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Hate Speech in Croatia – an Overview of Selected Approaches

Abstract

The article provides an overview of three approaches to speech that denigrates and demoralizes a particular individual and/or group based on their ascriptive characteristics. It focuses on nationalistically motivated hate speech in Croatia while drawing from examples stemming from the World War II Ustaša regime that have become increasingly present in contemporary Croatian society. The overarching goal of the article is to provide insight into approaches that together form a framework bringing forth some of the crucial elements for the analysis of hate speech in Croatia.

Keywords: *Za dom spremni,* hate speech, fear speech, toxic speech, dangerous speech.

Introduction

In post-conflict societies such as Croatia the presence of hate speech carries a heavy burden stemming from collective traumas and contested memories emerging from the past and subsequently manipulated within the political arena. The 1990s Yugoslav Wars remain an explicit and tragic example of the power of language and political rhetoric to incite conflict (see, e.g. Thompson, 1999; Kurspahić, 2003). A rise of nationalistically fueled hate speech in Croatia has been observed in recent years, expressed primarily through speech and symbols originating from the World War II Independent State of Croatia and subsequently re-signified only to be employed during the 1990s Homeland War. The increased presence of the Croatian World War II fascist

salute *Za dom spremni* ("Ready for the Homeland") in contemporary Croatia has been addressed (Pavlaković, 2008; Brentin, 2016; Blanuša and Kulenović, 2018), along with the overall rise of nationalism, populism, and divisive speech that fuel it (Brentin and Pavasović Trošt, 2016; Kulenović, 2016; Čolović and Opačić, 2017).

The communicative situations in which the salute *Za dom spremni* has appeared are diverse, including its use during football matches (Brentin, 2016), the inscription on a memorial plaque near the former Ustaša concentration camp at Jasenovac (Milekić, 2016; Milekić, 2017), on radical right-wing Facebook pages (Damčević and Rodik, 2018), through public chants from the side of high school graduates in Rijeka in May 2018, followed by the desecration of the town's Liberation Monument with the fascist salute (Šestan Kučić, 2018), at the annual Bleiburg commemoration (Pavlaković, Brentin, and Pauković, 2018), and as a way to gain profit (Vladisavljevic, Rudic, and Lakic, 2018).

Some of the main questions within the debate about hate speech are intertwined with issues regarding free speech and democracy, extremism, and political correctness (Greenawalt, 1995; Hare and Weinstein, 2009; Hughes, 2009; Waldron, 2012). The ambiguity of the hate speech designation makes it challenging to establish concrete, effective, but at the same time non-repressive measures in order to counter it; it is gradually becoming a term prone to misuse and misinterpretation, especially when its presence is used to further antagonism towards a particular outgroup from the side of certain political elites. This article attempts to provide an overview of selected approaches to speech that aims to degrade and demoralize a specific group based on their ascriptive characteristics. Approaches focus on hate speech followed by nuances of fear speech (Buyse, 2014), toxic speech (Tirrell, 2018), and dangerous speech (Maynard and Benesch, 2016) in the context of the previously mentioned examples stemming from the WWII Ustaša regime.

Ready for the Homeland

The fascist salute *Za dom spremni* ("Ready for the Homeland") has become a fairly common occurrence in different socio-communicative contexts in the past couple of years in Croatia. There are a number of conditions that enabled and reinforced this, such as the rise of nationalism, populism, and radical-right groups and organizations (see Brentin and Pavasović Trošt, 2016). The Croatian political dynamic was one of the decisive elements that gradually reinforced a hermetic sphere of prevalent narratives that largely influenced the subsequent nature of debates surrounding the salute. Namely, the return of the conservative party the *Croatian Democratic Union* (HDZ - *Hrvatska demokratska zajednica*) paved the way for the resurfacing of values and attitudes present during the 1990s Homeland War, with the most salient manifestations being the rise of nationalism and hate speech, historical revisionism, and an increasingly hermetic sphere of narratives.

Za dom spremni is a fascist salute that was employed in World War II in the Nazi puppet state Independent State of Croatia (NDH – *Nezavisna Država Hrvaska*) established on the 10th of April 1941 and dissolved in 1945. The Ustaša regime led by Ante Pavelić was built on various rigorous racial laws, regulations, and measures that were established and implemented relentlessly against Jews, Roma, Serbs, and antifascists, as well as anyone opposing the regime. Thousands of people were murdered in concentration camps established in the NDH and it remains one of the darkest parts of Croatian history.[1]

It has been pointed out by scholars (Pavlaković, 2008; Brentin, 2016) that *Za dom spremni* is without a doubt a fascist salute. However, this has been continuously disputed by various radical right-wing organizations and figures who have sought to re-signify the salute as the manifestation of the desire of the Croatian people to gain independence. The attempt to maintain the perceived linearity of the Croatian statehood narrative (see Bellamy, 2003) exhibits the common logic of inclusion-exclusion; namely, the aspects that are seen as not fitting into a particular narrative are deemed non-existent and pushed to the culture's periphery (Lotman, 1990). This has been further fueled by the Yugoslav Wars in the 1990s, when *Za dom spremni* was used by the Croatian Defense

[1] See Sabrina P. Ramet (2006), "The NDH – An Introduction", in *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions,* 7 (4), 399-408.

Forces (HOS - *Hrvatske Obrambene Snage*), a paramilitary arm of the far right-wing party, the Croatian Party of the Rights (*Hrvatska Stranka Prava*) (Brentin, 2016).

The socio-communicative situations and the political discourse surrounding the salute are vast and do not fall into the scope of this article. However, providing an overview into the current state of affairs is necessary in order to illustrate the distinctive cultural layers the salute *Za dom spremni* has been a part of while slowly making its way into the various instances of everyday life.

Ready for the Homeland – the salute lives on

During the past couple of years one event can be seen as symptomatic (although not exclusive) for the resurfacing of certain myths and narratives in contemporary Croatia (see Jović, 2017), that being the return of the conservative political party the Croatian Democratic Union. It was followed by the rising presence of nationalistic values and attitudes that were prevalent during the Homeland War which in turn fueled a rather hermetic sphere of perspectives concerning various historical and political discussions.

The presence of the salute in public discourse in recent years can be characterized as fairly incessant. Probably one of the most widely problematized example of its use was the case of Josip Šimunić, the Croatian football player who chanted the salute after Croatia won the match against Iceland in 2013 during the World Cup qualifications. Šimunić was subsequently fined by FIFA and banned from the following ten matches, but he failed to take responsibility for chanting the salute in front of thousands of people, justifying it by stating that for him, home carries a positive connotation (see Brentin, 2016). The case of Šimunić is a good example of the interplay of extremism, remembrance, and the ways how different nationalist practices become embedded and reproduced in different cultural layers (Billig, 1995; Brentin, 2016).[2] Chanting *Za dom spremni* in front of an audience at the stadium, only to subsequently be spread on national television and social media, gave rise to discussions regarding the rehabilitation of the World War II Ustaša regime in contemporary Croatia and the contested narratives that accompany it.

[2] For a more detailed analysis of the role of sport for nation-building in post-socialist Croatia, see Dario Brentin (2013), 'A lofty battle for the nation': the social roles of sport in Tudjman's Croatia, in: *Sport in Society: Cultures, Commerce, Media, Politics,* 16 (8), 993-1008.

The second case when the use of the salute caused controversy was the memorial plaque that was installed by former members of the Croatian Defense Forces (HOS – *Hrvatske obrambene snage*) and right-wing politicians in 2016 in Jasenovac near the former World War II concentration camp that was operating in the Independent State of Croatia (Milekić, 2016). The plaque contained the salute *Za dom spremni*, which caused a chain of reactions regarding the claim that the plaque is there to honor the Croatian defenders (*branitelji*) of the Homeland War, with the attempt to modify the meanings attached to the salute. As a result of the rising historical revisionism, attacks on the anti-fascist heritage, and the lack of governmental responses, a boycott from the side of the Jewish and Antifascist organizations followed and culminated with their refusal to attend the official Jasenovac commemoration with the state officials; instead, they organized separate commemorations. After months of debate, the memorial plaque was moved to the nearby village Novska while still containing the salute, with the relocation rather having the function of appeasement than that of actually solving underlying issues (Milekić, 2017). One of the events that illustrated the lack of a concrete response from the side of the Croatian government extended even to the state top when the Croatian president Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, stated that the salute is not fascist, but that it was merely compromised in World War II (HINA, 2017).

Other cases of the presence of the salute include online environments as new sites of symbolic conflicts (Rutten, Fedor, and Zvereva, 2013), where the rise of radical right-wing groups and organizations has shown a largely hermetic sphere of communication characterized by the tendency to create self-descriptions based on oppositions with the notion of the Yugoslav as the principal enemy of the Croatian people (Damčević and Rodik, 2018). Another case is Patriot Hrvatska (*Patriot Croatia*), a shop in Split, Croatia, operating online as well and selling products containing the insignia of the World War II Ustaša regime such as *Za dom spremni* and the letter *U* (standing for *Ustaša*). In addition to the public and legal discrepancies surrounding those symbols, the process of transferring meaning from a verbal to a visual sign system and reframing it in a way that it still carries the dominant meaning is the determining feature of those examples.

The first one, the stylized letter *U* standing for the Ustaša, has been incorporated into a smiley-face emoticon and called *Uncle Smiley.* The second example is the attempt to re-signify the salute *Za dom spremni,* while containing the word *za* (for), followed by the image of a house and the word *spremni* (ready). After the story about the shop's controversial products was reported by local media, one of the shop's owners wrote a statement on the official Facebook page Patriot

Hrvatska stating that "the method of association is irrelevant and individual […] and they [the products] are made in a way so that everyone sees what they want to see."[3] He continued to emphasize that Croats have survived and suffered hundreds of years of foreign and domestic occupation and that the idea [supposedly that of Croatianness] will survive no matter what. Here the author draws on the myth of redemption and suffering (see Schopflin, 1997) that became especially salient during and after the Croatian Homeland War of the 1990s and gave rise to the still prevalent myth of victimization. After a staff member from BIRN (Balkan Investigative Reporting Network) called the author (Filip), he declined to talk about Patriot Hrvatska, explaining that "since the Republic of Croatia is not in the Balkans and thus automatically does not belong to any kind of imaginary region, I consider every conversation on the subject pointless as well as futile" (Vladisavljevic, Rudic, Lakic, 2018).

The year 2019 is not isolated from events that are reinforcing an already hermetic political and social sphere as one consequence of the embeddedness of hate speech. In May 2018, a number of graduates from the Pomorska škola Bakar (*Nautical School in Bakar*) were photographed and recorded marching through the city centers while wearing black T-shirts, chanting the salute *Za dom spremni,* throwing smoke bombs, and firing torches. This culminated with the desecration of the Rijeka's Liberation Monument with the salute as well as other fascist symbols (Šestan-Kučić,2018). The year 2019 was marked by a few incidents, among which was the antagonistic rhetoric employed by the Vukovar's mayor Ivan Penava, directed towards the Serb minority in a trauma-laden environment (Novosti, 2019). The European Parliament elections were no exception and the appearance of hateful messages on election billboards of the Independent Democratic Serb party were often ripped or defaced with anti-Serb graffiti and symbols of the WWII fascist Ustaša movement (Vladisavljević, 2019).

Although the Article 325 of the Croatian Criminal Code determined a punishment for up to three years in prison for people who "call for hatred or violence to be directed against groups […] because of their racial, religious, national or ethnic affiliation" (NN 125/2011), while organizers of hate-mongering groups can receive up to six years in prison, hardly anyone using the salute *Za dom spremni* is prosecuted according to this article. Usually the person and/or a group is charged under misdemeanor legislation and fined. In March 2018 Croatia's Council for dealing with

[3] Metoda asocijacija je nebitna i individualna […] su napravljeni tako da u njima svatko vidi ono što želi vidjeti. My translation from Croatian – K.D.

Consequences of the Rule of Non-Democratic Regimes presented a proposal that would allow the use of the fascist salute *Za dom spremni* in exceptional situations, while still considering it unconstitutional (Milekic, 2018). This has furthered debates regarding the lack of concrete countermeasures and regulations, leaving the salute unsanctioned by Croatian law. The Croatian office of the Ombudsman has pointed out in the report published in November 2018 that the "relativizing of the crimes committed by the NDH undermines the fundamental values of the Constitution, while the lack of reactions facilitates the rise of hate speech" (Ombudsman, 2018). Furthermore, the Holocaust Revisionist Report, published in the beginning of 2019, categorizes Croatia as one of the most problematic countries in Europe when it comes to historical revisionism and the proliferation of hate speech (Vladisavljević, 2019). One of the harms of hate speech, as Waldron puts it (2012), is the sense of security citizens share in a space they inhabit and which is subsequently eroded by the increased presence of hate speech. This sense of security Waldron deems as public good, while hate speech undermines it or simply makes it difficult to sustain; namely, "it does this not only by intimating discrimination and violence, but by reawakening living nightmares of what this society was like – or what other societies have been like – in the past (Waldron, 2012: 4).

Approaching hate speech

When thinking about ways to address hate speech, numerous questions come up; from the relations of freedom of speech and hate speech, political correctness, and legal responsibility, to the definition of hate and how to measure it, the factor of intentionality, and what falls under the scope of such speech and why, to name but only a few. For the purpose of drawing more attention to some of the notions and elements that may be useful when dealing with nationalistically motivated hate speech in Croatia, I will focus on an overview of three contributions, each of which can inform this process. There was no particular method employed that informed my selection, but the variety of the authors' approaches, both on the theoretical and practical level. With that in mind, this paper will serve as a limited overview of the rising approaches to speech that seeks to marginalize and denigrate based on certain ascriptive characteristics that a target group shares. Although I am not at all opposed to the hate speech designation that has become prevalent both in scientific and vernacular discourse, since it is useful to be able to refer to an established and familiar notion, the

ambiguity that characterizes it poses significant difficulties for the development of effective approaches and the avoidance of subjective application (see Benesch, Buerger, Glavinic, and Manion 2018). Moreover, although there is a level of universality to almost any phenomenon, local peculiarities call for a thorough observation of diverse instances in order to grasp a clearer picture of this complex communicative act. The three approaches presented below are therefore inevitably tied to one another and each of them enables a fruitful toolkit for the detection and analysis of hate speech, while posing valuable questions along the way.

Fear speech

Fear speech, a notion proposed by Antoine Buyse[4] in his article *Words of Violence: 'Fear Speech,' or How Violent Conflict Escalation Relates to the Freedom of Expression* (2014), draws our attention from hate to fear as a more pressing factor when it comes to potential violence escalation. What Buyse focuses on are cases where speech had a significant role in inciting and justifying violence against another group[5], such as in the tragic cases of Rwanda and former Yugoslavia (see, e.g. Kurspahić, 2003). The existence of a history of violent conflict needs to be taken into account when dealing with such speech, as it carries a much heavier load than it does in societies without such a history.[6] While drawing from law, social sciences, and conflict studies, Buyse proposes a couple of factors he deems relevant for the assessment of words that may lead to, conflict escalation. His choice to focus on ethnic conflict stems from it being the most common kind of violent intra-state conflict (Buyse, 2014: 782). Buyse proposes that, while hate speech inevitably can provide a base for a certain degree of violence incitement, it is fear that serves as the final element for its escalation. This more often than not has to do with the process of making the so-called in-group perceive the out-group as a collective that is planning to attack and harm them in the near future. Some of the salient factors that Buyse points out in regard to inciting speech and words are the content of the message, the context in which it appears, who makes the statement, and how it is disseminated. As it will be shown later on, these elements are problematized in the other two approaches as well.

[4] Antoine Buyse is a professor of human rights and director of the Netherlands Institute of Human Rights (SIM).

[5] The article *Accusation in a Mirror* (2012) by Kenneth L. Marcus provides an insightful exploration of this crucial mechanism that serves to justify violence against one group by convincing them that the intended victims will commit precisely those crimes that the first group intends to commit against them.

[6] I am not claiming here that the presence of hate speech is less significant in these cases, but the probability of a conflict escalation is usually higher in a conflict and trauma laden contexts and it should not be taken lightly.

An aspect that Buyse focuses on in more depth is that of framing, namely, the influence it has on our perception of events and phenomena. Framing inevitably presents a certain piece of information as more salient and memorable than another, which in turn influences how the event in question will be perceived from the side of individuals and groups. There are many ways to accomplish this and achieve effectiveness, for example, linking texts to certain symbols or narratives that evoke particular emotions and reactions in the target audience. This process is based on selection, meaning that there is always an aspect that is made central, dominant in the text, and other aspects that are excluded or found in the background. There are many questions that can help us when analyzing such texts, for example, considering who is the target audience, what is the central topic, who does it benefit, who does it seclude (and why) etc. In the Croatian context, one does not have to look far back in order to remember the destructive potential of both hate speech and fear speech and the effects of media framing in (re)producing the enemy (see Kurspahić, 2003; Kolstø, 2009).

Various groups and individuals are often engaged in the framing process and the maintenance of meanings a particular frame presents; these are often politicians, state officials, and the media. Different frames reproduce different meanings, and in the circumstances of heightened socio-political tension, they can serve as a significantly powerful tool for guiding collective action and constructing perceptions of the *other*. Relying on framing theory, Buyse presents three types of frames that can be extremely useful for the analysis of speech and/or symbols. The first one is the diagnostic frame that emphasizes the main problem in a specific situation and attributes blame and responsibility to particular social actors. An example can be the act of blaming an ethnic group for the existing living conditions or their worsening. The second frame is the prognostic frame, which has at its focus finding a suitable solution and strategies that support the latter; a more radical example can be the act of banishing an ethnic group, a solution which is then presented as the only possible option for a better future, therefore justifying radical measures. The third and final, motivational frame, functions as somewhat of a link between the diagnostic and prognostic frame, connecting them to the process of moral evaluation, which can further the process of justifying steps that follow, such as extreme marginalization or even violence. These forms of framing and speech/symbols appearing within as hate speech can be decisive for the advancement of the marginalization of a particular ethnic group or violence escalation, while fear construction may further the agenda when it is combined with feelings of existential dread. Although I would not

claim that fear speech is more dangerous than hate speech, as I think this would call for a more thorough analysis of diverse examples, both are active factors in the processes of enemy construction and further escalations this may lead to, and therefore should not be taken lightly.

Toxic speech

The second approach concerns toxic speech, a fruitful designation coined by Lynne Tirrell[7] in the article titled *Toxic Speech: Inoculations and Antidotes* (2018). With the effort to bring into dialogue philosophy of language and epidemiology, Tirrell's insight provides a rather innovative outlook of the issue of hate speech; while not exclusively focusing only on the latter, she looks at it from a more inclusive term, namely toxic speech that inflicts both individual and group harm, while in turn damaging the social fabric we are a part of. While basing her approach on the philosophy of language and epidemiology, she focuses on concepts from the study of biological toxins. By doing so, she accounts for the often insidious nature of toxic speech and the varying susceptibility to its harm. Two overarching ideas guide her contribution; her adamant stance according to which toxic speech damages the overall social fabric, and the implications of its frequency and the ways it gains power, such as due to the support of public officials (Tirrell, 2018: 118-119).

Tirrell considers toxic speech as speech that denies particular groups to actively exercise their citizen rights, turns one group against the other, furthers polarization within a society, and undermines the importance of a shared social life, among others (Tirrell, 2018; see also Waldron, 2012). Tirrell emphasizes the process of transmitting various social traumas through speech and symbols, as well as patterns that then help organize the structure of our environment; it does not mean that the words or symbols will take effect immediately, but the quantity will increase over time, functioning like smaller doses of arsenic that seem to have no effect, but subsequently lead to poisoning. The example of Josip Šimunić and his chanting of the *Za dom spremni* salute in 2013 comes to mind, which Dario Brentin succinctly characterized as "the banality of being ready" (Brentin, 2016: 11) pointing out precisely the transformation of the salute "from a socially marginalized memory narrative to a popular mnemonic practice perceived as banal and quotidian" (Brentin, ibid.).

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[7] Lynne Tirrell is associate professor of philosophy at the University of Connecticut.

While relying on medical terminology, Tirrell points towards the need for developing effective measure that would mitigate harm caused by toxic speech, and while doing so, she brings forth individual protections and collective action (e.g. strengthening social engagement and civil society) (Tirrell, 2018: 123). Two approaches she introduces have at their focus one main question – what do we actually do with language? Introducing Wittgenstein's theory of language games (see Wittgenstein, 1953), Tirrell observes speech as action, namely, "a language game as a whole that consists of language and the actions within which it is intertwined" (Wittgenstein in Tirrell, 2018: 124). In essence, language never acts alone and whenever we talk, we aim to accomplish something. Accordingly, toxic speech, including hate speech, can have a variety of functions; in this case it is usually to cause harm to a person or a group to a certain degree[8], be it emotional or physical. Building on the aforementioned, Tirrell presents an intriguing framework developed by Wilfrid Sellars who offered three main moves that can be considered as constitutive for any language game: entry transitions, moves within the game, and exit transitions (Tirrell, 2018: 124).

In the context of the examples from the Croatian context, an entry move would be Šimunić's chanting of the *Za dom spremni* salute. One of the questions that need attention are the identity of the speaker (toxic speech producer) and to what degree does this identity influence the possibility of others joining the game. Is someone automatically excluded from the game to begin with, given, for example, their status? The players determine the moves in the game, it is therefore crucial to see who enters the game and continues to make moves; this is inevitably a power play and the stakes are certainly not the same if toxic speech is uttered by a politician, athlete, or someone anonymous. The status of the speaker highly influences the course of the game and whether the speaker is challenged, supported, or ignored.

Finally, exiting the game can include a variety of actions such as the radicalization of particular groups, further marginalization, but also violence escalation in more extreme examples. The point is that exiting the game entails action that is noticeable already in the course of the language game; for example, the use of toxic speech from the side of influential persons, the lack of decisive action from the side of politicians and legal authorities, and the consequent proliferation of toxic speech. The moves for exiting the game uncover "physical and material changes wrought by our speech

[8] Although without a doubt relevant, the factor of intentionality will not be discussed here as it does not fall within the scope of the paper.

acts, but we must also track these back to the internal language-language moves that propel these exits (Tirrell, 2018: 126).

Moreover, the question of susceptibility and resistance to toxic speech should not be neglected; as in the case with specific toxins, children will be more susceptible to some types and more resistant to others. As a consequence of the spread of historical revisionism and hate speech in Croatia, there is a worrisome degree of use of the Ustaša symbols among the youth[9], with the absence of concrete measures that would mitigate existing harm and prevent further harm. One of the most effective measures long-term is the development of educational frameworks and activities that would have at their focus precisely the questions about the role of language for identity construction and hate speech as a communicative situation. Taking language for granted can be extremely dangerous, as Victor Klemperer powerfully and repeatedly emphasized in his book *The Language of the Third Reich: LTI - - Lingua Tertii Imperii: A Philologist's Notebook* (1947), where he provided a thorough insight into the role of language in the creation of the Third Reich and its unbelievable subtlety and intertwinement with the everyday.

A final aspect I would like to point to are the elements that Tirrell claims to be relevant for the evaluation of toxic speech; she does so by relying on the medical evaluations of toxins. According to Tirrell, we can distinguish four factors: the toxicant, i.e. the cause of harm, the dose, power, and quantity, route of delivery, and the susceptibility of the patient (Tirrell, 2018: 131). Surely, each harm is specific in its own way and will inevitably harm different individuals and groups in different ways and different amounts. The question of nuance when it comes to reception and resistance to a toxicant are an important question if we are to develop preventive measures and resistance on the level of a wider population. Moreover, the toxicant is not always necessarily explicit; for example, sometimes a much bigger problem is a lack of reactions from the ruling political party to the use of a fascist salute in public. As such, missing reactions or even a level of covert or explicit approval from the government are steps towards the relativization of hate speech and its presence in different spheres of everyday life. Although it is indeed a loaded and heavy topic to explore, the importance of language according to Tirrell is reflected precisely in its use for creating division among people and the ways how this leads to extreme examples of exit moves within a language game, such as violence escalation or genocide.

Dangerous speech

The dangerous speech model was coined by Susan Benesch[10] (see Benesch, 2013; Maynard and Benesch, 2016; Benesch et al., 2018) in order to recognize specific patterns that may lead to violence escalation. As she notes in *Dangerous Speech: A Proposal to Prevent Group Violence* (2013), hate speech is common in many societies, including those at minimal risk of genocide, and "some hate speech does not appreciably increase the risk of mass violence, although it may cause serious emotional and psychological damage (Benesch, 2013: 1). Dangerous speech can be defined as any kind of speech, image, or text that may incite violence (ibid.). Although Benesch maintains that the dangerous speech model finds its application primarily in analyzing and predicting violent conflict, I consider the model highly applicable not only in respect to analyzing patterns leading to potential violence escalation, but also for a more thorough approach to the analysis of hate speech, especially in post-conflict societies.[11]

Five elements constitutive of dangerous speech are as follows: the message, the speaker, the audience, the social and historical context, and the mode of dissemination (Benesch, 2013).[12]

1. The message itself that can be explicit, but also subtle; its character depends on the remaining four elements and is content and context dependent.
2. The speaker's influence makes a big difference in determining the dangerousness of a certain kind of speech, be it a political or religious leader, an athlete or singer, or sometimes even anonymous, which is common in online environments.
3. An audience is never homogeneous, therefore attention should be directed towards the degree of influence an audience may be susceptible to due to a history of conflict, unresolved trauma, or other circumstances that lead to the weakening of social ties to other social groups.

[10] Susan Benesch is the founder and director of the Dangerous Speech Project, trained as a human rights lawyer and an adjunct professor at American University's School of International Service.

[11] I am currently developing a more comprehensive approach to the potential uses of the dangerous speech model in Croatia, coupled with the cultural semiotics approach in order to account for the role of meaning-making mechanisms that shape such speech and its dynamic.

[12] Further development of the model can be found in the article "Dangerous Speech and Dangerous Ideology: An Integrated Model for Monitoring and Prevention" written by Susan Benesch and Jonathan L. Maynard where they expanded it to include a variety of justificatory mechanisms that make violence appear as acceptable and morally righteous.

4. The social and historical context emphasize the relevance of the overall environment in which speech reaches its audience; it may include aspects such as previous episodes of violence, war, and otherwise difficult living conditions.
5. Mode of dissemination is becoming an increasingly important element in a time when social media serve as one of the dominant means of communication and source of information. Furthermore, when a community depends only on one source of information, this may lead to the message being more influential than it would have been in different circumstances (ibid. 2-5; Maynard, Benesch, 2016).

Already on the level of the notion, *dangerous speech* is far less ambiguous than that of hate speech, and although it is not considered a perfect solution, at least three aspects can be observed as beneficial as opposed to the hate speech designation. Firstly, danger is something that is possible to evaluate and measure the potential degree of. It is, without a doubt, bound to fluctuate as meanings are not something fixed; however, danger is not as abstract as hate and no matter how subjective, we all operate with more or less concrete ideas about what constitutes potential danger for us as individuals and/or groups, whereas hate remains much more demanding to discern.

Secondly, the elements constituting the dangerous speech model, i.e. the message, speaker, audience, context, and mode of dissemination, are valuable both as a whole as well as when observed separately. When observed as a whole, we become aware of the multifaceted characteristics of dangerous speech and the variety of elements that shape its production, expression, and reception. This in turn enables a multi-perspectival view of such speech and makes its complexity much clearer. It needs to be emphasized that the dangerous speech model is not flawless; as with any model, its main function is to simplify a given phenomenon in order to provide a clearer account of it. The simplifying features of models are visible if we observe the elements separately and realize that each of them can be developed further into diverse subcategories and/or sub-models. Take into account, for example, the first element - the message. Subsequent elements and questions we may raise here range from the type of message (textual, visual, audible), the presence of discernible discursive characteristics and strategies that a message contains, whether it is explicit or subtle, and which particular cultural narratives and/or myths it draws from.

Thirdly, the hate speech designation often leaves a misleading impression that we are able to recognize it and that it is usually explicit, while dangerous speech directs us to the more nuanced expressions and versions of such socio-communicative situations and acknowledges the fact that hate speech does not need to be explicit in order to be dangerous. Furthermore, the dangerous speech model carries a strong heuristic potential and takes into account the role of actors, the cultural context and narratives, and dynamic of the speech at hand in order to examine it in a more thorough manner.

Reliance on the dangerous speech model in order to analyze nationalistically motivated hate speech in Croatia drives us to ask questions that help us avoid a superficial account of this complex communicative act. Moreover, it emphasizes the importance of the intertwinement of speech and symbols with the overall social fabric. The straightforwardness of the model allows for it to be adapted for research purposes as well as for the development of educational tools and frameworks. As such, each of the elements of the dangerous speech model illuminate a specific aspect of the communicative act in question, which also may differ depending on the type of message and the accompanying implications. Given the embeddedness of speech and symbols presented in this article and the fact of their spread in different cultural layers (e.g. sport, politics, the Internet, on memorials, etc.), such a model is extremely fruitful in grasping a variety of nuances we encounter it in. If we are able to comprehend the diversity of dangerous speech more thoroughly, we increase our chances for developing concrete ways for recognizing patterns as well as changes in such speech, and most importantly, for countering it in the long run.

Concluding remarks

This article set out to provide an overview of three approaches to speech that denigrates and demoralizes a particular individual and/or group based on their ascriptive characteristics. Those were *fear speech* (Antoine Buyse), *toxic speech* (Lynne Tirrell), and *dangerous speech* (Susan Benesch). The focus was on nationalistically motivated hate speech in Croatia stemming from the World War II Ustaša regime, such as the salute *Za dom spremni* and accompanying speech and symbols. The three approaches served to illustrate both the complexities of hate speech and the elements that should be taken into account in order to gain a more comprehensive insight into the communicative act in question.

Accordingly, Buyse's approach emphasized the importance of fear for furthering division between ethnic groups and the roles of different frames for the advancement of specific agendas, such as discrimination and marginalization of particular groups as well as violence escalation. Lynne Tirrell's account of toxic speech brought into dialogue philosophy of language and epidemiology in order to show how this can be fruitful for the detection and analysis of toxic speech, but also for the development of counter measures and different modes of resistance. Finally, the dangerous speech model coined by Susan Benesch serves as a valuable framework that enables us to identify multiple elements relevant for the effectiveness of such speech while not neglecting its often nuanced nature.

Each approach draws our attention towards the importance of the multiplicity of features that characterize hate speech. As such, the selected contributions should guide us in the direction of interdisciplinary dialogue when it comes to the study of hate speech. Having more tools at our disposal not only increases the potential for building a more substantial framework, but also reminds us of the subtleties of language and why they should never be taken for granted.

Sažetak

Rad pruža uvid u tri pristupa govoru koji degradira i demoralizira individualce ili grupe temeljem njihovih askriptivnih karakteristika. Slijedom toga, fokus je na nacionalistički motiviranom govoru mržnje u Hrvatskoj te primjerima vezanim za kontekst Drugog Svjetskog rata i ustaškog režima Nezavisne Države Hrvatske, koji su postali sve prisutniji u suvremenom hrvatskom društvu. Cilj rada je pružiti uvid u različite pristupe koji kao cjelina mogu poslužiti kao svojevrsni okvir koji u obzir uzima neke od presudnih elemenata za analizu govora mržnje u Hrvatskoj.

Ključne riječi: *Za dom spremni,* govor mržnje, govor straha, toksičan govor, opasan govor.

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