

Students on linguistic field research in eastern part of Croatia

Education for human rights and democratic citizenship was introduced into the Croatian educational system in 1999, emerging from the National programme of education for human rights and democratic citizenship, a document which combines guidelines of the Concept of education for democratic citizenship from the Council of Europe programme and numerous experiences from European countries in which similar programmes have been conducted for a longer period of time. In the first years of the implementation of the elements of civic education into the curriculum of Croatian schools, The Ministry of Education in the Republic of Croatia imported a lot of knowledge from the experiences of conducting the project "Education for democratic citizenship" which was introduced in 1997 by the Council of Europe.

The concept of education for human rights and democratic citizenship is complex and it is directed towards different dimensions: political, legal, social, economic and cultural. In the Republic of Croatia, the cultural dimension of the civic education plays an important role due to the differences in cultural traditions (Mediterranean, Central-European, Balkans...) which are the product of different historical developments of respective parts of Croatia, as well as particular specificities of microlocalities in respective cultural traditions. An example of this particularity is the village Siče within the area that belongs to a cultural heritage of the Central Europe.

The Republic of Croatia is a country characterized by distinctive dialects. The Croatian language has three basic dialects, quite different from each other and from the standard language. Croatian dialects are "Štokavian", "Kajkavian" and "Čakavian". Their names are derived from the interrogative pronoun "what," which is što, kaj or ča. Each of these dialects is further divided into subdialects, the subdialects into dialectal subgroups, and dialect subgroups into local speeches (village dialects). Dialectological study is based on local speeches - the village dialects (*Moguš, 1977*).

It is important to emphasize that Croatia is a rather small country with the population of 4.5 million. In such a small country with small population, there is a plenty of linguistic diversity. The village being differentiated from another village by its linguistic expression is an established idea, and an entire book might have been written on the diversity of Croatian dialects. It is this dialectical diversity that is specific for Croatian language.

A part of the program of the Croatian Ministry of Culture is safeguarding of specific Croatian dialects as intangible cultural heritage. In “Štokavian” area, precisely in Slavonia as one of the Croatian eastern regions, the dialect of the village Siče is preserved, and since August 2010 a dialect of the village Stari Perkovci has also been put under protection. We have attempted to describe our linguistic field research in these villages.

Siče is a village situated between a motorway and the river Sava, 22 km east from the town of Nova Gradiška, and 4 km south from Nova Kapela. It is 96 m above sea level. The village was not recorded in older resources, but in a council census in 1698 the village inhabitants and their livestock were mentioned indicating the economic standard of villages and people at that time. After great immigrations during the Battle of Vienna, Franciscans moved the parish centre to Siče. In 1760 Siče had 81 houses, 173 families and 805 Catholics. In 1769 the numbers were decreased to 77 houses, 169 families and 813 Catholics. In the last two centuries the number of people was fluctuating, but according to the 1991 Census, Siče had 454 inhabitants.

Stari Perkovci is a village situated between a railway and stream Breznica, 27 km northeast from the town of Slavonski Brod and 4 km northwest from Vrpolje. It lies 95 m above sea level. It was mentioned in a council census in 1698 as a not well-populated village. The inhabitants were the Croats, Catholics. In 1837 the village had 842 inhabitants, 917 people lived there in 1857, 1066 people in 1931 and 1157 people in 1991.

The importance of protecting particular Croatian dialects is best illustrated by the fact that those dialects are close to extinction. Those dialects are characterized by an abundance of linguistic specificities. The Croatian Ministry of Culture and Croatian dialectologists are aware of these facts and therefore, in recent years certain Croatian dialects have undergone the process of protection. The dialects protected so far are: the dialect of Bednja, the dialect of Hum na Sutli, the dialect of village Vidonje, the dialect of Susak island, the dialect of Posavian village Siče, the Istrian-Romanian dialects, the dialect of Žminj, the dialect of Stari Perkovci and the dialect of Arbanas from Zadar area.

The paper describes the linguistic field research of Siče and Stari Perkovci dialects. The dialect of Posavian village Siče is protected by the Resolution of the Ministry of Culture on the basis of Article 12, paragraph 1 of the Act on the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Property (Official Gazette no. 69/99, 151/03 and 157/03) and Article 9 of the Regulations of Cultural property register in Croatia (*Official Gazette* no. 37/01).

The Resolution prescribes the following: "It is hereby decreed that the dialect of the Posavian village Siče be proclaimed an intangible cultural heritage as defined

in Article 9 paragraph 1 first indent of the Act on Protection and Preservation of Cultural Property. The following safety measures are decreed for the protection of the abovementioned cultural property:

- to promote the function and status of the property in the society, and to include property protection in the programme planning;
- to ensure property sustainability via education, identification, documentation, scientific research, preservation, protection, promotion, value amplification, the possibility of conveying the tradition to the descendants via formal and informal education, and revitalization of the abandoned segments of the property;
- to make the public aware of it and to support the protection and preservation of the property by identifying the globalization process and social transformation in order to avoid the danger of extinction, destruction or commercialization of the property, and to prompt tolerance between people;
- to encourage the drafting of a regional dictionary and grammar;
- to include the cultivation of the mother tongue into the curriculum in elementary and secondary schools (*The Resolution on protection of the dialect of the Posavian village Siče*, 2008).

The dialect of Stari Perkovci is protected by the Resolution of the Ministry of Culture on the basis of Article 12, paragraph 1 of the Act on the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Property (*Official Gazette* no. 69/99, 151/03, 87/09 and 88/10) and Article 9, paragraph 1 of the Regulations of Cultural property register in Croatia (*Official Gazette* no. 37/01). The Resolution states: It is hereby decreed that the dialect of Stari Perkovci village be proclaimed an intangible cultural heritage as defined in Article 9, paragraph 1 first indent of the Act on Protection and Preservation of Cultural Property. The following safety measures are decreed for the protection of the abovementioned cultural property:

- to provide public access to the cultural heritage;
- to encourage participation of community members and groups in identifying, defining and transmitting the heritage;
- to popularize and promote the cultural heritage by organising seminars, folk dance performances, via electronic media, audio and video recordings;
- to promote and cultivate cultural heritage in its surroundings and other communities;
- to educate experts in this field by organising seminars, workshops, formal and informal education;
- to continue research of the cultural heritage by adequately documenting it in all contemporary forms, and carrying out expert and scientific evaluation;
- to introduce dialects into school curriculum;

- to protect the heritage by recognizing globalization processes and social transformations in order to prevent dialect extinction.

The cultural heritage carriers are obliged to implement measures of protection in accordance with the Act on Protection and Preservation of Cultural Property and all rules and regulations on cultural property respecting their historical-traditional patterns and expression (*Resolution on protection of the dialect of Stari Perkovci, 2010*).

The tasks based on abovementioned Resolutions have encouraged us to conduct a field research on the protected dialects in these two villages. The awareness of the need to study old and archaic dialects has always been present at our Faculty. A few years ago, professor Ljiljana Kolenić introduced a new course called Slavonian dialect to our Faculty of Teacher Education in Osijek and its department in Slavonski Brod. From the beginning professor Kolenić was assisted by Emina Berbić Kolar, who in the meantime finished her PhD on the topic Slavonian dialects. It is the first year the course was based solely on the field study and field research. Our goal was to develop a sense of care for the mother tongue in future teachers, so that they might convey the same feeling to their prospective students. Every year we get very good results from our students, encouraging us to continue our work and development of this course.

It should be emphasized that the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports of the Republic of Croatia, in line with aspirations of the Ministry of Culture to protect and preserve Croatian dialects, has issued a document called the National Curriculum Framework. A part of that document is titled “The Croatian language and its idioms”. This part of the National Curriculum Framework is extremely important for the Croatian dialectologists and Croatian dialectology. Clearly, Croatian schools pay the greatest attention to Croatian standard language. However, on the basis of this document, the emphasis is put on the importance of respecting and fostering the native idiom. The document states that students should be encouraged to express themselves creatively and without constraint in their mother tongue. Certainly, it is very important and encouraging since students coming to primary school at the age of 6 or 7 express themselves much better and more freely in their mother tongue than in the standard language they have not sufficiently mastered yet. One of the most important principles in teaching the Croatian language is the principle of regionality. This principle is fully respected in such approach to the organic idioms.

Since we had an opportunity to research the only protected dialects of our region, we decided to give students a chance to take part in such an important project. The students were divided into groups and taken to do field research. Before we started with the field study, the students had been introduced to the basic features of Slavonian dialect as a whole, and then to the dialects of Siče and Stari

Perkovci, as examples of Slavonian dialects.

Slavonian dialect is one of the “Štokavian” Croatian dialects. People usually refer to it as “Šokački” because Šokci, the Croatian ethnic group, use this dialect. Slavonian dialect is spoken almost in the entire area of Slavonian Posavina and Podravina, Croatian part of Baranja in the Danube region. It is also spoken in several places outside Croatian borders: in Bosnia and Herzegovina around Orašje, Hungary (on the other side of the border, near the river Drava) and in Serbia (western Danube region of Bačka). This is the dialect spoken exclusively by the Croats.

The characteristics of the Slavonian dialect are:

- 1.) Preservation of specific ancient accent, so-called curved accent (Croatian acute) marked by „~“: pomāžu, sačūva.
- 2.) Non-“Ijekavian” reflex of the Common Slavic jat vowel. According to the reflex of the jat vowel, the speeches of Slavonian dialect can be divided into:
 - a. Ikavian in Western and Eastern Slavonian Posavina from Nova Gradiška to Kobaš and around Vrbanja (díte-ditèta);
 - b. “Ikavian”-“Jekavian” in the central part of the Slavonian Posavina to Bebrina and Banovci and west from Slavonski Brod, to Gunja, and Rajevo Selo (dite-djeteta)
 - c. “Ekavian” in Slavonian Podravina from Vukosavljevica, west from Virovitica to Aljmaš and Erdut (dete-deteta);
 - d. “Ikavian”-“Ekavian” in the Danube region of Baranja (dite- deteta);
 - e. dialects with non-replaced jat. That is the pronunciation of ancient Croatian jat as hermetic e, where e is moved toward i by pronunciation. This dialect is spoken in Našice area.
- 3.) “Šćakavism”. The speeches of Slavonian dialect are “Šćakavian”, which means the old clusters *stj and *skj are pronounced as šć: šćucat, gušćer, prišć, šćedit, kršćen, šćipat.
- 4.) The omission of the consonant h. The speeches of Slavonian dialect do not pronounce the consonant h as well as the most of the “Štokavian” dialects. Šokci say lad, ladovina, gra, rana, rast (instead of hlad, hladovina, grah, hrana, hrast). The consonant h can be substituted by the consonant v or j: suvo, snaja (instead of suho, snaha).
- 5.) Omitting the last part of infinitive form of the verb. Šokci usually say: díjat, šćipat, divánit, ubòst, dõjt (without –i at the end).
- 6.) Specific hypocoristics of male genus ending with –a. It is well known that the short vowel with the falling accent in Slavonian dialect is on the first syllable: Mata, Mija, Andra, Iva, Joza, Tuna.
- 7.) Comparative adjectives differ from the standard language. Where the standard Croatian language prescribes –i, there is –ji in Slavonian: nǐžjī, gõrjī,

vīšjī, bṛžjī.

- 8.) Use of imperative is accompanied by the word *neka* instead of *nemoj*: *neka to dirat*. Imperative can also be accompanied by the word *ajde*: *ajde idi*.
- 9.) Past participle is often formed with *-t*: *porādito, nasèlito, pošādito*.
- 10.) Typical semi-compounds like *bab-Jela* where the first part is not inflected, and the second part is: *bàb-Jéla, bàb-Jele; bàc-Màta, bàc-Màte; strìn-Eva, strin-Eve*.
- 11.) There are still visible Turkish and German loanwords in the language, but it has to be emphasized that there are also Croatian words which could be called archaic or which can have different meaning from the one in the standard Croatian language (*Berbić Kolar & Kolenić, 2009*).

Having conducted a research on the protected speech of Siče in Posavina region and Stari Perkovci, we introduced the students to Ivšić's division of the speech of Posavina, which is a subdialect of the dialect of Slavonia. Stjepan Ivšić, one of the best Croatian dialectologists, divided Posavian speech into nine groups based on their accent. He placed the speech of Siče in the fourth group, and described as follows: "Group four says: *vodě, sačŭvam, ostô, nošili, òtac, kâžàli, rukôm, i kazivô*. This is the dialect of the following villages: Brod, Varoš, Slobodnica, Kaniža, Podvine, Glogovica, Dubovik, Crni Potok, Grabarje, Bukovle, Vrba, Zadubravle, Klakarje, Garčin, Oprisavci (and some other villages between them) and of the west Selca, Siče, Magića Mala, Komarnica, Štivica, Vrble... In this group the speech of Siče and Magića Mala could be singled out with their specificities: *vodě, sačŭvam, ostâl, nošili, òtac, kazàli, rŭkôm, and kazivâl* (*Ivšić, 1913*). He classified the dialect of Stari Perkovci into the first groups explaining: "Group one says *vodě, sačŭvam, ostô, nošili, oțac, kâžàli, rŭkôm* (and *rúka* as well) and *kazivô*. It is spoken like this mainly in these places: Babina Greda, Sikirevci, Kruševica, Gundinci, Beravci, Velika Kopanica, Divoševci, Čajkovci, Vrpole, Strizivojna, Stari and Novi Perkovci, Trnava. Sometimes we can also hear there *rŭkôm* and *rŭkôm* (for example in Gundinci, Beravci, Velika Kopanica, Stari and Novi Perkovci, Trnava) (*Ivšić, 1913*).

We have thoroughly studied the literature on the speech of Siče and Stari Perkovci in order to compare the previous research to ours. In this way we wanted to present the changes of Croatian dialect (the speech of Siče and Stari Perkovci) occurring with time.

After a theoretical introduction into the linguistic research, we went to the site. For this purpose, together with the students we created a map of the Croatian Posavina region, and specifically marked the villages of Siče and Stari Perkovci on the map. One group of students went to Siče and the other to Stari Perkovci. We must emphasize that these two villages are quite remote from each other, so the students were allowed to choose where they wanted to go. One group went to

Siče, which is west from the town of Slavonski Brod and the other to Stari Perkovci, which is east from Slavonski Brod.

Group 1 – Siče

In the village we were welcomed by the previously selected speakers of this particular speech. The selection of the speakers in the linguistic research is extremely important, since the success and the significance of the entire work depend on their testimonies. The speakers have to be people with a good vocal apparatus, elderly, making sense in presentation and speech, equally represented (men and women), and must be indigenous to the village researched. Our speakers were: Marija Mačković, b. Janković, born in 1925; Marija Glavičić, b. Smičić, born in 1930; Ana Čupić, b. Grabrić, born in 1936 and Stjepan Šimunović, born in 1937. All of them are literate and have completed four grades of elementary school. They made an effort to present their speech in the best possible manner. The students talked to them about the past, their childhood, customs, names of the dishes, cakes, various items, asked them about common names, surnames, nicknames, names for the parts of the village, etc. After recording the speakers, the students were given specific linguistic tasks. One group of students was dealing with phonology, the other with morphology, third group with syntax, fourth group with word formation and last group with lexicology. Naturally, they did these tasks alongside with the usual historical part about the village that is the introduction to the work.

Based on their testimonies, we have come to the following linguistic conclusions:

- a) At the phonological level, they recognised the preservation of the final l: učil, posāl, nāgal, čūl. Thus, we introduced the students to the fact that this is the only village of the “Štokavian” area preserving final l at the end of the past participle masculine singular. This is very important in the dialectological research and it has a great significance for researchers of the Croatian language in general; the reflex of the jat in long syllable is “Ikavian” (tīlo, cínit, cídít, řipa, mlíko), and in the short syllable “Jekavian” (tjelesā, pjevat, đēca). This speech has a rather interesting accentuation, since this speech is one of the ancient “Štokavian” dialects, the fact that represents archaic accentuation by itself. Namely, this speech has five accents, four standard accents and fifth, so-called curved accent (acute): vodē, dāla, posāl, učil, škřipī, seljāčko, dōjde... The accents can be placed on all syllables of the word, as well as on the last syllable: gorī, škřipī, kirijāl. This dialect also holds pre-accentual length: glāvā, jājcē; as well as post-accentual length: sūřī, grādī, cīdī.
- b) At the morphological level, they have recognized nominative singular of the

- noun *mati* which reads *màt*: (mine) *màt*, *màt* (lunch). We recorded genitive singular of the e-types of nouns with zero suffix: *iz škol*, but this is probably the reduction of post-accentual vowel. In the accusative singular of the e-type nouns suffix *-e* can occur: (*za te*) *stvâre*. The locative singular of the e-type nouns has the suffix *-e* from the former *jat*, which means non-palatal change [1] has prevailed: *u Gradiške*, *u zîme*, *u kâce*. The genitive plural of the a-type noun appears with the zero morpheme, i.e. prolonged root–*ovØ/-eØ*: *zecěv*, *zidõv*, *zmajěv*, (*godinu*) *dãn*, *đâkõv*, *kònjěv*, *jùtâr*. Apart from the a-type nouns, the zero morpheme occurs in the plural genitive of the e-type nouns: *cûr*. In the locative plural of the e-type noun, the old *-a* sequent occurs (from *-ah*) comparing to the standard suffix *-ama*: *na slikã*, and in the a-type nouns, the suffix *-i* comparing to the standard suffix *-ima*: *na ramenĩ*.
- c) At the syntactic level, they recognized that simple and short sentences are frequently used: *Učili smo mĩ sve*. *Učili smo mĩ i zèmljopis i pòvjest i svè*. *Òna nije bila nikaki đâk*. *Ònda se cûre i ponãvljale*. Temporal and object sentences are very often complex: *Kad učitelj ûde u škõlu, svi se dignemo i moljimo Očenaš*. *Mòraš znãt ko je stvořijo nebo i zemlju*.
- d) At the level of word formation, they recognized a common use of the diminutives for the usual, common words: *somići*, *trpežica*, *štagljic*, *jãjce*. The suffix *-ãca* is often used for the names of the different kinds of brandies: *jabukovãca*, *kruškovãca*, *šljivovãca* (as cited in *Babić*, 1991, p. 91).
- e) The students recorded the words and forms of the words they would not personally use in the standard Croatian language, or which they would rarely use. They singled out: *pèljat*, *jajce*, *vlâsi*, *vrtal*, *trpezica*, *kirijãt*, *stõše*, *čõrda*...
- f) At the lexical level there are many foreign words, especially Turkish loanwords that are the remains of the Ottoman rule: *đèrz*, *pëndžer*, *komšinića*, *pèškir*, *tepšija*.

Group 2 – Stari Perkovci

Upon arrival in this village we were pleasantly surprised. Beside the speakers of the dialect we were also welcomed by numerous villagers and invited to their homes. This refreshing experience of a Slavonian village, especially such an archaic one, was a great motivation for our students. The folk dance association *Ravnica* had a performance, where they danced and sang old traditional songs. The students were introduced to traditional costumes, instruments, old tools and objects. Naturally, in accordance with Slavonian tradition, we were offered various traditional dishes and desserts.

Our task was to describe the local speech. As we have already mentioned, the speakers of this language are extremely important and they have to satisfy certain

criteria: they have to be native to the village, have good a good vocal apparatus, make sense in their talk, and finally the number of men and women should be equal. We talked to the following speakers: Ivica Zmaić, born in 1924, Branko Zmaić, born in 1947, Josip Klaić, born in 1945, Marija Klaić, born in 1947. They are all literate and finished four years of primary education. The students talked to them about their childhood, customs, the relation between the past and present. They asked them about the most common names, nicknames and surnames in the village as well as about the names of the village parts and their origins. After recording the speakers, the students were given specific linguistic tasks. One group looked into phonology, the others into morphology, syntax, lexicology and word formation. In order to get a comprehensive description of the village's speech, we have to consider the introductory historical part of the village's foundation and development. Based on the speakers' testimonies we have come to the following linguistic conclusions:

- a) At the phonological level we can observe that ě was reflected "Ikavian"; in short syllables it is "Jekavian" (djevojčica, pjěvat), and in long ones it is "Ikavian" (críva, tríska). In this speech, when compared to the standard language, one can hear an increased number of vowels; beside a, e, i, o, u there are two more archaic vowels: ǎ and ŭ (komorǎt, mlǎdi, čŭj, gŭrman). There are often iotified forms: đěd, đevǔjka. In this speech vowel omission occurs both at the beginning and end of words: orat, pođić, al, il. The sound l often appears in palatal form: pofǎljit, moljila. The sound h is a completely unknown sound, it is omitted in all positions: a) at the beginning of a word – Ercěgovac, ōdamo, b) in the middle of a word – nŭiov, saranili, c) at the end of a word – siromǎ, odmǎ or it is replaced by the sound v: skŭva, vrpā. The sound n is often softened in front of e: njěki, njěkakav. The sound r is omitted in some words: jŭče, ŭveče. The sound j is often in intervocal position in order to overcome hiatus: dobjjo, rađjjo. The sounds s and z with coarticulation of position are transformed into š and ž: š njim, š njom. These speakers do not differentiate between č and ć, đ and dž. The consonant groups are common and stable. This speech also knows "Šćakavian": raspušćena. It preserves pre-accented length: kǎzǎli, rŭkŏm, and post-accented lengths: unŭčǎd, bŭnǎr.
- b) At the morphological level we have observed that in genitive case plural, one can hear zero ending: osǎm dǎn. Locative plural in places names has an old morpheme –i: in Pěrkovci, in Kěšinci. In dative and locative singular e-type nouns do not change the velar sounds k, g, h in front of morpheme –i: unŭki, djevŭjki, na nogi. In genitive plural of e-type nouns there is an old morpheme –i: za stŏ kŭni, za petnǎjst minŭti. The comparative of adjectives is formed with endings: -ji, -iji, -ši: širji, zadovoljniji, měkši. The personal

pronoun oni (them) in genitive and accusative is njija. In all pronoun types they use short forms: kog, čeg, va, na. Aorist, plusquamperfect and imperfect are not recorded. Imperative is often formed with words ajde, ajmo and present tense: ajmo reći. Present tense of 3rd person plural is often formed with ending –aje: pītāje, čekaje, sometimes it is also formed with ending –u: rādu, bolū.

- c) At the syntax level we have noticed that they mostly use simple sentences: Jā sam volījo šījat. (I loved sowing), Tō je bila jēdna šūma (This was one forest). Word order is unrestricted: Rāsoje, to je dijo plūga oračeg. (Rasoje, this is a part of a plough.)
- d) At the word formation level we have noticed systematic use of ethnics for feminine gender with ending –ka: Pêrkovka, Čâjkovka, Babogrētkā. Hypocorisms for masculine gender are formed with endings –anin and –dac: Pêrkovčanin, Babogrédac. In verb formation prefix po- is very common: ponīklo, podlāgat.
- e) The students recorded some words which are not used in the standard language or which are even unfamiliar: čekmez, cimerman, apa, nabibanac...
- f) At the lexicological level lots of loan words were recorded, mainly from Turkish: ćuprija, čekmez, dūrat, đūbre, fenjer...

Based on the conducted linguistic field research, we have concluded that the speeches of Siče and Stari Perkovci are definitely the most archaic idioms of the Posavina region, on all linguistic levels. They are also specific for its features which are shared with some other Croatian dialects although geographically far away from non-“Štokavian” areas. They are located in western Posavina and belong to the old “Štokavian” Posavian speech which forms the old Slavonian “Štokavian” speech together with Podravian speech. So far they were scientifically researched only by Stjepan Ivšić in 1913. After his work, there has been no systematic study of these local speeches in the contemporary Posavian dialect. They are certainly a living monument to the history of the Croatian language, and even to the history of Slavic languages. It is particularly interesting that young people living in Siče, use indigenous Siče speech. For example, there is a young Ivan Ćupić (17 years) who writes and performs plays in Siče speech, as well as his sister, Kristina Ćupić (23 years). These speeches are extremely important for the Croatian language, its history and dialectology. The students have become aware of this idea; they have become familiar with the linguistic features of Siče and Stari Perkovci speech and with village customs. Consequently, this field work has enriched their knowledge and experience. This was confirmed by the presentation of their field work in public forums. The forums were organized in multimedia form – from PowerPoint presentations, video and audio presentations, live performances, presentations of folk music, plays with situations from country life, to dance performances in

which they asked the audience to join them. In this way we combined the field-work from one linguistic discipline, dialectology, with other approaches, ethnology, sociology, natural history, geography, history.

Summary

The paper describes the linguistic field research of the protected speeches of villages Siče and Stari Perkovci. The villages are situated in Posavina region and represent a living linguistic monument to the Croatian language. The students of the Faculty of Teacher Education in Osijek and its department in Slavonski Brod, have provided a linguistic description of these speeches within the Slavonian dialect course. Based on the collected data at all linguistic levels, they concluded that these speeches were rightly protected as intangible cultural heritage in 2008 and 2010 and that they are extremely valuable and important for the Croatian language, its history and dialectology. Furthermore, it is important to implement this kind of research and field work into primary and secondary school curricula in order to preserve these precious languages, and at the same time provide teachers with an excellent template for methodological study of Croatian dialectology.

[1] In the past, nouns in the Croatian language had five different forms for every gender. These changes were divided into major transitions in masculine, feminine and neuter and so-called consonant transitions of the masculine, feminine and neuter. Today, from those fifteen inflections there remain only three that are no longer divided by gender, but by the suffix in the genitive singular. Major transitions had two alternatives: the main transition of the nouns to the non-palatal consonant and the main transition of the noun to the palatal consonants. In the feminine gender those two transitions merged into a single transition, therefore, one transition prevailed for the palatal and non-palatal basis, and the other one is lost. In the literary language, which is based on the new štokavian” dialect, palatal transition prevailed, and in the old “Štokavian” dialect (Slavonian dialect) non-palatal transition prevailed. The old suffix for the non-palatal transition was *ě*, and for the palatal transition *-i*. Although we are talking about “Ikavian”-“Jekavian” reflection of the *jat* in the speech of Siče, there is a *jat* suffix *-e*, and not *-i* or *-je*, which we would expect given the *jat* reflex.

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