, Vol. 1–4, 1955-56, 137–151.

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