two eminent linguists—and University of Chicago alumni—consider the relationship between language and politics. Victor Friedman (AM ’71, PhD. ’76) considers the proliferation of languages and dialects upon the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia, while Salikoko Mufwene (PhD. ’79) weighs some of the advantages and limitations of the ecological metaphors used by linguists concerned with language endangerment.

Language used as a political instrument can involve homogenization or diversifica-
tion. Requiring a specific language for employment in the public sector is one way that a state can enforce unity and secure its power. For example, the Act of Union joining Wales and England in 1536 stipulated that no one was to hold office under the Crown in Wales "unless he or they use the English speech or language." A state's creation of citizens through public education can also affect language use. In the 1930s, during the same period when school children in northern Greece were being physically abused if they spoke a home language other than Greek at school, children in Wales were forced to wear wooden yokes with the words "I will not speak Welsh" if they spoke Welsh in school. While the ideological equation of language with nation, territory, and state has led to the endangerment and elimination of linguistic diversity in some instances, it has had the opposite effect in others. Such was the case in the territory of former Yugoslavia.

From the point of view of South Slavic dialectology, the territories of former Yugoslavia and Bulgaria form a continuum along which emerge gradual changes in the linguistic system from village to village. Boundaries called isoglosses, map specific linguistic features, such as where dialects begin to use a definite article (from southern Serbia and Kosovo southward and eastward) or where the ancient Common Slavic nasal vowel that sounds like on in French has changed consistently to o (from western Bulgaria and northern Macedonia northward and westward). Political borders, however, and the official languages to which they more or less correspond, are relatively arbitrary. As the eminent semanticist Max Weinreich is reported to have said, a language is a dialect with an army and a navy. Where a dialect boundary corresponds to a national one, it is owing to the coincidence of some geographical feature (e.g., a mountain or river) that serves as a convenient territorial marker and also encourages dialect differentiation. As the Ottoman Empire broke up during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, linguists furthered the competing projects of their nascent nation-states. Serbian linguists deployed the abovementioned a-isogloss and others to define the Serbian language, which in turn was intended to be coterminous with the Serbian nation, its territory, and its state. Bulgarian linguists, on the other hand, deployed the definite article isogloss as the definition of Bulgarian, with the same extra-linguistic implications. (The vitality of this approach is demonstrated by the fact that a Bulgarian dialect atlas was published in 2001 using this same definition of Bulgarian.) During the nineteenth century, spoken dialects

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"...Languages have been treated as precious natural resources, allegedly critical to the survival of cultural diversity, which must also be maintained in the same way as biodiversity in our physical environment."

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were also recruited for the formation of modern standard languages, which would themselves be the vehicles of identity formation and state power. At that time, the majority of the population in the territory that eventually became the Republic of Macedonia consisted of Slavic speakers whose primary source of identity was religion. Literate Christian Slavic speakers in both Macedonia and Bulgaria—all of whom were subjects of the Ottoman Empire—called their colloquial language *Bulgarian*. By the mid-nineteenth century, however, a struggle over control of the emerging vernacular-based literary language became manifest. Two principal centers had arisen: one in northeastern Bulgaria, the other in southwestern Macedonia. Intellectuals in Macedonia envisioned a Bulgarian literary language based on Macedonian dialects or a Macedo-Bulgarian dialect compromise. Those in Bulgaria, however, insisted that their eastern standard be adopted without compromise. It is clear from polemics in the Bulgarian-language press of that time that, for some speakers, the differences between the Balkan Slavic dialects of northeastern Bulgaria and southwestern Macedonia were sufficiently salient that they could serve as the bases of separate identities and separate literary languages, which eventually they did. The eastern Bulgarian rejection of western Macedonian, together with other historical events, helped bring about the formation of a modern Macedonian linguistic and ethnic consciousness, and, in the twentieth century, the establishment of a Macedonian standard language and republic, first as part of Yugoslavia and now as an independent country.

The standardization of the former Serbo-Croatian into a single language was a nineteenth-century process with a defining moment. In 1850 a small group of Serbian and Croatian intellectuals signed a document in Vienna in which they agreed that since "one people must have one literature" they would adopt a single dialect—the most widespread in territory and numbers and one spoken in both the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires—as the basis of the literary language of both Serbs and Croats. During World War II, Croats rejected this unity in favor of a separate Croatian language. In 1954, a new accord was signed in Novi Sad in which Serbs, Croats, and Montenegrins agreed to a single language with two variants. This agreement began unraveling in 1967, when Croatian linguists accused their Serbian counterparts of dominating what was supposed to be a joint dictionary project, and in 1971 there was an unofficial declaration of Croatian linguistic independence. Although the dialects of the former Serbo-Croatian are territorial, e.g., Serbs and Croats in the same village spoke basically the same dialect, from the early 1970s onward, Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian linguists pursued separatist agendas by publishing their dialect studies in three separate dialectological journals. When Yugoslavia disintegrated, these linguists were in the position to help break Serbo-Croatian into separate standard languages to accompany the separate states. It is no coincidence that the author of the 1971 declaration served as vice-president of Croatia. At the same time, however, the dialect basis for both Bosnian and Croatian remains the large dialect agreed upon in 1850, rather than one of the smaller dialects spoken only by Croats or predominantly by Bosnians.

The case of Albanian in former Yugoslavia is similar. Albanian has two major dialects: Geg, spoken in northern Albania and most of former Yugoslavia, and Tosk, spoken in southern Albania, Greece, Italy, and the southwest corner of Macedonia. In 1967–72, the Albanian speakers of former Yugoslavia, the majority of whom live in Kosovo, abandoned their Geg-based standard in favor of the Tosk-based standard that the Albanian communist party, which was dominated by Tosks, had succeeded in imposing on Albania since the 1950s. In a spirit reminiscent of the abovementioned 1850 Vienna Accord, the 1972 resolution declared: "The Albanian people now have one unified literary language." With the fall of communism, Geg speakers in Albania sought to reintroduce the use of Geg, but the Kosovars, who were still part of Yugoslavia, would not support them, arguing "one language, one nation." Since the 1999 war and the change in Kosovos status, however, there has been some agitation for the creation of an independent Kosovo with a Geg-based standard language or at least the introduction of more Geg elements into the unified standard language.

Politics can create, preserve, endanger, and destroy languages. Any standard language is by its very nature a political creation, although the degree of overt state intervention varies. Current European Union policy on minority languages encourages the preservation of diversity in some spheres, although the bureaucratic demand for exponentially increasing combinations of language-translators has reached frightening proportions. In the Republic of Macedonia, the grammatical systems of the local dialects of six different linguistic groups have many identical features owing to centuries of mutual multilingualism. Under the pressure of globalization, however, more people now know English than any of the country’s minority languages, and, in minority-language schools, children sometimes learn more English than Macedonian. After centuries of linguistic diversification and preservation, thinking globally threatens speaking locally.