Language contact in the Republic of Ragusa: the example of Marin Držić and his comedies

Relatrice: Prof. Paola Cotticelli
Laureanda: Jelena Živojinović
Co-relatore: Prof. Stefano Aloe
Matricola: VR387821

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CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.............................................................................................................1

INTRODUCTION......................................................................................................................3

CHAPTER 1: Historical background of Dubrovnik

1. Why Dubrovnik?..................................................................................................................7
2. On the origins......................................................................................................................9
3. The many sides of Dubrovnik..........................................................................................10
   3.1. A slow/quick starting point: Dubrovnik in the Middle Ages.....................................11
   3.2. The Silver Period.......................................................................................................14
       3.2.1. Dubrovnik and Venice: a discontinuous relationship.................................14
       3.2.2. Dubrovnik and Slavic populations...............................................................17
       3.2.3. The rise of a Republic....................................................................................19
   3.3. The Golden Years.....................................................................................................23
       3.3.1. Dubrovnik and the Ottoman Empire..........................................................24
       3.3.2. Consequences of the Ragusan-Ottoman relationship................................26
   3.4. What happened after the Golden Era?......................................................................26

CHAPTER 2: Language contact in Dubrovnik

1. The linguistic situation in Dubrovnik: a co-existence of multiple languages..............29
   1.1. The genealogical classification of Dalmatian......................................................30
       1.1.1. Ragusan: its framework and remains......................................................35
1.2. The Romance component in Ragusa: Venetian and Italian.............37
1.3. Slavic facets in Dubrovnik......................................................40

2. The outcome of language contact in Dubrovnik.................................43
   2.1. Trilingualism, multilingualism and code-switching.......................45
   2.2. Multilingualism in literature..................................................46

CHAPTER 3: Language contact within the comedies of Marin Držić

1. Who was Marin Držić?.............................................................................50
2. The sociolinguistic perspective in Držić’s works.................................52
   2.1. Code-switching and code mixing..................................................55
   2.2. Asymmetric multilingualism.........................................................57
   2.3. Language contact among Slavic dialects.........................................60
3. Ascertaining contact-induced change....................................................62
   3.1. Phonological change within Darsa’s comedies.................................63
   3.2. Morphological change.................................................................66
      3.2.1. Italian - Serbian morphological change: the outcomes
         of transmorphemization...............................................................67
      3.2.2. A postulation of a morphological change from Old Shtokavian to
         Neo Shtokavian...........................................................................70
   3.3. Syntactic innovations.....................................................................71
      3.3.1. Word order issues.................................................................72
      3.3.2. Calques of prepositions in the construction of the final clause.....72
   3.4. Lexical change: borrowings and their orthographical adaptation......74

CONCLUSION...............................................................................................81

REFERENCES.............................................................................................85
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INTRODUCTION

Apart from being just a thesis that certifies the conclusion of a course of study, to me this research means much more. It represents on one hand, my origins and my Slavic physical and mental constitution and, on the other hand, one of my biggest passions – the love for the Romance world. The union of these two components created something special in Dubrovnik, a little town on the Adriatic Sea that remained immune to nationalist movements for a very long time. Therefore, this will also be an attempt of showing and demonstrating that no politically motivated prejudices towards linguistic differences, that I would personally rather call variants, should exist. Renaissance Dubrovnik is a great example of how multiple languages coexisted along with a strong and deep-rooted patriotic feeling. It has always been a city of great value and great importance particularly due to its strategic position. Thanks to a set of multiple reasons and because of its location, it has been a crossroad of many different cultures for a long time.

Concerning the linguistic issue, I will always address the Romance adstrate component as to Italian due to practical reasons and to the Slavic component as to Serbian. On one hand, the appellative “Italian” seems to be a reasonable choice standing for the prestigious literary language coming from Tuscany that however, is not to be confused with Tuscan dialects. In addition, we find Venetian, as constantly present in Ragusan environment due to its “colonial” status that later transformed into a superstrate used as a lingua franca for the sake of communication in the maritime-economic field. On the other hand, Serbian also seems to be the reasonable solution, because of specific motivations. Namely, despite today’s language policies and diatribes, the appellative “Croatian” did not exist neither in the Middle Ages, nor in Renaissance. On the contrary, the majority of scholars address the Slavic component as to lingua serviana that, however, has a double meaning. It stands both for what we now call Serbian and for the language written exclusively using the Cyrillic alphabet. Since no further alternatives are provided and using the appellative
Slavic, as referring to *lingua sclava*, would be too generic, I will only utilize the term “Serbian”.

My main focus in this research will be language contact in Dubrovnik. This very articulated topic will be described in all its facets, starting from the causes of contact, both social and linguistic predictors that should lead us towards a context of bilingualism, or possibly trilingualism and arriving to a detailed analysis of a literary corpus of data provided by Marin Držić.

Chapter 1 will focus on major Ragusan historical facts. Starting from the reasons why Dubrovnik ended up being “the chosen one”, I will briefly mention how this little town managed to reach its neutral position and to keep it over centuries, despite the fact that almost all the towns located on the Adriatic shoreline had a similar potential. I will majorly focus on the description of both the Ragusan silver period and the golden era, in order to understand what the crucial elements for its success were. Obviously, a farsighted and appropriate way of taking political decisions should be the answer to this question, or at least to a part of it, but we will also see how dealing with much larger puissances and constant threats contributed to the survival of such a little maritime town.

Chapter 2 will deal with the contact itself and will provide a general overview of the three major threads that continuously interweaved. Ragusan, Italian and Serbian will separately be given personal space to understand their development and their social status. We will take a closer look on how the linguistic issue gradually changed in the passage from a multilingualism, where we could find Ragusan as substrate language and Serbian and Italian as superstrate towards Ragusan, in addition to Venetian, also superstrate, to a trilingualism, where Serbian took the role of substrate and Italian and Venetian the one of superstrate. As a conclusion of this chapter, I will briefly mention the importance and contribution of literary works that contributed to spread the linguistic knowledge.

Chapter 3 will be entirely focused on a practical example, i.e. on the analysis of the comedies of Marin Držić. After a short introduction on Držić’s life, that also reflected a mundane aspect that characterized Ragusa, I will try to provide a description of phenomena represented majorly in his masterpiece *Dundo Maroje*. I will deepen most of the levels of linguistic analysis, starting from microstructures and a phonological and morphological investigation and arriving to macrostructures and in investigation of a
syntactic and lexical type. The outcome should reflect two types of contact: on one side, a Serbian-Italian-Venetian contact, which should provide us several solutions in terms of borrowings, and on the other hand, a possible contact among Serbian dialects. Namely, concerning the latter, several scholars argued a possible contact specifically between Shtokavian and Chakavian dialects and attributed this question a suspicious presence of consistent Ikavian pronunciation, which is one of the main characteristics of Chakavian. The overall result should fairly and faithfully represent the linguistic situation in Renaissance Dubrovnik that was characterized by multilingualism.
CHAPTER 1

Historical background of Dubrovnik

“Ragusa was a large maritime town whose population were hard-working craftsmen and possessed a large fleet which traveled to different parts.”
(Carter, 1972 :74)

1. Why Dubrovnik?

Dubrovnik (originally called Ragusium, later Ragusa) is a town located in southern part of Dalmatia, nowadays Croatia. As it lies on the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea, it is reasonable to presume that the town owes its existence to the trade and commerce. In fact, the years of the Renaissance had been a long period of a great areal primacy in trade, thanks to the extended commercial network, both maritime and on the mainland.

However, Dubrovnik’s favorable, yet not ideal geographical position1 does not explain the supremacy that this little town reached in the 1400s. Bettarini (2012: 24) stands that Ragusa was not the only candidate able to provide favorable conditions for a flourishing exportation and importation of goods. As a matter of fact, he listed almost 30 towns which had the equal potential of financial growth. Zadar, Split, Trogir, Kotor and Bar are some of the high-sounding names of the list.

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1 Fig. 1. Carter (1971).
Unlike its competitors, Dubrovnik had to offer some further motivations that brought the town to conquer the primacy. Namely, the features that it held coincided with its nature. Numerous little islands precede the old town and are “a natural stopping point for shipping routes” (Bettarini 2012: 23). Moreover, its port is located on the eastern side of the city. This specific characteristic prevents the ships from the cold and strong wind “bura” and facilitates their entry and exit. In addition, Dubrovnik was directly connected to the mainland countries, such as Serbia and Bosnia thanks to the river Neretva, running through it.

Ragusan wise political life had also contributed to its survival. Some crucial points of its political and economic history will be discussed in the following points of this chapter.

Fig. 1: Dubrovnik and its geographical position.
2. On the origins

There are several legends explaining the origins and the birth of the city of Dubrovnik. Probably the most interesting one was narrated by Junije Palmotić, a Ragusan poet and dramatist in the 16th century, in his most famous work, named Pavlimir. His drama incorporates many features of Virgil’s Aeneid. In fact, the protagonist of the story is the prince Pavlimir, whose ancestors were forced to flee to Rome due to local intrigues. The young prince was later called by local authorities to return to the motherland, defeat the opponents and restore the ancestral regnum Sclavorum situated in the Western Balkans. His effort was paid off and Pavlimir was able to build up a new town named Dubrovnik, by creating a symbiosis of Romance and Slavic cultures, which are so characteristic of Dalmatian coast.

Despite Palmotić’s drama, there also exists a well-known historical version. Namely, Dubrovnik (as we know it today) is a union of two different towns. On one hand, a town named Ragusium was built in the 7th century by a Latin population fleeing from a close town Epidaurus due to continuous attacks and thefts. A local island was their shelter and in a short time they created ex novo a new homeland of extraordinary potential. The name Ragusium and later Ragusa is believed to derive from Greek etymon rhagoûs(s)a meaning ‘full of cracks’, which perfectly describes this geographical environment. On the other hand, Slavic populations settled on the hills on the mainland, naming their town Dubrovnik. The etymology is likely to come from ‘dub’, an old Slavic lexeme for ‘oak’.

This version was confirmed by recent archaeological excavations in the area of Pustijerna, where the remains of an early Christian church were found. In fact, the first attestations of Ragusa chronologically overlap the tragic end of Epidaurus and the rise of a new maritime puissance.

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2 It is believed that Epidaurus had existed for ten or even twelve centuries before its end. Nowadays its territories are occupied by the town named Cavtat.

3 Kravar (1994).
Moreover, several other proves can still be found in town. For example, the main street in Dubrovnik called *Stradun* used to be a channel dividing Ragusa from Dubrovnik. In the 8th century the channel was progressively filled and the two settlements became a unique whole. In parallel, ethnic contrasts between Slavic and Romance populations slowly disappeared.

3. **The many sides of Dubrovnik**

Ragusa had showed its potential since the very beginning of its existence. Havrylyshyn and Srzentic (2013) proposed a classification of the main Ragusan periods according to the political and historical evolution. Here is a list introduced by the two scholars, which also owns a broad consensus by a great number of historians:

- The Byzantine period (7th century – 1204)
- The Venetian period (1204 – 1358)
- The Hungarian period (1358 – 1526)
- The Ottoman period (1526 – 1684)
- The Austrian period (1684 – 1806)
- The French occupation (1806 – 1815)

However, despite a transparent historical timeline, it is crucial to apprehend the economic development through centuries along with the periods of both Ragusan zenith and nadir in order to provide the full picture. The following list\(^4\) broadly catalogs the partition of the main economic periods, which will be deepened below by incorporating some considerable historical facts.

- The Foundation Period (7th century – 1250)
- The Silver Period (1250 – 1400)
- Golden years (1400 – 1575)

\(^4\) Havrylyshyn and Srzentic (2013).
3.1. A slow/quick starting point: Dubrovnik in the Middle Ages

Since the very beginning, Ragusan economy was based on fishing, simple agriculture and ship-building. However, this embryo State, which was under Byzantine rule since 1018, slowly started taking advantage of its geographical position and switched its main employment onto the sea. This gradual movement into navigation began by making the first agreements with closer cities in order to facilitate the development of trade.

In the eleventh and twelfth century Dubrovnik acknowledged Byzantine (1018-69; 1167-71; 1192-1205), at shorter ranges Venetian (1000-18; 1171-72) and Norman (1081-85; 1172-92) leaderships, and on several occasions was formally independent, particularly after 1069, when it was in close contact with the Serbian Kingdom. During the 12th century, Dubrovnik made a series of trade-policy contracts with several cities of the Adriatic and the Mediterranean ports and the neighboring suzerains. Particularly important were the agreements with the city of Molfetta (1148), Ravenna (1188), Fano and Ancona (1199). In addition, a peace agreement was signed with the neighboring town Kotor (1181). Only a few years after, following the defeat of Poljica (1184) the Serbian Prince Stefan Nemanja officialized an agreement with Ragusans in 1186 by guaranteeing free trade with Serbia. What is considered to be one of the most important agreements for Ragusa was signed in 1189. Namely, Bosnian vassal “Ban” Kulin⁵ allowed the merchants to trade freely in the entire territory of Bosnia without any additional taxes or fees, unless

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⁵ Ban Kulin is still contemplated as the greatest Bosnian ruler. The agreement (Povelja Kulina Bana) stipulated between the vassal and the Ragusan rulers in 1189 is extremely important due to its content. Specifically, this is the first official document of the State of Bosnia and also the one that first quoted the Slavic name Dubrovnik. Moreover, the paper was written in both Cyrillic Old Serbian and Latin. Fig. 2 (on the following page) shows one of the three existing copies of this document. The original is held in Saint Petersburg, Russia, while this is one of two manuscripts held in the archive of Dubrovnik and is one of the oldest documents that this national institution holds.
the merchant himself wanted to pay tribute to the vassal as a gift. The fact that the vassal could personally guarantee the safety to the merchants of Dubrovnik says a lot about the former organization of Bosnia and the impact of its rulers. In fact, he stated that he would be an eternal friend to the Knez Krvaš and to all the Ragusans, "Kunem se tebi knezu Krvašu i svim Dubrovčanima, da ću vam biti vječni prijatelj".

Several other agreements were equally important for Dubrovnik and contributed to its development. For example, the prince Kačić of Omiš guaranteed Dubrovnik a smooth sailing on the Adriatic (1190). The Byzantine Emperor Isaac II Angelos made a concession to all the merchants in 1192 to trade in Byzantium and Bulgaria without any type of obligations. Other concessions followed in 13th century, such as the ones with the cities from the Italic peninsula: Monopoli and Bari in 1201, Termoli in 1203, Recanati in 1206, Bisceglie in 1211, Ferrara and Rimini in 1231; along with some maritime towns from the Dalmatian coast, such as: Split and Sibenik in 1234, Ulcinj in 1242, Senj in 1248 and Trogir in 1250. Moreover, the accords of trading with Albania were confirmed 1210 by the local ruler Krujë, while the ones with Bulgaria in 1230 by the Car Ivan Asen II. In such way, Ragusans strengthened their market monopoly in the Western Balkans. What is more, they extended their commercial relations to Egypt, Tunisia and other parts of northern Africa.

Despite the accelerated rise of Dubrovnik, it is however, fundamental to deepen some historical key facts that marked the evolution of the entire Dalmatia. Namely, the entire historic landscape changed after the Fourth Crusade, one of the most cruel, dramatic and treacherous expeditions, announced by Pope Innocent III. In spite of the initial intention of reconquering Jerusalem and the Holy places of Christianity in the Middle East, the outcome was very different compared to the expectation. Venice had a great role in this event, due to the need of manpower, resources and expertise which were requested

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6 Knez is a Slavic noble title standing for "prince". This term had widely been used across Europe in different forms, such as "knjaz", "knezu", due to its Germanic origins. In fact, it derives from the Proto-Germanic form *kuningaz*, which can be translated as "king". This term was also present in Old Church Slavonic as Кнѧша.
to build and equip a large fleet in a short time. Already in 1202, the city of Zadar was brutally sacked and the ordinary citizenry massacred. Although it was a Christian town, the commander and Doge Enrico Dandolo was given the permission by the Pope to continue his root to Constantinople, because the Papal States looked for a reunification with the Orthodox Church. The initial goal of chasing the Muslims out from the Holy Land was never reached, but as a result, the crusaders conquered Constantinople in 1204. This fact allowed Venice to extend its domination to all the cities of Dalmatia, Dubrovnik included. However, this small mercantile town managed to keep a certain degree of autonomy, although its economic rise was kept under strict control by Venetians. I will further discuss this topic in the following point.

3.2. The Silver Period

The year 1204 marked the beginning of a new era for Dubrovnik, due to a radical reversal of power. However, even if it was almost natural to think that being constantly supervised and kept under control by a foreign puissance would surely decrease the potential of growth of this small mercantile town, on the contrary, it opened a wide range of new opportunities, which Ragusans knew how to profit by. It is indispensable to underline the fact that both towns took advantage of each other and this is the main reason why Dubrovnik managed to keep a certain level of autonomy. Further data concerning the relations between Dubrovnik and Venice and also between Dubrovnik and the Serbian Kingdom will be discussed below.

3.2.1. Dubrovnik and Venice: a discontinuous relationship

Starting from 1205, Dubrovnik acknowledged the sovereignty of Venice over its entire territory. What is crucial to mention for this period is that Dubrovnik was not ruled directly by the institutions of Venetian Doge, on the contrary, the town had a wide range
of autonomy. Namely, only the Rector\textsuperscript{7} of the municipality used to be nominated by the supreme government. This allowed Ragusans to constitute their own internal administration, which was based in the image of \textit{la Serenissima Repubblica}. In fact, it was an oligarchy, a government made of a relatively small elite group, distributed in three Councils. The commanding framework was so well organized that this pattern and partition of roles lasted for four centuries (Bettarini 2012). Indeed, during the dominance of Serene Republic, it gave protection and safeguard against tyranny to both townships. On the other hand, several restrictions imposed to Ragusa are often missing from the general overview of this period. For example, there were some consistent limitations concerning navigation towards Venice and as Krekić (1980: 390) states, it was the matter of “tantummodo cum quatuor navigiolis a septuaginta militariis infra” per year. Let us now have a brief look on the constitutional setting of this period.\textsuperscript{8}

Firstly, there was the Great (also Major or Grand) Council, in charge of voting and nominating magistrates of the town. It was an organ of approximately a hundred members nominated annually from among prominent nobles. Becoming a member of the Grand Council was not so problematic for young aristocrats, in fact, what they had to provide was simply a certificate attesting good morals and the completion of their studies. Yet, soon after 1296, this right was limited to fewer old families of the town and no new blood was permitted the ruling exclusivity. Secondly, the Minor Council, also called the Council of Ten, was responsible of the executive power. This is the key factor of understanding and perceiving the game of presence and at the same time absence of Venetia. Specifically, this structure was, as Bjelovučić (1970) states, \textit{a type of Committee of Public Safety}, a sort of self-protection in case of noble conspiracy that had the authority to alter or cancel certain decisions taken by the Senate. Thus, it is understandable that Venetia needed a support in case of emergency and was part of the administrative body, although not actively. Lastly, the most important ministry was the Senate (also called \textit{Pregati} or \textit{Rogati}). This was supposed to be a small, solid and exclusive unit of the wisest and most respected members of the Major Council. Its members needed to be over forty years old.

\textsuperscript{7} Rectors were initially nominated for life. After 1236, according to Cvjetković (1923), a new one was assigned every two years. Nevertheless, discordant and conflicting information can be found concerning this fact.

\textsuperscript{8} A fair amount of information concerning the political environment and framework of Dubrovnik can be found in Bjelovučić (1970).
and were elected for life. Thus, only in case of death, a new senator was voted. The task of the Senate was extremely important and it consisted in juridical, administrative and legislative functions.

Although the political background of Ragusa seemed to show no imperfections, a general discontent and dissatisfaction slowly grew against the government and Venetian supremacy. It culminated in the conflicts in 1231, 1235 and 1251, but the Venetians managed to retain and strengthen their position. In the second half of the 13th century and the beginning of 14th century, Dubrovnik’s intermediary trade was constantly on the rise. Its dealers supplied and traded in the sale of textiles, wood, cattle, and agricultural products, but also salt, ores, gold and other goods. Thanks to the development of trade, credit and finance, Dubrovnik began minting its own money since 1337, owned a large granary (barn), and built the port and arsenal. Unfortunately, the development of the city was slowed down by the great plague of 1348, which dissolved almost half of the population. Due to the plague that devastated the city in 1348, 1357, 1366 and 1374, Dubrovnik was among the first towns in the world in 1377 to build a lazaret and to introduce quarantine for ships and travelers.

A vibrant and growing economy naturally implied the movement of goods, but also the movement of people (politicians, ambassadors, ship owners, merchants, sailors, etc.). A conspicuous number of documents found in the Archives of Dubrovnik witness a permanent or temporary presence of many Greeks and Levantines. These people were mostly native to Epirus and the islands of Corfu and Kefalonia, but they also came from Morea, Constantinople, Rhodes and Crete. In addition, aside from foreign merchants, workers and, to a certain extent, soldiers also had numerous foreign clerks. Obviously, the majority of clerks operating in notary service came from Venice due to its political, administrative and economic rule and as a matter of fact, certain changes on the usage of language of the notarial deeds date back to this period. Ragusa, like all the trading cities of the Middle Ages profited from the slave trade. Slaves were usually recruited in Bosnia and Levant and were subsequently sold at the markets of the West.
The period of Venetian dominance marked an exponential rise of this our little town. Disagreements that could break out between it and Venice had never been irremediable - essentially each of the two cities managed to take advantage of the position that held.

3.2.2. Dubrovnik and Slavic populations

Since the very beginning, Dubrovnik has always had a good relationship with Serbia, which kept on evolving in parallel to the development of the two countries. Indeed, it was a relation of peace and friendship based on mutual respect for the principles of sovereignty, mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence that lasted for centuries. It is no wonder that both sides had more than some advantage from each other. On one hand, Dubrovnik represented the open door to West for the landlocked Serbia, an opportunity to export typical and local products to the other side of the Adriatic. Such route was wisely undertaken and exploited by the King Uroš that strengthened the economic position of Raška⁹. On the other hand, Ragusans first took advantage of Serbian (and later also Bosnian) mines, primarily silver and gold. Their role of intermediaries resulted to be the key in newly re-opened Roman mines in Serbia, such as Brskovo and later in Novo Brdo, Srebrenica, but also Rudnik in Bosnia. It should be enough to mention that nearly 30% of the overall European demand for silver came from the Balkans and half of it was transported through Ragusa to the main destinations of Florence, Venice and Genova. In return, these cities provided Balkan countries through the same route with luxury clothing for nobles, jewelry, glass and so on (Havrylyshyn and Srzentic 2013). Surprisingly, slave trade had never been one of the major sources of profit in Dubrovnik. On the contrary, slaves were mainly kept as household servants until slavery ended up

⁹ Nowadays, Raška is considered to have been the very first Serbian nation-state. Established by the dynasty Vlastimirović in the 9th century, the cradle of the first Serbian state was located in the area among the rivers Tara, Lim and Drina. Its name Rashi (Raska) was first mentioned in 1189. Today, Raška is the name for a geographic area, and one of the Serbian parishes in southwestern Serbia, which was named after the eponymous river. In order not to make confusion and to adapt the usage of terms to other works, such as Havrylyshyn and Srzentic (2013), I will only use the appellative “Serbia”.
being abolished in 1416. Therefore, Dubrovnik was one of the first city states to abrogate this kind of human exploitation.

In this period the largest part of streets were built or straightened and widened, primarily because of the fire that in 1292 had destroyed much of the city (Carter 1972:470).

It is also important to mention the fact that not all the noble members of Ragusa actually resided in the town. Namely, apart from foreigners named *habitatores*\(^{10}\) that used to spend prolonged periods in Ragusa, other foreigners were assigned a noble title because of several reasons that we will discuss immediately. In the first place, certain families from Kotor became part of Ragusan patriciate and for this reason, were official members of the Major Council. Such usage worked in favor of Dubrovnik, because in times of need, these “acquired” nobles were required to help or provide support. A striking example comes from the War of Chioggia (1378-1381), when Ragusans called for Kotor to stand by their side, even though that little town was under Venetian rule. After the first refusal and the promise to honor them with Ragusan citizenship, Kotor accepted the offer.

Other rulers and important characters gained the same privilege, such as the King of Bosnia, Stjepan Ostoja (1399), then the Duke Hrvoje Vukčić (1399), King Tvrtko II (1405) and the Duke Sandalj Hranić (1405). In addition, they were honored with a palace in Dubrovnik, but never ended up using it. In turn, they donated a small piece of Bosnian territory to Ragusa. Other notorious names are present on this conspicuously long list. As a matter of fact, we find the Emperor Stefan Dušan, who was honored in 1350 and later the Prince Lazar Hrebeljanović (1362) who obtained an honorary Ragusan citizenship. This tradition was maintained for decades and kept on being adopted even over the golden era. In fact, we find another well-known figure – the one of *Despot*\(^{11}\) Đurađ Branković, who visited Dubrovnik three times (1426, 1440, 1441) and was also honored with the Ragusan citizenship, but in turn guaranteed a free and safe transition of Ragusan

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\(^{10}\) *Habitatores* were merchants, ship owners, craftsmen, priests and others, coming from Italy, Dalmatia, Serbia, Bosnia, Greece and other neighboring countries that used to spend a prolonged period in Ragusa. Such rich men were prominent residents who awaited Ragusan citizenship. This kind of practice will be very common in 15th and 16th century, during the golden years.

\(^{11}\) *Despot* was a honorific title of Byzantine origin. Unfortunately, there is no legal formula concerning this specific title. Usually it is translated into English as “Lord” and it was mainly used in Serbia to intend the “Lord of Serbs”.
merchants, but also of their goods through Serbian lands. Nevertheless, even if this was a very positive period for Ragusan welfare, it was not as prosperous as the Golden era that will be deepened below.

3.3.3. The rise of a Republic

The year 1358 was crucial for Ragusan history. After a crushing defeat against Hungarian Kingdom in the attempt to control the Adriatic area in February of the same year, Venetia was forced to cede numerous holdings in Dalmatia (among which was also Ragusa) to Hungarian King Louis of Anjou. The Treaty of Zadar was signed on February 18th 1358 and it ended hostilities between the two contenders. However, the Treaty was a link among several coincidences that brought to a decision that turned out to be the best possible solution for Dubrovnik. First of all, since Dubrovnik had never been dominated by the Hungarian Kingdom in the Middle Ages, although it might appear as an insignificant detail, it was unlikely to get the same status as certain cities of northern Dalmatia. Secondly, even before the Revolt of Saint Titus, Dubrovnik stopped recognizing the sovereignty and the supremacy of Venetia. Thirdly, Ragusan assertive and effective approach to diplomacy was well known and ended up being a way to build and develop mutual respect, which later in turn led to more successful outcomes and less difficult communications with the sovereign state. As a matter of fact, on May 27th 1358 at the Royal Court in Višegrad, Dubrovnik was able to obtain a large range of autonomy. Only symbolical obligations were requested by the formal ruler, but such duty was so reduced that it is plausible to consider Ragusa as a largely independent city-state from that moment on, even though minimal tribute of 500 ducats annually was requested.

12 Krekić (1980:23-27) provides a clear picture of this specific point and explains the role of Dubrovnik in the Venetian operations against Cretan rebels (1363-1364).
After outgrowing Venetian tutelage, coming under patronage of Hungarian king, Dubrovnik was dealing with maritime affairs even more despite of interference of Venice. Nonetheless, Ragusan-Venetian long-term relationship did not cease overnight. In fact, not only Ragusans maintained a live contact with Venice (and also with other Italian cities), but they also kept various traditions, such as sending their sons to Italy for studying purposes and inviting Italian architects to build churches, palaces, etc. Moreover, merchants mainly used the Romance parlance, almost as a *lingua franca*, in order to communicate with their western collaborators, even though the population was mostly made of Slavs. This point will be further developed in the following chapter.

However, even though Ragusan independence is a widely known and acknowledged historical fact, it is necessary to point out certain peculiarities. Namely, Dubrovnik on its own had much room for autonomy, but from a formal point of view, it privileged no special treatments, if compared to other Dalmatian towns and cities. Indeed, the town was obliged to display Hungarian flags and other national emblems. The charter, in fact, made it crystal clear that Ragusans belonged as subjects of the Hungarian Kingdom to the monarch to all effects and purposes and as Kunčević (2012) affirms, were “faithful”, “obedient” and “devoted” servants.

Notwithstanding, Ragusans never stopped willing to take an extra step that kept them away from a fully independent state. In fact, Kunčević (2012:79) claims that “the major ideological issue in late medieval Ragusa was redefining the city’s relationship with the Hungarian Kingdom in order to provide a sound legal basis for its factual independence.” The first decades of Hungarian dominance glided smoothly, however, the death of the King Louis of Anjou signed a dark period of several crisis across Europe, that gave a chance to Ragusans to take advantage of it. What emerges is that although they have always faithfully served the ruler, their identity as Ragusans never disappeared and was visible on many different levels. First of all, let us swiftly list the three main reasons that brought to a crisis in Europe, wisely spotted once again by Kunčević (2012). Firstly, the Hungarian throne descendant, Louis’ daughter Mary, along with her mother, was not able to maintain her father’s position, which caused a long period of struggle and fight for the throne, but also noble rebellions and assassinations of royals. The Turkish conquests slowly advancing from Byzantium through the Balkans were the main threat for Europe.
and such a chaotic political situation was working in their favor. In addition, the hot spot
was the duel for the throne fought by King Sigismund of Luxembourg and Ladislas of
Naples. But, above all, Dubrovnik’s main issue was Venetian Renaissance, “a rapid
expansion in Dalmatia after 1409” that managed to reconquer an extensive territory lost
after the Treaty of Zadar. However, the Serenissima obtained back all the Dalmatian
regions, except for Dubrovnik.

Before moving onto the Golden Period, it is fundamental to mention the point of view of
Ragusans themselves, which is not to be underestimated. Strictly speaking, what emerges
from this paragraph is that the appellation “republic” did not correspond to the legal
statehood. Despite the fact that nowadays, we only refer to this period as of the one of
“Republic of Ragusa” beginning in 1358 with the stipulation of the Chart of Višegrad,
Dubrovnik first started using such appellation in mid 1400s. More than once, Ragusans
have tried to treat again their position and relationship with the Hungarian Kingdom.
Namely, apart from the conditions mentioned in the Chart, which existed de jure, a
condition of mutual co-existence prevailed. The Hungarian Kingdom could not desert
Ragusa with no reasons and without their consent and in return, Ragusa kept on paying
the annual tribute in order to preserve the benefit of protection of the Hungarians.
However, their viewpoint clearly emerges from the following quote that we find in
Kunčević (2012):

Quare serenitatem vestram humiliter supplicamus, quod de nobis,
servitoribus et fedelibus suis, ita cogitare, ita disponere ac reminisci dignetur,
quod tam fidelem libertatem, quam liberam fidelitatem… in eternum servare
possimus, et ad pedesmaiestatis vestre et sacri regni Hungarie fidelis corde
vivere atque mori...

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13 Sigismund of Luxembourg was the Margrave of Brandenbourg and was betrothed to Louis’ daughter
Mary. After the death of Kind Louis the two got married in 1385 and Sigismund became King of Hungary.
Ladislas of Naples, on the other hand, claimed the crown of Hungary, but was refused to be recognized by
the Pope Urban VI. Six years later, due to the opposition of some nobles towards the King Sigismund he
was able to claim this title again, but even though he proclaimed himself as the new King of Hungary, he
had never been able to fully obtain the command of those territories.
Further information on this topic can be found in: Foretić (1980), Ćirković (2008), Pešorda Vardić (2006),
Dinić-Knežević (1986), etc.
Thus we humbly beg your Illustriousness to remember, think and dispose of us, your faithful, and servants, in such a way that faithful freedom as much as free faithfulness... we could preserve perpetually, and live and die loyal at heart at the feet of Your Majesty and of the Holy Kingdom of Hungary...

The term “free” is relatively complicated to explain in this context though. Briefly, Ragusans stated that there had never been an invasion or occupation of their town by the Hungarians. In fact, neither Hungarian army had ever entered the town, nor Ragusa ever had a Hungarian chancellor. Instead, it was a case of a voluntary admission into the kingdom, expressly asked by Ragusans themselves. Such statement is still possible to find in many documents that are present in the Archive and date this period. For example, Philippus de Diversis, a teacher of a public school, affirmed:

...haec civitas...sine pastore et absque securitatis et refugii baculo foret destitute vestri antecessores optimo consilio ducti regem illum potentissimum in dominum eligeret seseque tributarios ipsius et suorum successorum constituere.

“...this city...was left without a shepherd, safety and refuge, and [therefore] your ancestors, led by great wisdom, chose for their lord this mighty king, becoming the tribute-payers to him and his heirs.”

To conclude, the second half of 14th century was an extended period of negotiation with the Hungarian Kingdom. Obviously, it is not possible to admit a lawful political independence of Ragusa, because its legitimate sovereign was the King of Hungary, as stated in the Chart of Višegrad. Nonetheless, the negotiation allowed Ragusans to put their relationship with the ruler on the level of bargaining, rather than submission, which was the right opportunity to strengthen their economic situation. The only way of “exiting” this sort of union was by breaching the contract, which both sides agreed on. Therefore, we can say at least that Ragusa was becoming a fully economically independent town. Even though the wrong appellation is still being used to name this period, the full legislative independence arrived much later.
3.3. The Golden Years

It is fairly difficult to establish the exact beginning of this period. Certain scholars insist on the fact that the wide range of autonomy that Ragusa obtained after joining the Hungarian Kingdom was the key factor for the new maritime prosperity. In other words, the year 1358 is often considered to be the breaking point between Venetian oppression of their political and economic power and the new condition gained after the Treaty of Zadar. Nevertheless, there had never been any belligerence or warlike aggressions from Venetians, on the contrary, Ragusans had the chance to assimilate Venetian mastery in diplomacy and trade and were often addressed as “little Venice”. Surely, we are mostly interested in this period due to its importance.

However, we consider the second half of 14th century as a transition period that slowly led Ragusa towards its zenith of prosperity and welfare that could clearly been seen in 15th and 16th century.

First of all, the Golden years witnessed the growth of population that reached its peak with approximately 90,000 inhabitants. It is necessary to specify that a large number of these were foreigners coming from different neighboring areas and because of considerably different reasons. On one hand, many Slavs fled from the Ottomans that were advancing through the Balkans and had no mercy for any opponents. Harsh living conditions and fear for their own survival were the reasons why they reached Ragusa in search for salvation. On the other hand, good and quality life conditions made this town very desirable and many intellectuals, but also entire families moved, willing to obtain a better life. A well-fitting example is the case of a community, a group of families from Prato that settled in Ragusa and remained for several generations.14

Although the economy of the Golden years was still based on “trade services including shipping profits and the value of direct and indirect labor services” as Havrylyshyn and Srzentlic (2013) state, shipbuilding was also a typical Ragusan craft. Its profit

14 Bettarini (2012) wrote a handbook where he explores the interconnection between human mobility and global economy in the Late Middle Ages, proposing an experiment in collective conversion of business done by a group of wool workers of Prato.
exponentially raised to the point when some of the best shipmasters became Ragusan and were no longer Venetian. In addition, Lane (1973:425) affirms that these masters were Dalmatians with Slavic names and that, due to the lack of manpower, they were often forced to hire foreigners. This is also considered to be a period of extensive slavization of Ragusa. However, this topic will be developed in the following chapter, which is focused on language issue.

Apart from shipbuilding, Dubrovnik was well-known for goldsmithing and silversmithing as well, that were both imported from Italy and coming from domestic production. Jewels were later exported to the Balkans. The set of all of features we brought up is a clear indication of a new era of general wellness and economic and political strength. This contributed to the development of a flourishing cultural life in the town. Several artists and writers have left a remarkable trace over the 15th and 16th century, such as Petar Menčetić, Andrija Čubranović, Mavro Vetranović, but also the very talented Marin Držić, also known as Marino Darsa. A deeper linguistic analysis of certain Darsa’s works will take place in the following chapters.

3.3.1. Dubrovnik and the Ottoman Empire

It is crucial not to forget the enormous political change that occurred in 1440. Due to big threat of the dangerous and rapid Ottoman expansion through the Balkans after the defeat of Serbs at the battle of Kosovo in 1389, it was strictly necessary to provide specific changes concerning international relations.

Dubrovnik had tried to avoid any type of contact with zones “affected” by Turks for decades, to the point where in 1430 it was forced to open an official diplomatic contact with the “infidel”. In the first instance, the first attempt of political agreement was negotiated with the sultan in the occasion of the war with one of the “newly acquired” vassals – the duke Radoslav Pavlović. The result of the negotiation was a charter issued directly by the sultan that allowed Ragusans to trade freely in his territories by paying an
annual tribute of 12,500 golden ducats. Governed by the circumstances, they invested
great effort in building a special survival strategy based on bribe, gifts, and services,
ranging from medical care to providing the Turks with information from the West.
Surprisingly, despite the agreement signed with the conqueror, Ragusa managed to
maintain its relationship with the Hungarian Kingdom. This status of neutrality turned out
to be the trump card for Ragusan success. Moreover, in addition to the charter obtained
by the sultan, Ragusans also negotiated their condition with the Hungarian King that
allowed them to start minting and issuing their own coins of silver and gold with the name
“libertas” on them. Obviously, such conditions led towards one direction – the one of
independence. As always, it was by no means a republican type of government, but a
government made of patriciates, who respected the international agreements they
stipulated over the years.

Maritime affairs and land trading of Dubrovnik had the most significant success
under patronage of Turkish Empire. Therefore, Dubrovnik and its mercantile maritime
were very important on the Mediterranean Sea in second half of 15th century.
Turkish conquering of eastern Mediterranean countries caused suspension of trading
affairs between European countries and the East. In the meanwhile, Dubrovnik trading
affairs between eastern and western Mediterranean coasts had their revival in 16th
century, enabling Dubrovnik to take over even more influence in intermediation in trading
affairs between Balkan countries and Western Europe. Besides this, Dubrovnik was
developing its maritime trading affairs worldwide. Dubrovnik had a strong mercantile
marine, which, at the time, took the 3rd place in Europe. In the last decades of 15th and
during 16th century, Dubrovnik was laying down good basis for its maritime affairs, on
which it had been working on for centuries. The most important factor in naval
architecture was a shipyard. The old shipyard situated in port of Dubrovnik could not
please the great demands of Dubrovnik maritime affairs of 16th century. Therefore, in
1525 the building of big public shipyard in Port Gruž had started. There were also some
smaller shipyards in Lopud, Šipan, Slano, Orebić, Cavtat and Zaton and some other, less
important, as well. The work of shipbuilders in Dubrovnik was famous worldwide and
some foreign writers in 16th and 17th century wrote in the most praising way about it. It
was natural that the active maritime affairs brought to such quality in shipbuilding in
Dubrovnik. Therefore, it was not unusual that the shipbuilding in “Ragusean way” was famous worldwide.

3.3.2. Consequences of the Ragusan-Ottoman relationship

Aside from the negotiation with the Ottoman Empire and a flourishing economic growth, this period also signed a weakening of the relationship between Dubrovnik and the Hungarian Kingdom. Even though it seemed clear that Dubrovnik managed to resist between two fires for decades, one crucial detail was missing to have a complete picture of the facts. Specifically, any type of contact with the Ottomans was kept secret for obvious existential purposes. Moreover, the expedition of an embassy with gifts for the sultan on the occasion of their initial negotiation was wisely obfuscated by appealing to the liberation of some apparently-captured merchants during the expansion and consolidation of the Ottoman Empire on the Balkans. However, the two substantial conditions – the payment and an annual tribute to the enemy and the free trade in the Ottoman possessions – were still being hided until the beginning of 16th century. At that point, such operations came to surface and induced Ragusa to renegotiate its status. Sadly, what followed is a decrease in the importance of spices and minerals that led Ragusans to reorient to other products, such as the skin, which was imported from Bulgaria and central Serbia and sent to Ancona, Venice and Genova. In spite of this flaw, Dubrovnik reached its top and kept it for more than half of the century.

3.4. What happened after the Golden era?

Unfortunately, Ragusan dominance could not last forever. The end of 16th century marked an emerging of brand new routes that moved almost the entire maritime set from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic mainly thanks to the opening of the Cape of Good Hope. In fact, countries such as Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, England and France have
above all benefited from their new mercantilist opportunities. Even though what followed the golden years is not totally relevant to our focus, let us glance quickly at this long and gradual period of decline and at its causes.

An abounding number of reasons that followed one another, brought to a gradual decline of this little, but once strong and potent town. It is no dubious the fact that the opening of new routes superseded the internal European scenario whose center used to be the Mediterranean. However, what clearly emerges from a deeper analysis of this period, is that Ragusa progressively lost its old connections with Italy and the Balkans, whose routes were still alive.

Surely, a series of wars that succeeded one another contributed to reduce the strength of Dubrovnik. The long fifth Ottoman-Venetian War, also called the Cretan War or War of Candia (1645-1669), forced merchants to increase the prices of another highly requested item on the western markets – wool. According to Carter (1971) the prices were doubled and reached the amount of 7.5 ducats per sack (86 kilograms), while the same quantity used to cost 4 ducats only a couple of years before the outbreak of the war. A similar scenario occurred towards the end of 17th century. Namely, during the Austro-Turkish War (1683-1699) wool prices increased up to 6 ducats per sack. In addition, a natural disaster contributed to definitive end of Ragusan supremacy. A powerful earthquake hit Dubrovnik in 1667 and killed around 3,000 Ragusans along with the destruction of three quarters of buildings. Such a devastating misfortune occurred during the War of Candia while both sides, the Turkish one and the Venetian one too were still interested in gaining full control of this little town.

After the earthquake, the town reemerged by rebuilding the town, but it had never been able to fully recover and regain the old glory and shine. The Republic of Ragusa formally ceased to exist in 1806 after the French occupation by Napoleon.
CHAPTER 2

Language contact in Dubrovnik

1. The linguistic situation: a co-existence of multiple languages

“We speak of language contact when two or more languages (or varieties of languages) interact with one another.” This is how Campbell (2013:298) started his chapter on language contact in one of the monumental handbooks that is still considered as the reference point for historical linguistics studies. What is important to include in this definition is, as Thomason (2001) points out, the fact that two or more languages are used in the same place and at the same time. Such a scenario clearly emerges from the picture described in our previous chapter. Namely, the set of historical events that occurred one after another and once again, Ragusan astonishing diplomatic skills in maintaining the most politically neutral position possible created the perfect environment for the development of a prosperous and flourishing culture. In fact, Dubrovnik was a crossing point for countless merchants, craft workers, fishermen, but also notaries and scholars and was also considered to be a bridging point between East and West. A similar environment swarmed of people coming from several parts of Europe that obviously, spoke different languages and different types of means of communication. Therefore, in this micro linguistic area a situation of multilingualism slowly developed and persisted for centuries. It is possible to distinguish among three components, two of which were derivations of Romance, while the remaining one was Slavic. The interlacement of these three components might not be obvious and accessible straightforwardly, due to an enormous amount of written articles on this topic that partially explain the context or even
worse, try to obfuscate some plausible data because of political reasons. In this chapter I will try to fairly illustrate the development of Ragusan within the family of Eastern Romance languages. Moreover, I will deepen the status of Venetian and Serbian without favoring any “linguistic supremacy” of one language rather than another. The second part of this chapter will deal with the issue of multilingualism, language contact and some of the striking consequences of this phenomenon.

Nonetheless, even though there are few existing proves of Ragusan, I will attempt to provide a closest picture of how it developed and disappeared. A description of the state and afterwards, of a reinforcement of both Venetian and Serbian will come after. In addition, as previously mentioned in the introduction, I will always refer to the Slavic component as to Serbian and a rapid excursus on the motivations of this choice will be clearly explained. A deeper synchronic analysis will follow in Chapter 3.

1.1. The genealogical classification of Dalmatian

The narration and description of the linguistic issue in the old Dalmatia had to start with an in-depth analysis on Ragusan language. However, before deepening this language itself, it is necessary to place it into the group of Dalmatian-Romance languages and to rapidly explain this restrained, yet important linguistic branch of the Appennine-Balkan Romania.

Specifically, Dalmatian was a remnant of the Eastern Latinity, firmly settled on the eastern Adriatic coast in the time of Augustus and preserved on the island of Krk at least for nearly two millennia as well as in the rest of Dalmatia. Its extinction is surely in part, due to the slow migration of Slavs, but even more, to the powerful influence of the Venetian language, that imposed itself with the extension of the Venetian Republic in the 13th century. It is not to be forgotten the fact that, apart from historically induced motivations, Ragusans themselves easily adapted to a new linguistic situation and although their national identity as Ragusans was very deep, the same feeling did not exist
for their language. In other words, historical facts are not to be blamed for this gradual Romanization and later, Slavization.

Several scholars have attempted to provide an explanation concerning the division of Dalmatian languages, but none of them seemed to provide a clear picture of a genealogical tree. A first possible solution was presented by Bloomfield (1933), who split Romance languages into six ramifications: French, Rumanian, Dalmatian, Portuguese-Spanish-Catalan, Italian and Ladin. Surprisingly, already in 1933 and with limited sources, Bloomfield was able to subdivide Dalmatian into Ragusan and Veliot. Despite this precocious intuition, scholars that followed did not do further research on this area. In fact, at a later time, Voegelin (1976) divided Balkan Romance languages into two different branches: Romanian and Dalmato-Romanic. Although this initial partition might work, Voegelin mentions Vegliot as the only language deriving from the latter branch. It is possible that this scholar merged different variants into one single language or more probably, he did not distinguish between Dalmatian and Vegliote, which is now considered to be a sub-branch. Other works, such as Agard (1984), Ruhlen (1991), Gordon (2005) mostly agree with Voegelin (1976) on a unique representation of Dalmatian through Vegliot. The genealogical tree I will refer to is, however, more complex and, what is fundamental, both leading scholars of Dalmatian, Matteo Giulio Bartoli and Žarko Muljačić, agree on a more articulated partition of this branch. Some of their most important works are Bartoli (1906), Muljačić (1962), Muljačić (1999) and more.

By Dalmatian or Dalmatian Romance, as the most reputable online database Glottolog names it, we simply intend a language developed from Latin in the area of Dalmatia. Instead, another rather reliable source, multitree.org, well-known as a digital library of language relationships, contains the following description in its database:

15 Veliot was mainly located in the isle of Krk. In fact, its name derives from the Italian name of this island – Veglia.
16 Bartoli (1906) was written in German, so that a wider audience could read it. Almost one century later it was translated into Italian and published as Bartoli (2000). We will refer to the latter version.
17 Glottolog.org takes the partition of Dalmatian Romance one step further. Namely, it distinguishes two main branches: Dalmatian and Istriot. No further partitions are mentioned, which leads us to believe that a subsequent temporal development of Dalmatian has not been officially attested yet. However, we will not be dealing with Istriot in this chapter, but only with Dalmatian.
18 http://multitree.org/codes/dlm
This is probably the most accurate description we will find. However, this idiom spread out into different forms that evolved independently. For this reason, we consider it to be a group of genetically related languages, majorly spoken in the geographical area of Dalmatia, a territory of 12 towns that extended approximately from Veglia (or Krk) Island to Kotor. It roughly existed from 14th to 19th century. It is no doubt that we are speaking of Indo-European family, in particular of Romance languages that however, presented different features compared to the geographically close Venetian and Friulian. This particular group of languages is relatively tough to classify, due to divergent historical periods in which they have evolved and later, extinguished. As a matter of fact, diverse
scholars have arrived to diverse outcomes so far as seen above. On one hand, Bartoli (2000) affirms that there existed two varieties of this Dalmatian Romance language — a

![Fig. 3: A representation of the spread of Dalmatian. (Vuletić 2015)](image)

northern one, called Veglioto\(^\text{19}\), or the language of the Isle of Veglia and a southern one, named Ragusan. He often used the appellative *Dalmatian* as a synonym of *Vegliot*,

\(^{19}\) *Veglioto*, or Vegliot, is also known as Krk Romanian in its translation in English. We do not know the exact period of development of this language, but we can affirm with certainty that it became formally extinct after the death of its last speaker, Antonio Udina in 1898. What is interesting to report is that Udina’s mother tongue was Venetian. Vegliot was for him “the grandmother’s language.” At school then he learned Italian and German, Croatian and from his girlfriend as sacristan learned the rudiments of Latin. Since all the other fellow citizens who spoke Vegliot had died many years before him, Udina had no opportunity to converse in that language. However, in contrast to almost non-existent written record of Ragusan, Veglioto has been maintained through numerous written proves.
although it might create confusion. These two varieties developed independently, both arrived to extinction, but in two very different time periods. Although Muljačić specifies that Bartoli’s work is not complete and that specific information has probably been omitted on purpose\textsuperscript{20}, in large part his idea is largely coherent to Bartoli’s. On the other hand, other scholars, such as Rosenkrantz (1955) and Zamboni (1976) pulled out an alternative partition made of three varieties of Dalmatian. Namely, apart from Bartoli’s hypothesis of Vegliot and Ragusan, Jadertin variant was added. This third addition represented the variation spoken in Zadar. Unfortunately, the lack of data does not allow us confirm or contradict any of the two theories. A more recent research dating 2001, in Muljačić (2001a), however, presents a slightly different splitting. As a matter of fact, he distinguishes Dalmatian – Romance languages into three different branches represented by the following middle languages\textsuperscript{21}: Jadertin, Ragusan and Labeatic\textsuperscript{22}. Vegliot was no less than a low language or a non-standard variety of Jadertin. Ragusan, on the other hand, owned its own place as one of the standard varieties of Dalmatian. Nonetheless, this relatively recent theory does not seem to be overwhelmingly satisfying and moreover, there exist no data on how certain sociolinguistic changes affected the history of Ragusan language. In fact, we will stick to the original bipartition between Vegliot and Ragusan. Thus, let us know focus on Ragusan variation.

\textsuperscript{20} Most of the critiques regarded wrong translations from Vegliot into German and Italian. Bartoli, in addition, never mentioned the fact that Antonio Udina’s mother was Slavic, probably because his knowledge might have been questioned. Tullio de Mauro (1964, 1980) severely criticized his evident tendency towards nationalism that had probably influenced his editorial choices.

\textsuperscript{21} The concept of middle languages and also low languages belongs to a sociolinguistic model developed by Muljačić and Heinz Kloss. Their theory is a relativistic approach, potentially applicable to all linguistic fields and aims to avoid the bipartition ‘language-dialect’ by preferring the one of standard and non-standard variety. The term dialect is considered to be inappropriate from a sociolinguistic point of view because it does not reflect the dynamic character of the varieties. Therefore, according to this theory, we consider the existence of a high language dominating middle languages that represent a standard variety, which in turn, dominate low languages, a non-standard variety. Further information can be find in Muljačić (1985) and Berruto (1997:57).

\textsuperscript{22} Labeatic was a standard variety of Dalmatian-Romance in southern Dalmatia, precisely spoken in the area of Antivari/Bar. Its existence is postulated by a number of scholars, among which we find Muljačić (1997).
1.1.1. Ragusan: its framework and remains

Ragusan, sometimes considered as a dialect and sometimes as one of the Dalmatian languages, seems to represent the oldest variety of Dalmatian. Unfortunately, no written records of this language have been preserved. We are relatively certain about the fact that it became extinguished roughly around the end of the 15th century, due to the predominance of both Venetian and Serbian. Nonetheless, a poor, yet significant witness has come from an illustrious personage mentioned in the previous chapter – Philippus de Diversis. Also called by means of his extended name Philippus de Diversis de Quartigianis, this grammar teacher and director of the Ragusan school provided a decent description of Ragusa by mentioning certain terms specific to Ragusan. Here we find a short paragraph of his manuscript containing four original lemmas:

In prescriptis omnibus consiliis et offitiis civilium et criminalium oratores, seu arrengatores advocati iudices et consules legis statuto latine loquuntur, non autem sclave, nec tamen nostro idiomate italico, in quo nobiscum phantur et conveniunt, sed quodam alio vulgari ydiomate eis speciali, quod a nobis Latinis intelligit, nisi alqualis immo magna eiusmodi loquendi habeatur saltim audiendi consuetudo, panem vocant pen, patrem dicunt teta, domus dicitur chesa, facere fachir, et sic de caeteris, quae nobis ignotum ydioma parturient. Hec dicta sint de consiliis, de curia civili, et criminali, de appellationibus, de advocatis, et eorum ydiomate latino, deinceps de specialioribus principatibus agendum videtur.

Unfortunately, apart from the four lemmas indicated by Philippus de Diversis, there are fewer other attested forms of this language. However, Bartoli (2000) provides a very short analysis concerning phonological and morphological features of this attestation, even

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23 Philippus de Diversis was born in Lucca at the beginning of the 14th century. Due to the exile of his family from his hometown, he spent a long period of his life in Venice, before receiving an invitation from Ragusan authorities to go and teach grammar in this little mercantile town. His Ragusan period lasted from 1434 to 1440. No additional information are known about the years that followed, but according to certain scholars he was able to return to his homeland.

24 The description mentioned is part of the manuscript named “Descriptio Ragusina edita ab eximio magro Philippo de Diversis Quartigianis Luccensis, A.D. MCCCCXL ab eo confecta” that is located in the Franciscan monastery in Ragusa.
though such a restricted set of samples does not endorse us to deepen further than this.

Just to list a few characteristics, Bartoli affirms that Ragusan presented a limited amount of diphthongs if compared to Vegliot and to be precise, it was the case of closing diphthongs, while Vegliot contained a larger quantity of the opening ones. In addition, the passage $a > e$ had a large extent if compared to its sister language, probably due to a similarity with Serbian $\dd{a} > a/e$ or $\dd{a} > ea$ also present in Serbian. Furthermore, considering the only morphological feature we know, there existed the affix $-esc$- as opposed to its Vegliot equivalent $-ej$-.

Muljačić, on the other hand, tried to reconstruct the system of historical phonology of Ragusan by applying the methods of generative phonology to explain the processing of the degemination of the groups $-nn$, $-ll$ and $-rr$- typical of Romance languages. Undoubtedly, due to the evident lack of written records of Ragusan, we are obliged to resort to comparative evidence provided by the two adstrate languages – Venetian and Serbian. Ragusan was somehow forced to adapt to the adstrate languages that did not own the group we mentioned. Therefore, the group $-nn$, $-ll$- and later $-rr$- was the last one to undergo the degemination process, by following $-pp$- and $-tt$-. Muljačić refers to this phenomenon as to a slow “dedalmatization”, where Ragusan was losing its Dalmatian features. In fact, he says: “Dernières entre toutes les géminées, les $-nn$, les $-ll$- et enfin les $-rr$- subissaient le sort des $-pp$, $-tt$-, etc, c.-à-d. elles disparaissaient peu à peu dans le ragusain qui se dédalmatisait” (Muljačić 2000:185).

What strikes in the texts related to historical phonology is the profound knowledge of the historical Slavonic and Venetian phonology of Muljačić that turned out to be useful to illuminate the evolution of Ragusan vocalism. He mostly worked on a stop of the descending diphthongization in the Ragusan due to the influence of the Venetian phonological system, but also on the degemination in the Ragusan under the pressure of the Venetian and Slavic adstrats, as showed above. Additional works of this scholar attempted to demonstrate a reinterpretation of the Ragusan phonemes in the Serbian phonological system. Moreover, Muljačić worked on the historical phonology of

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25 Both Venetian and Serbian were considered to be adstrate languages in the initial period of this multilingual setting. In other words, none of the mentioned languages had an identifiably higher or lower prestige. The issue of language contact will be deepened the second part of this chapter.
Vegliot, where we find contact with Serbian already after 800s, 300 years earlier than Dubrovnik.

It is very important to mention that Ragusan had been the official language of Dubrovnik, even if for a very short period. As a matter of fact, Latin exceeded as the official language for centuries, until 1472, when it was officially substituted with Ragusian. Unfortunately, due to a massive usage both Serbian and Venetian/Tuscan, Ragusan extinguished towards the end of 15th century.

1.2. The Romance component in Ragusa: Venetian and Italian

The first attestations of a non-Dalmatian component in Ragusa date back to the 12th century. As it is possible to imagine, a consistent writing in Latin, and later Italian, started occurring right after the passage of power and authority from Byzantium to the Serenissima and developed over centuries of extended maritime commerce. A large corpus of documents is still kept in the Archives of Dubrovnik and represents precious evidence of a non-Dalmatian installation in this area. Just as explained in the previous point, it is important to mention the fact that northern towns of Dalmatia, such as Zadar, Split and Trogir, had already had an extended and lasting contact with Venice, long before it arrived to Ragusa. Before explaining how different languages interweaved among them, I will attempt to provide a picture of a linear trend of this Western Romance component.

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the appellative Italian will be used in its widest sense, although neither a linguistic nor a geographical unity did exist at this point of Italian history. This choice is justified by the fact that Ragusa saw the presence of its numerous variants succeed one another. In fact, apart from the presence of Venetian, due to colonialist reasons that were explained in detail in Chapter 1 and obviously due to a

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26 However, despite this very last attempt to save and maintain the idiom by making it become, formally, the official language of Ragusa, it is suitable to specify that its usage kept on decreasing. In fact, Venetian, Serbian and to a certain extent, Italian were commonly spoken.
consistent maritime exchange, geographical closeness and continuous relationships, it is possible to find traces of Tuscan, but also certain southern vernaculars. Unfortunately, most of the analysis done so far does not allow us to identify any morphological or syntactic changes. As a matter of fact, Muljačić, Bartoli, but also other scholars largely operated on the level of phonetic, phonological and lexical analysis. I will now represent some of the key points explaining Italian presence in Dubrovnik.

Undoubtedly, the Archives of Dubrovnik represent the richest quantity of documents witnessing the presence of Latin/Italian presence. Among the most important collections we find: Diplomata et acta (independent charters and acts); Reformationes (minutes of all three Councils from 1301 to 1415, and from 1415, this collection has been divided into more separate ones for each panel), Acta Consilli Rogatorum (Minutes of the Senate), Acta Minoris Consillii (Minutes of the Small Council), Acta Maioris Consillii (Records of the Grand Chamber), Letterae et commissiones (letters and guidance of Dubrovnik Republic), Diversa notariae, Diversa Cancellariae (various office writings), Debita notariae, Probate (Wills), Procurae (Acts of Attorney), etc.

It should be noted again that from now on, each loan we consider from the Italian speaking area mainly involves Venetian dialect and Italian-Tuscan itself. As the area of the Dalmatia was a territory of intense language contact, along its coast certain vocab entered the local language thanks to the long-term physical, historical and political contact with Venice. However, in the city centers, primarily in Dubrovnik, many Italian lexemes could be spotted as well, which mainly entered the language because of individuals that trained at Italian universities. The collections mentioned above contain both components, because the unusual and incongruent provenance of chancellors, notaries and men of culture, coming from diverse parts of the Italic peninsula. In the Renaissance period the Tuscan component started to prevail in some cases, simply because it held a more prestigious social condition if compared to a ‘colonial’ Venetian.

What is interesting to consider is the fact that a good amount of documents contain speeches in Venetian, dictated to ambassadors that can be considered as masterpieces of diplomatic rhetoric. Unlike Venice, where rectors used a solemn Latin when addressing

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27 It should be noted that Italian, originally from Tuscany, is not be confused with Tuscan dialects. In fact, Italian, despite being the most literary used language on the Italian peninsula, did not held the exclusivity of being the language of literature. Unlike Venetian, Italian was a more cultured language, but also a lingua franca, used as a common mean of communication among speakers holding divergent L1s.
their Doge, Ragusa stepped first in an early use of Venetian in its documentation of chancellery. The language of these documents is also spotted as volgare\textsuperscript{28} and is of Venetian mold, but with peculiar characteristics with traces belonging to the language spoken in the rest of Veneto, but not Venice. For example, we find metaphonesis\textsuperscript{29}, such as quili, fari, andari, that in certain cases takes southern peculiarities, as in “et quilo debi saldar per parte nostra e da tuta la terra cum quele bele parole, che a ti parerà che se convegna”. This is undoubtedly due to the presence of Venetian, but also non Venetian and southern Italian chancellors that operated in Ragusa, but again, attempted to linearize as much as possible to Venetian. On the other hand, a growing hint of Tuscan lexemes anticipated in a way Ragusan political reorientation. Although Deanović (1972) listed a conspicuous number of Neo-Latin loans in Ragusan, among which we also find Tuscan ones, other scholars agree with the fact that it is hard to consider a substantial contact between Ragusa and Tuscany, because its spread followed many decades later. Still in 16\textsuperscript{th} and 17\textsuperscript{th} century we speak of a lingua franca as Bartoli intends it – a colonial Venetian, also known as Verkehrssprache. In fact, for a scholar of 16\textsuperscript{th} century, the term ‘italian’ is not specific, yet generic, including Venetian, known as a spoken variety of Italian. Folena (2015) quotes a Venetan versifier, Gian Paolo Liompardi, often signing himself as Zuan Polo, describing a Ragusan noble man in the attempt of expressing himself in an aulic Florentine or Paduan. The outcome is a mixture where patently Venetian lexemes resurface and Polo makes a caricature out of it, as in the following example:

\begin{verbatim}
Perché del fiorentin è mio parlansa
ché là san stado per medigar rugnia,
e ancho in Padua ia san studiando
    e un cor l’atro parlo misculado.
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{28} The term volgare or vulgariter reflects the spoken vernacular in contrast to lettera or literaliter standing for Latin in its earlier stages.

\textsuperscript{29} Folena (2015: 243-253).
This 'Italian' presence was witnessed among others, by Georges Guillet in 17th century, referring in his famous description of Athens, to the presence among the illustrious men of the city of a certain "bon homme Capitanakis, marchand riche, qui parle fort bien l'italien". He provided an anonymous report where, in relation to Ragusa / Dubrovnik, he wrote that there "the nobles speak Italian, a mixture of Roman dialect corrupted by its pronunciation and some Neapolitan terms, which mixed together form a language that has its own special grace". He explained, again, about the linguistic situation of Ionian Islands during Venetian government, where Venetian was 'the' language and where the nobility was spotted by the inhabitants because they were capable (and wanted to) of speaking Venetian, believing and considering the local dialect of Modern Greek, a language of which to be ashamed. Whoever studied went to Italy, especially to Padua. Even the high Catholic clergy, in the climate of the Counter-Reformation, was generally made up of Italian prelates. Furthermore, in 1694 citizens of Trogir prayed the Roman pope to send them, finally, a bishop who knew their Slavic language. In Dalmatia Latin and Italian had always been languages used for the sake of literature, especially in prose works. Slavic, on the other hand appeared in poems, but we do not lack poems written by Serbo-Croatian authors in Italian, such as Girolamo Papal, born in Split in 1460, Nicola Naljesković (ca. 1510-1587) and Nikola Gučetić (1549-1610), both Ragusans they wrote about philosophy in Italian.

1.3. Slavic facets in Dubrovnik

Historical proof clearly explains that both a Slavic and a Romance component have always coexisted in Dubrovnik, since its earliest times. However, even the language component had been influenced by historical events. It is the case of a slight evolution of

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30 Georges Guillet was a French comedian and scholar, known for his travels in the countries of Levant where he was renowned as "Sieur de La Guilletière".
this Slavic component in Dubrovnik, which showed some interesting characteristics especially in its form used over the 16th and 17th century. Namely, Ottoman invasions incremented migratory flows from Balkan hinterland and in order to create a continuity, a sort of an imaginary line linking the coast with the inner Balkans, Shtokavian dialect remained in use. I do not intend to ascertain that this migratory stream was the only reason of a similar choice, on the contrary, many native men of literature contributed to spread the use of this variant. For example, Ivan Gundulić, one of the most significant historical literary figures of Ragusa, helped to spread Shtokavian variety due to his wide popularity. His epic poem ‘Osman’ remained relevant also as “a statement of independence and autonomy for the city and for Slavs in general, in the face of foreign oppressors” (Cvitanić 2010:111). Let us now have a closer look on this Ragusan dialectal variant as opposed to other Slavic dialects of this region.

The Dubrovnik Shtokavian (also Štokavian) dialect had been the source from which a vernacular literature emerged during the 16th and 17th centuries. It covered a significantly smaller area than it covers today, meaning that the Shtokavian speech had spread for the last five centuries, overwhelmingly at the expense of Chakavian and Kajkavian idioms. Modern areal distribution of these three dialects as well as their internal stratification (Shtokavian and Chakavian in particular) is primarily a result of the migrations resulting from the spread of Ottoman Empire on the Balkans. Migratory waves were particularly strong in the 16th–18th century, bringing about large-scale linguistic and ethnic changes on the Central South Slavic area. These three variants developed by taking their names from their respective interrogative pronouns standing for ‘what’, i.e. ‘što’ (Štokavian), ‘ča’ (Čakavian), ‘kaj’ (Kajkavian) and characterize the diversity of the distribution of dialects in today’s Croatia. What is important for this research is to illustrate major peculiarities of the Shtokavian version, which is fundamental in defining Ragusan linguistic prospectus. It is also the oldest one among the three and was divided into two zones – eastern, spoken majorly in Serbia and western, spoken in today’s Herzegovina and parts of Croatia. It primarily utilized Jekavian pronunciation, but with time Ikavian

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31 This work only circulated via handwritten copies, due to the Turkish threat. Namely, its content was based on contemporary events surrounding the defeat of Sultan Osman II by the Poles. It was published only in 19th century.

32 Jekavian (or Ijekavian), Ekavian and Ikavian are three pronunciation varieties of Serbo-Croatian. This distinction goes back to Proto-Slavic Ė yat (yat) vowel (Old Cyrillic Ė, Ė; Latin transliteration Ė) where it
one appeared too, due to close contact with Chakavian dialect. Slowly, Ragusa elaborated its own version of Neo-Shtokavian, which is also considered to be an independent subdialect (its geographical extension can be seen in Fig. 4). A feature that strictly belonged to the Ragusan subdialect was the preservation of the suffix -og(a) in genitive and accusative singular of masculine and neuter gender in pronominal-adjectival declension, for example ser. drugoga. In addition, several other characteristics were common to Shtokavian, such as the metathesis of OCS въше to ser. sve, the ending -у in locative singular masculine and neuter nouns eg. U gradu, u m(j)estu, special constructs reflecting old dual for numerals 2-4, eg. dva, tri četiri stola, etc. An exhaustive list of Shtokavian features can be found in Crystal (1998), Friedman (1999) and Okuka (2008).

Fig. 4: Glottolog.org;  The areal distribution of the Ragusan subdialect.

To conclude this short digression on the status of the Slavic component in Dubrovnik, not to forget is the mention of a Serbian Chancellery established in Dubrovnik the early 13th century. It served for Cyrillic transcription by connoisseurs of Italian in

had a phonetic value articulatory between the vowels /i/ and /e/. In Jekavian Shtokavian dialect, yat has diphthongal sequence of /ie/ both in long and short syllables, while in Ekavian Shtokavian, its production is limited to /e/ or /e/.

Eg: Ser. lepo (Ekavian), lijepo (Ijekavian) / ljepo (Jekavian), lipo (Ikavian).
correspondence mainly with Serbia, but with other countries of hinterland. An enormous corpus of documentation remained from its existence that lasted for centuries. Unfortunately, not much attention has been dedicated to the studies of this corpus that probably contains precious information of the position and evolution of Shtokavian dialect, due to the appearance of a nationalistic ideology in 20th century.

2. The outcome of language contact in Dubrovnik

This prolonged language contact in Ragusa has not gone unnoticed. Due to its extended duration that lasted over centuries, we are led to imagine that this process underwent various phases. As a matter of fact, we could summarize it into 4 main phases, starting from presence of a unique Romance linguistic family to our arriving point in the 16th century when we find no more traces of Ragusan. This has probably been the most drastic consequence of the contact, especially due to social factors mentioned above that made it impossible even to keep the legislative role of Ragusan. In other words, a drenching position of Serbian and partially Italian and their constant usage of a daily basis brought to a capsizing situation in which it was no longer possible to preserve the original native language. The following scheme synthesizes these four major steps that occurred in Ragusa over several centuries:

1. Dalmatian-Romance as a unique language (6th-9th century)
2. Second Romance diphthongization (10th-12th century)
4. Second phase of cohabitation with Venetian dialect (15th-16th century). Second phase of Venetian-Slavic symbiosis and “death” of Ragusan
We have already discussed and mentioned several examples concerning the first two points. As previously explained, the entire territory of Dalmatia had always been in the state of persistent language, although not only linguistic, contact. We have noticed that primordial Dalmatian had itself undergone multiple stages taking place in different periods before allocating as Ragusan language or Ragusan dialect in its areas. No further explanation should be necessary to understand the curiosity that this extinguished language still triggers. However, as it is well known, an almost total absence of written records does not allow the development of supplementary hypothesis on its structure and substantial divergence if compared to other Romance, but not Dalmatian languages.

Much research has been done on phonological processes to which our Romance component had been submitted. In fact, both Muljačić and Bartoli dedicated much effort to outlining an ontogenesis of Dalmatian. We have briefly discussed the degemination of groups -nn-, -ll- and -rr- and the fact that it was recognized as a gradual measure of “dedalmatisation”.

Phase 3 was unearthed by Schuchardt\textsuperscript{33}, who gave evidence of the linguistic situation in 13\textsuperscript{th} century. What he claims is that the Romance language spoken in Dubrovnik in that period was more similar to the one of Apulia than to Venetian or to a closer Lombard version. Apart from this, what followed was a gradual Venetianization starting approximately from 1420 from northern Dalmatia until it got to Dubrovnik. Venetian, in turn, had later been replaced by Tuscan variety. In the following quotation we find an original exemplification of this phenomenon:

Im Norden blieb das letztere inselförmig inmitten der slawischen Überflutung. Es festigte sich, seitdem die Venetianer hier Fuss zu fassen begannen und das geschah schon im 10. Jhdt, zugleich aber veränderte es seinen Charakter, es wurde venetianisiert, wenn wir nicht vorziehen zu sagen: es wurde ein romanischer Dialekt durch den andern verdrängt.

In order to explain phases 3 and 4, it is binding to cover once again some sociolinguistic factors that ended up being the main reasons of the linguistic change.

\textsuperscript{33} This passage is well explained in Muljačić (2000:85).
On one hand, literary works helped to spread a linguistic culture. Not only their importance was crucial, but authors as Marin Držić, Šiško Menčetić and many others bring us back to their era by simulating and faithfully representing the linguistic code that represents precious data for further analysis. As it will emerge from Chapter 3, there was an intense usage of code switching. However, for the moment, let us focus on sociolinguistic aspects.

2.1. Trilingualism, multilingualism and code switching

On a smaller scale, the Republic of Ragusa was characterized by a diglossing ruling elite. As noted by certain scholars, among which we find Nicolas de Nicolay, a French 16th century geographer, Slavic was the everyday language in this period, while Italian served as the language of government among the city’s hereditary ruling elite. Latin was also widely used which gave rise to a trilingual society, where fewer space was left for the original Ragusan. However, not all the scholars agree with this partition.

According to Birnbaum (1974), educated people of Dubrovnik in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were predominantly bilingual or even trilingual, having a command of Serbian and Italian. Other scholars annotated their observations on Dubrovnik during their travels around Europe and most of the times spotted a gendered aspect of multilingualism. Strictly speaking, the knowledge of Italian was limited to men, due to their consistent exposal and involvement in the maritime affairs with Italians, while women were reported generally only to be able to speak Serbian. Nonetheless, “in their homes they speak the Slavonic language out of respect for the women because few of them understand the Italian language, and even if some woman understands it, she doesn’t want to speak anything but her maternal language” (Ljubić 1877). In part this was a function of education, because it is well known, boys used to be instructed in prestigious schools in Latin and later Italian, while girls used to be educated by nuns primarily in Slavic. Furthermore, it might be presupposed that higher
schooling was reserved to a social elite. The reality was that these elites studied Italian from a young age and therefore, was able to use it with grace and great skills. However, this practice was not limited to Ragusan nobility, in fact, there are numerous elusive but intriguing archival hints of non-elite individuals who code-switched from Italian to Slavic and vice versa and peppered their everyday use with borrowed words and phrases from one of the two languages while communicating in the other. Just the same was the situation with smaller urban areas. Namely, it is believed that multilingualism was a peculiarity, or a distinctive sign of urban areas. On the contrary, in the course of a 1672 inquiry in the small village of Kuna in northern Dubrovnik, eight of nine local men called to testify, gave some portion of their testimony in Italian, despite a massive usage of the Slavic component (Reyerson 2016).

2.2. Multilingualism in literature

Literary works have undoubtedly contributed to provide further clarification on linguistic setting in Dubrovnik. Due to significant changes in the composition of the population of the Ragusan Republic, during the 16th century the spoken idiom in this area gradually changed, including the parlance of the city of Dubrovnik. If we compare the language of non-literary texts of Dubrovnik from the 16th century, as, for example, statements of participants of legal proceedings that did not speak any foreign language, but only their Serbian dialect of Ragusa, with literary solutions that were not conditioned by any needs or special linguistic characterization (eg, prose texts), it is possible to assume that such literary works were largely based on the spoken idiom in Dubrovnik. Since the idiom during the 16th century changed, in parallel to the change of the language of Ragusan writers, it no wonder that the language we find in literary works at the beginning, middle and end of the century is not the same. The language component, however, changed among writers, but the differences among are not as big as it is usually pointed out. As a matter of fact, many overlaps at all linguistic levels have been overlooked. Many concrete examples from diverse works of different authors from the 16th century clearly show that the most important linguistic features in
these works are comparable. It is usually said, for example, that Nikola Dimitrović, through his many innovations and introduction of elements of the vernacular and Italianisms, paved the way for Marin Držić. However, it has to be pointed out that, notwithstanding this, there are very recognizable features of archaic Shtokavian at various language levels, in the lexis as well, in spite of the many new lexemes he included in his work. Also visible in Držić’s works is the parallel existence of the old and new system, even though the new system gradually began to prevail. The parallelism in the two systems can also be seen in the works of Nikola Nalješković. His examples incontrovertibly show that the biggest turn towards Neo-Shtokavian was made by Dinko Ranjina, although in his language there are influences of archaic Western Shtokavian and some others as well. Such a trend is illustrated in the following example, representing one of Ranjina’s poems:

[…] Ustan’ gori, djevojčica, sanka ne zaspala I
Maglica se briegom krate, sad je na te pala:

cvitje hoce opaliti, koji si nabrala;
jes te hode prevariti, ako nis’ dabrala […]

The prose texts of Dinko Zlatarić are usually taken as an example of advanced Neo-Shtokavian but in Zlatarić too there is still a far from negligible proportion of old declensions. The prose idiom of Franjo Lukarević also contains partially older forms of declensions, and in addition, usages that do not involve the new iotation. The differences in the literary languages of Šiško Menčetić and Džore Držić on the one hand, Marin Držić, for example, on the other one, Dinko Ranjina as a third way and Dinko Zlatarić as a fourth, actually to a considerable extent reflect changes in the Dubrovnik vernacular, which gradually shifted from the archaic Western Shtokavian dialect into the Neo-Shtokavian. However, this process was not in any way concluded in the period of the Renaissance. We will only deal with works of Marino Darsa in the attempt of providing a substantial analysis of language contact in his works.
CHAPTER 3

Language contact within the comedies of Marin Držić

TVOJA RIJEČ JOŠ ŽIVI - Marinu Držiću

Dum Marine naš, prošlo je petsto ljeta,
a ničeg novog nema u duši svijeta.
Još uvijek ljudi nazbilj nisu na vlasti,
dok ljudi nahvao plivaju u slasti.

I danas se s brjemenom akomodavat
treba, za dukate i dušu prodavat
da bi se za trpezom bogatih bilo,
kopune blagovalo i vino pilo.

Ipak, Marine slavni, tješi nas nada
da u dubravi još ljudi nazbilj ima
koji čuvaju srce i dušu Grada.

Tvoja riječ još živi u drami i pjesmi.
Svijetli nam u mranku i daje nam snagu
poput vode u Onofrijevoj česmi.

Tin Kolumbić (1936)
1. Who was Marin Držić?

Marin Držić, also known as Marino Darsa was one of the major Ragusan poets and playwrights. Also known as Ragusan Shakespeare or Molière, this artist surely grew up in a stimulating environment. On one hand, his uncle Đore Držić (1461-1501), also poet, represented the perfect example from which to get inspired. On the other hand, instead, numerous artists and writers that have marked the history of Ragusan literature preceded him, such as Šiško Menčetić (1457-1527) and Marko Marulić (1450-1524). Due to his precious contribution to Ragusan linguistic, but also in general, cultural development, it is surely worth spending a few lines to retrace the major aspects of his life.

Born in 1508, Držić spent his youth in his hometown, but was later, sent to Siena to continue with his studies in Canonical Law where he first entered the Romance world. Being a turbulent spirit with multiple talents, Držić had always been more concerned with theater than with studies. However, this stay in Siena marked him deeply, by accentuating his penchant for the arts. In fact, there was a genius inside Marin that was fighting to make itself heard. It eventually shone through in the end through some of his most famous masterpieces.

He returned to his hometown after a few years without a diploma, without a title, but enriched with great literary and life experiences thanks to his mundane life in a cosmopolitan Renaissance Italy. The particular position of Dubrovnik, a miniature republic, an astounding enclave, Christian and free, in the then, Ottoman Empire, made the theatrical life dogmatically linked to an ideology: in this case, the Christian ideology of the Counter-Reform. On his return from Siena, Držić stayed in his hometown from 1545 to 1562. At 34

34 The Counter-Reform, however, occurred after 1545.
that time he wrote most of his work, such as *Tirena* (1549), *Novela od Stanca* (1550), *Dundo Maroje* (1551), and many others, devoting himself entirely to the theater. In 1545, he entered as secretary in the service of the Austrian Count Rogendorf. He traveled a lot, going from Vienna to Istanbul, and returning to Dubrovnik to squander his maternal heritage. His bitter words and his dissolute life earned him the enmity of his fellow-citizens. The last years of his troubled life, Držić spent them in Venice where, in 1563, he became chaplain of the Patriarchate. In this role, he attempted to put into execution an uncommon idea. As a matter of fact, in the letters sent to the Duke of Tuscany Cosimo I, he set out a plan to overthrow the aristocratic oligarchy of Dubrovnik, which he described as composed of "twelve feeble monsters ". However, the Italian letters of Držić were an extraordinary combination of painful artistic sensibility and critical lucidity and therefore, cannot be regarded as a real system of political action nor as a pure literary work, but they constitute an exceptional human document. On one hand the author depicted the reality of a small republic, while, on the other, he gave the key to his poetics, which makes it possible to distinguish, in his work, the original from imitation. Notwithstanding his effort, he received no reply from the Duke, and died at Venice in 1567.

This controversial character provided evidence and awareness of Ragusan society in the 16th century. Although it might be straightforward to assume that a literary work would twist the original image of society, rather than cruelly representing its positive and negative aspects, Darsa, on the contrary, provided an example of what he was directly surrounded by over his Ragusan years. Further examples from Darsa’s works will be presented in the following point.

What is certainly crucial to mention is Darsa’s patriotic link to his homeland. Even though in multiple occasions he made it clear that he did not support Ragusan government and its “dubious”35 diplomatic and political choices, he never renounced, nor disclaimed his belonging. Indeed, this patriotic feeling emerged several times and on different levels, but was often mixed with critics towards Ragusa society. For example, his last comedy, named *Skup* (The Miser) is an illustration of comic mastery, but it is also a terribly serious

35 According to Darsa, the town was governed by “a group of monsters”. In his early years, he also joined a band of outlaws, became a conspirator and even tried to overthrow the Republic of Dubrovnik, but without any success.
work, bearer of a gloomy outlook of man and society and of a moral message characterized by the ideals of mildness, leniency and reason, against the ruling greed and arrogance. Nonetheless, he never lost the opportunity to show his roots as he always considered himself to be Ragusan. Thus, all of his documents written in Italian bear the signature of “Marino Darsa Raguseo”, as can be seen in Fig. 6.

Fig. 6: An example of one of Darsa’s writings along with his well-known signature.

2. The sociolinguistic perspective in Držić’s works

Darsa’s works seem to be a perfect exemplification of what we have already attempted to explain in Chapter 2. Namely, a complex sociolinguistic environment in Ragusa was a result of a contact, or better, a meeting of multiple languages and dialects that coexisted on this relatively small territory. But how well is it represented in Darsa’s literary work?

The key factor of a faithful linguistic representation of Darsa’s period through his works is the initial skimming of all the poetical elements on one hand, enriching his texts, but on the other hand, trying to probably unintentionally disguise a slightly different reality.
Thus, he even showed to be ready to sacrifice one of the characteristics – a linguistic homogeneity – in order to provide his audience with a rich patchwork of linguistic usage. Even supposing a concession to Držić to resort in part to linguistic stereotyping, the poetic function in this linguistic heterogeneity of the text serves to foreground the humor related to language interference and code-switching. However, certain works, such as Dundo Maroje, assume to reveal a true urban sociolinguistic situation. Therefore, we can affirm with certainty that this work faithfully represents the language spoken in Ragusa in his period. Undoubtedly, Darsa’s knowledge cannot be called into question. As a matter of fact, he was trilingual and knew perfectly Serbian, Italian and Venetian, due to his multiple and extended stays, first in Siena and later in Venice, where he died.

What arises from his works is to a certain extend a confirmation of a specific theory we mentioned in the previous chapter. Namely, we could postulate a hypothesis of several comedies accentuating a gendered multilingualism, where substantial difference between men and women seems to be evident. Thus, parts of dialogues among Slavic women do not leak any usage of the Italian language, on the contrary, Serbian is used in its purest form. A similar scenario can be found in dialogues between a man and a woman, where the woman uses Serbian as the only language and apart from integrated loan words\(^{36}\) (eg. *spenžere* from it. *spendere*). No code-switching can be spotted, as it is the case of a line pronounced by a man. However, what cannot be confirmed is the attribution of one single linguistic code to the female gender. Thus, there are multiple examples of females using correctly another linguistic code, which in this case is Italian. However, it was the only possible choice, because in such cases at least one of the characters could exclusively use Italian. For example, in Dundo Maroje (Uncle Maroje), we find one of the many significant dialogues between Laura, the courtesan and Maro’s lover and Petrunjela, her servant:

LAURA: *Petruniella, che ragionamenti sano quei? Non te ho detto che tu averai delle bastonate, desgraziata?\(^{37}\)*

\(^{36}\)A deeper analysis on loans and on contact-induced lexical change will follow later in this chapter.

\(^{37}\)All the contents in italic mark the use of the idiom of a linguistic minority (*it. alloglossia*). Such elements are not to be confused with integrated loan words, which were abundantly used by an average Ragusan speaker in the Renaissance and were part of the lexical corpus of the idiom of that time. It is important to keep in mind this distinction, because the elements in italic indicate the speaker’s ability to use another language. Foreign words, used in their original form, designate the passage from one language to another,
PETRUNJELA: *Madonna, ghe son signori Ragusei, sangue tira, parlar poco, lassame-ghe štar*.

LAURA: *Entra in casa, desgraziata – Sadi, entra in casa.*

(Second act, scene 3)

Although Petrunjela uses nothing but Serbian in her monologues and dialogues with other characters (that often used an intensive code-switching) and maybe because of her humble origins, she answers in Venetian to Laura, who speaks Italian, a socially more prestigious language. This fact accentuates the social difference between the two interlocutors. Such example is not unique, in fact, they occur in all of Darsa’s comedies. Indeed, we have to deduce that certain social discrimination existed, although there were no consistent differences between genders. Most likely, the reason for this gendered partition simply lies in the subdivision and performance of the tasks, where mostly men had the chance to have major contact with an external world, whereas women generally tended to remain at home.

Since it is often claimed that Marin Držić, unlike his literary predecessors in the city, endorsed the language of the Dubrovnik commoners, it is possible to draw another conclusion. What can be concluded is that the speech of these ordinary people was in many features not yet Neo-Shtokavian, because it preserved conspicuous features of concerning phonological change. More on the phonological change of Shtokavian will follow below.

which is due to a spontaneous reaction of the speaker. On the contrary, integrated loan words are never a sign of the same capacity and, therefore, of a situation of multilingualism. They rather represent processes of interferences and language contact.

38 The addition of this diacritic, although Venetian does not require it, is probably the result of a personal choice done by Držić in order to facilitate the reading and to provide an idea of the exact pronunciation.
2.1. Code-switching and code mixing

Another crucial feature of multilingualism in Ragusa was an extensive usage of code-switching that, as we have just acknowledged, was mainly used by the Ragusan male component. Besides this gendered selection, it is worth glancing at this phenomenon, also due to its massive use.

Let us first define the context in which code-switching occurs. We have already mentioned that it was exclusively utilized by the male component, but would it be possible to provide a deeper analysis in order to gain additional information on the linguistic issue of the town and on the position each language held? Surely it would. In fact, Držić continuously proposes a wide range of dialogues incorporating both the Italian and Serbian codes. What is interesting to remark is that men constantly relied on code-switching to a lesser or greater extent, mostly depending on the interlocutor. As a matter of fact, by applying Myers-Scotton’ (1990, 1992, 1993b) method, we understand that an inter-phrastic commutation prevails and only fewer examples of intra-phrastic code-switching is present. For example, we find:

TRIPČETA: *Che ha questo pover omo?*
BOKČILO: *Misser, ga boli: fiol spenzuto denari, doglia!*

(First act, scene 1)

TRIPČETA: *Che bone nove? Imate li ča novo otuda? Ča se ono boljahote?*
MAROJE: *U fastidiju sam.*

(First act, scene 1, fewer lines below)

Italian propositions are used as larger units to replace Serbian, but, in the same way, we also find commutations of a little scale. However, both single adjuncts and larger propositions are used only as unbound forms. In fact, infra-sentential code-switching (also called code-mixing) is tendentially very rare and can be easily argued that it might

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potentially be considered an example of Darsa’s literary virtuosity or, more likely, reflects a multilingual society where code-switching is used to connote semantically and/or syntactically different concepts. In fact, we find the same issue, but with a slightly different outcome, in the following example:

BOKČILO: Nu ćeš vidjet er ćeš sve nać a contradiu.

(First act, scene 3)

As Čale (1987) affirms, this linguistic choice, originally standing for “al contrario”, was deliberately changed into “a contradiu” in order to create a word pun “contra Dio” and to make it to his personal stylistic preference.

Such examples allow us to understand the type of switching and mixing that this bilingual community had chosen. The level of its bilingual competence leads us towards drawing a possible conclusion on the type of multilingualism characterized by asymmetry. This conjecture will be expanded in the following point.

Since there was continuous movement and exchange between Dubrovnik and Italian towns and as a consequence, the contact between the two languages was so strong and intense, the linguistic change majorly affected the lexical level of analysis, through borrowings, but also the syntactic function in the sentence. In fact, subject, predicate, object and complements – the main elements in a sentence, tend to follow, in the majority of cases, the Italian word order to allow an easier correspondence of meaning.

Word order, however, did not affect certain common phrases, intercalary expressions or proverbs that were rigorously transmitted in Italian, as in the following examples:

POMET: Ben trovata la sagnoria vostra, signor Marin! Njegda tvoj bijeh u Dubrovniku; u Rimu si sada veličak čovjek. Daleko siromaha od veličijeh ljudi!

(First act, scene 6)

TRIPČETA: (Muči malo, per amor de Dio, da čujemo koga vraga vijećahu.)
MAROJE: (Da čujemo ne dobro za mene.)

MARO: Sta ben questa cosa, Pomete; ovako se karecaju sinjore, ovaki im se prezenti darivaju.

(First act, scene 6, fewer lines below)

It is evident that such Italian expressions retain a high degree of autonomy, but no syntactic difficulty when switching codes. Such insertion of fixed phrases and sayings in the function of a simple commentary is one of the means of proving the social status of the language. As a matter of fact, the use of such phrases in a foreign language, which is considered as an indicator of the high and prestigious social status, provides evidence of the speaker’s knowledge experience and also material success. In an interview with the gentleman’s servants such a use of language gives an idea of belonging to a higher social class and clearly delineates the border between the two social classes.

2.2. Asymmetric multilingualism

According to Bowern (2010:343), “truly symmetric multilingualism is sometimes argued to be quite rare. That is, the argument goes that in cases there the whole community speaks more than one language, the multilingualism is redundant and that some point it becomes unstable and language shift occurs.”

Our previous point exemplified a consistent use of Serbian-Italian code-switching in the 16th century Ragusa. In agreement with Assenza (2016), this phenomenon is generally taken as an example of balanced bilingualism. Although some scholars, such as Muysken (2000) attribute a balanced use of both linguistic codes or better, an intra-sentential shift, to the distinct occurrence of code-mixing, others, like the above mentioned Assenza (2016), simply condense them in one single peculiarity. However, even by considering them in one unique case, we cannot agree with a “balanced bilingualism” to be a suitable description of Ragusa. Such an affirmation is confirmed by the exclusive use of inter-sentential code-switching which leads us to comprehend that the knowledge of Italian
was limited to a daily use that did not permit to go beyond macro structures. Indeed, intra-sentential code-switching or code-mixing, involving substantial change on the grammatical level, is a feature that is majorly suitable for what is known as “equilingualism”\textsuperscript{40}, while Darsa’s comedies leak out information of a slightly different Ragusan environment. Therefore, the hypothesis of a balanced bilingualism appears totally incorrect and insufficient to explain how the different proficiency between two or more languages reflects differential reliance on lexical and conceptual activation during the code-switching production processes.

An interesting hypothesis arises from provided data. Due to the rarity of a perfectly symmetrical bilingual community, as stated by Bowern (2010:343), and to evidence provided by Držić, it is possible to postulate another trend, or better another proceeding that ended up with asymmetrical, or polarized type of multilingualism. In fact, as already seen in Chapter 2, if we consider an environment of multilingualism as the starting point of Ragusan cultural environment, then we witness a gradual decline leading towards a simpler trilingualism, where, in turn, we assist to a consistent distortion of roles. Let us try to understand better this point in order not to confuse the position held by each language.

The period preceding the final disappearance of Ragusa in 15\textsuperscript{th}-16\textsuperscript{th} century shows a completely different type of linguistic environment. As a matter of fact, Ragusan is considered to once had been the spoken language in Dubrovnik, along with the presence of two adstrate\textsuperscript{41} languages: Serbian and Italian. Nonetheless, another parallel theory was elaborated by Malinar (2004), assuming that this trilingualism spread in a slightly different way. Namely, the autochthonous Romance component was considered to be the substratum language, whereas Serbian was the adstrate and a superstrate language, but only towards Ragusan. In addition, Venetian was spotted as another adstrate language, but as a superstrate towards both Serbian and Ragusan.

\textsuperscript{40} Native speakers of two languages are sometimes called equilingual, or ambilingual, if their mastery of both languages is equal.

\textsuperscript{41} Thomason and Kaufman (1992) provide an exhaustive definition of adstratum, or of an adstrate language: “adstratum languages are those of invaded or invader groups that are neither dominant nor subordinate in the contact situation.”
Despite Malinar’s conjecture, as we already know, these two strata (Serbian and Italian) prevailed over decades to arrive to the extinction of what initially was the major component, on account of inconsistency of the population support. However, Serbian and Italian did not seem to keep on coexisting as two languages holding the same political and social status. Namely, already in Držić’s period we testify a gradual change from two languages being on the same level, to a completely different type of linguistic interference. In fact, rather than talking about two equal languages, we could risk to a certain extent and postulate a new inversion of roles in terms of a Serbian substrate and an Italian superstrate. On one hand, Serbian is assumed to be the “underlying layer”, the substance of reality in which all more accidental properties or phenomena are grounded. On the other hand, instead, Italian can be considered as the language “being layered” and as “the one that makes inroads into a place where a language is already fully established”. Simply by considering definitions of substrate and superstrate, we will probably be able to understand the position that each of the two languages held. Namely, the linguistic substrate is a contact situation in which the speakers of a culturally less prestigious language shift to L2, which is the language considered culturally superior – the one of a superstrate. However, the overall linguistic issue was more articulated than simply being made of two codes. To be precise, we should consider all of the idioms present on the territory of Ragusa and try to detect their status. What appears evident is that there was a certain type of difference between the codes. Namely, in terms of substrate-superstrate distinction, we can determinate two substrate languages and two superstrate languages. Concerning substrate, on one hand, we surely still find some traces of Ragusan that rapidly disappearing due to its low prestige and to the society that was gradually becoming more and more of Slavic ethnicity. The second substrate we find is Serbian that was gradually substituting Ragusan and becoming the main mean of communication. On the other hand, instead, we find Venetian, the superstrate language which was used as a lingua franca for maritime trade and exchange. Surely, it held a political prestige in Dubrovnik and was used in administrative and economical writings. Apart from Venetian, we find Italian as a second superstrate – Italian, which was an aulic and literary language. The latter point, however, needs further explanation. Is it possible to consider Italian as a new language that gradually took place and influenced the already-existing Serbian in
Dubrovnik? The most reasonable answer to this question appears negative. Thus, historical facts have proved multiple times that both languages had existed at least since the Middle Ages and even before, in their older forms. It is no wonder that Serbian and Italian were considered adstrate languages, because it was a phenomenon of mutual influence of languages in contact and, in turn, they were considered superstrate languages towards Ragusan. Due to a gradual change, Slavic component has prevailed over Italian. This fact clearly emerges from Darsa’s works where the majority of the characters have an L1 Serbian and, partially L2 Italian. L2, however, is not to be viewed necessarily at the same level of L1. We find no traces of an early bilingualism in Darsa’s comedies, on the contrary, L2 Italian could act as a prestigious language in social differentiation.

To conclude, it is necessary to say that we find no confirmation about this hypothesis in any of the references mentioned so far. What is clear is that a gradual mutation has occurred, which brought to a change of status and roles between Serbian and Italian in Dubrovnik. Our hypothesis proposes Serbian as a substratum language, along with the remaining of Ragusan, while Italian and Venetian might be assigned the label of superstrate, two languages that influenced the substratum, but never managed to substitute it.

However, what has not been mentioned yet is a contact among Serbian dialects that occurred in parallel to the Serbian-Italian influence that operated on a larger scale. Undoubtedly, both processes are fundamental for the final outcome which is the language that has for the most part been preserved until today. We will now briefly mention language contact among Slavic dialects and successfully, provide a deeper analysis including both processes.

2.3. Language contact among Slavic dialects

Apart from the almost obvious Italo-Serbian substrate-superstrate influence, another matter deserves an equal amount of attention. Surely, the distinction we have already talked about is accepted and shared by numerous scholars, whereas the point we are about to deal with appears somehow new, if compared to the existing researches. What
we are speaking about is a contact among different Slavic dialects. In fact, despite the continuous reference simply to Serbian, this component was mainly made of Shtokavian dialect, along with the influence of Chakavian, operating mostly on a phonological level and the alternance of Jekavism, Ekavism and Ikavism.

Dubrovnik’s Slavic segment in the Renaissance still largely contained features of an archaic Shtokavian on all the linguistic levels, which, however, partially consisted of Chakavian too. At the same time, this is exactly when the Neo-Shtokavian innovation began to gradually distort the system. Such changes of the organic idiom are reflected in the works of many Renaissance authors, whenever a particular language implementation was not conditioned by stylistic needs.

Despite the different attitudes of the late 19th and even the 20th century, nowadays most linguists accept the scientific arguments for setting the archaic Shtokavian as the idiom underlying Ragusan Renaissance literature. Establishing the role of Chakavian elements in the literary language is not possible without the involvement of historical dialectology and reconstruction assumed the Dubrovnik spoken idioms in the 16th century. It should be borne in mind that this is a period of large population migration and Dubrovnik region, a consequence of the Turkish invasion of the country Croatian and neighboring nations and because of significant alterations in the composition of the population of Ragusan Republic in the 16th century, the idiom gradually changed.

In general, we can say that certain expressions belong both to Shtokavian and Chakavian variant. Starting northern from today’s town Neretva, to the western side of Cetinje, we could only find Ikavian Shtokavian that later switched to Neo-Shtokavian. Nonetheless, since natural borders among languages presuppose the existence of gentle and mild transition areas, we can notice that in 15th century Dubrovnik was more likely to use the Ikavism variant, rather than Jekavism, to which it switched bit by bit. Moreover, in 16th century both the Old and Neo-Shtokavian coexisted almost uniquely in Dubrovnik, whose language contained conspicuous Old Shtokavian features, which were constantly threatened by these newly arrived innovations.
3. Ascertaining contact-induced change

Multiple definitions can be generated on contact-induced change. One of them, despite its not so straightforward meaning, is defined as follows: “Contact is a source of linguistic change if it is less likely that a given change would have occurred outside a specific contact situation” (Thomason 2001: 62-63). What strikes here is that Thomason does not shape the contact-induced change as the only possible outcome. In fact, internal change might occur as a parallel phenomenon and what really surprises is the fact that most historical linguists are reluctant to admit language contact as one of the possible causes of linguistic change. Thus, as Thomason (2010: 34) points out, in such cases, only when the hypothesis of an internal change has failed, scholars are likely to admit the existence of other types of external causes. However, we will only be dealing with language contact and its consequences.

Traditionally, contact-induced change is additionally partitioned into two broad categories: those due to ‘borrowing’ and those due to ‘interference’ by an L1 or other primary language on an L2 in the course of second language acquisition (SLA). The phenomenon of interference, in turn, includes both substratum influence and transfer. Inconsistencies in the use of these terms pose a problem for the classification and analysis of the outcomes of contact-induced change. Furthermore, similar labels have been used to refer both to the outcomes of language contact and to the processes that lead to such results. Therefore, in order not to aggravate the matter and to provide the clearest picture of a change provoked by language contact, I will stick to Thomason’s extended research that touched all the issues concerning contact, starting by outlining a theoretical background, explaining possible causes and arriving to the point to draw conclusions on its outcomes.

So far, both social and linguistic predictors have been analyzed in Chapters 1 and 2. Hence, we will deal with contact-induced change on all the levels of linguistic analysis: phonological, morphological, syntactic and lexical. Numerous examples will be provided regarding data extrapolated from Marin Držić’s works.
3.1. Phonological change within Darsa’s works

We have already remarked that the most conspicuous studies done so far on Darsa’s comedies and in general on the linguistic change concerns phonology. In fact, Bartoli and Muljačić are the two most common names when it comes to phonetic and phonological analysis, but several other scholars have followed their same path. Apart from their researches, one among all deserves to be run through again. Thus, despite being slightly outdated, Rešetar (1933) is still maintaining its primacy concerning the analysis of the phonological change within Marin Držić and his comedies. Let us now get a closer look on Rešetar’s analysis by providing additional examples that resulted from my personal research. In this point, we will only deal with phonetic and phonological change. More on lexemes will follow later in this chapter. This part will exclusively be focused on delimiting perimeters of Serbian dialects, because no substantial phonological change resulted from a larger scale contact between Serbian and Italian.

Philologists often noted that a common discussion concerning our Ragusan author, Marin Držić, was dealing with the length of the already mentioned yat syllable. Its longer version constituted of –ie- appears numerous times as mentioned by the philologist Milan Rešetar in his discussion on this topic. As a matter of fact, his studied in 1921 affirmed that the longer variant of yat was pronounced as one single syllable in Ragusan dialect. We can find numerous attestations in Darsa’s prose, as for example liepa stvar, scienite, brieme, grieh, riečmi, etc (all of the listed lexemes are contained in the prologue of Dundo Maroje). In addition, the negation of the verb ‘to be’, used as the auxiliary, also contained long yat, for example niesu, in contrast to its Ekavian version nisu.

Rešetar has also warned us about the two-syllabic pronunciation of yat in the last open syllable\(^{42}\) and in the word-ending pronominal and adjectival declination. Thus, many examples are included once again in Dundo Maroje, as in

\[
\textit{svoijem} / \text{Ek. svojm}
\]

\(^{42}\) In an open syllable, nothing comes after the vowel. For example, \textit{he} is an open syllable, because there is nothing (no consonants) closing it in.
Apart from lexemes marked by Jekavism or I(j)e kavism, that often are more than just a simple phonological feature, but also question the orthographical rules, many texts of Ragusan authors are characterized by a consistent Ikavian component too. Its presence is more frequent in lexical than in grammatical morphemes. In fact, several examples are to be detected in Dundo Maroje, but also in Skup, such as:

- svitla zvizda / Ek. svetla zvezda
- svitlo lice / Ek. svetlo lice
- ovdì / Ek. ovde
- na bilome prozoru / Ek. na belom(e) prozoru

Rešetar also provided additional interesting data concerning Ragusan idiom in 19th century. Surprisingly, his research showed a conspicuous use of Ikavism in a modern context, which leads us to think that this variant might have prevailed over the other two variants and that it lasted over centuries. However, no concrete conclusion can be drawn out of such a statement, because there are no reliable proves showing that Ikavism actually reflected a popular use of this form rather than simply being a stylistic choice.

Despite a massive use of Ikavian variety, although geographically more distant, Ekavian elements could be spotted as well. Namely, for example, Držić cites the adverb of
frequency *vazda*, deriving from OCS *въсьгда*, as in *ljubav ku si mi vazda nosio*. In addition, at the beginning of *Dundo Maroje*, he mentions *skule od mudaraca*. This noun *mudarac* which is simply a substantive derived from the adjective *mudar*, with the addition of the suffix *–ac*. What is peculiar to this noun is that it kept the phoneme *lal* deriving from the nominative of the adjective itself, which is a common feature of the Old Shtokavian. In fact, a similar version of this noun is also used nowadays in its form *mrtavac* (noun) - *mrtavac* (adjective) in the region of Slavonija.

Another common trait of the Slavic Renaissance language in Dubrovnik was a common presence of the voiced palate-alveolar affricate *ldʒ* in its graphemic form *dž*, as in *spendža, tradžedija, fadžan, pendžaju, alodžaju*, etc. This feature is believed to be of Romance influence, specifically if we consider borrowed forms. It is also necessary to mention that this phoneme was kept and is still used as the initial consonant. For example, *džora* (also *dzora*) instead of *zora*, *dzet* instead of *zet*, etc. (Vulić-Vranković 2016)

Again, Vulić-Vranković (2016) mentions W. von Humboldt, who noticed that everything related to a language is dynamic, that the language is a mental process and that if it is truly to be studied then it should be approached from the side of his vital activity. Darsa’s activity can be recognized on many different levels, due to his primary Jekavian Shtokavian, interwoven with Ikavian Chakavian. If we consider the dynamics of this development, we can understand that Darsa’s presence was crucial also in the development of today’s language.

Ragusan 16th century authors still to a considerable extent preserve numerous features of archaic Shtokavian usage that is compatible to Chakavian and Kaikavian. Notwithstanding their knowledge of the written word from previous centuries and the vigorous and constant communication with their Chakavian speaking fellow nationals, many non-Neo-Shtokavian features of these writers did not originate under this influence but were simply the result of the fact that Dubrovnik’s variant at that time was not still to a considerable extent Neo-Shtokavian. A neglect of the phenomenon of archaic Shtokavian in modern Croatian philology manifested in the attitude of researchers towards the language of the Ragusan Renaissance writers, whose language was mostly of the Old Western Shtokavian type. Thus, it has happened that the various dualities that we meet in their language are a result of the gradual transition of the Dubrovnik’s idiom from
its archaic Shtokavian to Neo-Shtokavian that has been interpreted in terms of Shtokavian-Chakavian contacts. What is usually called Chakavian in Dubrovnik Renaissance writings mostly has Western Shtokavian features, that is, the features of archaic Shtokavian. Such an opinion about the Chakavian influence has largely been determined by the fact that the literary language of the earlier periods in Croatian philology has often been sharply demarcated by historical dialectology. So, it happened that some linguistic approaches were considered the influence of literary works from older period or even the influence of other speech idioms, while the fact that Dubrovnik writers could have simply adopted a given linguistic usage from their own local speech was ignored.

3.2. Morphological change

The analysis of a morphological type does not reveal much on Serbian-Italian contact. On the contrary, we could distinguish two different processes that deserve to be explained separately. In other words, on one hand, we will deal with morphological items that underwent a change and are relevant to the passage from Old-Shtokavian to Neo-Shtokavian. On the other hand, we will take a closer look on affixes – mostly suffixes – that went through a trial of adaptation in their passage from Italian to Serbian. As it will be seen below, in the majority of analyzed cases, such suffixes are part of either Italian loan words or calques that endured phonological adaptation and are now part of Serbian to all effects.

When speaking about Ragusan Renaissance morphology, it is inevitable to mention the process of transmorphemization. Just as regarding transphonemization, transmorphemization occurs in contexts of morphological substitution. Filipović (1980), who invented this term, uses it “to cover changes occurring when a morpheme of the donor language, according to the basic principle of morphological adaptation begins with the formation of the citation form of the loan, and goes on in the creation of inflected forms, whatever the part of speech may be.” It splits into three different types: zero transphonemization (a model is taken by the borrowing language as a free morpheme
with a zero bound morpheme), *compromise transmorphemization* (a loan keeps a final bound morpheme that does not conform to the borrowing morphological system and maintains a compromise replica) and *complete transmorphemization* (a bound morpheme is replaced by a borrowing language bound morpheme). We will now separately have a closer look on both the Serbian – Italian side of the contact and the possible Old Shtokavian – Neo Shtokavian one as well.

3.2.1. Italian - Serbian morphological change: nouns and verbs

All the three processes of *transmorphologization* can be detected in the morphological change that occurred as a consequence to the Serbo-Italian contact. It mostly involved the categories of nouns, verbs and adjectives. Starting from zero transmorphemization, we assist to a process of morphological adaptation through the loss of the final bound morpheme. Such characteristics is common in lexemes containing the suffixes –o and –e, usually marking masculine singular lexemes, as in the following examples involving the categories of nouns and adjectives:

*consiglio > konselj*

*segno > senj*

*compagno > kompanj*

*atto > at*

*errore > eror*

*villano > vilan*

*galante > galant*

*degno > denj*

*spirito > spirit*

*passo > pas*
The process of compromise transmorphemization is the one that probably occurred more often in the Italian - Serbian morphological change. As it is possible to notice in the following examples, Italian bound morpheme is maintained in the Serbian final outcome. Due to the discrepancy between the two languages, only degemination materialized, as in the following substantives:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{vedovella} > \textit{veduvela}
  \item \textit{mascherata} > \textit{maskerata} / \textit{maškerata}
  \item \textit{oste} > \textit{ošte}
  \item \textit{allegrezza} > \textit{alegreca}
\end{itemize}

During morphological adaptation of both nominal and adjectival categories, it is relatively common to find a graphemic insertion \textit{–a–}, a feature standing between a phonological and a morphological use, applied in order to break longer chains of consonants that usually do not occur in the standard Shtokavian form. For example:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{impedimento} > \textit{impedimenat}
  \item \textit{appuntamento} > \textit{apuntamenat}
  \item \textit{alloggiamento} > \textit{alodamenat}
\end{itemize}

Concerning the adaptation of Italian suffixes, we have to mention certain common nouns, usually ending with \textit{–tur} and deriving from the Italian \textit{–tore} or \textit{–ijer}, coming from \textit{–iere}. Here are listed some examples found in \textit{Dundo Maroje}:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{dottore} > \textit{doktur}
  \item \textit{drappiere} > \textit{drapijer}
\end{itemize}
Along with compromise transmorphemization, we also find a conspicuous amount of complete transmorphemization in verbal borrowings, where the standard Italian suffix is substituted with its Slavic equivalents –iti and –ati. What is fundamental to mention is that in this category we find integrated loan words, that resulted from the application of the morpheme marking the infinitive. Also important to say is that we can notice a phonetical and graphical adaptation of such loan words, whose meaning does not change, except for fewer exceptions that will be seen below:

alloggiare > alodžati
affaticarsi > afatigati se
bastare > bastati
abbandonare > abandonati
accomodarsi > akomodavati se
spacciarsi > spačati se
consumare > konsumati

---

43 We find a very similar pattern in Županović (2008). However, she spotted a conversion into verbal suffixes –at and –it, whereas in Držić, we find the integral version that is also used nowadays.

44 For what concerns reflexive verbs, their reflexive particle follows the infinitive as a graphically stand-alone fraction.

45 The additional morpheme –va- is also called imperfective morpheme, whose function is only aspectual and serves to derive imperfective verbs from the perfective ones.
3.2.2. A postulation of a morphological change from Old Shtokavian to Neo Shtokavian

Apart from Serbian-Italian morphological contact that was shaped around the process of adaptation of morphological features during the transfer from the Romance component to the Slavic one, finally, but not less important is the mutation performing in the sphere of Old Shtokavian / Neo Shtokavian. As a matter of fact, many works dating back to Renaissance, among which we find Darsa’s ones, preserved many archaic forms of cases. Let us now try to go through some of the major peculiarities that can be detected in his writings.

Among the first features, we find the archaic suffixation of locative, ending with –i, rather than with the Neo-Shtokavian form –u, as in na neb-i (Tirena), instead of na neb-u. However, at the same time newer version makes an entrance, as in u polj-u, na grl-u, etc. We could represent this feature of a possible passage from Old Shtokavian to Neo Shtokavian in a more specific way according to the change in diachrony, as it follows:

neut. sing. loc. na nebi > na nebu

A change in the inflection of nouns is relatively common in the passage from a more archaic to a newer form. Nonetheless, unfortunately, we are not able to affirm whether this feature is only linked to neuter nouns or not, due to the lack of additional attestations.

Next, compared to locative and its limited appearance, we can detect a larger number of old forms of dative. Namely, masculine plural nouns generally kept the archaic suffixation –om, compared to –ima, as in rekoše negromant-om, instead of rekoše negromant-ima; daše duh žvirat-om, instead of daše duh žvirat-ima, etc. There existed another variant marking dative plural, i.e. –em, for example svojim prijatelj-em (Tirena), instead of svojim prijatelj-ima. At the same time, dative feminine plural ending in –am occurs as well, as in zelenim trav-am i gustomu dubju daju, which was later replaced by –ama. This newer version would have transformed our example into zelenim trav-ama I gustomu dubju daju.
Another trace of the Old Shtokavian could possibly be spotted in masculine and neuter plural of the instrumental case, ending with –i. For example, we find *medu vlastel-i, tvojima druz-i*, instead of *medu vlastel-o, tvojima drug-ovima* (Tirena); *s negromant-i*, standing for *s negromant-ima* (*Dundo Maroje*). A very similar scenario is present in the female ending too, where the suffix –ami is used for the plural form of instrumental, instead of –ama, for example, *s ruk-ami* instead of *s ruk-ama*, or *s tizijem osob-ami*, instead of *s tim osob-ama*.

However, such examples belong to archaic forms in their absolute sense, i.e. they belong to a phase of a common Slavic that was transmitted to Old Church Slavonic and was used in the Reign of Serbia as well. We can conclude that there is no enough of evidence to distinguish Shtokavian dialect from the Chakavian one, because the same transformations could have occurred in both processes, even though most probably, in two different temporal contexts.

Surely, examples that we have seen are not the only ones witnessing traces of an Old Shtokavian component in Darsa’s writings. However, we can conclude by saying that the Renaissance was still a period of transition and of affirmation for Neo Shtokavian that coexisted along with its archaic version for a long period.

3.3. Syntactic innovations

Strictly considering Serbian-Italian contact, the syntactic level of analysis should probably be the most interesting to go through, along with lexical change, because it allows us to spot some innovative features that are likely to be a consequence of the contact. Namely, some structures were faithfully reported from Italian into Serbian, such as word order. We will know examine some of the major peculiarities found specifically in Držić’s *Dundo Maroje* by starting from word order issues.
3.3.1. Word order issues

Županović (2008), by analysing a writing of Martin Benetović, realized that the word order in specific sentences did not follow the standard SVO pattern which is one of the main features of Serbian and in general, Slavic syntax. Namely, sentences containing their verbal component made of an auxiliary and a past participle and a personal pronoun as their object, used to invert the order of auxiliary and pronoun. Although it might sound confusing, the following example should clarify this theoretical statement:

MAROJE: Ajmeh, moja starosti, na što me si dovela, da se po svijetu tučem za dežvijanijem sinom, za haramijom, da iz morske pućine izvadim zlato, da iz jame beza dna izmem imanje” Pet tisuć dukata dah djetetu u ruke! Vuku dat u pohranu meso! Jaoh, valjalo bi mi dat dvaest I četiri konje na dan, na svaku uru svoga, za eror ki sam učinio.

(First act, scene 1)

The first construction that we find exemplifies in a perfect way our theory. In fact, na što me si dovela inverts the order of the auxiliary si and the pronoun me, whose role is of a direct object. Instead, standard Serbian would require the following pattern: na što si me dovela. Such a construction is meant to derive from the Italian-Slavic contact, because it literally follows the Italian construction following the order of pronoun, auxiliary and finally, past participle – for example, ‘mi ha visto’, ‘ti ho incontrato’, ecc. What is important to add is that this change occurs exclusively when a direct object is needed, i.e. in the use of accusative and is not to confused with the use of dative, that in Serbian follows the standard pattern (aux. + dat. + past part.).

3.3.2. Calques of prepositions in the construction of the final clauses

Another feature, spotted both in Županović (2008) and in my research on Marino Darsa, is a consistent use of the Italian formula per + infinitive, which in Serbian is simply replaced by the preposition za, as in the following example:
DUGI NOS: I, za dovršit besjedu, ovi obrazi od papagala, od mojemuća, od žaba, žvirati, barbaćepi i s koze udreni i, za u kraće rijet, ljudi nahvao, počeše se plodit i miješat s ženami nazbilj po taki način, er se ljudi nahvao toliko počeše umnažat, er poče veće broja bit od ljudi nahvao neg ljudi nazbilj.

(Introduction)

VLAHO: A ja sam njeki antiki čovjek, tučem se po svijetu za dobit kaban, da u daž ne okisnem.

(Act two, scene 2)

Ma ovo brijeme od poklada budući od starijeh našijeh odlučeno na tance, igre i veselja, i videći se našoj družini od Pometa ne puštat proć poklade bez kojegodi feste ili lijepe ili grube, stavili se su za prikazat vam jednu komediju koja, ako i ne bude toliko dobra i lijepa, ali su ove žene ljepe koje ju će gledat, i vi dobri koji ju ćete slušat.

(Prologue)

Many other examples using the construction za + infinitive can be detected in Dundo Maroje, in spite of the standard use of this preposition in Serbian that is followed by a noun, rather than a verb. Moreover, this construction is still used in certain parts of Croatia.

Lastly, Županović (2008) detects some additional syntactic features that do not occur in Darsa’s comedies. One of them is the use of ‘double morphology’ by adding an additional preposition in the presence of an inflection marking the case that does not require it. For example: s druge strane od kuće does not require the preposition od, due to already-existing genitive case marking.

However, despite such additional syntactic features that cannot be considered as part of the standard language, because of their inconsistent use, the construction za + infinitive and the change in word order are two crucial phenomena that are still being used in the Croatian variant.
3.4. Lexical change: borrowings and their orthographical adaptation

Investigations on language contact usually prefer the lexical sphere, which is the most sensitive area to the influence of foreign elements. One of the two main outcomes of contact-induced change is borrowing, which is usually associated with situations of language maintenance and is defined as “the incorporation of foreign features into a group’s native language by speakers of that language” (Thomason & Kaufman 1988: 37). There is a continuum in borrowing, from words that remain relatively alien and unassimilated in pronunciation and spelling, through those that become more or less acclimatized to forms that have been assimilated so fully that their exotic origin is entirely obscured.

There are numerous Italian lexemes in Darsa’s comedies, but the largest part of this group underwent a long process of phonetic adaptation. In fact, it is very rare to find foreign, non-adapted words, because almost all the foreign lexemes are loan words, integrated words, whose orthography was adapted if compared to the receiving language form. Tagliavini synthetized the Serbian-Italian contact in the following way:

Dovunque esistono contatti tra due popoli e due lingue si determinano influssi reciproci; nel caso dell’italiano e del croato46 e dei loro rispettivi dialetti, gli influssi linguistici e le penetrazioni lessicali sono avvenute però quasi unicamente in un solo senso, e cioè dall’italiano sul croato, mentre i dialetti italiani sono rimasti immuni da influssi slavi … La differenza quantitativa e qualitativa tra i due flussi di scambi lessicali si deve al diverso prestigio delle due lingue e al fatto che mentre, sul litorale e nelle isole di Dalmazia, gli Slavi hanno generalmente conosciuto l’italiano, gli Italiani solo molto raramente hanno conosciuto e parlato il croato.

46 Many scholars have addressed the Slavic component in Ragusa as to Croatian, due to reconnect to today’s linguistic distinction.
Such a synthesis partially confirms my previous hypothesis on the distinction of substrate-superstrate that attributes a major percentage of distribution to Serbian (which is assumed to be the substrate language) and a minor one to Italian (superstrate).

Moving back to loan words and their orthographic adaptation, Županović (2008) noticed that there are more or less ten different innovations that need to be spotted: transphonematization\textsuperscript{47} zero, degemination, the change /o/ > /u/, /e/ > /i/, /i/ > /e/, /ie/ > /i/, the insertion of the grapheme \textit{j} inside /ia/ and /io/, an exchange between fricatives and affricates, an exchange of palatals and an exchange of sibilants. We will now see some examples, most of which have been detected by Županović (2008).

At first, the transphonemization occurs in type zero, free morpheme + zero bound morpheme, as in the following examples:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{banda} > \textit{banda}
  \item \textit{natura} > \textit{natura}
  \item \textit{segreto} > \textit{sekreto}
  \item \textit{fortuna} > \textit{fortuna}
  \item \textit{ventura} > \textit{ventura}
  \item \textit{felicità} > \textit{feličita}
\end{itemize}

Secondly, degemination is a very common feature that we often find in the passage of lexemes from Italian to Serbian, which is also typical of Venetian.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{avvocato} > \textit{advokat}
  \item \textit{bagatella} > \textit{bagatela}
  \item \textit{appunto} > \textit{apunto}
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{47} The term of transphonemization has often been used by Yugoslav, or better, Serbo-Croatian scholars to designate the function of substitution on phonological level. Particularly, it has been used by Filipović (1981) in his studies on anglicisms in Serbo-Croatian. The concept splits into three distinguished types: complete transphonemization (the description corresponds to phonemes in the borrowing language), partial or compromise transphonemization (original phonemes differ in part from the ones in the borrowing language) and free transphonemization (this type occurs very frequently and depends on the similarities and differences on the phonological systems of the borrowing language and the lending language). Another type is zero transphonemization, represented by the formula free morpheme + zero bound morpheme.
allegrezza > alegreca
errore > eror
faccenda > fačenda

Probably the most common vowel change is /o/ > /u/ that we find in numerous examples in, as Županović specifies, both stressed and unstressed syllables. Again, this feature was very common in Venetian as well.

argomento > argument
fattore > faktur
torto > turto
corto > kurto
scapolo > skapulat

Italian diphthongs are subjected to a change that splits into two different directions. On one hand, they are simplified into one single vowel, so that we obtain /ie/ > /i/ as in the following examples.

cancelliere > kancilir
forestiere > frustir

The diphthong /ua/ instead, undergoes the transformation into /va/, as in:
persuadere > persvadit
guazzetto > gvacet
sguardo > zvardo
perseguitare > persegvitat
On the other hand, certain /ia/ and /io/ diphthongs are separated by the intervocalic element /j/.

- fastidio > fastidijo
- contemplazione > kontemplacijon
- bestia > bestija / beštija
- primiera > primijera
- ruffiana > rufijana
- furia > furija
- matrimonio > matrimonijo
- collana > kolajina
- cavaliere > kavalijer
- astuzia > astucija

Several consonantal changes are not to be forgotten. Mostly fricatives and affricates have undergone this change.

- vaggheggiare > vagižat
- geloso > lužiljuz
- capriccio > kapric

Dealing with consonants, we also find the velar sibilant /s/ transforming into a post-velar sibilant /ʃ/.

- pistola > pištola
- scrigno > škrinjo
- scale > škale

Some other transformations are worth being mentioned, even though the following examples do not occur as frequently as the previous ones.
Nonetheless, it is also necessary to mention that we do not only find Italian loan words, but a few Turkish borrowings too. For example, already in the first lines of the first act, Darsa utilizes the term *haramija* standing for brigand. This term was actually introduced into Serbian in 1539, after the arrival of Ottoman soldiers in the neighbouring area of Dubrovnik. Other examples are *dzubun* (< Tur. *zibun*), standing for a short male coat, *didija* (< Tur. *gidi*), meaning silly and/or nasty boy.

In fact, during their almost two-century-long rule in parts of Croatia, the Turks influenced local population strongly, and these influences were, and still are, reflected in today’s Croatian language. Turkish influences in the Slavic language were mostly spread by the Turkish army, Turkish administration, but also thanks to Islamised Slavs (mostly from Bosnia) that were forced to relocate to parts of Croatia during Ottoman rule. Islamised Slavs spoke mostly Shtokavian dialect that was already strongly influenced by Turkish (at that time Bosnia had already been for a longer period under Ottoman rule), especially through so-called ‘Bosnian Turkish’.

Additional foreign words that are worth being mentioned are relatively different from any other lexemes that have already been mentioned and analyzed in this paragraph. As a matter of fact, firstly, we find *Gramarzi* right at the beginning of *Dundo Maroje*. This form is often translated into Serbian as ‘velika hvala’ and despite the fact that it could appear as a potential calque of an Italian dialectal form (due to the geographical proximity) might seem probable, as Jones (1976) explains, it was used in Middle High German (MHG) in 13th century. However, it derives from Old French and its expression

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48 Bosnian Turkish is a special idiom that belongs to Balkan dialects of Turkish language and was used in Bosnia exclusively as a form of oral communication between non-Turkish subjects to Ottoman authorities. This idiom was used as some kind of filter for phonological adaptation of Turkish words before they entered Shtokavian dialect.
grant merci. It later appeared also in the form grammercy, coming from French grammerci.

Two other very interesting lexemes are mandžagvadanj and parlašuša. On one hand, mandžagvadanj looks simply as a phonetically and orthographically adapted univerbation of the Italian compound mangiaguadagni, that however, is a rare form standing for ‘spendaccone’. In Dundo Maroje this term gains a slightly different meaning and stands for a ‘dangler’, or ‘parasite’. What leads us to think that the possibility of being a simple loan word is the fact that the lexeme has maintained its original shape, but has undergone phonological and orthographical adaptation. In fact, the diphthong /ua/ is transformed into /va/ and there is the loss of the final vowel.

On the other hand, we find parlašuša. This form seems to have been intended by Držić himself, because it only appears in his works, specifically in Dundo Maroje. It is explained as ‘a woman that parla šu-šu, i.e. a woman who speaks Italian’. No specific analyze has been done on this lexeme, but it appears as a compound made of a union of a verb and a noun, whereas parla- is obviously an Italian form and –šuša can be assumed as a onomatopoeically originated nouns, standing for ‘Italian language’.
CONCLUSION

The uniqueness of Ragusa is clearly visible on many different levels. A conspicuous amount of scholars have attempted to provide a linear guide of the main steps of its existence by following the historical temporal line. The importance of such works cannot be questioned and, as a matter of fact, each research illustrates a piece of a puzzle that is the Ragusan social, historical and political life. However, none of the references refers to all three components at once. Obviously, this thesis has never aimed to become a monumental and unique work that would surpass and overcome what has been done so far. On the contrary, its aim was to contribute by focusing on language, which is its social component and on the language contact that occurred in this area. This was done by referring to some main historical factors that acted as causes to the contact itself.

Chapter 1, in fact, retraced some major historical facts of Dubrovnik from the “birth” of this town to the end of its Republic at the hands of Napoleon and his conquests. One of the two major focuses of this chapter was the description of the so-called Silver period, in which Ragusa was still under Venetian domain. This period was crucial for Ragusa despite the lack of autonomy and the impossibility for the patriciate to rule the town on its own. This longevous authority of the Serenissima permitted this little Dalmatian town to develop in the image of such an important and strong puissance in the Mediterranean. The second main point of this chapter was entirely dedicated to Ragusan Golden era. I attempted to explain the main reasons why and how, despite the continuous threat of being attacked and the succession of different rulers, this town managed to keep its neutral position. Namely, the greatest Ragusan diplomatic skills and abilities in bargaining acted as a cohesive point of strength in some crucial moments of Ragusan history. The entire Chapter 1 was, therefore, dedicated to the explanation the key factors in the life and survival of this community.
Chapter 2 retraced the linguistic evolution and the language contact in Dubrovnik. It enclosed three components, whose status needed to be deepened individually, due to irreconcilable inconsistencies., incompatible timelines and different political status that each of the three languages held. In the first part of the chapter, the main characteristics of Ragusan were explained based on the few existing written records due to its early extinction. This language was initially placed within the branch of Dalmatian languages, whose partition was argued by several scholars. We have seen a possible distinction between Ragusan and Veliote, as Bartoli (1906) affirmed, a tripartition among Ragusan, Jadertin and Veliote by Zamboni (1976), but also a slightly different division done by Muljačić (1962) from a sociolinguistic point of view, diving languages into Ragusan, Jadertin and Labeatic.

A slightly distinguished treatment was reserved to Serbian and Italian that outlived the disappearance of the local autochthonous language and coexisted in an uneven symbiosis. Not to forget is the presence of Venetian, along with Serbian and Italian. All the conditions for the development of an ambience of contact were respected. Moreover, a massive use of code-switching, on one hand, contributed to spread all three idioms, but on the other hand, acted as an indicator of a high level linguistic proficiency. The last point in this chapter was a linking unit that guided us towards the last one. The importance and the contribution of literary writings surely helped to divulgate the knowledge of linguistic codes.

This theme was majorly developed in Chapter 3 thanks to the analysis of the comedies of Marin Držić. The huge importance and the role of this author in the linguistic domain are often underestimated. In fact, apart from fewer precious works on linguistics and numerous literary analysis, we do not find much more on the linguistic issue. This research tried to provide an understandable and coherent rediscovery of the Ragusan linguistic issue in the Renaissance mainly thanks to Darsa’s masterpiece Dundo Maroje, along with the rest of his writings. The main investigation touched most of the linguistic levels of analysis, starting from phonology, to syntax and lexicon. The outcome of this research shows certain points of Italian-Venetian-Serbian contact on the syntactic and lexical level, a contact of Serbian dialects on the phonological and morphological level.
and a change of “roles” between Serbian and Italian. Let us very quickly clarify all the three points.

Firstly, after the definite extinction of Ragusan, Serbian and Italian moved from being superstrate languages towards Ragusan that was considered to be the substrate, to remaining the only living languages in Dubrovnik. What happened was a change of roles, in which Serbian became the new substrate and the most widespread language and Italian remained as a superstrate, along with the already existing superstrate Venetian as well.

Secondly, the result of the Serbo-Italian contact showed an innovation through changes in word order and in the construction of final clauses through the use of the formula za + infinitive. Namely, the construction of the final clause most likely reflects the Italian construction per + infinitive. In fact, we find numerous examples, as in za dovršit besjedu (Dundo Maroje). Concerning word order, instead, we can affirm with certainty that a conspicuous amount of examples showed an inversion of verb and object, resulting the order SOV, as in na što me si dovela. It is necessary to point out that the change of word order occurred only in the presence of a pronoun that acted as a direct object.

In addition, the contact on the lexical level produced a very long list of Italian loan words that underwent a process of orthographical adaptation. Several processes showed us that borrowings underwent a change, such as /ie/ > /i/, as in the example of forestiero > frustir.

The contact, or better, non-contact among Serbian dialects showed clearly that Chakavian barely touched Ragusan Slavic idiom. On the contrary, our initial doubts were justified by a passage from Old-Shtokavian to Neo-Shtokavian that gradually took place and involved different varieties of syllabic pronunciation due to the length of yat. However, this feature ended up being crucial in understanding the separation of Dubrovnik from the Ekavian variant, and its enclosing of the Jekavian one. In addition, we could distinguish two outcomes. On one hand, yat was pronounced as only one single syllable, as in liepa stvar, while on the other hand, it was split into two syllables, as in svojijem. Not to forget is the presence of numerous Ikavisms too, such as svitla zvizda, as Rešetar affirms.

Despite the greatness and largeness of such an articulated research, I hope that my contribution could help to somehow enrich the content of materials on Dubrovnik at least in part to that which has enriched me and my personal knowledge.
However, still a lot of work needs to be done. In fact, numerous scholars have worked on outlining a historical background of Ragusa, but the sources on the language itself and the linguistic issue are limited. To conclude, I would like to quote a statement written by Muljačić that incites scholars to continue working and researching on this unique town on the Adriatic:

Iako je dubrovačka prošlost relativno dobro proučena, još su mnoga važna pitanja nerasvetljena i ima mnogo posla za sve ljude dobre volje. Veliki zadaci očekuju stručnjake svih disciplina, a ne samo lingviste. Dubrovnik, biser naše kulture i veliki prozor kroz koji smo upoznavali Evropu i ona nas, to zaslужuje.
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