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Abstract

Some specialties of Croatian dialectological prosodic system(s)

The dialectal picture of Croatia is composed of three dialectal groups: Čakavian, Kajkavian and Štokavian. Dialects belonging to all three dialectal groups are spoken throughout the Republic of Croatia. All Croatian dialects belong to the Central South Slavic diasystem of the Slavic linguistic branch, and on the South-Slavic territory it comprises part of the dialectal continuum between the Slovenian type in the North-West and the Macedonian-Bulgarian type in the South-East. The names of those dialectal groups are based upon the use of the interrogative pronouns *ča*, *kaj* and *što* 'what' (*quid*). However, on the South Slavic territory, this classification is relevant only for Croatian dialects and it results from the needs of the Croatian linguistic community. As far as Štokavian dialects are concerned, the archaic šćakavian (the so-called Slavonian) is spoken only by Croats, Neo-Štokavian ikavian and ijekavian-šćakavian is spoken by Croats and Bosniaks, and Neo-štokavian ijekavian by Croats in some areas in the wider Dubrovnik region, but also by other South Slavic peoples. Croats in Burgenland (Austria, Hungary, and Slovakia) mostly speak Čakavian, and rarely the Štokavian or Kajkavian dialects; Croats in the Italian province of Molise speak an archaic Štokavian dialect, and Karaševo Croats in Romania speak a Torlak dialect.

Due to numerous, often forced migrations, the areal distribution of certain Croatian dialect has changed drastically since the Middle Ages. Both Čakavian and Kajkavian were historically distributed throughout a much wider area, but at present the Štokavian dialect prevails. Prior to migrations, the Čakavian dialects were spoken as far North as the rivers Kupa and Sava, and as far east as the Una-Dinara-Cetina line. After migrations, Čakavian dialects were ousted mostly to the coastal regions and islands, while the Čakavian dialects inland began to

differ according to the degree of Štokavian influence. The Kajkavian dialects were also once spoken much further to the East, where the Štokavian prevails today.

The Čakavian, Kajkavian and Štokavian dialectal groups differ on all linguistic levels: phonological, morphological, syntactic and lexical, and each level includes a number of archaisms and innovations specific to a particular dialectal group.

It is quite logical that all three Croatian dialectal groups have a lot of similarities, on all linguistic levels, but also is the fact that there are some prosodic features which tightly link all Croatian dialectal groups together, and at the same time differ them from all other South Slavic languages. One of the most striking feature is the existence of young Slavic acute which has several names: neoacute, Čakavian acute, a new acute, but due to fact that it is specific only for Croatian dialects, the author uses the name Croatian acute, the term that is more and more in use in Croatian dialectology.