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SUSTAINABILITY OF THE OLD LANGUAGE CONDITION IN THE SPEECH OF THE CROATIAN VILLAGE (ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE VILLAGE OF ŠLJIVOŠEVCI)

Review Article

<https://doi.org/1059014/OGJV4729>

Abstract

Based on linguistic research from the mid-last century, specifically the research of Josip Hamm in 1949 and Stjepan Sekereš in 1974, and my own contemporary research of the Slavonian dialect, this paper will present the characteristics of the speech in the research of two Croatian dialectologists and the features of the contemporary state of speech in Croatian villages at all linguistic levels. The research is based on the study of the Podravina subdialect of the Slavonian dialect of the Shtokavian group, with the modern linguistic analysis based on the speech of the village of Šljivoševci. Significant changes have occurred in the speech of the Croatian village seventy years after Hamm's research and fifty years after Sekereš's research. This paper will show which linguistic levels are most susceptible to changes and which preserve the old linguistic condition.

Keywords: Croatian village, Podravina subdialect, Slavonian dialect, sustainability of speech, Šljivoševci

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Introduction

Heritage, patrimony, or ancestral inheritance represents the entirety of cultural heritage or cultural goods, including individual immovable, movable, and intangible cultural goods (Kostović-Vranješ, 2015: 445).

The concept of heritage encompasses both material and immaterial goods of a certain nation, and due to the diversity of nations, it is possible to speak of the heritage of a certain region, city, municipality, and even family. Nurturing the traditional heritage of a nation or a specific region is an important factor in working with children from early childhood, as it develops sensitivity towards language, music, art, spiritual, cultural, and natural wealth of the area to which the children belong (Kostović-Vranješ, 2015, according to Paragvaj, Ujčić, 2005).

In exploring traditional heritage, it is important to be attentive and not overdo the content, but to enable children's activity and productivity and encourage them to engage in investigative work by asking questions, drawing conclusions, participating in the presentation of traditional content, and discovering the importance of uncovering traditional values that are integral to students' lives. Cultural heritage represents a value that is not reflected in an object or practice itself, but in the meaning of that object or practice for life (Šošić, 2014, according to Forrest, 2010; Gillman, 2010).

Each nation will direct its national heritage towards different forms such as religion, customs, human relationships, song and dance, and the like, attributing to them historical, educational, economic, representative, or other values, which ultimately can be unified in one cultural good. Traditional heritage as an intangible manifestation of a certain culture is reflected in social customs and is evident in social values, beliefs, customs, language, dance, and other aspects of human activity, as discussed by Prott and O'Keefe (1992) who add the concept of manifestations that are a reflection of a certain way of life and testify to the history and validity of that way of life, which are preserved from oblivion by reconstruction in the present.

The concept of heritage in the complex term "cultural heritage" more clearly reflects the contemporary understanding that these are the goods inherited by the current human generation from earlier ones, which then includes the obligation to protect and preserve these same goods to the

greatest possible extent for future generations (Šošić, 2014). Heritage becomes a national good, and the power it possesses as a bearer of the identity of a particular social community, on one hand, represents the past of that community, and on the other, it implies its present and future (Jelinčić, 2010).

It is necessary to think more thoroughly about the processes of preservation, nurturing, and promotion, as we cannot predict how long it will take for traditional heritage resources to vanish, for various reasons. The sustainability of local, and therefore national, cultural identity greatly depends on the actions of each individual.

The dialect of the Slavonian region is an integral and inseparable part of the traditional heritage of the Croatian people. Croatian cultural heritage includes culture, customs, beliefs, norms, costumes, dances, but also the speech of a place which, as the lowest level idiom, greatly reflects the way of life in that particular place. Furthermore, by nurturing and transmitting local dialects, we preserve from oblivion an essential part of human life that is acquired from an early age, thus ensuring the existence of the people, their culture, and most importantly their cultural and linguistic identity.

Slavonian Dialect

The Slavonian dialect refers to Croatian old Shtokavian speeches located in Slavonian Podravina, Slavonian Posavina, the central eastern part of Slavonia, the Croatian part of Baranja, and some places outside the borders of the Republic of Croatia (some places in northeastern Bosnia, in the western Bačka region of the Danube in Serbia, and a few places along the Drava in Hungary). The Slavonian dialect is spoken exclusively by Croats.

The name “Slavonian dialect” does not encompass all meanings, as it is spoken not only in Slavonia but also in Baranja and outside the borders of the Republic of Croatia, and not all of Slavonia speaks the Slavonian dialect. The Slavonian dialect is spread in the southern and northern parts of Slavonia, the central eastern part around Našice, Đakovo, and Vinkovci, and the central western part around Požega. The speech of Croats from Ilok, Babska, Tovarnik, and other places, which have recently been

considered part of the Šumadija-Vojvodina dialect, and the speech of the place Ilača, can also be considered Slavonian dialects.

The Slavonian dialect is known as the Šokački speech among the people. Considering the accent system, the Slavonian dialect can be divided into several groups:

Speeches that maintain the old accentuation, which, according to Milan Moguš, have three old accents (ˊ, ˆ, ˘) in all old positions. This accent system can be heard in the far east of the Ikavian- Ekavian speeches in Slavonia around Vrpolje and in a few places around Valpovo in Slavonian Podravina.

Speeches with a newer accentuation using a circumflex accent (˘). These speeches, in addition to the three old accents (ˊ, ˆ, ˘), also recognize two new ones (ˊ, ˘). This accentuation is found in most Slavonian dialect speeches. In some places of this group, words with two accents (žènä) can be heard.

A smaller group of speeches where the acute accent is used only occasionally. In these speeches, the same word can be heard with both the acute and another accent.

The Ilok group of speeches has an older dual-accent and a newer four-accent system.

Speeches of the Slavonian dialect are “ščakavski.” Old groups *skj and *stj and new ones that arose after the loss of the semi-vowel change to šć. Thus, even today, in these speeches, one can hear: šćâp, *oprâšćam*, šćîpat.

In the speeches of the Slavonian dialect, the absence of the sound h is extremely pronounced. It either completely disappears, or the hiatus caused by the absence of the sound h is resolved by inserting the sounds v or j: *râst*, *doôdi*; *sûvo*, *orëj*.

Another feature of the Slavonian dialect is the softening of the sounds l and n before the sound i: *mòljit*, *vòljit*, *naslònjit*.

The final “i” in the infinitive is generally lost: *dôjt*, *nâjt*.

The resonant l at the end of a syllable in nouns and adjectives often remains unchanged: *pëpel*, *vësel*, *dëbel*.

In the verbal participle, the vowel cluster ao is reduced to o: *kôpo*, *lăgo*, *môgo*.

Verbs whose infinitive base in the standard language ends in -nu end in -ni in the Slavonian dialect: *pogñit*, *osvñnit*, *klëknit*. A special verb is “*metnuti*,” where we might expect “*mètnit*” by analogy to *poginit* and *osvanit*, but “*mètit*” appears.

According to the ending for the 3rd person plural present tense, the Slavonian dialect can be divided into three groups:

- 3rd person plural predominantly on -iju-eju (*ideju*, *nòsiju*)
- 3rd person plural predominantly on -aje (*igraje se*)
- Group with the 3rd person plural predominantly on -u (*dřžu*).
- In the Slavonian dialect, the passive participle ending in -t is much more common than in the standard language: *posădito*, *razbîta*.
- The present participle generally appears without the final -i: *ïduć*, *šuteć*, *bèruć*.

Podravina Subdialect of the Slavonian Dialect

The Slavonian dialect is divided into subdialects:

- Posavina subdialect
- Podravina subdialect
- Baranja subdialect.

Ljiljana Kolenić claims: “Within the Slavonian dialect, we can talk about subdialects: Posavina, Podravina, and Baranja. The Posavina (southern) subdialect of the Slavonian dialect is Ikavian and semi-Ikavian (Ikavian-Ekavian), and to a lesser extent Ekavian. The Podravina (northern) subdialect is Ekavian, and the Baranja subdialect is Ikavian-Ekavian.” (Kolenić 2003:175).

The research for this paper was conducted based on the Podravina subdialect: Stjepan Sekereš described the boundaries of the Podravina subdialect and divided the Podravina subdialect into speeches (Sekereš 1967:137).

According to his interpretation, the western boundary is from Virovitica through Turanovac to the Drava, the northern boundary goes along the Drava River north of Bušetina to Osijek, the eastern boundary from Osijek is through Brođanci to Habjanovci, and the southern boundary goes from Habjanovci through Koška, Podgorač, Našice, Feričanci, Bokšić,

Beničanci, Rakitovica, Viljevo, Čađavica, Novak, Suhopolje to Virovitica. He also includes the speeches of Erdut and Aljmaš, villages east of Osijek, in this subdialect. Sekereš also emphasizes that he disagrees with the classification of the speeches of settlements around Virovitica, where the Ikavian speech is located, into the East Herzegovinian dialect, as he believes that the speeches of these settlements are quite similar in their accentual, phonetic, morphological, syntactic, and lexical features to the Ekavian speech of Slavonian Podravina, and therefore belong to the Podravina subdialect.

Sekereš further divides the Podravina subdialect into the following speech groups:

- Western Podravina speech group
- Eastern Podravina speech.

The Western Podravina speech group encompasses the area of the Podravina subdialect to the west of Donji Miholjac, and this group can be divided into two basic speeches: the Čađavica- Sopje speech and the Turanovac-Rušani speech. The boundary between these two speeches is from the Drava near Detkovac through Gradina to Suhopolje.

The Eastern Podravina speech encompasses the area to the east of Donji Miholjac.

The main linguistic features of the Podravina subdialect according to Stjepan Sekereš can be summarized in the following common characteristics:

- Retention of the acute: *starovĕrski*, *čōrba*, *bīlo*
- Long falling accent in words like: *dīm*, *sīr*
- Long falling accent on two-syllable words: *vēnac*, *glāva*
- Short falling accent in words like: *kōvač*, *jūnak*
- Short falling accent in words like: *jēlen*, *ĕkser*
- Short falling accent in words like: *jēzik*, *sēlo*
- No differentiation between the sounds *č* and *ć*; pronunciation closer to *č*: *nočom*
- The replacement of the yat sound most often with *e*: *dete*, *mleko*; in isolated lexemes, it is possible to replace it with *i*: *divojka*, *dvi*
- Contraction of the vowel cluster *ao* to *o*: *pitao>pito*, *mogao>mogo*, *pjevao>pevo*

- Absence of the phoneme h in any position: *rast, njiovu, gra*; it can sometimes be replaced with the sounds v or j: *kruva, snaje*; in some lexemes, it can be replaced with the sound k: *siromak*
- Some consonant clusters are simplified: *tica, jeno, srbeti*
- Softening of the sounds l and n: *voljim, moljitva, lužnjica*
- The consonant cluster jd remains unchanged: *dojdem, najdem, pojdem*
- The vowel cluster io is pronounced as ijo: *bijo, vozijo*
- Sometimes, a prosthetic v appears before the initial sound u: *vuže, vuzak*
- The yat sound after the sound r disappears, making r syllabic: *umrti, prostrti*
- Sibilantization and palatalization do not occur: *papriki, vojski, zecevi*
- Adjectives in the comparative have the ending eji: *pametneji, stareji*
- In the instrumental, instead of the forms mnom, tobom, sobom, the pronouns have the forms *menom, tebom, sobom*
- Old case forms are preserved: *voziti se na koli, držati u zubi*
- Nouns ending in -t and some others often have the ending -(j)om in the instrumental:
 - *pamećom, mašćom, ćerjom*
- The 2nd person pronoun oni has the genitive form *nji: od nji sam došo*, and the accusative form *nje: nje smo sreli*
- Instead of the reflexive-possessive pronoun svoj, the possessive pronoun is used: *uzo sam svoju biciklu*
- Instead of the possessive pronoun njezin, the genitive of the personal pronoun *ona* is used: *to je nje ćerka*
- Instead of the forms počinjati, načinjati, the forms počimati, načimati are used
- Verbs of the second type, instead of ending in -nuti, end in -niti: *klekniti, osvaniti, potoniti*
- Verbs ending in -ivati have the ending -ivam in the 1st person present: *istovarivam, zavezivam*
- To express prohibition in the imperative, instead of *nemoj, nemojte*, the forms *neka, nekate* are used

- The present tense of the verbs *vidjeti*, *gledati*, *moći* in the present tense has the forms
- *videm*, *gledem*, *možem* or *morem*
- Verbs with the present tense ending -em have the ending -eju in the 3rd person plural:
- *pobegneju*, *pokreneju*
- Adverbs receive suffixes: *ovudak*, *tudak*, *onudak*
- Hypocoristic male names are formed with the suffixes -o, -oš, -eta: *Ivo*, *Pavo*, *Tonoš*, *Jozeta*
- Hypocoristic female names are formed with the suffixes -a, -ača, -ena: *Mara*, *Kata*, *Marača*, *Lenkena* (Sekereš 1962).

Josip Hamm's research

Among the researchers who studied the speech of Slavonian Podravina, the priority should certainly be given to Josip Hamm (1949). The boundary of his study of Podravina speeches included all places between Osijek, the Drava, and Donji Miholjac on one side and the line Osijek-Habjanovci-Poreč-Donji Miholjac on the other side – the area he called Lower Podravina (Hamm 1949).

At the very beginning of the monumental work “Shtokavian Speech of Lower Podravina,” Josip Hamm states: “A long time ago, I went to Lower Podravina to collect material for a significant dialectological study. My initial intention was to travel through the entire area of Podravina Shtokavian dialect, from Aljmaš and Erdut to Virovitica, hoping to extend my research further south and connect with Ivšić's studies on the Šaptinovac dialect, the modern Posavina speech, and Croatian Kajkavian speeches (...). But then I abandoned that idea.” (Hamm 1949:5) Hamm continues to explain why he abandoned such a dialectological study. He emphasizes that almost every dialectological work in our country represents a separate chapter and that older ones often do not provide answers to important (e.g., accentual) questions or give them generally and unreliably, sometimes even inaccurately, that they are of little use for broader synthetic work (Hamm 1949:5). He further emphasizes that accentuation should be the primary criterion for linguistic division, as Ivšić did in his study of the Kajkavian language of Croats, where the representation of an entire

speech was placed on an accent-intonation basis. This was a significant step forward because, in our region, accentuation should be the primary criterion for linguistic division (...) (Hamm 1949:6).

Hamm also criticizes previous dialectological research for not sufficiently addressing the migrations of the area, saying: "Another significant shortcoming in dialectological works is the insufficient attention to the migratory background on which a speech developed. (...) Every speech in its current form is the result of the real components that preceded it. Language cannot be imagined without those who speak it, just as speech (dialect) cannot be imagined without the land on which it emerged." (Hamm 1949:7). According to Hamm, modern dialectology should also use extralinguistic data, so he first deals with the migrations of the population of the studied area. He notes that from the Peace of Požarevac in 1718 to the collapse of Austro-Hungary in 1918, there were almost no significant changes between Osijek and Donji Miholjac that would indicate larger migrations and linguistic influences from outside. The changes that occurred during the Turkish period or immediately after the Turks strengthened rather than weakened the indigenous population in the settlements that survived. He concludes that in the 18th and 19th centuries in Lower Podravina, there were no significant changes that could have influenced the local speech. Hamm dedicates a large part of his work to accentuation and also addresses morphology and lexicon.

Regarding accentuation, Hamm first comments on Ivšić's interpretation of the Posavina acute and its comparison with the Čakavian and Kajkavian acute. He emphasizes that it is a pity that Ivšić did not more precisely define the difference between the Posavina and Kajkavian acute, especially since it is sometimes believed that today's Podravina Shtokavians are descendants of former Kajkavians who partially Shtokavianized before the Turks and could easily have preserved this older accentual feature.

Furthermore, Hamm states that the Podravina acute belongs to rising accents or accents with a rising intonation. In it, the expiratory force is stronger in the second part than in the first and stronger than the force with which the next syllable is pronounced. He also notes that in addition to the acute and the long rising accent, there is a special accent in some speeches that some dialectologists mark with the signs ^ and " or simply ` and ´, but it often replaces the older ˘. By intonation, it is similar to the

acute, and Ivšić calls such an accent sluggish (") and records it for some Kajkavian and Posavina speeches. Hamm claims that, due to the relatively shorter initial part of the accent and the higher intonation of the following syllable, this accent has a special feature of lightness and buoyancy, so he calls it "saltans," and since it is shorter than the acute, he extends the name of such an accent to "semi-long saltans" ('). Interestingly, Hamm claims that this accent is more common in women's speech than in men's and more in younger than in older people's speech. He divided the entire area of Lower Podravina into eastern, western, and central parts concerning the semi-long saltans.

Regarding morphological features, Josip Hamm highlighted three characteristic features of Lower Podravina: the instrumental singular of non-palatal noun bases in masculine and neuter with -em: *stolem/kajmakem* in the eastern part, while in the western part (except for slight exceptions: *putem, poslem, kotlem*) it remains -om; longer and shorter forms for the 3rd person plural present: -u, -eju, -iju: *krađu/kradeju, vozu/voziju*; pejoratives for female personal names: -ena: *Marena, Lenkena* (western part) -aka: *Kataka* -uša: *Jeluša* -ača: *Anača* (eastern part). The suffix for male personal names is most often -oš: *Ivoš, Đuroš*, and sometimes the suffix -eta is heard: *Iveta, Đureta*. Based on morphological research, Hamm concludes that the core of Podravina Shtokavian is clearly outlined: it is located in the western area, and its foundation is Tb, Vc, Gt, Cr, Mc, Kn, and Čm. These settlements can today be considered the purest representatives of this Podravina speech (Hamm 1949:52).

At the end of his work, Josip Hamm expresses his opinion on the origin of Podravina Shtokavian and addresses Pavičić's theses on the Kajkavian origin of Podravina Shtokavian.

Examining the scientific opinions on Podravina Shtokavian (Jagić, Rešetar, Gopić, Klaić, and others), Hamm presents several hypotheses about the origin of Podravina Shtokavian: 1. Podravina Shtokavians were originally Kajkavians who later Shtokavianized; 2. Podravina Shtokavians could have preserved the characteristics of the old Slavonian Shtokavian speech from the time before the community with neighboring Kajkavians, with whom they could have had some common features; 3. Podravina Shtokavians could have been originally settlers from Posavina and Bosnian areas settled by the Turks on land that once belonged to Kajkavian natives.

Hamm immediately dismisses the third hypothesis because it cannot be proven either historically or linguistically. Hamm believes that evidence of the remaining two hypotheses should be sought in the analysis of Podravina speech, particularly in the western area, which he believes has preserved the most antiquity. He calls the speech of this area the central speech. Citing many linguistic features of Podravina speeches, he dismisses Pavičić's theses on the Kajkavian origin of Podravina Shtokavian and this one with the fact that Podravina accentuation is partly older than Kajkavian and represents a continuation of the development that preceded the accentuation in some Posavina speeches. Therefore, it cannot be objectively proven that Podravina Shtokavian is a direct continuation of the former Kajkavian speech. Supporting the thesis of the Shtokavian origin of Podravina speeches, he emphasizes that Shtokavian could have been brought from the south or autochthonous. In conclusion, he says: "It remains to say what I think about the origin of Podravina Shtokavian. (...) Podravina Shtokavian is a natural continuation of that archaic Shtokavian speech that spread throughout Slavonia during the great migrations and has remained there. (...) The original boundaries of this archaic type of Shtokavian speech in Slavonia and the southern regions are difficult to establish." (Hamm 1949:67). The main features of this speech were "ščakavism" (šč, žđ), soft pronunciation of the sound č, common accent with characteristic acute, and dual pronunciation of Proto-Slavic semi-vowels: one lower (ɤ) that eventually turned into a and one higher (ɛ) that turned into e or a similar sound. Such pronunciation favored the early division of archaic Shtokavian into two parts, one northern (ekavci) that retained the basic e for Proto-Slavic ě, and one southern (ikavci) that through a closed e (ɛ) turned into i. At the same time, the southern branch, when the full vocalization of the sound ɤ occurred, gave priority to the pronunciation a, while the more conservative northern branch oscillated between e and a until finally also turning to a. Josip Hamm also marks the boundaries of the archaic type of Shtokavian speech: the northern boundary probably reached the Drava and Danube, where it touched the northwestern boundary of neighboring Shtokavian speeches in Srijem, and further south along the Bosna and Neretva river basins gradually descended to the sea, from where it came to the Sava through the Cetina and Una along the Čakavian area. The western boundary reached Virje and Gola, and the southern boundary reached Okučani. The boundary between the northern and southern

branches probably originally ran along the Sava River: this is indicated by the Ekavian toponymy near Okučani, Nova Gradiška, Brod, and Đakovo (...) (Hamm 1949:67).

Research of Stjepan Sekereš

Stjepan Sekereš published an extensive work on the speech of Slavonian Podravina, the first part in 1974 and the second part in 1975. The work is the result of his research on the Ekavian speeches of Slavonian Podravina from Erdut to Vaška. The Podravina speech, which has many Kajkavian elements, is among the most archaic Shtokavian speeches, as Sekereš emphasizes (Sekereš 1974:125). He divides the speeches encompassed by this work into two basic speeches: western and eastern speech. He emphasizes that the main difference between these speeches is in the accent (*nārod-nārod, livada-livāda*), the pronunciation of the sound *č* (*kuća-kuč'a*), the pronunciation of the infinitive (*pevat-pevati*), and the formation of the comparative (*noviji-noveji*). Sekereš includes both speeches, along with the Virovitica speech, in the Podravina subdialect, while the speech of Ikavian settlers in that area is classified as the East Herzegovinian dialect. He also addresses Josip Hamm's work "Shtokavian Speech of Lower Podravina," stating that it is the most comprehensive work on the speech of that area, but criticizes Hamm for including the speech of some settlements between Osijek and Donji Miholjac while ignoring the other settlements of Slavonian Podravina. Sekereš emphasizes that he does not find the semi-long saltans (') mentioned by Hamm, concluding that Hamm likely took some finer nuances in the pronunciation of the short falling accent as a new accent, which cannot be a characteristic of the common speech of that entire area, but only of the speech of some individuals in that area (Sekereš 1974:125). Sekereš, contrary to Hamm, mentions the high rising accent (') that appears in almost all villages around Donji Miholjac and in Podravina villages up to Vaška. Regarding the reflection of *yat*, he emphasizes that the speeches of Slavonian Podravina are mostly Ekavian, but there are also Ikavian speeches that emerged under the influence of settlers from Bosnia during migrations in the past.

In his work, Sekereš provides data on the migrations of the population of Slavonian Podravina from the settlement of Slavs in the late 6th and early

7th centuries, through Turkish rule in the 16th and 17th centuries, to migrations in the 20th century. According to the origin of the population, Sekereš divided the settlements in Slavonian Podravina into six groups.

The first group includes old settlements where the majority are natives (from the same place or surrounding villages). In these places, the old speech is well preserved. Such settlements are: Brođanci, Abljanovci (Habjanovci), Bizovac, Satnica, Arkanovci (Harkanovci), Želčin (Zelčin), Marjančaci, Nard, Valpovo, Bocanjevci, Vinograci, Tiborjanci, Veliškovci, Gat, Marjanci, Kunišinci, Čamagevci (Čamagajevci), Lacići, Beničanci, Šljivoševci, Rakitovica, Črnkovci, Bočkinci, Podgajci (Podravski Podgajci), Sveti Đurađ (Đurađ), Noskovci, and Sopje.

The second group includes old Croatian settlements where the majority are natives, but there are also many settlers from various Yugoslav regions. In these settlements, settlers could have had a minor influence on the speech of the natives.

The third group includes settlements where settlers from various regions are the majority, and natives are in the minority.

The fourth group includes Serbian settlements where the majority are Serbian settlers.

The fifth group includes Serbian settlements where there are Croats in a greater or lesser extent.

The sixth group includes all settlements that emerged in the 20th century (mostly after the First World War), where newer settlers from various regions live.

Sekereš further emphasizes that he will focus only on the speech of the first five groups in his work, as he believes that the speech of the sixth group has no connection to the speech of the old population of that area and is not important for the speech of Slavonian Podravina. It will be noted that the village of Šljivoševci, which is the subject of this paper, was classified by Stjepan Sekereš in the first group of settlements.

After describing all the migrations that occurred in that area, it is clear that they influenced the speech of the native Podravina population, which he claims is Ekavian with an older accentuation. Sekereš states that Kajkavian dialect, Slavonian Posavina speech, and East Herzegovinian dialect could have influenced the speech of Slavonian Podravina. He emphasizes

that Kajkavian dialect and Posavina speech could have influenced the speech of some rural settlements of that area before the 16th century, and from the 16th century, the East Herzegovinian dialect had a strong influence through settlers from that dialect area. The strongest influence was in the southern and northern parts of the Podravina speech.

The rest of the work is dedicated to describing linguistic levels from accentuation, phonology, morphology to word formation, syntax, and lexicon. In the first part of the work on the speech of Slavonian Podravina, he presented dialectological maps of Slavonian Podravina according to the accent criterion and the reflection of yat (Sekereš 1974).

Methodology

The research began with theoretical preparation: studying literature related to dialectological data on the speeches of the Podravina subdialect of the Slavonian dialect; this includes primarily the works of prominent dialectologists Josip Hamm and Stjepan Sekereš, discussed in the section on the Slavonian dialect.

The research also involved fieldwork, following the guidelines of Mate Hraste on field research, accepted by other dialectologists. Most of the research was based on spontaneous conversations with selected speakers on any topic of their interest, but it was essential that they relaxed and spoke in their vernacular speech. The term “vernacular speech” is borrowed from sociolinguistics, referring to the speech used by a person in everyday situations, the speech that is most natural to them (Labov 1984:29). The biggest obstacle was the observer’s paradox, the fact that the presence of the observer modifies the speaker’s behavior, i.e., speakers do not speak in the same way in the presence of a researcher because they are aware of the act of speaking.

Speakers were informed that their conversations would be used to describe the speech of their place and were informed when the recording started and ended.

Speakers were recorded with an Olympus VN-5500PC dictaphone, and the research was conducted during February and March 2024 on several occasions.

Speakers

Speakers were selected according to well-known dialectological principles: attempts were made to find speakers of older age, to verify whether they had spent their entire life or most of it in their native place, whether their ancestors and spouses were from the same place, whether they had a lower level of education, and whether they were not completely under other linguistic influences. Although such speakers are hard to find today, it is still to a certain extent possible in Šljivoševci, but the village is extinguishing, as confirmed by the speakers.

In Šljivoševci, the speakers were: Ružica Kovačić (b. 1965), Katica Drašinac (b. 1948), and Stjepan Drašinac (b. 1945), to whom I extend my gratitude for their time, hospitality, kindness, and willingness.

Šljivoševci

Šljivoševci is a village in the Republic of Croatia, in Osijek-Baranja County, and belongs to the Municipality of Magadenovac. The Municipality of Magadenovac includes six villages: Beničanci, Lacići, Kućanci, Magadenovac, Malinovac, and Šljivoševci.

This paper further describes the contemporary state of the speech of Šljivoševci, a place where the archaic speech, retaining the characteristics of the Slavonian dialect, Podravina subdialect, is still somewhat preserved at all linguistic levels. Further analysis will reveal the level of retention this old state in the speech of Šljivoševci.

Šljivoševci is located at an altitude of 96 meters in the lowland of the eastern Croatian plain. It is believed that the village got its name from the abundance of plums that grow in the area. The first mention of the village name Šljivoševci dates back to 1333, and the center of the village is adorned by the parish church of St. Gregory. The church burned down in 1819 and remained unusable until 1874 when it was completely restored. After that, the renovation and decoration started, and in 1885, the clock was placed on the tower. In 1889, the church was paved with cement tiles, and that year new organs were acquired, that still exist today.

The village has a school up to the 4th grade, which operates as part of the “Matija Gubec” Elementary School in Magadenovac. There is also a Cultural and Artistic Society “Seljačka Sloga,” which has been continuously active since 2003 after a break from the 1970s. Residents are particularly proud of the Folklore Festival “Suncokret mi urodio diko,” which is held traditionally every year. On the way from Osijek to Šljivoševci, it is impossible not to notice the vast sunflower fields.

According to the data from the Croatian Bureau of Statistics, the village had 351 inhabitants in 2011, and according to the 2021 census, 276 inhabitants, indicating a population decline in the village.

The following is a description of the contemporary speech of Šljivoševci at all linguistic levels.

Phonological System Šćakavism

Šćakavism is a feature of all three Croatian dialects, but it is one of the main characteristics of the Podravina speeches. Stjepan Sekereš (1974: 145), traveling through Slavonian Podravina and recording speeches, concludes that in all Podravina villages where the old speech is well preserved, the clusters *st' sk'* are replaced by the cluster *šč* (*šč*): *ščuka*, *gùščer*, *ščípati*, *kòščica*. However, Stjepan Sekereš notes that there are also words with *št*: *šteta*, *prīšt*, *štène*, *štuka*. In the speech of Šljivoševci, during encounters with speakers, only one example of šćakavism was recorded: *ne pušćaju doma*. Recently, more šćakavisms have appeared, so šćakavism is a phenomenon that is disappearing from the speech of Šljivoševci.

Sound h

As noted by Hamm and Sekereš, and in today's speech of Šljivoševci, the sound *h* is an unstable unit without a fixed position. It can be completely omitted, or the hiatus caused by its omission can be bridged by inserting other sounds, most often the sounds *j*, *v*, or *k*. The omission of the sound *h* is frequent even among younger speakers. The recorded examples of the omission of the sound *h* include:

In the initial position: *ladnetina*, *ren*

In the central position: *ruvo, Mioljac, njiova, kuvala, duvan, naranit, njiov, kruva, poranit, plenat*

In the final position: *gra, pet, beli' ruva.*

Omission of Vowels

In the Slavonian dialect, the omission of vowels is very common, and this is also true in the speech of Šljivoševci; the examples show that vowel reductions are present regardless of:

- a) the type of word,
- b) the vowel in question, and
- c) whether it is an apocope, central position in the word, or final position.

Found examples include: *nis(u), godna, ond, bil(i), snimo, kazo, Katca, ti sam, bud, bez brige.*

Omission of Consonants

Although the omission of consonants is an inevitable phenomenon in the Podravina speeches of the Slavonian dialect, it is a phenomenon that is disappearing in the speech of Šljivoševci, and only the example *čer* was found among the speakers.

Softening of the Sounds l and n

The softening of the sounds l and n, known as *muiranje*, most often occurs before i and e, and sometimes before a. This phenomenon has been recorded by previous dialectologists and has not disappeared in the speech of Šljivoševci, with examples including: *podeljiti se, telji se (krava), voljim, moljim vas.*

Yat

The speeches of the Podravina subdialect of the Slavonian dialect, to which the speech of Šljivoševci belongs, are generally Ekavian, so the yat has developed into e. The Ekavian reflection of the yat sound is inevitable among older speakers, except when they try to speak “literary” language due to the observer’s paradox, while the younger generation predominantly uses the standard reflection of the yat sound, although they can occasionally be heard using the Ekavian reflection of the yat sound. Recorded examples include: *zadremam, deteta, prešuteli, deca, teli, lepše, nedelje, dever, mesto, setim, sećam, lepa, celi, reč, dve, lepog, mleko, venčanje, venac, uvek, seno, pevalo se, navestit, sreda, verujem, testo, pripovedali, lepši, šutela, dečaka*.

Addition of Sounds

The addition of sounds is common in the Podravina speeches of the Slavonian dialect, including the speech of Šljivoševci. Therefore, it is not uncommon, especially among the older generation, to add prefixes, even more than one, to the base of the word: *zotimali, zopremane smo*.

The addition of a vowel was recorded in the demonstrative pronoun, probably by analogy to ovaj, onaj: *otom (... s otom Ružicom mojom...)*.

Sound Changes

In the Podravina speeches of the Slavonian dialect, there is generally no change from k to c before i, i.e., sibilantization does not occur, and this is also true in the speech of Šljivoševci; recorded examples include: *kad su bili zaruki, u vojski, dade vojski*.

Accents

The speech of Šljivoševci, regarding the accent system, belongs to speeches with older accentuation and reflects an older phase of the Croatian language. However, the acute (ˇ, new acute or neokaut), although a significant

feature of Shtokavian speeches of the Slavonian dialect, was surprisingly recorded only once in the speech of Šljivoševci in the example *obrisāči*.

On the other hand, the quick accents, which are recorded consistently in all speakers, both younger and older, are exceptionally well preserved: *ne trēba, komentīramo, nosīlo, potrūdimo se, komšīje, zaborāvila, pilēceg, pojēli, kobīle, sastānemo, metīli, Topōlje, počastīt, komšīje, komšīluk, batīna, strina, Marīja, sušāre, večēru, tamjāna, potrāje, cipēle, stojīmo, nemōjte, ponjāva, nedēlja, imāle, kašīkom, gužvāre, dovēzli, popečēmo, potrōšimo, lepīnje, nosīlo, pekmēza, kajmāka, kamēnje, njegōvi, pojēde, ložīle, vātru, poslīkat, dolāzio, udāt, kobīla, prosīt*.

Regarding enclitics, the short falling accent generally remains at the end of the word. Thus, *kakō bi, kakī je (kakī je to s tebom), and kakō sam* in one accent unit are pronounced *kakōbi, kakīje, and kakōsam*, so the short falling accent is actually on the penult, which is its usual place. The tendency for the short falling accent to keep its place on the penult is especially strong in older speakers.

In words combined with a proclitic, sometimes the accent jumps from the accented word to the proclitic: *ū selu ide se ū selo*.

Morphological System Pronouns

A significant phenomenon in the speech of Šljivoševci is that the dative plural of the personal pronoun *oni* appears in a stressed form even when it is in the position of an enclitic, as confirmed by the following examples: *da njim ne dam, da njim napišem, baci njim se jesti, napisala sam njim*.

Verbs

In the speech of Šljivoševci, the most interesting morphological features are the verbs.

The infinitive generally lacks the final *i*: *kazat, viit, it, reć, počastit*.

In the present tense bases, the new Shtokavian jotation groups *-jd-*, *-jt-* are absent at the boundaries of the prefixal and root morpheme, as illustrated

by the examples in the verb *doći*: *dojti, dojde, dojdemo, dojdu, and izaći: izajde*.

In contrast, in the 3rd person singular present, the verbs *vidjeti* and *gledati* appear with a jotted present base: *viđe, de viđe, viđem, ne viđete; gledī*.

Hamm (1949:44-45), writing about the Shtokavian of Lower Podravina, states that in these speeches, various endings for the 3rd person plural present are possible, for example, *-aju* (*krādēju, upręgneju, šījeju*), *-iju* (*nōsiju, prāviju, vōziju*), *-u* (*pěvū, ĩgrū*); sometimes even *-aju*. The analysis shows that these endings are confirmed in the speech of Šljivoševci (with the note that the grammatical morpheme *-u* did not appear in the analysis), as confirmed by the examples: *oćeju, ispregneju (se konji), povežeju (se za kola), (dok obredi) trajeju, (konji jedeju), (poslije se) upregneju, ćeju, klepečeju (krila), (oni njega) zoveju, nećeju; nastaviju (se svatovi); posvetiju (se mladenci), doradiju, moliju se; održaju*.

Syntax

The construction composed of the formula preposition *iz* plus noun in the genitive is a feature of Podravina speeches of the Slavonian dialect (Mance 2014). Confirmed examples from the speech of Šljivoševci include: *doći iz polnočke; dok siđe iz kola*.

The adverb *jako*, besides expressing that something happened intensely, strongly, or to a great extent, is also used to indicate that something happened very often; for example: *žene su jako išle*.

The most common filler in the speech of Šljivoševci is the one meaning approval *âda*.

Animacy Category

In the speech of Šljivoševci, the accusative singular of nouns of the a-type that denote animate but also inanimate objects is equalized with the genitive, and this phenomenon is especially inevitable in older speakers. Confirmed examples include:

vodio je KUD-a, kopati kukuruza, imala sam štanda, kuvala sam paprikaša, jel imate fenjera, kum traži blagoslova, tražim blagoslova od Gospodina Boga, mora izvršit svojeg zadatka, gnjetem nekakog papira, tučemo suncokreta, imamo tamjana, anđel je nosio bora, idem kuvat sosa, čestitati Božića, slušaj doživljaja jednog, on je taman izvadio zuba, nećete ormara poslikat.

The verb *htjeti*

In the speech of Šljivoševci, there is also a sentence structure with the verb *htjeti*. The collected examples indicate a repeated event, a habit characteristic of a certain period in the past. The construction appears in two forms, both with the perfect tense of the verb *htjeti*, and one part of the examples has the verb in the infinitive, and the other part has the verb in the present tense:

tela sam moju decu i unučad peljat u crkvu, teo meće se u bale (duvan), isključivo je teo s ugljenom (sušit duvan), telo se sa ražnja rezati, otac je teo nareže, mi smo teli stojimo kod cure, teli su reć repice.

This construction appears very rarely in younger speakers, indicating that it is disappearing from the speech of Šljivoševci, but it is also significant that neither Josip Hamm nor Stjepan Sekereš mention such a construction in their research.

Lexicon

The speech of Šljivoševci is rich in lexical units characteristic of the Slavonian village, and we list only those lexical units that do not exist in the Croatian standard language and seemed most interesting to the author.

Batinke are wooden mallets used for beating sunflower seeds. *Bebke* are dolls, and *berška* is a cradle, while *steljka* is a walker (for small children who cannot yet walk independently). *Flute* are cakes made from potato dough, *repice* are potatoes, and *kolonka* is a metal container for carrying milk. *Krislinge* are colorful salon candies used for decorating the Christmas tree. *Plevnja* is the residue from threshing grain. If something is *po-brcano*, it means it is scattered and mixed up. *Pokrivača* is a head covering for older women, and *rojte* are decorations on a scarf. *Sos* is a broth or

tomato sauce. Šljivansko *belo ruvo* was festive clothing for younger women. Šupat means to look around. *Tilange* are white scarves, and *taclen* is a metal baking tray.

Sustainability of identity by preserving the language

Language and speech are basic characteristics of everyone's identity, with a primary focus on the mother tongue. This is the first language a child acquires at birth from the closest people. It does not necessarily have to be exclusively the mother, often in rural areas it can be the father, grandparents, or even close relatives, neighbors with whom the child communicates from birth, individuals with whom the child establishes a social and emotional bond. In this context, emotional and social connections and conditioning are very important for further development of the child's personality and for their identity determination and realization. In this context, the importance of a local dialect and its position and perception of speech production should be observed, both in children and adults. Loss of speech production in the local dialect or regional speech is a serious threat to losing one's identity or creating an identity crisis.

The native language is the foundation for acquiring all other languages, for successful development of linguistic activities, and for shaping the identity of the speaker, for the development of self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-confidence.

Bežen says: "Regional dialects are determined by territorial distribution that has changed throughout history due to population migrations. Large migrations, which significantly altered the geographical distribution of Croatian dialects, occurred during the time of Turkish conquests in the 16th and 17th centuries, when the Štokavian speakers from the east displaced especially the Chakavians and settled in their areas" (Bežen, 2009).

When it comes to Slavonia and its people, the mentioned time frame is important for creating a true picture of the development of identity and self-realization.

Preserving identity through language is one of the important ways in which we can express our culture, tradition, and belonging. Language

allows us to convey our uniqueness and personality, and to connect with other people who share the same values and beliefs.

Through language, we can preserve the heritage of our ancestors and maintain traditional customs and beliefs. Stories and legends are passed down that shape our identity and help us feel connected to our community and history.

It is important to nurture and develop our language skills in order to be able to preserve our identity and communicate with others in a way that is familiar and understandable to us. We can express ourselves in the most authentic way through language and remain true to our roots and values.

By preserving the language of our ancestors, we preserve the Croatian identity because language is a key element of national culture and heritage. Language is a way of communication that carries the values, tradition, and identity of a nation.

Through language, we transmit the stories, songs, customs, and traditions of our ancestors, thus preserving collective memory and a sense of belonging. Through language, we express our emotions, thoughts, beliefs, and identity, creating our personal and national identity.

Concluding Thoughts

The linguistic analysis in this paper has shown that the contemporary state of speech in Šljivoševci, especially among older speakers, still to a certain extent preserves the old condition of Croatian Shtokavian as recorded by Josip Hamm and Stjepan Sekereš in the mid-20th century. However, many linguistic features have disappeared from today's speech, and others appear much less frequently.

Here, once again, the linguistic features described by the two Croatian dialectologists will be noted, appearing to a greater or lesser extent in the speech of Šljivoševci:

- The new acute is almost gone; in meetings with speakers, it was recorded only once
- The Ekavian reflection of the yat sound is preserved in both older and younger speakers, although the reflection of yat as in the

standard language is often heard. The Ekavian reflection of the yat sound is mostly preserved in root morphemes

- The sound h generally remains mute in the speech of Šljivoševci; it can be completely omitted, or the hiatus caused by its omission is resolved by inserting the sounds j, v, or k; among younger speakers, under the influence of the standard language, it sometimes appears. The omission of the sound h is recorded in all positions in the word
- Šćakavism is disappearing and was also recorded only in one example: *pušćat*
- Of the morphological features noted by Hamm (1949) as characteristic of the Podravina subdialect, the longer forms for the 3rd person plural present: -eju, -iju, and -aju: *povežeju; nastaviju; održaju*, are still present today
- Systematically equalizing the accusative singular for a-type nouns that denote both animate and inanimate objects with the genitive singular: *kuvala sam paprikaša, jel imate fenjera, kum traži blagoslova*
- The speech of Šljivoševci abounds with the syntactic construction with the verb htjeti, appearing in two forms: with the perfect tense of the verb htjeti and the infinitive of the main verb or with the perfect tense of the verb htjeti and the present tense of the main verb. It is used to denote a repeated event or habit characteristic of a certain period in the past: *telo se sa ražnja rezati, otac je teo nareže*. Previous dialectologists do not record such a construction.

From the presented research results, it is evident that even today, the speech of Šljivoševci preserves the old state, but the influence of the standard Croatian language is evident at all linguistic levels, especially among the younger generation. However, the influence of the standard language is the least at the phonological level because old linguistic features are generally best preserved there. The research shows that organic speeches are slowly but surely disappearing, and to reconstruct them in the future, it is necessary to meticulously record them now.

Furthermore, preserving the language of our ancestors helps to maintain linguistic diversity, which is crucial for the overall health of global communication. Each language has its own unique structures and expressions,

offering different ways of perceiving the world. By preserving diverse languages, we are enriching the global mosaic of human expression and understanding.

In addition, language is a vital tool for preserving traditional knowledge and practices. Many indigenous cultures have intricate knowledge systems that are encoded in their languages, from medicinal plants to ecological practices. By preserving these languages, we are also protecting valuable knowledge that can benefit society as a whole.

In conclusion, preserving the language of our ancestors is essential for maintaining cultural heritage, identity, and diversity. By honoring and protecting our linguistic heritage, we are ensuring that future generations will be able to connect with their roots, access traditional knowledge, and contribute to the richness of global communication. It is our responsibility to safeguard the languages of our ancestors for the benefit of all.

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ODRŽIVOST STAROGA JEZIČNOG STANJA U GOVORU HRVATSKOG SELA (NA PRIMJERU SELA ŠLJIVOŠEVCI)

Sažetak

Na temelju jezičnih istraživanja iz sredine prošloga stoljeća, točnije iz istraživanja Josipa Hamma 1949. i Stjepana Sekereša 1974. te vlastitih suvremenih istraživanja govora slavonskog dijalekta prikazat će se značajke govora u istraživanjima dvojice hrvatskih dijalektologa te značajke suvremenoga stanja u govoru hrvatskoga sela, i to na svim jezičnim razinama. Istraživanje se temelji na proučavanju podravskog poddijalekta slavonskog dijalekta štokavskog narječja, a suvremena jezična analiza temelji se na istraživanju govora sela Šljivoševci. U govoru hrvatskog sela dogodile su se znatne promjene sedamdesetak godina nakon Hammova istraživanja i pedesetak godina nakon Sekereševa istraživanja, a rad će pokazati i koje su jezične razine najpodložnije promjenama, a u kojima se pak čuva staro jezično stanje.

Ključne riječi: hrvatsko selo, održivost govora, podravski poddijalekt, slavonski dijalekt, Šljivoševci