

Bosnian

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1. Language description

Like Serbian and Croatian, Bosnian is a South Slavic language. The Slavic languages are a branch of the Indo-European language family. Before Yugoslavia officially fell apart in 2003, the language spoken in the country was called Serbo-Croatian. After the disintegration of Yugoslavia, languages in the different countries were labelled differently. In Serbia, the language is called Serbian; Bosnian in Bosnia, and Croatian in Croatia.

Bosnian is one of the three official languages of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Serbian is spoken mainly in the north and south-east of the country and Croatian is spoken mainly in the south and south-west. According to Riđanović (2012), the languages are very similar in spite of the different names (quoted in: meertaligheidentaalstoornissenvu.weebly.com). The speakers of the languages experience no difficulty communicating with each other. The sounds of the languages are exactly the same, although there may, of course, be individual differences between speakers.

The grammatical and lexical differences between the three languages are minimal. An example of the word 'girl' translated into the three languages: 'dèvojka' in Serbian, 'djèvojka' in Bosnian and 'divojka' in Croatian. Distinctive for Bosnians is that they often use many words borrowed from Turkish.

Bosnian is spoken by about 3 million people, most of whom live in Bosnia and Sandzak. Sandzak is a region in Serbia and Montenegro where a majority of Bosnians live. Many Bosnians fled the country during the war, so the language is also spoken in other parts of the world.

Table 1

Bosnian consonant system (cf. hum.uva.nl/BKS/bosnisch/bosnisch_klanken.html)

	Coronal					Dorsal				
	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
plosives	p b			t d			k g			
nasal	m			n		ɲ	ŋ			
trill			r							
fricatives		f v		s z	ʃ ʒ		x			
affricate ¹				ʦ	ʧ dʒ	tʃ				
liquid				l		ʎ				
semi-vowels	ʋ					j				

¹ various allophones occur in the affricates, pronounced more towards the front or the back.

Syllable structure

Consonant clusters are common in the Bosnian language - in initial, medial, and final positions. The affricates are separate phonemes and are not counted among the clusters.

<i>Bosnian script</i>	<i>IPA transcription</i>	<i>Translation</i>
hljeb	hʎɛb	bread
Crv	ʦru	worm
Radost	radost	joy

Stress pattern

There is no rule for the stress placement in Bosnian. Usually stress is on the first syllable ('Sarajevo), but often not (gos'podin). Stress shifts places in different forms of the same word. Bosnian is described as a pitch accent language. Pitch accent is emphasizing sounds by pronouncing them in a higher tone.

2. Age of acquisition of consonants

No publications were found on the acquisition of phonemes by young Bosnian children. There are publications available about young Croatian children; this literature has been used because the difference between Bosnian and Croatian is minimal.

According to Fabek (2015), researchers disagree about the AoA in Croatian. Compared to other authors, Posokhova (2008) expected the acquisition of the consonants at a younger age. Vuletić (cited in Fabek, 2015) expects the first acquisition of consonants at only 3 years of age. Posokhova's (2008) acquisition order is most similar to that of Polish. Polish is very similar to Croatian; therefore, the acquisition order of Posokhova is maintained.

Table 2

Age of Acquisition of consonants based on Croatian (Posokhova, 2008)

age	phonemes
1;0 – 1;11	p, b
2;0 – 2;11	t, d, k, g, f, x, m,
3;0 – 3;6	n, ɲ, ŋ, j, v
3;7 – 4;6	s, z, ʃ, ʒ, ʦ, ʣ, ʎ
4;7 – 5;0	ʧ, ʨ, ʤ, r

Posokhova's summary does not indicate whether there is a difference in AoA between consonants in initial or final positions. The research also lacks substantiation.

3. Common phonological processes

Salihović & Junuzović-Žunic (2009) name the following phonological processes and ages. The processes and ages are not based on the authors' own research, but on general development processes as described by Bowen (1997) and Dodd (2000). The examples are derived from the Bosnian words from Speakaboo.

voicing	puʒ → buʒ	tot 3;0
devoicing	gɔlub → gɔlup	tot 3;0
stopping	sɪr → tɪr	tot 3;0
deletion finalC	majmun → majmu	to 3;3
fronting	kraua → traua, miʃ → mis	to 3;6
gliding	balɔn → bajɔn	to 5;0
lateralisation	riba → liba	to 5;0
cluster reduction	tsuijet → suijet, tuijet	to 5;0
(affricate reduction)	dʒɛp → dɛp, ʒɛp / zɛʦ → zɛt, zɛs	to 5;0

At age 5, all phonemes should be acquired. The expectation is therefore that the processes mentioned will then have disappeared.

4. Lexical variation

In order to elicit the /f/ the word /fudbal/ (football) is chosen. In Bosnian, the word /noʒɔmet/ is also used.

For the word /druʒ/ (tree), /grana/ can also be used. This depends on where the speaker comes from.

5. Performance of typically-developing Bosnian toddlers in the Netherlands

No information available yet.

6. Sources

Literature

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