

Review article

**DIALECTAL FEATURES OF YOUTH SPEECH
IN THE PRIZREN-TIMOK LINGUISTIC AREA –
DEGREE OF EXAMINATION**

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Abstract. *The paper presents dialectological and teaching methodology research that explores the dialectal characteristics of the speech of young individuals in the Prizren-Timok (P-T) linguistic region. In an attempt to depict speech in its original, authentic, and unaltered form, traditional dialectology tends to exclude the speech of the youth, labelling it as "unreliable" and lacking authenticity. This judgment is rooted in the belief that many dialectal features are diminished in the speech of young individuals due to their heightened exposure to the standard language. Conversely, conventional grammar teaching is grounded in the mechanical adoption of standard language rules, actively discouraging the expression of dialectal features and deeming them irregular and undesirable. An examination of contemporary literature in dialectology and Serbian language teaching methodology reveals a growing interest among researchers in the speech patterns of young individuals from the P-T linguistic region. Dialectologists have investigated different aspects of the speech of young people, covering various linguistic levels such as prosody, phonetics, morphology, syntax, semantic and lexicon. Applying various methodologies, researchers have observed the coexistence of forms from the standard language and dialects, the fading of specific dialectal features, and the persistence of others on all linguistic levels. In teaching methodology research authors highlight the need to update teaching methods, show consideration for students' language preferences, integrate instruction with personal experiences, and, foremost, establish a link between dialectal and standard language systems. Given that the speech of young individuals reflects the emerging tendencies of a particular dialect and serves as the foundation for grammar instruction in acquiring the standard language, the description of youth speech provided by the presented research is of significant importance. This holds relevance not only for further investigations into the P-T speech but also for the more effective implementation of grammar instruction within the P-T linguistic area.*

Key words: *youth speech, dialectal characteristics, standard language, grammar instruction*

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1. YOUTH SPEECH IN DIALECTOLOGICAL AND TEACHING METHODOLOGY RESEARCH

Traditional dialectological research is focused on describing an authentic, "pure" dialect, interpreting it as an isolated, closed system that remains unaffected by other linguistic influences and resistant to development or change. Speakers of this authentic and native linguistic expression are commonly older, less educated individuals residing in rural areas (predominantly women). Their continuous residence in their regions has prevented them from being exposed to other languages and linguistic variations. Therefore, they present ideal informants from the perspective of traditional dialectology. Conversely, the youth are omitted from dialectological investigations. Namely, their language is thought to be notably shaped by the impact of education and exposure to media, resulting in a lack of typical dialectal markers. Simultaneously, it is commonly recognized that their language assimilates features from various linguistic varieties, progressively conforming to linguistic standard variant. Furthermore, young individuals are prone to engaging in diglossic behavior, adjusting their linguistic code based on the situation, conversational partner, topic, and other communication contexts. Consequently, the linguistic expression of the youth is exceptionally dynamic and lively, undergoing constant modifications, blending diverse linguistic traits, shaping new ones, and retaining older features. This form of expression suggests impending changes and offers insights into the direction of the dialect development. Given the coexistence of dialectal and standard language features within this idiom, exploring it could yield more precise understandings of how the standard language disrupts the dialectal system, the grammatical categories where the dialectal system yields, and which dialectal characteristics are more prone to alterations while others persist.

Educational practice indicates that in the P-T speech area, the process of adopting the standard language is realized with significant difficulties, to the extent that it cannot even be fully accomplished (Janjić, 2005b). Methodologists attribute the reason for this situation to substantial differences in the grammatical structure between the dialectal and standard language systems (Janjić, 2004, pp. 407-408). Namely, dialects in the P-T linguistic region distinctly stand out from other Serbian dialects due to specific sets of features, numerous archaisms, and a range of innovations of the Balkanistic type introduced from non-Slavic languages. The archaisms are particularly evident at the phonetic level. They include preserving vowel schwa, final "l", vocalic "l", and the consonant "dz". Balkanistic features involve the loss of the infinitive, postpositive article, and clitic doubling, as well as the development of the set of analytical structures – analytical declension, analytical comparison, and analytical future. Balkanistic linguistic processes have also impacted the accentual system, resulting in the neutralization of qualitative-quantitative oppositions and establishing a singular, expiratory accent.

Considering that one of the primary objectives of Serbian language teaching is to acquire the principles of the standard language (Pravilnik, 2017, p. 4), there has been a discussion among methodologists about how to ensure the successful adoption of the language standard, particularly in the P-T speech area. Conventional grammar teaching presents the standard language as prestigious and the only acceptable idiom, while casting the dialect aside as irregular and undesirable. Consequently, students develop an awareness that local speech is perceived as a less esteemed linguistic expression, leading to feelings of shame. However, contemporary perspectives from dialectologists and educators underscore the cultural and psychological value of local speech, allocating it a distinct place in the educational process. "Above all, it serves as a means of comprehending the world and understanding the immediate environment in which its speakers develop, and certainly

serves as the foundation from which to begin mastering the literary language norm" (Radić, 2008, p. 135). This viewpoint aligns with the psychological theories of Piaget and Vygotsky, which posit that a child's innate linguistic code is projected onto its local speech, serving as the basis for its initiation into formal education. Therefore, the learning process must be rooted in students' personal experiences and build upon their existing knowledge (Janjić & Novaković, 2015, p. 26). Thus, the local speech of students assumes significant importance in Serbian language instruction. This concept implies an adaptation of the teaching process and the incorporation of new teaching methods, principles, and practices that respect students' language habits, integrate instruction with students' personal experiences, and, most importantly, establish a meaningful connection between the dialectal and standard language systems.

Given that the speech of young individuals reflects emerging characteristics of a particular dialect and serves as the foundation for grammar instruction in acquiring the standard language, understanding youth speech is essential for advancing research on the P-T dialect and improving grammar instruction in the P-T linguistic region. The aim of this study is to provide a comprehensive description of both dialectological and teaching methodology research of the dialectal features present in the speech of young individuals within the P-T linguistic area, and, thus, create a general portrayal of the examined linguistic variety.

2. REVIEW OF DIALECTOLOGICAL RESEARCH

In conventional dialectological analyses of the P-T dialect, distinctions in speech between older and younger generations are frequently highlighted, typically in the introductory and concluding sections. Older individuals maintain dialectal linguistic traits, whereas the speech of the younger population is marked by a growing number of features associated with the standard language.

The question of generational divergence is thoroughly explored in the works of Marinković (1994) and Milosavljević (2011). These studies provide an inventory of linguistic characteristics, both phonetic and morphological, where generational distinctions become apparent. These include features such as vowel schwa, the negative form of the auxiliary verb "jesam" (*to be*) in the present tense, vowel alterations, articulation of sounds "j", "ć", "đ", the (non-)occurrence of sounds "f", "h", "dz", as well as articulation patterns in various consonant clusters, final "l", palatalization in the passive participle, labial palatalization and the palatalization of the consonant group "jd", the suffix "-u" in the 1st person singular present, accentuation, declension, comparison, plural forms of neuter gender nouns, pronominal enclitics, adjectival pronouns, and verbal stems. Through this analysis, the authors draw attention to the trend of standard language features infiltrating dialects, thereby disrupting the authenticity of the dialectal system. Consequently, the dialect tends to align with linguistic standardization, emphasizing the necessity for dialectologists to focus on the speech of the younger population and the emerging changes within it.

In contemporary dialectological research from the beginning of the 21st century, increasing attention is being paid to the speech of the younger generation. There is a growing number of papers examining the speech of the youngest population, including preschool and school-age children, high school students, university students, and young adults in their twenties. These studies cover diverse, predominantly urban, environments within the P-T speech area. Taking into account the interference between the standard language and dialects, dialectologists systematically observe and describe variations in standard linguistic and dialectal features at

different linguistic levels. Additionally, certain scholars strive to identify the circumstances in which linguistic variations occur. This approach implies an expansion of the methodological framework of research towards sociolinguistics and social urban dialectology. It includes the analysis of spontaneous spoken discourse, identification of the frequency of dialectal features, and the integration of social parameters, speech situations, and conversation topics into the analysis. The diglossic behaviour of young individuals has been recognized, and specific linguistic traits have been examined at different linguistic levels, encompassing prosodic and phonetic elements, morphological and syntactic structures, as well as lexical aspects. The issue of the youth's inclination towards hypercorrection and their attitudes towards their own dialect has also been explored.

Contrary to the opinion of dialectologists that the accentual system in P-T speech undergoes minimal changes, conducted research suggests that even this linguistic aspect is not entirely resistant to the influence of the standard language. At the prosodic level, an observed tendency involves the accent shifting by one syllable towards the word's initial position, accompanied by the change in quantity or quality of the accent.

Analyses highlight the contradiction between two tendencies – preserving the accent position characteristic of the dialect and shifting the accent by one syllable towards the start of the word. As a result, this leads to the accent occurring both at the standard language position and at a location not defined by the norm (depending on the word). Differences in accent placement are apparent even at the preschool age, as suggested by research on the speech of preschool children in Niš (Marković, 2012) and Vranje (Tomić, 2012a). A percentage analysis of accent placement in the speech of six-year-olds from Vranje revealed that the accent transfer process has affected almost all syllables in a word to a similar extent – accent retraction occurs equally with ultimate, open, closed, and medial syllables.

D. Stanković provides a more comprehensive understanding of the accent transfer process in the speech of young residents of Vranje in several of her works (2018, 2022a, 2022b). By analyzing a sample of 40 participants aged 5 to 14, the author examines accent placement in the speech of the youth, determining which types of words and syllables are more susceptible to the transfer process. The research investigates the frequency of dialectal accent placement and identifies linguistic and non-linguistic social factors contributing to its preservation. The conducted study reveals a robust process of accent transfer, resulting in a significant number of double forms, often present in the speech of the same participants. This indicates the inclination of young individuals to replace the dialectal accent with the standard one. In the pursuit of this goal, occasionally, due to uncertainties and limited knowledge of accent norms, hypercorrection can lead to shifting the accent even further than prescribed by the standard. The accent transfer process affects all types of words, with the highest degree of influence noted in adjectives and numerals, whereas it is nearly undetectable in verbs. The accent is transferred from all initial syllables, with a more intensive transfer from the last open syllable, followed by the transfer from the last closed syllable, while the dialectal placement remains most consistent within the word on the medial syllable. Regarding the transfer of accent to the proclitic, it occurs on the negative particle in the negation form of the verbs "znati" (*to know*) and "smeti" (*to may*). Despite the visible accent transfer process, quantitative analysis indicates a higher number of words with the non-transferred accent. Various dialectal features within words contribute to the preservation of the dialectal accent placement. Additionally, the dialectal placement remains stable in personal names and names of local places, streets, and institutions. On the other hand, established constructions and syntagmatic combinations, titles of literary works, films, TV series and shows, and standard language inflection act as factors establishing the standard

language accent placement. The conducted sociolinguistic analysis showed that the influence of the frequency of dialectal accent placement by non-linguistic factors (gender, parental education, place of residence (city center/periphery), (non)attendance of kindergarten/school) is rather minimal. Age is the only non-linguistic variable that does not affect accent placement – the number of words with the non-transferred accent does not decrease with age. The smallest occurrence of words with dialectal accent placement is identified in the speech of children from first to fourth grade, a notably higher frequency is observed in the speech of preschool-age children, and the greatest occurrence is noticed in the speech of children from the fifth to eighth grade.

The shifting of accents is noticeable even at an older age. A. Redžić (2022) investigated how dialectal and standard language forms are used in terms of accent placement in the spontaneous speech of two participants in their twenties from Sirinić. She found that, at this age, there is an evident interchangeability of dialectal and standard language accent placement in the speech of young individuals. However, a greater number of words typically exhibit a dialectal accent placement. The change in accent placement is influenced by the appearance of other standard language elements, with standard accent placement emerging as an accompanying element of other standard language features in the utterance.

The transfer of accent by one syllable towards the beginning of the word is also visible in the process of reading text. S. Milosavljević (2012) observed the change in accent placement while reading two stylistically different texts by respondents from Lebane, belonging to different generations – seven respondents aged 17 to 20 and seven aged 44 to 48. The author aimed to determine whether the change in accent placement depends on the generational affiliation of respondents and the type of text. The research results indicate that members of the younger generation show a greater tendency to shift the accent placement compared to members of the older generation, which is attributed to the influence of education and media. On the other hand, the affiliation of texts to private or public communication does not affect the accent placement, which is attributed to the process of reading itself and the reader's awareness of perceiving them. In the speech of all respondents, words were noted where accent placement shifted to the standard position, words where accent placement shifted by one syllable towards the beginning of the word but not to the standard position, and those words where hypercorrective shifting occurred – accent was shifted by one syllable towards the beginning of the word even though the norm does not prescribe it.

Analyzing accent patterns in the speech of an eleven-year-old from Niš, J. Marković (2019) notes another trend in the accent system of the P-T dialectal area – shifting the accent towards the end of the word to further enhance the sense of dialectal belonging in the speech. The author emphasizes: "What is significant is the fact that the young speaker is aware of the relationship between the idiom of his region and the standard, and almost unconsciously, instinctively, by creating his idiolect in a certain situation, defends the speech of his region" (Marković, 2019, p. 634). Based on these observations, we can say that young individuals perceive dialectal accent placement as a marker of regional identity, and therefore, they less frequently replace this dialectal feature with the standard one, reflecting the psychological factor of preserving dialectal accent placement.

In addition to accent placement, changes have been observed in the very nature of the accent. A. Lončar and N. Sudimac, in several of their works (2016, 2017a, 2017b, 2018), provide an acoustic portrayal of prosody and its realizations in the P-T region. Using experimental phonetic methods, they measured the values of duration, pitch, and intensity of stressed and unstressed vowels in disyllabic words in the speech of individuals aged 20

to 26 from Niš, Leskovac, Vranje, Svilajnac, and Pirot. The research revealed that, in terms of the pitch relationship between stressed and unstressed vowels, the expiratory accent of this region is most similar to the short-rising accent, while the duration of stressed vowels is akin to both short-rising stress and short-falling stress. Moreover, all three observed parameters – duration, pitch movement, and intensity – exhibit different realizations in various parts of the P-T region.

D. Stanković is the only researcher who has investigated the phonetic characteristics of the speech of young individuals in several of her works. By examining the phonetic features of the speech of six-year-olds from a Vranje kindergarten, the author observed changes between dialectal and standard language forms depending on the communicative context. Notably, some features specific to the Vranje dialect were not confirmed in the analysis of preschoolers' speech, ekavian form of the negative auxiliary verb "jesam" (*to be / I am*) in present tense, the absence of the vocalic "l" and the consonant "dz" (Tomić, 2012b). In her works (2018, 2021, 2022b), Stanković conducted a more in-depth analysis of the phonetic characteristics of preschool and elementary school-aged children from Vranje such as vowel schwa, consistent ekavian form of the negative auxiliary verb "jesam" (*to be / I am*) in present tense, consonant "h" loss and the grammatical suffix "-(j)a" (<"l") in the masculine gender of the active participle in singular. These linguistic variables were examined in relation to social factors influencing children's language behavior, including age, gender, parents' education, place of residence, and attendance of kindergarten/school. The results of the analysis of phonetic phenomena indicated significant variability and pronounced exposure to changes, with a shift towards standard language forms. The stability of the consonant "h" was particularly noticeable, whereas ekavian forms in negations (*ne, nesam...*) were less frequent. Age was the only factor that did not impact the reduction in the frequency of dialectal forms.

On the morphological level, dialectologists have examined the relationship between dialectal and standard language forms of linguistic features in the system of nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs. The case system has garnered the greatest attention.

In the case system of speech, J. Marković (2012) observed standard, dialectal, and hypercorrective forms in the use of locatives instead of accusatives in the speech of ten children aged 4–6 from Niš.

These three case forms have also been confirmed in the speech of preschool and elementary school-aged children from Vranje (Stanković, 2018; 2020; 2022c). Qualitative and quantitative analyses conducted in these studies show that the general case is the dominant case form. It is most stable in the locative function, while the penetration of standard language forms is somewhat higher when it comes to the genitive function. In determining non-linguistic and linguistic conditions for the use of the general case and the establishment of standard language forms, the author found that the use of the general case depends to a lesser extent on non-linguistic factors, gender, place of residence, parents' education, and attendance of preschool/school. The differences are more significant when it comes to parents' education, while age is irrelevant. The standard language case forms are most commonly used in established forms such as fixed expressions, street names, institutions, events, holidays, movies, series, shows, books, animated movies, animated characters, and adverbialized forms.

In Stanković's (2022b) study, the author discerns the case forms employed by young residents of Vranje in a context of case analysis for conveying semantic values of the standard prepositionless genitive in both nominal and adverbial positions. The analysis also investigates the factors impacting form selection. Notably, the prepositionless general case

and the preposition + genitive case structure hold a significant role among expressive means. However, the persistence of these case structures is disrupted by the infiltration of the prepositionless genitive into almost all semantic categories under the influence of the standard language, to which the speech of the young population is exposed more extensively. A firm base is evident in established expressions, terms from school life, administration, names of institutions, holidays, TV shows, etc. Additionally, in temporal constructions, it is utilized with a mandatory determiner in the form of fossilized adverbial phrases. Concerning the positional conditioning of prepositionless genitive use, the analysis reveals that the position significantly regulates case form usage. Specifically, the prepositionless genitive form is more easily established in a nominal position, alongside a noun and quantifier. Conversely, adjectives, demonstrative particles, verbs requiring an object complement, and the verb "imati/nemati" (*to have / not to have*) meaning existence (*there is, there isn't / there are, there aren't*) partially or completely impede the infiltration of the prepositionless genitive. Regarding the positional influence on the use of the prepositionless genitive, the analysis indicates that the position plays a crucial role in determining the choice of case forms. Specifically, the prepositionless genitive form is more readily adopted in adnominal positions, alongside a noun and quantifier. Conversely, adjectives, demonstrative particles, verbs requiring an object complement, and the verbs "imati/nemati" in the sense of existence, either wholly or partially, impede the integration of the prepositionless genitive.

M. Janjić (2005a) analyzed 120 oral responses and 120 written essays from students in two primary schools in Vranje. The findings revealed that students use non-standard case forms in both written and spoken language. The most common non-standard case forms are those of the accusative, followed by the locative, genitive, instrumental, and dative case forms, respectively. Notably, no non-standard vocative forms were observed, with only two non-standard forms noted in the use of the nominative. The highest error percentage is associated with the improper use of the accusative and locative when expressing location. Among them, the most frequent errors occur when students use the locative instead of the accusative.

P. Žugić (2013) explored the use of cases in written expression, focusing on a sample of university students. The analysis of excerpts from 58 written assignments by students from the P-T dialectal area, comprising 15 graduates and 43 younger students, revealed a higher frequency of case-related errors in the speech of university students compared to elementary school students. Furthermore, the case errors in their speech were more diverse. Students used analytic forms characteristic of the P-T dialects, but also hypercorrective case forms, arising from attempts to replace the general case with the corresponding standard case form. Interestingly, there were no significant differences in the use of case forms between the speech of graduates and younger students.

A. Redžić (2021) also identified a higher prevalence of dialectal forms in the declension of nouns and personal pronouns in the speech of two female participants in their twenties from Sirinić. The author also investigated the conditions under which standard forms appear. Through qualitative analysis of examples, it was determined that the presence of standard language forms is contextually conditioned. Speakers use standard language elements in three cases: in specially stylized expressions (the number of standard language forms is higher in non-neutral expressions marked by style, accompanied by irony or humor), in expressions related to a specific topic (the mention of books and movies increases the number of standard language forms), and within idiomatic expressions, perceived as a whole with a unique meaning, causing speakers to overlook or not notice their non-typical forms for everyday speech.

In the discourse of young individuals, three distinct forms of the future tense have been established: the standard language future form: the auxiliary verb "hteti" in the present + infinitive; the sub-standard language future form: the auxiliary verb "hteti" in present + da + present; the dialectal future form: "će" + present. The dialectal future tense is prevalent in various studied dialects, including the speech of preschool children in Niš (Marković, 2012), children of preschool and elementary school age in Vranje (Stanković, 2017), and young adults in their twenties from Sirinić (Redžić, 2022). A. Redžić observed that the contextual usage of the standard language form of the future tense is limited, appearing only in two stylistically marked expressions, with other standard language elements present in another. A detailed analysis of the future tense's usage in the speech of Vranje's youth revealed the dialectal form to be the most consistent among all examined dialectal forms. Although non-linguistic factors influence the use of the dialectal future tense, their impact is discernible but not substantial. Additionally, age and gender do not play a significant role in this context.

In her research on the speech of the youth from Sirinić, A. Redžić (2022) also investigated the use of the perfect tense. During this examination, she found that the dialectal form of the third person singular perfect tense, marked by the "-le" suffix and lacking an auxiliary verb, is more frequent in the analyzed speech compared to the standard language form. The usage of the standard language form is influenced by the topic and stylistic markedness of the statements. Notably, when participants discuss a film or express stylistically marked statements, there is a higher occurrence of the standard language form. Furthermore, the interchangeable use of suffixes "-le" and "-li" has been noted.

In addition to examining the future tense, D. Stanković (2018; 2022v) conducted a sociolinguistic analysis of various linguistic features in the speech of young people from Vranje. These features include the 3rd person plural present tense, pronouns, and adverbs ending in "-j", enclitic forms of personal pronouns, and the analytical comparison of adjectives. The linguistic characteristics analyzed exhibit variability in their forms, being used interchangeably in both dialectal and standard language forms. While the frequency of dialectal forms is influenced by non-linguistic factors, this influence is relatively minor. On the syntactic and semantic level, the study also explored certain case meanings and pronominal objects.

The analyses of case meanings suggest a diverse semantic potential of case forms in the speech of young individuals.

S. Milosavljević (2016) explores the adverbial meanings of prepositional-case constructions with the preposition "od" (*of*) in the language of young individuals in Lebane, aged 15 to 20, drawing on language data from Facebook chats (informal exchanges among participants). This investigation is compared with linguistic patterns in the Jablanica region, as documented by R. Žugić. The analysis affirms all the meanings observed in the speech of the Jablanica region, encompassing spatial, temporal, causative, partitive-possessive, as well as other meanings like comparative, agentive, and partitive (utilizing quantifiers). These meanings are predominantly expressed through an analytical prepositional case "od (*of*) + genitive". The morphological genitive is infrequently employed, mainly in constructions conveying spatial and causative meanings, as well as in temporal constructions serving as adverbial expressions.

The analysis of adverbial qualification in the speech of young individuals from Vranje, as conducted by Stanković in 2020, reveals a diverse semantic layer within this category. The discourse of the youth notably incorporates meanings related to instrumentality, mediality, comitativity, criteria, distributiveness, and comparativity. These meanings are predominantly

conveyed through an analytical case construction using prepositions like "sa" (*with*), "u" (*in*), "na" (*on*), "pomoću" (*by*), "preko" (*across*), "od" (*of*), serving various functions such as genitive, accusative, instrumental, and locative. The most frequently used analytical construction is "sa (*with*) + general case". Despite this, there is an observed influence of the standard language, leading to the adoption of inflectional forms. The standard language form is particularly prominent in certain analytical constructions, including "od (*of*) + general case" for comitativity, "od (*of*) + general case" with lexemes denoting material, "od (*of*) + general case" for comparativity, "s(a) (*with*) + general case" for instrumentality, and "po (*across*) + general case" for criteria.

Alongside the exploration of case meanings, D. Stanković (2018) examined the clitic doubling at the syntactic level in the speech of young individuals from Vranje. Among all the linguistic features scrutinized across different language levels, this syntactic dialectal aspect demonstrated the least consistency. In the discourse of the youth, instances of its usage were scarce. More commonly, young speakers substituted this syntactic dialectal feature with the standard language form, employing a singular, non-doubled pronoun.

By comparing the frequency indices of analyzed phonetic, morphological, and syntactic dialectal features, D. Stanković (2018) established the following hierarchy of dialectal traits in the speech of young individuals from Vranje:

- clitic doubling (FI 2.68)
- ekavian form of the negative auxiliary verb "jesam" (*to be / I am*) in present tense (FI 5.27)
- grammatical suffix "-(j)a" (<"-l") in the masculine gender of the active participle in singular (FI 7.02)
- vowel schwa (FI 7.66)
- analytical comparison (FI 10.43)
- particle "j", "ja" in pronominal and adverbial forms (FI 13.31)
- stem ending "-na" in the participle (FI 32.45)
- suffix "-v" in the 3rd person plural of the present (FI 43.01)
- consonant "h" loss (FI 44.33)
- enclitic pronouns (FI 54.12)
- dialectal accent placement (FI 73.86)
- use of the general case in the function of dependent cases (FI 82.64)
- future "će"-construction (FI 92.45).

Following the clitic doubling, subsequent modifications affect phonetic features and then morphological dialectal traits. Dialectal accent placement and the use of the general case demonstrate considerable stability. Among the dialectal features observed in the speech of young individuals from Vranje, the future "će"-construction proves to be the most resistant to change.

A. Redžić (2022) also compared the results of research on the usage of dialectal and standard language forms regarding accent placement, the perfect tense, future tense 1, and the declension of nouns and personal pronouns in the speech of young individuals from Sirinić. She observed that the percentage of using standard language forms for future tense 1 and accent placement is notably lower compared to the percentage of standard language forms in noun and pronoun declension, as well as in the perfect tense.

M. Janjić and I. Čutura (2011, 2012) engaged in research on the lexical layer in the speech of high school students and university students in Vranje. The results of their analyses point to a specific lexicon used by the youth, comprising lexemes formed through

a blend of dialectal elements, jargon, and internationalisms (anglicisms) based on various principles – metaphorization through opposition or similarity of entities (*havarija, magla, čoban, car, ispaliti, skapati se, otkačiti...*), metathesis (*vopi, tebra, vutra*), shortening of initial, medial, or final parts (*šulja, farke, fejs*), and adoption of anglicisms (*fensi, lajkovati, heder...*).

In the work published in 2016, A. Novaković examines a distinctive linguistic phenomenon observed across various language levels in the speech of young individuals – the tendency of young people towards hypercorrection. This inclination arises from the desire to replace dialectal forms with standard language forms, driven by linguistic uncertainty and an insufficient knowledge of the standard language. Analyzing a sample of 305 participants, the author investigates instances of hypercorrection in the speech of elementary and high school students, along with students from non-philology faculties in the P-T dialect region. The findings of the research suggest that the inclination towards hypercorrection increases with higher levels of education, correlating with the variation in the number of Serbian language classes offered to students in their schools and faculties. Notably, students in the fourth year of non-philology faculties exhibit the highest inclination towards hypercorrection, followed by students in the fourth grade of high school, while students in the eighth grade of elementary school display the lowest inclination. This indicates a correlation between the occurrence of hypercorrection and Serbian language instruction. Eighth-grade students, who receive more Serbian language classes, demonstrate fewer hypercorrective forms in their speech compared to high school seniors, especially in faculties without Serbian language instruction. Those with grades three and four show the highest inclination towards hypercorrection. The research identifies a greater inclination towards hypercorrection among females in high school, while males display such inclination only at the university level. The author found that the most common hypercorrections are recognized in paucal forms. The author attributes the occurrence of hypercorrection to linguistic insecurity, feelings of anxiety, and a lack of confidence in employing the standard language among its speakers. Furthermore, negative societal attitudes towards P-T dialects and inadequately organized Serbian language instruction in schools contribute to this phenomenon. The author posits that the reduction of hypercorrective forms in the speech of students could be achieved by introducing Serbian language classes in non-philology faculties and increasing the number of classes of Serbian language.

T. Trajković and M. Mihajlović (Trajković, 2018; Trajković & Mihajlović, 2020) explore the phenomenon of diglossia among high school students from Niš and Vranje across various communication scenarios. Their research indicates that both youth populations exhibit a positive attitude towards their dialects and advocate for their preservation. However, they also demonstrate a willingness to adapt their speech to accommodate their conversation partners. In Niš, this adaptation primarily affects the future tense 1, accent placement, and locative forms. Conversely, in Vranje, adaptation focuses on aspects such as the consonant "dz", vowel schwa, vocative forms with the suffix "-e", the 3rd person plural present tense forms with the suffix "-v", active participle with the suffix "-ja", pronominal enclitics, the word "tatko", analytic declension and analytic future tense constructions.

Examining attitudes towards one's native dialect holds significant importance for dialectological inquiries, as it reflects the speaker's stance towards their own language variety. This, alongside other factors, shapes the endurance of dialectal traits and the actual process of adopting characteristics of the standard language. M. Janjić (2011) and M. Mihajlović (2016) delved into exploring the attitudes of the youth towards P-T dialects. M. Janjić's analysis, conducted among high school students in Vranje, suggests that young

people from Vranje maintain allegiance to their local dialect. They view the standard language as a creative tool but resort to using it only when necessary. The dialect, in their perspective, holds the greatest advantage, with the belief that everyone, regardless of education and age, should embrace it, considering it not as uncultured but rather as a source of creativity and beauty.

M. Mihajlović arrived at similar conclusions when examining the attitudes of high school students from Vranje and Preševo toward their local dialects. The participants expressed a fondness for their dialect and place of origin, viewing it not as a deficiency in comparison to their peers from the Northeastern dialectal region. They reject the idea that one's manner of speech must be directly associated with their level of education. In their everyday interactions, they employ both the dialect and the standard language concurrently, adapting their choice based on the communication context and the person they are conversing with. They advocate for the preservation of the dialect while embracing the standard language.

3. OVERVIEW OF TEACHING METHODOLOGY RESEARCH

In dialectological and teaching methodology literature, various recommendations are found regarding the possibilities of overcoming dialectal features on the path to adopting the standard language. These recommendations encompass different procedures and methods in teaching practices, ranging from changes in lesson plans and curriculum, increasing the number of hours, to the development of a differential grammar. However, specific teaching methodology research and analyses on the question of local speech in the teaching of the Serbian language in the P-T dialectal region are limited.

From the methodological standpoint of Serbian language instruction, M. Janjić examines linguistic features that have demonstrated a significant degree of stability in dialectological studies, specifically the case system and accent. In her various works on teaching cases in the P-T dialectal region, the author highlights challenges in embracing the standard case system and proposes methods to address them (Janjić, 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2009). A broad inference drawn from her research is that students in this area never fully master the case system of the Serbian standard language. This finding is confirmed by the perspectives and experiences of educators participating in the class "Teaching Cases in Primary Schools within the P-T Dialectal Region" (Janjić, 2005b). They believe that local speech hinders the adoption of the standard case system and the standard language more broadly. Despite students' theoretical understanding of grammatical rules, practical application remains a challenge. It is believed that the struggle is futile (Janjić, 2005b, p. 139).

The study outlined in Janjić's work (2005a) reveals that students encounter the greatest difficulties in employing the accusative and locative to indicate place. According to the author, one of the reasons for challenges in adopting the standard case system lies in the unique linguistic environment of the P-T region. Consequently, the author suggests that in such a linguistic context, case instruction should take on a distinctive approach, utilizing specific methods and work formats, and extending over an increased number of instructional hours. To overcome the challenges of adopting standard case system, it is crucial to initiate instruction based on students' linguistic experiences. This approach integrates the dialect into the teaching process as the initial, foundational position, creating an indivisible entity where each component holds its place and significance. Nevertheless, grammar instruction persists

in adhering to outdated, non-functional models, disregarding the distinctive features of local speech and the linguistic habits of students.

M. Janjić (2016) notes a comparable scenario in the instruction of accents. The author identifies the lack of success in adopting the standard accent system in schools in eastern and southern Serbia as stemming from substantial differences between the dialectal and standard prosodic systems. She highlights problems with the unsystematic, incomplete, and methodologically stereotypical approach to orthoepy instruction in educational plans, programs, and textbooks. The potential for a more efficient approach to accent instruction is identified in the theory of affective strategies in language teaching. "Affective strategies could offer the essential encouragement and confidence to students, assuring them that mastering accent instruction is not unattainable but rather engaging and purposeful. These strategies, based on a contrasting method, would systematically approach prosodic elements, beginning with the features of accents in local speech, providing students with self-assurance and conviction in the attainability and appeal of this instructional task" (Janjić, 2016, p. 372).

After identifying dialectal features in the speech of elementary school students from Vranje that exhibit the greatest stability and conducting an analysis of grammar program contents, D. Stanković (2022b) further suggests potential directions for adapting educational programs to the speech habits of students from Vranje:

- Continuous and gradual acquisition of the accent system from the 1st grade.
- Increased representation of the future tense and declension of nouns.
- Acquisition of basic concepts related to pronoun objects, non-personal pronoun forms, and adjective comparison in younger grades.
- Specifically prescribed content, related to the use of the sound 'h' in enclitic forms of personal pronouns, and verbal adjectives ending in "-nu".

Greater representation of the present tense, with a special focus on the 3rd person plural.

4. CONCLUSIONS

A review of recent literature in the fields of dialectology and the methodology of teaching Serbian language has revealed an increasing focus among researchers on the speech of youth from the P-T dialectal region. Dialectologists have examined the speech of children and young people aged 4 to 26 from various urban areas within the P-T region (Niš, Leskovac, Vranje, Svrljig, Pirot, Lebane, Sirinić). Several linguistic features have been analyzed across different linguistic levels, ranging from prosodic and phonetic aspects to morphological, syntactic, semantic and lexical dimensions. These include the nature and location of accents, the vowel schwa, ekavian form of the negative auxiliary verb "jesam" (*to be / I am*) in present tense, consonant "h" loss and the grammatical suffix "-(j)a" (<"-l") in the masculine gender of the active participle in singular. Other aspects explored encompass the case system, future tense, perfect tense, third-person plural of the present tense, pronouns and adverbs ending in "j", enclitic forms of personal pronouns, and analytical comparison of adjectives. Specific case meanings, pronominal objects, and vocabulary have also been considered. Additionally, the conditions for the use of different forms, the tendency of the youth towards hypercorrection and diglossia, and their attitudes towards their own dialect were examined.

Researchers have identified the coexistence of standard and dialectal forms of linguistic features at all language levels, along with the emergence of hypercorrective forms, indicating

linguistic uncertainty and insufficient knowledge of the standard language. Moreover, many features demonstrate the persistence of dialectal forms – the number of dialectal forms is greater than standard language forms, especially concerning the case system, accent placement, and future tense. The lexicon of the youth represents a mixture of jargon, dialectal expressions, and anglicisms.

The utilization of standard and dialectal forms is influenced by various linguistic and communicative factors, such as other linguistic features in speech, proper names, established constructions and expressions, stylized statements, conversation topics, and, in terms of social parameters, factors like gender, parents' education, and place of residence (city center/periphery), as well as attendance or non-attendance of kindergarten/school. The proportion of dialectal to standard language forms varies based on these factors.

The frequency of hypercorrective forms in speech is influenced by the number of Serbian language classes attended. Eighth-grade students, who have a higher number of Serbian language classes, use fewer hypercorrective forms in their speech compared to high school seniors, particularly those in institutions where Serbian language classes are not part of the curriculum at the university level. Students with grades three and four exhibited the strongest inclination toward hypercorrection. In high school, individuals of the female gender showed a higher tendency toward hypercorrection, while individuals of the male gender exhibited such a tendency only at the university level. The propensity for hypercorrection can be attributed to linguistic uncertainty, a lack of confidence in employing the standard language, societal negativity towards P-T dialects, and inadequately organized Serbian language instruction in schools.

Research on the opinions of young individuals about their native dialect indicates that they have an affinity for their dialect, as well as that they actively use it. They reject the notion that their mode of speech must be closely tied to their level of education. In their day-to-day interactions, they employ both their dialect and the standard language concurrently, adapting their choice based on the communicative context and the individual they are conversing with. This standpoint undeniably plays a role in the preservation of dialectal characteristics in the speech of the youth.

Teaching methodologists have identified considerable difficulties for students from the P-T dialectal region in mastering the standard language accent and case system. To improve the implementation of grammar instruction in this speech area, they highlight the need for updating teaching approaches, aligning the curriculum with the dialectal region, respecting students' language habits, integrating teaching with personal experiences, and, most importantly, establishing a connection between the dialectal and standard language systems.

The results obtained from the mentioned research reveal overarching trends in the development of the dialects in the P-T region and the potential for a more efficient implementation of grammar instruction in the P-T speech area, emphasizing their importance for future dialectological and teaching methodology investigations into the speech of young individuals.

Nevertheless, there is still a limited number of studies systematically tracking the emergence of standard language features and the conditions under which dialectal features withdraw under the influence of the standard language. Moreover, there is a lack of research on the ways to successfully implement Serbian language instruction in the P-T speech area. Additionally, many linguistic features remain unexplored, and there is a gap in research on young speakers in rural environments.

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DIJALEKATSKE KARAKTERISTIKE GOVORA MLADIH SA PRIZRENSKO-TIMOČKOG GOVORNOG PODRUČJA – STEPEN ISPITANOSTI

U radu su predstavljena dijalektološka i metodička istraživanja koja se bave dijalekatskim karakteristikama govora mladih na prizrensko-timočkom govornom području. Težeći da opiše izvorne, autentične, „čiste“ govore, tradicionalna dijalektologija u svojim istraživanjima isključuje govor mladih kao „nepouzdan“, neautentičan, jer se u njemu, pod uticajem standardnog jezika, mnoge dijalekatske crte povlače. Na drugoj strani, tradicionalna nastava gramatike zasniva se na mehaničkom usvajanju standardnojezičkih pravila i potiskivanju dijalekatskih crta u govoru učenika kao nepravilnih i nepoželjnih. Pregledom novije literature iz oblasti dijalektologije i metodike nastave srpskog jezika ustanovljeno je da govor mladih sa prizrensko-timočkom govornom područja sve više privlači pažnju istraživača. Dijalektolozi su istraživali, u različitoj meri, sve jezičke nivoe govora mladih, počev od prozodijskog i fonetskog, preko morfološkog i sintaksičkog, do leksičkog. Primenjujući različitu metodologiju, na svim jezičkim nivoima utvrdili su koegzistenciju standardnojezičkih i dijalekatskih oblika, povlačenje nekih dijalekatskih crta, ali i stabilnost drugih. Metodičari ukazuju na neophodnost osavremenjivanja nastave, poštovanje učeničkih jezičkih navika, prožimanje nastave i ličnog iskustva i, pre svega, povezivanje dijalekatskog i standardnojezičkog sistema. Imajući u vidu činjenicu da govor mladih ukazuje na tendencije razvoja jednog dijalekta i predstavlja osnovu od koje se u nastavi gramatike polazi pri usvajanju standardnog jezika, opis govora mladih, koji daju prikazana istraživanja, od velikog je značaja kako za dalja istraživanja prizrensko-timočkih govora, tako i za efikasniju realizaciju nastave gramatike na prizrensko-timočkom govornom području.

Ključne reči: govor mladih, dijalekatske karakteristike, standardni jezik, nastava gramatike