

## WORDS RELATED TO SOME ANNUAL EGUMES IN SLAVIC AND OTHER INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

Milena Mikić-Vragolić<sup>1</sup>, Aleksandar Mikić<sup>2A</sup>, Branko Ćupina<sup>3</sup>,  
Vojislav Mihailović<sup>2A</sup>, Sanja Vasiljević<sup>2A</sup>, Đorđe Krstić<sup>3</sup>, Mirjana Vasić<sup>2B</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Matica srpska, Novi Sad, Serbia

<sup>2</sup>Institute of Field and Vegetable Crops, Forage  
Crops Department, Novi Sad, Serbia

<sup>2</sup>BInstitute of Field and Vegetable Crops, Vegetable Crops  
Department, Novi Sad, Serbia

<sup>3</sup>University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Agriculture, Department of Field  
and Vegetable Crops, Novi Sad, Serbia

**Summary:** The Indo-European languages form the largest and the most widely distributed linguistic family in the world today. There is an extensive vocabulary common to all Slavic languages, including numerous words related to legumes. A large number of annual legumes were domesticated in the regions inhabited by Indo-European tribes, such as faba bean, pea, lentil, vetches and vetchlings. The Primitive Slavic \**bobъ* was derived from the Primitive Indo-European root \**bhabhā*, denoting *something swelling*. There are Slavic languages with two words for lentil, with one of them derived from the Primitive Indo-European root \**s(w)ok<sup>w</sup>*-, meaning juice, and another from the Primitive Indo-European root \**lent-* and \**lent-s-*. The Primitive Slavic \**gorchъ* has its root in the Primitive Indo-European \**ghArs-*, being one of the words denoting a leguminous plant. The Primitive Slavonic word for grain, \**zъrno*, has its origin in the Primitive Indo-European \**g<sup>er</sup>/a/n-* and \**grān-*, meaning both grain and to mature.

**Key words:** annual legumes, Indo-European languages, Serbian language, Slavic languages.

### Introduction

The Indo-European languages form the largest and the most widely distributed linguistic family in the world today, consisting of about ten branches with more than one hundred languages (Table 1). There are branches with extinct languages, such as Celtic, with Celtiberian and Gaulish, and Balto-Slavic, with Old Prussian and Polabian, as well as entire branches that left no living descendant, such as Anatolian and Tocharian. In the light of rich linguistic evidence, it is generally believed that the original language of the common ancestors of modern Indo-European nations, called Proto- or Primitive Indo-European, was conceived before 3,000 BC somewhere in Eastern Europe, most probably in present Ukraine, and that it split up into different branches and languages during the subsequent millennium (Crystal, 1991).

Table 1. Structure of the Indo-European linguistic family

Branch	Group	Subgroup	Language
Anatolian	<i>Carian, Hittite, Luwian, Lycian, Lydian, Palaic</i>		
Balto-Slavic	Baltic		Latvian (Lettish), Lithuanian, <i>Old Prussian</i>
	Slavic	East Slavic	Belarusian, Russian, Rusyn, Ukrainian
		South Slavic	Bosnian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Macedonian, <i>Old Church Slavonic</i> , Serbian, Slovenian
West Slavic	Czech, Kashubian, Lower Sorbian, <i>Polabian</i> , Polish, <i>Pomeranian</i> , Slovak, <i>Slavonian</i> , Upper Sorbian		
Celtic	Brythonic		Breton, Cornish, Welsh
	Continental	<i>Celtiberian, Gaulish</i>	
	Goidelic (Gaelic)		Irish Gaelic, <i>Manx</i> , Scottish Gaelic
Germanic	East Germanic	<i>Burgundian, Gothic, Vandal</i>	
	North Germanic		Danish, Faroese, Icelandic, Norwegian, <i>Old Norse</i> , Swedish
	West Germanic	High German	High German, Yiddish
Low German		Afrikaans, Dutch, English, Flemish, Frisian, Low German	
Hellenic	<i>Aeolic, Arcadian, Attic, Byzantine Greek, Doric, Ionic, Koiné</i>		Modern Greek
Indo-Iranian	Indic	Central Indic	Hindi, Hindustani, Urdu
		Dardic	Kafiri, Kashmiri, Khowar, Kohistani, Romany (Gypsy), Shina
		East Indic	Assamese, Bengali, Bihari, Oriya
		Northwest Indic	Punjabi, Sindhi
		Pahari	Central Pahari, Eastern Pahari (Nepalese), Western Pahari
		<i>Sanskrit</i>	<i>Pali, Prakrit, Vedic</i>
		South Indic	Marathi, Sinhalese
	West Indic	Bhili, Gujarati, Rajasthani	
	Iranian	East Iranian, <i>Old Persian, Avestan</i>	Baluchi, <i>Khotanese, Khwarazmian, Ossetic, Pushtu, Sogdian, Yaghnobi</i>
West Iranian		Kurdish, Modern Persian (Farsi), <i>Middle Persian (Pahlavi), Parthian</i> , Tajiki	
Italic	Oско-Umbrian	Faliscan, Oscan, Umbrian	
	Latin	Eastern Romance	Italian, Rhaeto-Romanic, Romanian, Sardinian
Western Romance		Catalan, French, Ladino, Portuguese, Provençal, Spanish	
Illyrian	<i>Illyrian, Thracian</i>		Albanian
Phrygian	<i>Phrygian, Old Armenian</i>		Modern Armenian
Tokharian	<i>Tokharian A (Agnean), Tokharian B (Kuchean)</i>		

extinct

Although the Slavic tribes in their original homeland in East Europe were scarcely discernible to both Greek and Roman civilisations, their remarkable expansion from the beginning of the fourth century AD made them a well-known race. Baltic and Slavic are considered one branch of the Indo-European linguistic family, with many similarities in vocabulary and grammar as a result of mutual influences and occupying adjacent areas from time immemorial. The first written Slavic language, in fact a dialect of the Salonika region from the ninth century, known as Old Church Slavic or Old Slavic, is regarded as being not far removed from Primitive Slavic, and as such it would have been readily understood in all Slavic-speaking lands. Although modern Slavic languages are considerably differentiated, their underlying genius is highly recognisable, and the difference between some of their literary languages is still relatively small (Lockwood, 1977). As in certain other branches of the Indo-European family, there exists an extensive vocabulary of numerous words common to all Slavic languages, retaining nearly the same forms despite the fifteen centuries long separation. Among these we find words related to animals and wild and cultivated plants, especially fruits, cereals and legumes.

Although soya bean (*Glycine max* (L.) Merr.), originating in the Chinese-Japanese centre of diversity, and common bean (*Phaseolus vulgaris* L.), from the Central American and Mexican centre of diversity (Zeven & Zhukovsky, 1975), are exceptions, a large number of the most important annual legumes today were domesticated in the regions inhabited by Indo-European tribes: pea (*Pisum sativum* L.), lentil (*Lens culinaris* Medik.), vetches (*Vicia* spp.) and vetchlings (*Lathyrus* spp.) in the Near Eastern and the Mediterranean centres of diversity, and faba bean (*Vicia faba* L.) in the Central Asian centre of diversity (Mihailović, 2006). Nearly all these species have been grown for centuries as both food and feed crops with diverse ways of utilisation, such as green forage, hay, forage meal, immature pods, grain and straw, as well as grazing and green manure (Mikić et al., 2006). This has ensured them a special place in modern trends, such as organic farming and sustainable agriculture (Ćupina et al., 2004).

### Words related to the genera and species of annual legumes

The Slavic words for faba bean are rather uniform (Table 2), meaning both *faba bean* and *pod* in certain languages, such as Russian and Ukrainian. The words for faba bean in Hungarian (*bab*) and Romanian (*bob*) prove that both peoples adopted this species from the Balkan Slavs (Skok, 1971). The Primitive Slavic *\*bobъ* shares the common Primitive Indo-European root *\*bhabhā*, designating literally *something swelling* (Hawtin & Hebblethwaite, 1983), with the Latin *faba*, the Old Prussian *babo*, the Albanian *bathë* and the High German Bohne (Pokorny, 1959), as well as with the English bean, the Welsh *ffa* and the Breton *fav*, all denoting beans, and the Greek *φακός*, meaning *lentil* (Vasmer, 1953).

It is notable that there are Slavic languages which have two different words for lentil (Table 2). One of them, with forms such as *сочиво* in Serbian, *сачавіца* in Belarusian or *sok* in Lower Sorbian, is derived from the Primitive Slavic *\*sočevica* (Vasmer, 1958), being related to the Primitive Slavic *\*sókъ* and the Primitive Indo-European *\*s(w)ok<sup>w</sup>-*, both meaning *juice* (Nikolayev, 2007). Another word, resembled in the Old Church Slavic *ljašta*, the Macedonian *лека*, the

Bulgarian *леџа* and the Russian *ляча* (Vasmer, 1955) is derived from the Primitive Slavic \**letjā* (Skok, 1972) and shares the same Primitive Indo-European root \**lent-* and \**lent-s-* (Nikolayev, 2007) as the Latin *lens* and the High German *Linse*, having been borrowed into Hungarian as *lencse*.

The words for pea in all modern Slavic languages have nearly the same form (Table 2), derived from the Primitive Slavic \**gorchъ* (Skok, 1971), with Serbian, Croatian and Rusyn words (*џрашак*, *grašak* and *џрацок*) representing diminutive forms. Analogous words are found in Baltic languages, such as *garšas* and *garšvā* for the species *Archangelica officinalis* in Lithuanian, and in Germanic languages, such as *Giersch* for the species *Aegopodium podagraria* in High German (Vasmer, 1953). All of these have their root in the Primitive Indo-European \**ghArs-*, which was one of the words for a leguminous plant (Nikolayev, 2007). The Primitive Indo-European root meaning pea is \**erog<sup>w</sup>(h)o-* and \**erog<sup>w</sup>(h)o-*, becoming *Οροβοζ* in Greek, *ervum* in Latin, *Erbse* in High German and *orbaind* in Irish, either with the original or with a slightly changed meaning (Pokorny, 1959), as well as the Serbian *уров* for the species *Vicia ervilia* (L.) Willd. The Latin word *pisum* is derived from *pinsere*, meaning *to shell*, which is the predecessor of the words for pea in modern Romance languages and by borrowing is also found in English (Marin & Tatić, 2004).

Table 2. Words for some annual legumes in Slavic languages

Language	Faba bean	Lentil	Pea	Vetch	Vetchlings
Belarusian	<i>баб</i>	<i>сачавіца</i>	<i>џарох</i>		
Bulgarian	<i>бакла, боб</i>	<i>леџа</i>	<i>џрах</i>	<i>фий, џлушина</i>	<i>секирче</i>
Croatian	<i>bob</i>	<i>leča</i>	<i>grašak</i>	<i>grahorica</i>	<i>graholika</i>
Czech	<i>bob</i>	<i>čočka, sočovice</i>	<i>hrách</i>	<i>vikev</i>	<i>hrachor</i>
Kashubian	<i>bób</i>		<i>groch</i>		
Lower Sorbian	<i>bob</i>	<i>sok</i>	<i>groch</i>		
Macedonian	<i>бакла</i>	<i>леќа</i>	<i>џрашок</i>	<i>уров, џлушина</i>	<i>џраворика</i>
Polabian			<i>gorch</i>		
Polish	<i>bób</i>	<i>soczewica</i>	<i>groch</i>	<i>wyka</i>	<i>groszek</i>
Russian	<i>боб</i>	<i>чечевица, ляча</i>	<i>џорох</i>	<i>вика, џорошџк</i>	<i>чина</i>
Rusyn	<i>боб</i>	<i>ленча</i>	<i>џрацок</i>	<i>леднік</i>	
Serbian	<i>боб</i>	<i>сочиво, леќа</i>	<i>џрашак</i>	<i>џрахорица</i>	<i>џрахор</i>
Slovak	<i>bôb</i>	<i>šošovica</i>	<i>hrach</i>	<i>vika</i>	<i>hrachor</i>
Slovenian	<i>bob</i>	<i>leča</i>	<i>grah</i>	<i>grāšica</i>	<i>grahor</i>
Upper Sorbian	<i>bob</i>	<i>soka</i>	<i>hroch</i>	<i>woka</i>	<i>hróšik</i>
Ukrainian	<i>біб</i>	<i>сочевиця</i>	<i>џорох</i>	<i>вика</i>	

The native Slavic words for various species of vetches, excluding faba bean, are mostly derived from the words for pea, such as *џорошџк* in Russian and *grahorica* in Serbian and Croatian (Table 2). The alternative words, such as *vika* in Slovak and *вика* in Ukrainian and Russian, were introduced from the Old High German *wichha* through the Polish *wyka* (Vasmer, 1953). All of them, including the words for vetches in modern Romance and Celtic languages, such as *gwyg* in Welsh and *gweg* in Breton, were borrowed from the Latin *vicia* and *vincire*, meaning *to catch*, with a reference to tendrils (Marin & Tatić, 2004), that is, from

the Primitive Indo-European root *\*weik-* or *\*weig-* with the same meaning (Nikolayev, 2007). The Bulgarian *фуй*, which is very close with the Turkish *fig*, may have the same origin, but with certain peculiarities in its development. The Rusyn *ледник* is reflected in the Hungarian *lednek*, meaning *vetchling*.

Although the origin of *чина* in Russian (Vasmer, 1958) and *састрица* in Serbian (Stefanović, 1818), denoting *Lathyrus sativus* L., remain not completely explained, it is obvious that the Slavic peoples regarded vetchlings as close to pea as well, with the names as *grahor* in Serbian, *hrachor* in Czech and *hróšik* in Upper Sorbian (Table 2). The Latin *lathyrus* is derived from the Greek *λαθουρι*, generally accepted as a combination of two words with a meaning of *very strong*, due to its supposed aphrodisiac properties (Gligić, 1954), and with a possible connection with the Latin *lens*.

### Words related to the organs and products of annual legumes

Apart from the same word designing faba bean, there are Slavic words for pod, as one of the most prominent morphological characteristics in legumes, such as *mahun*a in Serbian and Croatian, derived from *mehъ* (Skok, 1972), meaning *bag*, and *лу́ска* in Russian, meaning *membrane* and to *shell* (Vasmer, 1955).

All Slavonic words for *seed*, such as *s(j)eme* in Serbian and Croatian, *сэ́мя* in Belarusian and *sema* in Polabian, originate from the Primitive Slavonic *\*seme* (Vasmer, 1955), having the Primitive Indo-European root *\*sēy-*, as *semen* in Latin or *\*sat-* in Primitive Celtic (Nikolayev, 2007).

Generally, the word for forage is rather similar in all Slavonic languages, such as *крма* in Old Church Slavonic, *krma* in Serbian and Croatian, *корм* in Russian and *kjarm* in Lower Sorbian, and is related to the Celtic words for beer, such as the Gaulish *корм* and the Irish *coirm* and *cuirm* (Vasmer, 1953), as well as the Welsh *cwrw* and the Breton *koref*, sharing the Primitive Indo-European root *\*k'ore-* and *\*k'rē-*, meaning *to feed* (Nikolayev, 2007).

The Primitive Slavonic word for grain is *\*zъrno* (Skok, 1973), with the forms such as *zrno* in Serbian and Croatian and *зерно* in Russian (Vasmer, 1953), having the same origin as the Latin *granum*, the Old Irish *grán*, the Welsh *grawn*, the Breton *greun*, and the High German Korn in the Primitive Indo-European *\*g'er[a]n-* and *\*grān-* (Nikolayev, 2007), meaning both *grain* and to *mature* (Pokorny, 1959). The Lithuanian form *žirmis*, denoting pea, was introduced with the same meaning to the Finno-Ugric languages, such as *hernes* in Estonian and *herne* in Finnish.

The Serbian and Croatian word *boranija*, designing immature pods of grain legumes, especially of *Phaseolus* beans, was introduced through the Turkish word *borani* and *burani* from the Arabic *būrāniyyā*, with the same meaning (Vujaklija, 1980).

Having rather similar derivatives in all Slavic languages, such as *sjano* in Old Church Slavonic, *s(ij)eno* in Serbian and Croatian, *сіно* in Ukrainian and *sano* in Kashubian (Vasmer, 1955), the Primitive Slavonic word for hay was *\*sekno*, akin to *šienas* in Lithuanian, *fenum* in Latin and *saka* in Old Indian, originating from the Primitive Indo-European *\*k'ēk<sup>w</sup>-* (Nikolayev, 2007).

In the form of *\*k'alam-* (Nikolayev, 2007), the Primitive Indo-European root meaning *straw* produced the Primitive Slavonic *\*sólma*, with its derivatives in

modern Slavonic languages, such as *slama* in Old Church Slavonic, Serbian, Croatian and Slovak and *солома* in Belarusian (Vasmer, 1955), as well as the Latvian *sāļms*, the Greek *καλαμοζ*, the Latin *culmus*, with a borrowing and the Tocharian *kulmämts* (Pokorny, 1959).

### Acknowledgements

The authors would like to express their sincerest gratitude to Dr. Rhisiart Hincks of Adran y Gymraeg (Department of Welsh), Prifysgol Cymru (University of Wales), Aberystwyth, Cymru (Wales), United Kingdom, for reading this paper before publication.

### References

- Crystal, D. (1991): The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Language, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom, 472.
- Gligić, V. (1954): Etimološki botanički rečnik, Veselin Masleša, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 258.
- Hawtin, G. C., Hebblethwaite, P. D. (1983): Background and history of faba bean production. In: Hebblethwaite, P. D. (ed.) *Faba bean (Vicia faba L.)*, Butterworths, London, United Kingdom, 3-22.
- Lockwood, W. B. (1977): Indo-European Philology, Historical and Comparative, Hutchinson, London, United Kingdom, 193.
- Marin, P., Tatić, B. (2004): Etimološki rečnik naziva rodova i vrsta vaskularne flore Evrope, NNK internacional, Belgrade, Serbia, 230.
- Mihailović, V., Mikić, A., Vasiljević, Sanja, Čupina, B., Krstić, Đ., Milić, D., Katić, S., Vasić, Mirjana (2006): A collection of annual legumes at its beginnings. Proceedings of the II International Symposium of Ecologists of the Republic of Montenegro, Kotor, Montenegro, 20-24 September 2006, 431-441.
- Nikolayev, S. L. (2007): Indo-European Etymology, The Tower of Babel, <http://starling.rinet.ru>
- Pokorny, J. (1959): Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch, 1, Francke, Bern, Switzerland, 1183.
- Skok, P. (1971): Etimologijski rječnik hrvatskoga ili srpskoga jezika, 1 (A - J), Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, Zagreb, Croatia, 788.
- Skok, P. (1972): Etimologijski rječnik hrvatskoga ili srpskoga jezika, 2 (K - Poni1), Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, Zagreb, Croatia, 700.
- Skok, P. (1973): Etimologijski rječnik hrvatskoga ili srpskoga jezika, 3 (poni2 - Ž), Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, Zagreb, Croatia, 703.
- Stefanović, V. (1818): Srpski rječnik, istolkovan njemačkim i latinskim rječma. P. P., Armeniern, Wien, Austria, 928.
- Vasmer, M. (1953): Russisches etymologisches Wörterbuch, 1 (A - K), Carl Winters Universitätsverlag, Heidelberg, Germany, 712.
- Vasmer, M. (1955): Russisches etymologisches Wörterbuch, 2 (L - Ssuda), Carl Winters Universitätsverlag, Heidelberg, Germany, 712.
- Vasmer, M. (1958): Russisches etymologisches Wörterbuch, 3 (Sta - Y), Carl Winters Universitätsverlag, Heidelberg, 697.
- Vujaklija, M. (1980): Leksikon stranih reči i izraza, Prosveta, Belgrade, Serbia.
- Zeven, A. C., Zhukovsky, P. M. (1975): Dictionary of Cultivated Plants and Their Centres of Diversity, Centre for Agricultural Publishing and Documentation, Wageningen, 219.