

ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

COULD THE ACCESSION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EU LANGUAGE POLICY

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ABSTRACT

This research paper explores the public opinion of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopting the European Union (EU) Language Policy, the country's relations, and how the policy would impact the future of the country and its relations with the EU. The EU Language Policy encourages multilingualism and promotes the learning of two additional languages, in addition to the official language of the country. Adoption and adequate implementation of this policy are important for both aspiring members and EU member states, as it aims at advancing the functionality and competitiveness of the EU. The paper examines relevant aspects of the EU's history, the importance of the policy, and how adopting it would impact the education system in B&H if economic and social growth could be expected. The research part of the paper was conducted via a self-responded survey gauging the public opinions on certain aspects relevant to the topic. Overall, the research finds that adapting the EU Language Policy is a significant step towards integration of B&H into the EU; and that adapting it would be logistically challenging but a welcome and necessary step for immeasurable benefits that come with becoming a member state of the EU. The opinions of the participants were mostly unanimous regarding positive attitudes towards learning languages, retaining culture, positive long-term effects on the country, and dissatisfaction with B&H's behavior in relation to their relationship with the EU.

Keywords: Language Policy, EU language Policy, Member state, EU candidacy, B&H Education system, B&H-EU relations



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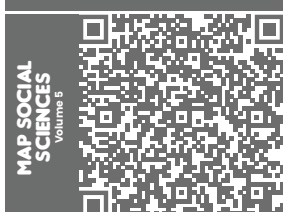
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INTRODUCTION

Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H), a country in the Balkan Peninsula established in the Yugoslavia wars of the 1990s, is a young country that strives for a brighter future and to "have a seat at the table" with other countries on the global platform (Gromes, 2009). One way to ensure this happens at an accelerated rate, many believe that joining the European Union (EU) is the way forward. Political unrest and economic instabilities plague the area, with political leaders regularly misleading the media about military threats to cover up certain competencies and money laundering schemes that might have otherwise made it into the news (Weber & Bassuener, 2014). The mass panic such news reports cause leads many citizens of B&H to believe that there is no future in the country and that the safest option for the individuals is to leave the country for an EU member state. Since leaving one's place of birth, one's homeland is frowned upon by society, citizens are forced to decide between leaving the country for another or staying and enduring the progressively more imperfect living situation with repetitious threats of war breaking out. With both options being equally difficult, a third possibility came forth: becoming a member state of the EU, or NATO. Many find comfort in thinking that the political and economic instability will work itself out, and Bosnia's civilian future will become brighter if the country successfully joins the EU. However, as will be mentioned in detail in this paper, one does not simply apply for EU membership and automatically get accepted into the "club" without deliberation and effort. The procedure (Baun & Marek, 2013) is long, laborious, and riddled with details that keep applicant countries waiting for decades for their chance to join. This paper goes into the details about joining the EU, focuses on how B&H adopting the EU Language Policy could advance the country's chances to move forward and survey the public opinion in the region on the situation and relevant topics.

The European Union language policy plays a crucial role in the integration process of its member states (Phillipson, 2004). This policy promotes multilingualism, language diversity, and communication among member states to break down language barriers and encourage positive international relations. Bosnia and Herzegovina has been seeking membership in the EU for over a decade and, though this is not among the primary issues holding it back from joining (Domm, 2011), it is still a factor worth mentioning. Language policies play a significant role in the EU accession process, and

implementing the EU language policy could have a positive influence on B&H's progress towards joining.

Among other things, this research paper aims to explore how implementing the EU language policy can help accelerate B&H's accession to the EU. The literature review is followed by results from a survey sent to participants to gauge their opinions on the topic. The survey will seek to determine their thoughts on the relevance and effectiveness of the EU language policy's implementation in B&H's education system and the benefits of the integration process.

The paper will start with an overview of the EU language policy and its relevance to EU accession. It will then delve into the current language situation in B&H and the challenges it poses for the country's accession process. The paper will then explore how implementing the EU language policy in B&H can help overcome these challenges and improve the country's chances of joining the EU.

This research paper will provide valuable insights into the role of language policies in the EU accession process and its impact on Bosnia and Herzegovina's integration into the EU. The findings of this research will be of great significance to policymakers, language planners, and researchers who are interested in the role of language policies in the EU accession process.

One of the research questions can be: Does Bosnia and Herzegovina have the capacity to implement the EU Language Policy? With the help of that question, we could clearly see indications that would show us the opinion of the population about what they think, and what capacities B&H has. Another question that would help research on living standards is: Why B&H should join the European Union? This kind of question leads to the economic aspect that is mentioned every now and then in B&H. The European Union has its own benefits, but this question could also open up a third one, such as: What benefits would B&H receive from membership in the European Union? The benefits themselves indicate a social aspect, but also an economic one because benefits are needed by every society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The main literature for this research is related to the European Union language policy and the evolution of the European Union. Similar research

has been done many times, by researchers in the field of International Relations and European Studies. According to research done by Gazzola (2006), he explains importance of the multilingualism and connectivity with the institutions of the European Union, like the European Parliament. On the other hand, there are authors like Phillipson (2004), who think that the English language has become a threat to the European Community and its linguistic diversity. Since the United Kingdom left the European Union in 2020, this is maybe not relevant anymore. Author Gubbins (2002) explained, in his first chapter, how nations have developed a sense of nationalism colliding with the globalism that is also making its way in. The work of Leanerts (2002) describes how the EU Language Policy was created within the Euratom Treaty in 1957 which is reflected in Article 217. According to a study by Darquennes (2013), it is precisely written that there are old and new languages, new are actually migrant languages, while old languages are old European languages. The European Union (EU) is a one-of-a-kind supranational entity that marks a watershed point in the course of European integration.

The EU was founded towards the close of World War II when European countries had been decimated by the conflict and faced tremendous political, societal, and economic issues. The EU was formed in response to these issues, with the goal of promoting stability, peace, and development in Europe. The purpose of this literature study is to investigate the formation of the EU and the reasons that contributed to its formation. The establishment of the Union was a slow process that took a few decades. The beginnings of the EU may be dated to the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951 (Haas, 1958). The ECSC was established to ensure that no single nation dominated the production of coal and steel in Europe, preventing any nation from acquiring an economic edge over the rest. The ECSC's achievement prepared the ground for deeper European integration, culminating in the establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957. Many factors influenced the formation of the EU, spanning financial, legal, and social issues. The economic aspect was a critical motivator of European integration (Rosamond, 2000).

After World War II, European countries sought a new economic system that would give stability and development. The EEC was established with the goal of establishing a single market that would stimulate commerce and encourage eco-

nomical prosperity throughout Europe. Social issues were also important in the formation of the EU. The formation of the EU was intended to foster socio-economic development and solidarity in Europe (Shaw, 2014). The EU was built on the ideas of social fairness, tolerance, and basic rights safeguarding. The creation of the EU was intended to create a structure that fosters social interaction and integration, as well as promoting community stability and inclusivity.

Creation of a united Europe

Creating a united Europe was a very difficult path. Europe, as a geographical and political term, soon became a term for development and a better life. The end of the Second World War devastated Germany, divided into four Allied occupation zones, the French, British, and American zone and the former East Germany under the Soviet zone. One of the main European powers found itself in a challenging and awkward position, in a context of a divided country, a firm denazification process and the need for a post-war recovery. One of the leading things was the decision of the US administration to enable the Marshall Plan, the economic recovery of the infrastructure and the return to normal life in Europe. According to the idea of the French foreign minister Robert Schuman, Germany (West) and France, as two enemies which had repetitive conflicts throughout history, signed a historic declaration, better known as the Schuman Declaration, which allowed for partnership and peace and also joint forces for the production of coal and steel. This declaration is a framework, which later through the years will become the European Union as we know it today.

After the declaration, the six founding countries, including Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, West Germany (later Germany), France, and Italy, agreed to establish an organization called the European Coal and Steel Community by signing the Treaty of Paris in 1951. The European Coal and Steel Community was the guarantor of peace on European soil so that bloody conflicts from history would not happen again. Shortly after Paris, in 1957, the same members signed the Treaty of Rome, which created Euratom and the European Economic Community. Then it was decided that it would function according to the system of the common market, where decisions would be made by joint forces in terms of economy and politics.

One of the main policies created by this agreement is the Common Agricultural Policy, which will protect products and farmers, in order to avoid competition from countries that are not members of the European Economic Community, adjusting prices and prohibiting monopolies. What is very important to emphasize is that the Treaty of Rome created the institutions and bodies of the European Economic Community, such as the Economic and Social Committee (advisory body), the European Parliament (later the European Parliament), the European Commission and the European Court of Justice. Over time, the European Economic Community began to expand to more countries, which will be shown later in this paper through the list. In 1985, the Schengen Agreement was signed with the goal of maximizing of mobility of people and goods within the European Community.

Finally, the European Union was created in 1993 with the signing of the Maastricht Treaty. In 2009, the Lisbon Treaty confirmed greater democracy and decision-making with the legislature. Currently, the European Union has 27 members, while nine others¹ waiting in line for the EU enlargement:

- 1951 – Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands and West Germany
- 1973 – Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom
- 1981 – Greece
- 1986 – Portugal and Spain
- 1995 – Austria, Finland and Sweden
- 2004 – Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia
- 2007 – Bulgaria and Romania
- 2013 – Croatia

The European Union's language policy prioritizes respect for linguistic diversity across all Member States and fosters intercultural dialogue throughout the EU. To implement mutual respect, the EU supports the teaching and learning of foreign languages and enhances citizen mobility through specialized educational and vocational training programs (Bećirović et al., 2019). Proficiency in foreign languages is considered a fundamental skill

that all EU citizens should develop to enhance their educational and career prospects. During the Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth, held on 17 November 2017 in Gothenburg, Sweden, the Commission proposed the concept of a 'European Education Area.' By 2025, it envisions that speaking two foreign languages in addition to one's mother tongue will become standard practice (European Parliament, 2023).

Criteria for joining the European Union

In order for a European country to accede to the European Union, there are criteria for accession. The Copenhagen Criteria were adopted by the European Council in 1993, and they encompass the political, economic, and legal criteria. Two years later, these were supplemented with the Madrid Criterion which focuses on the functioning of public administrations. The legal criterion from Copenhagen is related, among others, to the imperative of the rule of law and transposition and compliance with legal legacy, i.e. EU acquis. Politically, it refers to democracy, respect for human rights, and protection of minorities in the state, while economically it looks at the proper market. In addition to these criteria, there is something translated as the legal legacy of the European Union, better known as the EU acquis. The EU acquis are rules and regulations mandated by the EU and included within the legal system of the member states. The EU acquis consists of 33 chapters and 2 additional ones, where the 34th chapter talks about institutions and the last other issues. Bosnia and Herzegovina, a country with aspirations to join the EU, also faces these criteria and conditions for entry. The domestic political scene has proven to be insufficiently effective in terms of EU-led reforms and requirements.

Over the past twenty years, the European Union's policies concerning foreign relations and enlargement toward the Western Balkans Six (WB6) have increasingly intertwined. Senior EU leadership has endeavored to harmonize and contextualize this relationship within the region by advocating a range of norms. These norms are intended to mirror strategically directed policies designed to dismantle the existing ethnically dominated and managed polycentrism in the Western Balkans (Hasić et al., 2020.).

¹ Western Balkans countries (Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Kosovo*) and Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.

Briefly about EU Language Policy

This part of the literature review will be related to European Union language policy. Articles will help us to understand the membership following this language policy. This research has been done before, by the researchers in the field of International Relations and European Studies. According to his research, Gazzola (2006) explains the importance of multilingualism and connectivity with the institutions of the European Union, like the European Parliament. On the other hand, another researcher, Phillipson (2004), thinks that the English language has become a threat to the European Community. Since the United Kingdom left the European Union in 2020, it is maybe not relevant anymore. In his book Gubbins (2002), it is explained in the first chapter how nations have developed a sense of nationalism and globalism. The work of Gilberte Lenaerts (2001) describes how the EU Language Policy was created within the Euratom Treaty in 1957 which is reflected in Article 217. According to another study, it is precisely written that there are old and new languages, new are actually migrant languages, while old languages are old European languages (Darquennes, 2013).

Dignity for the linguistic variety in each Member State and the development of a multicultural discourse within the EU are the cornerstones of EU language policy. Via specialized programs for vocational and educational training, the EU encourages the study of other languages as well as the travel of every person in order to turn good relations into reality. All EU nationals are considered to be required to learn at least one language, besides maternal, in order to increase their possibilities for higher education and work. The European Parliament passed a resolution on the endangerment of European languages and multilingualism in the European Union in 2013, urging national governments to pay closer attention to threatened European languages as well as to dedicate themselves to the preservation and advancement of the Union's multilingualism. This decision was an adoption of a Parliamentary decision on local and fewer European languages, together with a relevant Council clarification on the publicity of multilingualism and L2 proficiency, which was accompanied by many implementation plans and structure guidance systems by the Commission to promote literacy development and multilingualism.

Language part

Language policies have become an important aspect of national education systems as they help promote multilingualism and cultural diversity (Bećirović, 2023; Polz & Bećirović, 2022), while also facilitating communication between countries. B&H has recently shown interest in adapting to the EU Language Policy in order to facilitate its integration into the European Union. This section of the literature review aims to discuss the current language learning system in B&H and how the country is capable of adapting to the EU Language Policy.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has three official languages: Bosnian, Serbian, and Croatian, commonly grouped as one named BHS/BCS (Dubravac, et al., 2018). However, the country has been struggling with language education (Kovačević, et al., 2018) reform since the end of the Yugoslav Wars in the 1990s. As a result, the language learning system in Bosnia and Herzegovina is fragmented and lacks consistency, leading to a lack of language proficiency among the population (Hutchinson, 2014). Many geographical regions have their own standards of teaching and accepted knowledge which may occasionally contradict that which is taught in a different part of the same country (Bozic, 2006).

Overcoming these challenges, and adapting the rest of the Language Policy, are a required step in B&H's progress through to the EU. In 2015, the country introduced the "Language Learning in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2020" program, which aims to improve language learning outcomes by focusing on early education and promoting multilingualism (European Commission, 2021). The program also aims to increase the number of language teachers, improve language curriculums, and promote student exchanges and mobility (European Commission, 2021).

While there are still challenges to be addressed (Laličić, et al., 2020), Bosnia and Herzegovina has shown potential for adapting to the EU Language Policy. Studies have shown that the country has a relatively high level of language proficiency compared to other countries in the region (Oberhofer & Stepanov, 2018) with BCS, English, and German being mandatory from Primary Schools through Highschool. Additionally, research has shown that implementing language policies can have a positive impact on the economic and social development of countries, including increasing employability and fostering social cohesion (Eu-

ropean Parliament, 2017). Language teachers and language teaching academies would benefit as the demand for language learning would increase, and a more linguistically versatile employee base would improve overall quality and value contributed to a variety of workplaces (Sinanović & Bećirović, 2016).

However, there are also challenges to be addressed, such as the lack of qualified language teachers and the need for a more coordinated approach to language education (Hutchinson, 2014). In addition, the political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina can also pose challenges (Bećirović & Brdarević-Čeljo, 2018) to the implementation of language policies, as language is often politicized and linked to identity (Zielonka, 2015). Both of these issues could be combated through good marketing and development in the field of education. For example, increasing salaries for teachers will increase the desire to follow such a career path, and improved marketing and acceptance to higher education institutions would increase the supply of teachers.

To conclude, the current language learning system in Bosnia and Herzegovina faces challenges (Mašić & Bećirović, 2021), but the country has shown potential for adapting to the EU Language Policy. By introducing language policies and promoting multilingualism, Bosnia and Herzegovina can improve language learning outcomes and increase its chances of integration into the European Union. However, further efforts are needed to address the challenges and ensure a coordinated approach to language education in the country.

METHODOLOGY

Aim and research questions

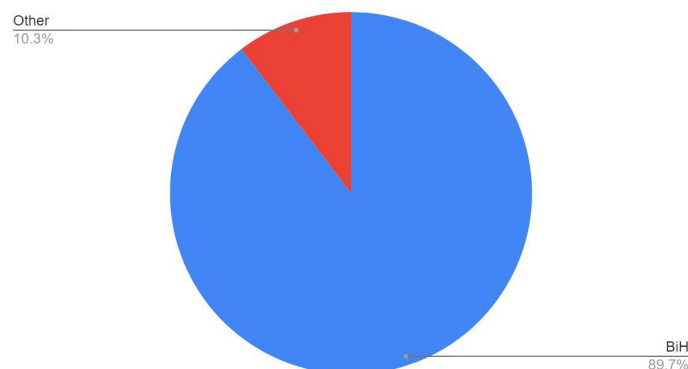
The investigation was carried out in conformity with the ethical standards established by the AAAL Ethics Standards (De Costa et al., 2019). All participants provided their informed consent, and all data was gathered and managed privately. The majority of the data consisted of answers to Likert scale questions that showed how strongly the majority's view leaned one way or the other or how contentious it may be. Due to an expected range of variable replies, certain questions on nationality and age were left open-ended. The bulk of participants were citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina from different universities, departments, generations, and levels of study, and walks of life. The purpose of the survey was to gather information on the par-

ticipant's background and opinions on the topics of B&H's relations with the EU, the likelihood of joining, possible outcomes, and how the EU Language Policy plays into the process and how the implementation of it would be possible in the current state of the country. 21 questions were deemed enough because it was determined that most voluntary participants would not finish surveys if there were too many questions. Further questions that were thought to be pertinent were included.

Participants

Convenience sampling was used for participant recruitment in the research. The sample was made up of 116 individuals from 15 different countries with Bosnian being the majority at 105 individuals and ranged in age from 16 to 72. Student groups, colleagues from the same research generation, and acquaintances of the study's authors who also happen to be enrolled in academic institutions or whose opinions might be relevant served as sources for recruiting participants.

Chart 1.
Nationality of participants.
Nationality

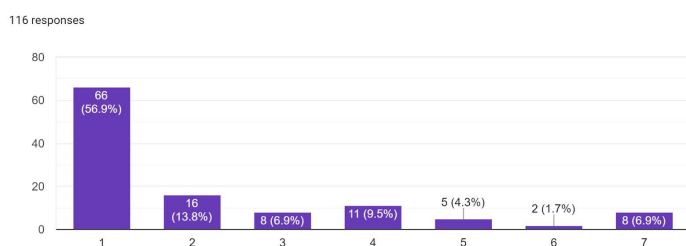


This study gave the opportunity for respondents to express their nationality, though 17 confused this for Ethnic Identity. From a total number of 116, there were 105 respondents which marked some variation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Included in the number of 105, were the controversial responses of 13 Bosniaks, 2 Croats, 1 Serb, and 1 Yugoslav as well as 4 responses of dual citizenship with Austria, Croatia, Netherlands and Germany. When it comes to the 4 groups of Bosniaks, Croats, Serbs and Yugoslavs, they are controversial because of the ethnic sense of expression with which people choose to identify but is invalid to the question asked of them. Since all four of these groups actively live in Bosnia and Herzegovina, they were grouped into the "B&H" group.

In general, Bosniaks live in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croats live in Herzegovina, and Serbs live in the Republika Srpska autonomous region, which are geographical regions rather than independent countries; and the individuals that chose Yugoslav is from Sarajevo which, to this day, has large numbers of individuals that associate with the mentality of "brotherhood" and "togetherness" from that time period. Responses with dual citizenship identified as citizens of B&H with dual citizenship and it can clearly be seen that those individuals are not interested in ethnicity. Nevertheless, this is not the topic of this research, the ethnic sense of identity could be investigated in a future study. Finally, 11 participants responded with nationalities from three states, the United States of America, Azerbaijan and Egypt, and live in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Chart 2.

Bosnia and Herzegovina should join the European Union.



Instruments

The question that most contributed to the development of the hypothesis and the research itself is: Does Bosnia and Herzegovina have the capacity to implement the EU Language Policy? Using this question, questions were created that were included in the survey, and then later the results were obtained. A research question that helped develop economic aspect sounds: Why Bosnia and Herzegovina should join the European Union? This issue was shown through the questions in the survey that were related to the entry into the EU and the departure of people in case BiH does not join the EU. What benefits would BiH receive from membership in the European Union? The third research question related to the benefits that Bosnia and Herzegovina would have by joining the European Union. The third research question relates to politics itself: Would Bosnia and Herzegovina be more stable on the geopolitical scene by joining the European Union? This is the question that most interests scientists because BiH is geographically located in the very middle, as a junction of east and west.

The data was gathered using a self-administered survey using Google Forms. The questionnaire, which included 21 questions containing the six conventional inquiries about age, sex, study field, etc., was created to gauge thoughts on the public opinions on the paper's topic which is B&H's aspirations of joining the EU and a role the EU Language Policy might have in the process. Invalid or similar results to open-ended questions were sorted (e.g., "BiH," "Bosna i Hercegovina," and "Bosnia and Herzegovina" were grouped as "BiH") after the survey data were exported to Excel Sheets. The Excel tools were then used to graph the findings for better understanding.

Before completing the survey, participants were made aware of the study's objectives and provided their informed permission. As is customary, they were also notified that their answers would be kept confidential and that no personal information would be disclosed. Self-administered, the survey was only completed online using a URL link that was shared in group chats on Viber, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, and Instagram. No translation alternatives were provided since it was assumed that everyone who took the survey could comprehend the questions because the survey was only in English. Data collection lasted for 11 days, after which time all prospective participants had been reached.

Basic graphs and charts were used to examine the data in order to more clearly communicate the concepts and findings. Due to the study's lack of need for reliability, t-tests, or ANOVA testing, no SPSS or extra statistical procedures were performed.

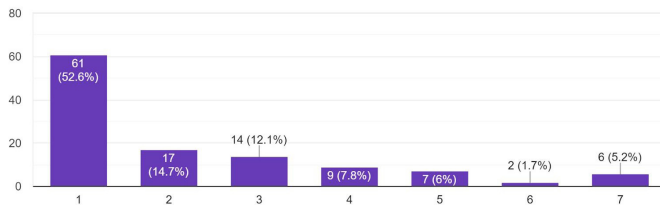
RESULTS

The first Likert scale question of the research was based on the political and social question about whether or not Bosnia and Herzegovina should join the European Union. From the total sum of 116 responses in Chart 2, it is clearly seen that the majority, 66 respondents (56.9%), are supportive of Bosnia and Herzegovina joining the EU. The individuals who are against joining the EU add up to 12.9%. From this data, it can clearly be seen that many people in Bosnia think that the country should be part of the union.

Chart 3.

Joining EU will benefit B&H.

116 responses

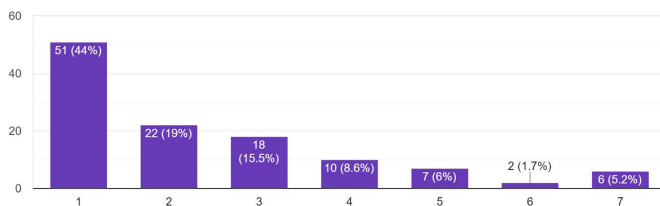


In Chart 3, a little difference in regard to responses where a majority 61 (52.6%) people think that Bosnia and Herzegovina would benefit from joining the EU in every sense, can be seen. When it comes to those opposed to the idea of B&H benefiting from joining the EU, the responses are identical to Chart 2 with 12.9% of participants voting on this side of the scale.

Chart 4.

B&H will become more politically stable if it joins the EU.

116 responses



When it comes to the Chart 4, there is a slight increase in responses where people think it would be more politically stable. Based on the first 3 options of the scale, we can see that 91 respondents think that B&H will become more politically stable. This is one of the important questions, because the media and politicians in B&H are always speaking about starting a possible war and the secession of the Republika Srpska autonomous region before major elections. Joining the Union will improve stability between entities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The question regarding the hypothetical stability brought to the economy by accession is presented in Chart 5. In this chart, it can again be seen on the scale that options 1 to 3 have 91 respondents' votes, supporting the idea that the economy's stability will be improved. In this sense, a more stable economy implies higher salaries, lower effects of recessions, and better quality of life.

Chart 5.

B&H will become more economically stable if it joins EU.

116 responses

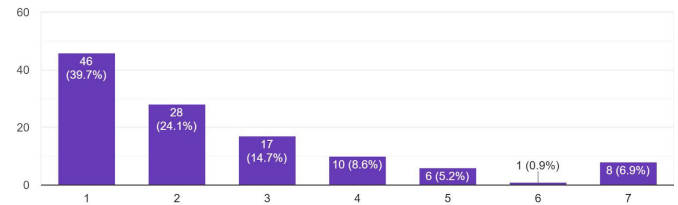


Chart 6.

If B&H doesn't join the EU, I will leave the country for a better life.

116 responses

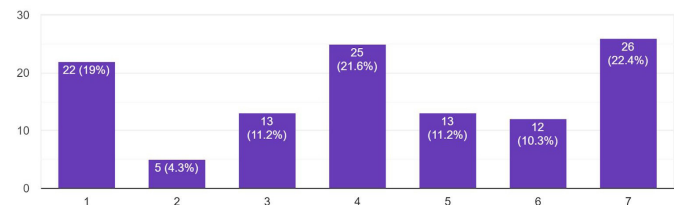


Chart 6 offers one of the most interesting results. Many respondents from the age group of 41-50 years, 26 in total, voted that they would not leave the country. It is understandable because those people lived in Yugoslavia and they didn't want to leave the country, not even in wartime. However, the opposite can be said for the younger population, 22 respondents who expressed the desire to leave the country because they think that the situation will get progressively worse in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the middle, 25 respondents who didn't have a clear view, voted neutral.

Chart 7.

Joining EU will result in B&H becoming more globalized due to foreign investments.

116 responses

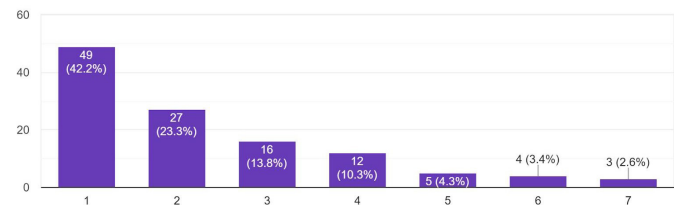


Chart 7 is really important for the population of B&H. Many people think that foreign investments are crucial for developing of economy. Joining the EU would result in the investments of many interna-

tional corporations, possibly employing hundreds of B&H citizens. Foreign investments would likely result in the opening of new workplaces for the population. On the other hand, the older population which lost hope in the economy of B&H are of the opinion that foreign investments will not affect the economy of B&H.

Chart 8.

Learning new languages is welcome in B&H

116 responses

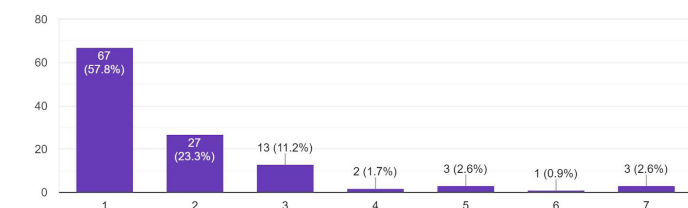
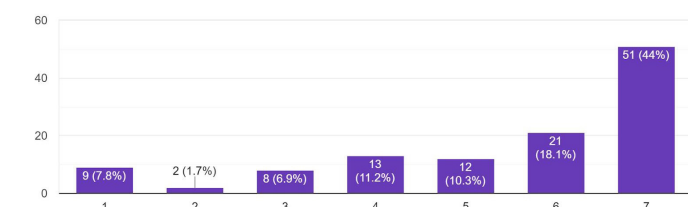


Chart 8 shows that people in B&H are ready to learn new languages. Most of the young population in Bosnia and Herzegovina already speak English and German so, it could be safe to assume that another language would not impact the status quo too much.

Chart 9.

Joining EU will result in B&H losing its cultural and language identity.

116 responses

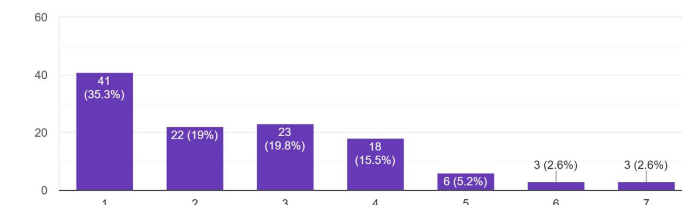


The Chart 9 is one of the most sensitive questions for the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Most of the respondents that voted the 5 to 7 points on the scale expressed the opinion that Bosnia and Herzegovina will not lose its cultural and language identity. This can be understood through the scope of the mindset of the population. Bosnia and Herzegovina gained independence in 1992 for the first time, but before that, it was a country under the rule of other states (Ottoman Empire, Austro-Hungarian Empire, Yugoslavia). The participants think that Bosnia and Herzegovina will not lose its own culture and language to be replaced by the values of the European Union. The mentality seems to be something to the sentiment of "if we could spend 600 years being ruled by outside powers and retain most of our personality and culture, the EU will not change us too much either."

Chart 10.

B&H can adapt to the EU Language Policy.

116 responses

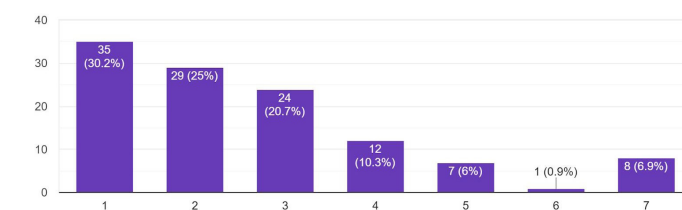


Most of the population expressed the opinion that Bosnia and Herzegovina is capable of adapting to the EU Language Policy, albeit with the improvement of the educational system.

Chart 11.

Following the Language Policy will help B&H get accepted to EU faster.

116 responses



Adopting the EU Language Policy is important for the population in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Chart 11, it can be seen that the population has a positive view of this policy. Only 8 respondents (6.9%) expressed the opinion that it would not speed up the accession to the EU.

Chart 12.

Adopting the EU Language Policy would cause Language loss in B&H.

116 responses

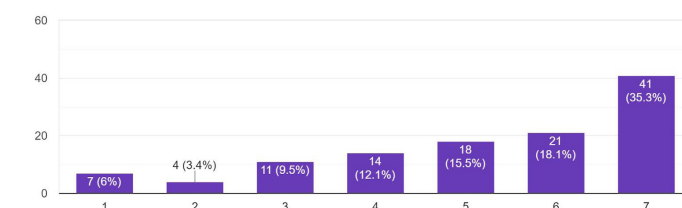


Chart 12 is again a little bit sensitive. It is similar to Chart 9 in that both questions propose the idea that a part of B&H's sociocultural and linguistic identity is at stake. Interestingly, respondents in both cases expressed the opinion that EU Language Policy will not cause any alienation of the Bosnian language and it will not be replaced by other languages from the European Union.

Chart 13.

The education system in B&H is capable of adapting to the EU Language Policy.

116 responses

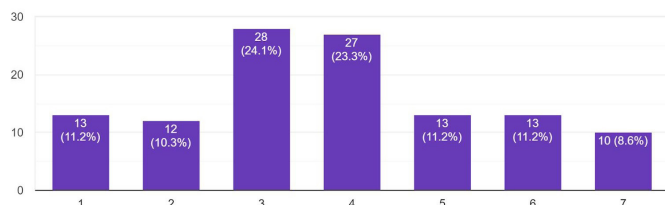


Chart 13 is one of the charts with the least definitive responses. In that sense, points 1 to 3 on the scale, on the 3, 28 respondents (24.1%) think that the education system can adapt to the EU Language policy, but on the 4th point on the scale, 27 respondents (23.3%) can select the neutral option. On a scale from 5 to 7, it can be seen that people think that the educational system is not capable of adopting. According to the population, this can be understood through the view of the education system of B&H which is currently not so capable of adopting any reforms.

Chart 14.

The people in B&H are easily going to adapt to the policy.

116 responses

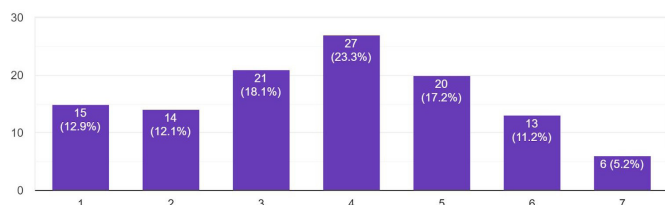


Chart 14 is another example of the neutral-centered results. On the fourth point of the scale, 27 respondents (23.3%) are neutral to the question of the citizens of B&H being able to adapt to the policy. It is understandable, because of the economic and social situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. People are not willing to accept any new thing related to the politics. On the scale from 1 to 3, we have 50 (43.1%) respondents who think that B&H will be capable do adapt to language policy. The scale from 5 to 7, 39 respondents (33.6) think that B&H is not capable. It is optimistic to see that people of 43.1% think that Bosnia and Herzegovina will be capable to adapt to the EU Language Policy.

Chart 15.

Minority languages in B&H would be more accepted and respected if B&H adopts the policy.

116 responses

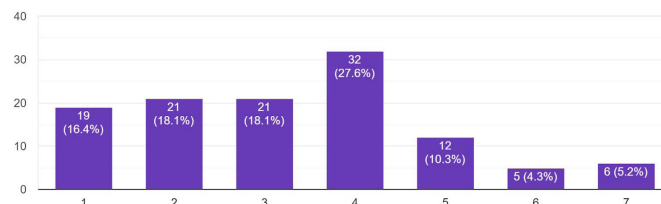


Chart 15 is important for the minority languages in Bosnia and Herzegovina, such as the Roma and Jewish populations. This chart can be also connected to the case of the Sejdić-Finci case, because of the recognition of minorities to participate in the elections in a sense to be political candidates. On the fourth scale, 32 respondents (27.6%) can be seen and it can be deduced that people are not 100% sure that minority languages will be more respected. On a scale from 1 to 3, 62 respondents think that minority languages will be more respected. On a scale from 5 to 7, 23 respondents think that minority languages will not be respected. This chart can be understood through the Sejdić-Finci case (Wakelin, 2012).

Chart 16.

There is a real possibility that Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (BHS) will become less relevant or disappear, to be replaced with bigger EU languages.

116 responses

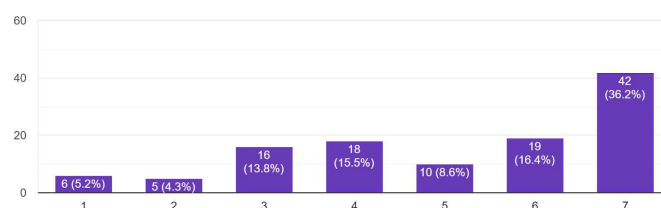
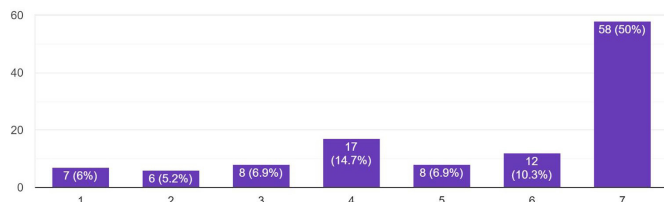


Chart 16 is similar to Chart 9 and Chart 12 in that they are charts questioning sensitive topics. According to the respondents on a scale from 5 to 7, people thinking that BCS will disappear can be seen. On a scale from 1 to 3, the people thinking that BCS will continue to exist can be seen. This chart can be considered as a political and social question because BCS is divided among ethnic groups, Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs in the entities.

Chart 17.

I am concerned about BHS disappearing.



This Chart 17 is also connected to the political and social question like Chart 16. 58 respondents think that BHS will not disappear. This means that the majority think BCS will not disappear as three languages in one or that BCS will become one Bosnian language. Also, there is a hypothesis that BCS will be replaced by another language from the European Union, presented in Chart 16, though this is debunked by the majority.

Chart 18.

BCS is too complicated as a language.

116 responses

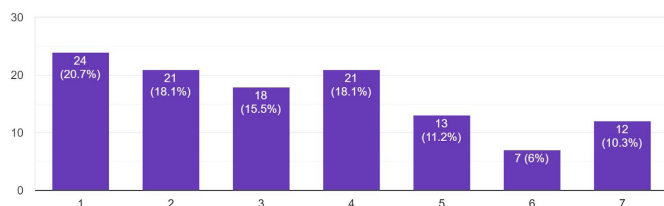


Chart 18 is similar to Chart 16 and Chart 17 in that it connects the political and societal aspects of language and identity. A total of 33 respondents (28.4%) expressed the opinion that BCS is complicated for the children and youth learning one language in three groups because Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian are almost the same languages.

Chart 19.

BCS is too inefficient in international communication/political influence.

116 responses

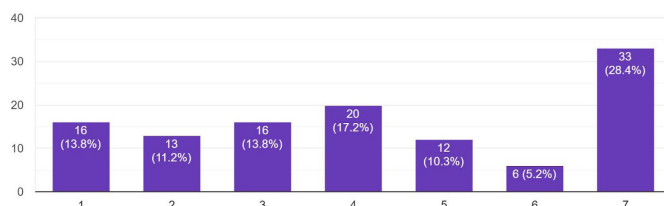


Chart 19 is also similar to Chart 16, Chart 17 and Chart 18. On the scale, the points from 1 to 3, 63 respondents think that BCS is not efficient in political communication, more precisely in diplomacy. On the other hand, a total of 32 respondents think that BCS is efficient enough in international diplomacy. This chart is complex because it is oriented toward B&H diplomacy, which is not efficient, because of the political system of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

DISCUSSION

The participants of this study are, predictably, female dominant with 57.8% being female though this is by surprisingly smaller margins than in previous studies which tend to have a 2:1 ratio, or 67%/33% split (Odak & Sijercic, 2021). In general, female individuals are more likely to fill out free surveys than males, even though each of the sexes had an equal opportunity to access the survey. One possible reason for this shift in the degree of responses is that the topic of the survey was quite political, which tends to be masculine or male-dominated topic and, therefore, would be off-putting for the females that would have otherwise filled it out. Another possible reason for this is that, in the data collection phase, many contacts in niche political positions, or driven with political views, were reached out to and asked to fill out the survey, all of whom happened to be males and they brought up the numbers by a bit.

The age of participants is quite broad, the largest age group is 20-24 with 37.93% of the total group; the second and third largest are 41-50 and 51-60 with 19.83% each. Consequently, there are groups that pull the average (mean) up to 34.8 years of age, meaning that, although the largest group is of young people whose opinions are less relevant, enough of the older generations are represented in the study to bring the average up and improve the validity of the opinionated responses.

For education, all participants have a high school diploma as a minimum with 29.3% having a Bachelor's degree, 25% a Master's degree, and 1.7% a PhD from a total of 30 different fields of study. This means that all participants are, at the very least, educated and from a variety of different specializations.

When it comes to nationality, 105 individual responses where some variation that translated to Bosnian and Herzegovinian, 4 were dual citizenship including an EU country, and the remainders were

Yugoslav, Serb, Croat, and Bosniak which was ethnic identity rather than nationality. A total of 11 participants selected a nation completely unrelated, such as American, Azerbaijani, Egyptian, etc. and these were grouped as "other." The conclusion here is that nearly all participants have relevant opinions on the political situation in B&H as they are either from the country or have lived there for an extended period of time.

One final question, which was ultimately omitted from the Results section is in regards to City of Residence to which 82.8% wrote Sarajevo and the remainder was 20 unique votes, each worth 0.9%, including at least 2 misspelled votes for "Sarajevo" and many cities in B&H. This question was deemed irrelevant in retrospect but at least demonstrates that the majority of participants are located in B&H. Variables that may have contributed to biased or skewed responses are mentioned above, and additional ones include the reach of the two respective researchers conducting this study, geographical reach, academic circles, and political biases of the individuals.

On questions 5, 6, 7, and 8 (Charts 5, 6, 7, & 8), it is quite clear that the public believes that B&H should join EU and it will benefit the country in an economic, a political, and a general sense. On the question "I will leave B&H for a better life in the country doesn't join the EU" (Chart 6), there is a 3-way split with 34.5% voting on the positive side, 43.9% voting on the negative side, and the remaining 21.6% voting neutral. It is worth mentioning that the majority of responses to this question were "Strongly agree/disagree" which suggests that, even though the individuals' opinions varied dramatically on the matter, they generally felt strongly about their opinions which, ultimately, did not offer a conclusive final decision as to the matter, which should be of mild concern for the state of the current economic and political situation. Finally, the following questions (Charts 10 & 11) suggested that joining the EU will increase foreign investment but will not affect the cultural and linguistic identity of the region.

The following 3 questions (Charts 12, 13, & 14) regarding B&H's attitude towards learning new languages, willingness to adapt to the EU Language Policy, and the perceived benefits in the process of accession through adapting the Policy, all questions present results that resemble a logarithmic curve in favor of "Strongly agree" with the response to Chart 12, adapting to the policy would cause lan-

guage loss in B&H, being inverted, favoring "Strongly disagree." This suggests that the attitudes of the public towards new languages is absolutely not a problem, and there is no concern about language loss. The opinions on language loss are continued through Charts 19 & 20, where both "there is a possibility that BCS will be replaced with a bigger EU language" and "I am concerned about BCS disappearing" had overwhelmingly positive results of "Strongly disagree."

Process of implementation of EU Language Policy

The questions regarding the process of adapting to the Language Policy from the perspective of the education system and individual citizens (Chart 13 & 17) were exemplified in a chart as an inverse parabola, with a high concentration in or around the "Neutral" option. However, there are at least 10 votes per option, on all the extremes, the concentration towards the middle suggesting a degree of skepticism towards the idea. The participants of the study seem to doubt the capability of the educational system and the people of B&H to adapt to the policy. Similar results were shown on the question about Minority languages being more respected in B&H if it joins the EU (Chart 15) with the majority of the group clustering around "Neutral" though the "Disagree" side is more populous than the "Agree" side which exemplifies lack of certainty and/or doubt that adopting the EU Language Policy would positively impact the acceptability of the minority languages in B&H.

BCS language

The final 2 Likert questions, BCS is too complicated as a language, and BCS is too inefficient in international communication/political influence (Charts 21 & 22), results were spread widely across each of the options with the most populous vote on Chart 18 being "Strongly agree" with 28.4%; the "Disagree" side had 45 individual votes, "Agree" side had 51, and the remaining 20 votes went to "Neutral." This is a close split but the "Agree" side leaned significantly more towards "Strongly agree" than the "Disagree" side leaned to "Strongly disagree" which suggests that those who perceive BCS as complex felt more passionately about their perspective than those of the opposing opinion. For the question of BCS being too inefficient in an international setting/political influence (Chart 19), there was another widespread of responses but, surprisingly, the majority (54.2%) voted on the "Disagree"

side of the spectrum. This is surprising due to BCS being geographically restricted to the Balkans and not being a globally spoken language like English, German, or French. The researchers expected different responses to this particular question, in the sense that BCS is only relevant to B&H and its immediate neighbors but irrelevant or ineffective in a broader European context.

Multilingualism

Following the Likert scale questions, a total of 3 open-ended questions were in the survey but due to the variety of answers, all 226 answers would be impossible to effectively chart or convey in the Results section. Consequently, they were excluded but are worth briefly mentioning in this section. The first question was about how adopting the policy will impact the education system in B&H to which a variety of responses were received. The range was from variations of "Positive" and "Confusion" over to "I don't have an opinion/knowledge on the topic" and expressing genuine concern for the educators/institutions that would be scrambling to keep up with the changes. Generally, the responses to this question were "positive," mentioning that improved diversity and multilingualism can only be a good thing once the chinks are worked out.

Opinion on the relationship between BiH and EU

The next question, "What do you think about the relationship between B&H and the EU?" had a total of 77 responses. The overwhelming majority expressed dissatisfaction with how the relationship stands at the moment in comparison to where they believe it should be. Over 2 dozen mentioned that the politicians and civilians in B&H are not expressing enough interest or putting in the necessary effort to work towards joining, or even improving the relationship. Another couple dozen mentioned that the relationship is some sort of "protectorate" or a one-way relationship whereby B&H expects the EU to resolve all of its problems, with one going as far as saying they prefer NATO as a better protector and another expressing that "BiH should stay militarily and politically neutral." In general, it is agreed that the situation is complicated, needs some work on B&H's side, and that joining the EU is a positive step forward.

Minority languages

The final relevant question, "What would happen to minority languages in B&H if the EU Language Policy is adapted?" had nearly unanimous results expressing confidence in the survivability of languages. A few individuals said they lack the knowledge to definitively say, and a few expressed mild concern but they are a marginal 6 in the 76 total responses. A few interesting answers included "Pala muha na mededa," EU will protect minority languages, and that BCS will actually increase in relevance due to the EU ensuring that other countries learn it in their educational systems.

Public opinion on research

The last question (Chart 23) was irrelevant to the study as a whole but was included for 2 reasons: 1. it provides insight into the attitudes of participants towards the study itself, to see how well the topic landed in this particular demographic and 2. it is always entertaining to include this question. A total of 81.9% of participants selected "Good luck with your research!" which is the most supportive, friendly possible response and suggests the topics of the study landed well with this audience. The remaining 18.1% selected one of the other responses for the sake of entertainment or left their own affectionate response directed to one of the researchers, with the only one relevant to the study being "You should send this papers to the University and to the Government" which suggests the group find this study particularly meaningful in the grand scheme of the political landscape of B&H. It may be partially due to the system in B&H appearing to be similar to a dictatorship in which the political leaders seem to not take the opinions and well-being of the general public too seriously, only pursuing their own personal interests with complete disregard for those around them, as exemplified in the previous open-ended questions where multiple individuals mentioned the corruption that runs rampant in amongst the politicians of the country.

Factors of results

Factors that could have influenced the results of this study are mentioned at the beginning of this section but the results are quite consistent and frequently nearly unanimous so the factors didn't seem to have much effect at all. There were only a few questions on which the responses were divided or clustered around neutral and it is likely that the aforementioned variable could be contributing

factors to the split in responses on those individual questions but performing the tasks would add unnecessary work and extra data to an already extended paper.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study regarding the public opinion on how B&H adopting the EU Language Policy will improve its chances of joining has overwhelmingly positive results. The majority of participants firmly believe that B&H joining the EU is a good idea for political and economic stability in the region and that adopting the policy is a necessary and beneficial step towards accomplishing that goal. Additionally, they believe that the BCS language and minority languages will not suffer too much from adding new languages to the curricula, but the education system will have difficulty adapting. Inversely, the students will easily adapt to the new languages and the experience will be beneficial for them, without the fearful weight of their native BCS or minority languages fading from use. Interestingly, many believe that BCS is not inefficient in international communication or political influence, and one individual even expressed the possibility of BCS becoming more relevant under the EU. Finally, many feel that the relationship is one-sided, with B&H being reliant on the EU as a protectorate, and economic donor, all participants that expressed an opinion were dissatisfied with the actions of the B&H politicians and civilians towards building and improving their relations with the EU. If progress is to be made, B&H should make an effort to reach the EU standards and reciprocate friendly gestures, resolve corruption in the government, and adapt to the mentality needed to make progress. The participants of this study support the topics covered here and insist that the final paper should be shared with relevant individuals.

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