

UDK 811.163.6' 282
811.163.42' 282 497.5 Međimurje
Izvorni znanstveni članak
Priljubljen: 6. X. 2004.
Prihvaćen za tisak: 16. IX. 2005.

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DIALECT VARIATION ALONG THE MURA

The paper gives the vocalic systems and some prosodic features of some lesser-known speech varieties in villages around the Mura river in eastern prleški, western međimurski, and southern prekmurski, i.e., at the point of convergence of the three dialects. In addition to presenting new material collected by the author, the paper discusses the innovations that have occurred as a result of contact, as well as background on divergences and convergences among these areas in the more remote past. The paper affirms the transition between međimurski and prleški and the disjuncture between these two and prekmurski. Observations about interaction between the dialects in recent times include the spread of *ei*, *ou* diphthongization southward from prekmurski across the Mura, the failure of plain *u* (replacing the fronted reflex of Proto-Slavic **u*) to penetrate from međimurski north of the river, and the parallel development of the last step in the tendency to replace quantity oppositions with quality in the stressed syllable which entails also the emergence of new diphthongs *ie*, *uo* replacing formerly short-stressed mid-vowels.

KEY WORDS: *dialectology, međimurski dialect, prleški dialect, prekmurski dialect, Kajkavian, Slovene, language contact, accentology, phonology, typology of vowel systems*

While dialect classification has been a central concern in South Slavic dialectology (Alexander, 2000: 3), interstitial dialect phenomena have been of greater concern in American and West European dialectological traditions, going hand in hand with interdisciplinary approaches occasioned by focus on discourse, cognitive psychological, and sociolinguistic studies (see, for example, Trudgill, 1986, Preston, 2003). Within both traditions, nevertheless, establishing the empirical facts of dialect diffusion in general and explaining its motivating factors remain ongoing endeavors, with dialect contact issues coming to the fore in recent years in Croatian dialectology in particular (Lisac, 1998, Lončarić, 1999, Alexander, 2000, Zečević, 2000, Wolfram and Schilling-Estes, 2003). The present study examines a small area at the point of contact between dialects in Croatia and Slovenia, along the Mura River, in an attempt to address some of the issues of how the dialect variants at a natural and political frontier

have assumed the structures that they have.¹ In particular, the present paper offers a case study within the domain of phonological structure of what changes occur when two different, but typologically similar and mutually intelligible dialects come together.

A first impression, at least to this foreign fieldworker's ear, is that the rural Slavic speech varieties in western Međimurje, Croatia, on the one hand, and Prekmurje and Prlekija, Slovenia, on the other, seem as though they are subtly differing variants of a single code.² Closer inspection, however, reveals a number

¹ Support for the project was provided by a Fulbright-Hays Dissertation Fellowship (1988) and U.S. Department of Education Grant for scholarly exchange between UCLA and the University of Zagreb (1989). The latter was facilitated by Prof. Dr. Bariša Krekić (UCLA) with local institutional sponsorship by Dr. Mijo Lončarić (then director of the Zavod za jezik Instituta za filologiju i folkloristiku, now the Institut za hrvatski jezik i jezikoslovlje), who was instrumental in providing access to archival materials and permission to conduct field studies in Croatia. Mr. Štefan Skledar in Prekmurje and Dr. Zvonimir Bartolić in Međimurje provided logistical support, helped locate appropriate dialect speakers, and assisted with expert advice on countless practical and substantive matters connected with the fieldwork. My appreciation and esteem for these people, and the dialect speakers whose valuable time I took and knowledge I benefited from, remains profound.

Previously unpublished dialect material (the villages Bistrica, Gibina, Knezovec, Peklenica) presented here was collected as an ancillary investigation to my primary project on prekmurski in Slovenia, the results of which are summarized in Greenberg 1993 (additional material was collected, but is not yet presented, for Sv. Martin and Zasadbreg). My goal in the ancillary study was to track the spread of features characteristic of prekmurski and to discern their directionality. The focus in both the primary and secondary projects has been on the phonological characteristics, following especially the structures of the vowel and accent systems, with a view to contributing to the reconstruction of the processes leading back to earlier stages of South Slavic and forward to the present distribution of dialect variants.

² The following are some notes on the material, its collection, and representation. My speech repertoire in the late 1980s included a near-native command of standard Slovene, passable conversational ability in prekmurski, reasonable ability in standard Croatian, and basic competence in Hungarian (which turned out to be essential for work in Porabje). I was able to adjust some features of my speech on the fly to accommodate to local patterns, though it is certain that I never did so with anything approaching native accuracy. This being the case, I did my best to keep quiet as much as possible, to listen, take notes, and, when the speakers felt comfortable with my doing so, to record the material directly onto cassette tapes. Both to locate the profile of speakers I required—usually, those educated before the Second World War and, when possible, having little experience outside of the native village—as well as to increase the speakers' comfort with my presence, I was always introduced through a trusted local authority figure (e.g., a priest, a local intellectual). Nevertheless, the observer's paradox invariably influenced the speech produced by those whom I interviewed. Code-switching between međimurski and standard Croatian was frequent and especially common at the beginning of the interviews, though I found that this could be reduced by steering the conversation towards topics concerning local crafts, domestic activities, and events in the past. Women proved to be less apt to code-switch than men, though there were exceptions. The examples adduced in the present paper are from stretches of narrative that were clearly međimurski.

Field recordings were transferred to digital media using a sampling rate of 22,000 Hz and the resulting WAVE files were reviewed using the software program Praat 4.2.16 for Windows by Paul Boersma and David Weenink. While most of the transcription was done by ear, the Praat program allowed the viewing of formant structure, pitch contour, etc., for the purpose of making maximally objective decisions on material that was difficult to judge purely by listening. It turned out to be most useful for identifying subtle differences in vowel qualities, which are relevant in the vowel systems under investigation. In order to render these qualities as accurately as possible in writing, and in a way that is recognizable to the widest possible readership, IPA transcription is used with the following concessions to tradition: the consonant signs č, š, ž are used with their commonly understood values in Croatian. Also, the traditional signs for segments in Proto-Slavic are used, rather than their IPA counterparts, except where otherwise noted.

of historically salient differences brought about by the disjuncture in the formation of the respective dialects. Nevertheless, the similarities are too striking to ignore. The interplay between these differences and similarities indicate dialects in contact, mutually intelligible codes that, having diverged in the past, have in certain respects grown back together.

Both the *prekmurski* and *međimurski*³ speakers commonly recognize that there is a palpable difference between their dialects. As Bartolić has noted, the dialect along the southern bank of the Mura differs strikingly from *prekmurski* and in some ways also from the more central varieties of *međimurski* (1971: 100). I wrote into my field notes several speakers' metalinguistic observations that the two dialects fall into distinct cognitive categories, e.g., a speaker in Peklenica, Međimurje, identified the speech in Bistrica, Prekmurje, a few kilometers away, as "*fejst slovenčina*" in which "*čuda ne razmeš*."⁴ Moreover, several people north of the Mura pointed out to me that the characteristics of what they consider *međimurski* speech can be detected in some localities within Prekmurje very close to the Mura River, which affirms Bartolić's impression and, as will be seen, this impression is reflected in the facts evidenced in the available material. In particular, to the extent that western Međimurje speech corresponds to that found in the Republic of Slovenia, it has more genetic and structural affinity with the speech varieties to the west, with *prleški* (cf. the material in Središče ob Dravi in Greenberg 1996, 1999), than to *prekmurski*. For this reason, Oblak's treatment of the speech of Sveti Martin (1896), which remained for nearly a century one of the few sources of published *međimurski* dialect data in reasonably narrow phonetic transcription, gives the impression that the dialect corresponds to *prekmurski* to a greater degree than the facts warrant (Bartolić, 1971: 99–100). It is also evident from the numerous conversations that I had with native speakers on both sides that today contacts across the Mura are common for the purposes of trade, labor, as well as social and familial relations. It would be unusual if some degree of dialect diffusion were not a product of these contacts. This offers the dialectologist an interesting laboratory to study what structural characteristics diffuse—and which do not—in the contact of closely related, yet different, dialects.

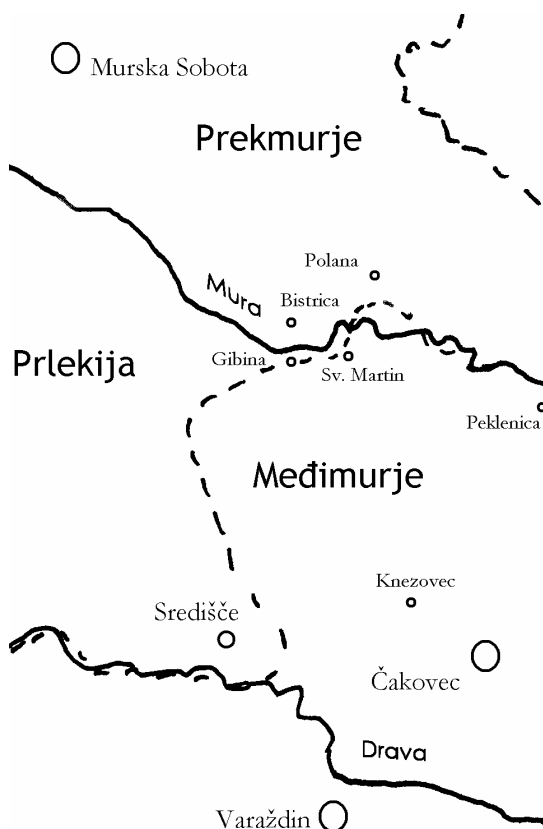
For the purpose of delimiting the scope of the present paper to a manageable size, the discussion focuses on issues of vowels and word prosody.

³ The terms *prekmurski* and *međimurski*, as well as other normalized spellings for designation of regional speech varieties, are based on native local usage and are employed in the English text for the purpose of avoiding cumbersome phrases such as "the speech varieties characteristic of Međimurje."

⁴ 'Fully Slovene'; 'there's lots [in the speech of Bistrica] you can't understand'.

Figure 1: Map of areas under discussion

NB: The map only approximates relations; borders and distances are not precise



A SKETCH OF DIACRITIC FEATURES

The following brief sketch gives the most salient phonological and morphological features, with their historical background, leading to the međimurski and prekmurski dialects today. I have relied mostly on Vermeer 1983 for developments pertaining to Kajkavian and Greenberg 2000 for developments in prekmurski with the understanding that the interested reader may consult the literature listed in these two works for fuller treatments, further details, and other interpretations.

MEDIMURSKI

In most respects međimurski reflects a conservative variety of the "osnovna kajkavska akcentuacija" described by Ivšić. With the rest of Kajkavian, it shares (1) the place and pitch contour of the inherited Proto-Slavic falling tone in examples such as **mě:so* > *mè:so* 'meat' (Ivšić, 1936: 70; Vermeer, 1983:

439); (2) the "neo-circumflex" development, a long (falling) stress in place of the "old acute" stress (Ivšić, 1936: 70; Vermeer, 1983: 439); (3) lengthening of "neo-acute" stress on etymologically short vowels (Ivšić, 1936: 72; Vermeer, 1983: 439–440); (4) retraction in the type *zá:bava* 'party' (< **za:bà:va*) (Vermeer, 1983: 440; Greenberg, 2000: 111–112). With regard to subtypes, međimurski is identified with Ivšić's classes A.1_{7–8} (see Ivšić, 1936: 80–81), characterized by the examples *'žena* 'woman, wife' *'lipa* 'lindentree', *le'ti:* 'flies 3SG' *'su:ša* 'drought' *'vi:mo* 'wine' (A.1₇) and *'žena, 'li:pa, le'ti:, 'su:ša, 'vi:mo* (A.1₈).⁵ In other words: (5) retraction from final short syllables has taken place and the newly stressed syllable has remained short (**že'na* > *'žena*); (6) the "old acute" stress has been shortened and remains such (**li?pa* > *'lipa*), or has been subsequently relengthened (> *'li:pa*); (7) "neo-acute" stress has merged in pitch contour with the falling tone, but has not been subject to retraction (**lě:'ti:tb* > *le'ti:*); (8) "neo-acute" stress has merged in pitch contour with the falling tone (**śú:ša* > *'su:ša*), i.e., word-level pitch distinctions have been lost; (9) retraction of short final stress onto an etymologically long vowel has been carried through, resulting in a long-stressed vowel and no introduction of new pitch distinctions (**vi:'no* > *v'i:mo*).

The following exceptions and amendments may be noted:

With regard to words that have inherited the Proto-Slavic falling pitch, at least in dialects west of Čakovec, the place of stress is now found on the second syllable, e.g., **vèčerb* > *ve'če:r* 'evening', unless the second syllable contained a weak jer or a vowel directly followed by a word boundary, i.e., place of stressed is retained in the types **pòbrya:li* > *po:ubrali* 'they picked' and *me:so* (both examples from Knezovec) (see also Vermeer, 1983: 440).

In certain morphologically defined categories vowels that were "neo-acute"-stressed in Proto-Slavic have become long stressed in Međimurje, e.g., **vólja* > *'vo:yla* 'will', *vъ òsmbъbъ* > *'v o:ysmi* 'at eight o'clock' the processes that led to these lengthenings are undoubtedly heterogeneous, as they show up with different pitches in Kajkavian dialects that preserve pitch distinctions (for details see Ivšić, 1936: 72, Vermeer, 1983: 439–440, Lončarić, 1996: 49).

In western međimurski the reflexes of **ě* and **ь/ѣ* have not merged, as is otherwise characteristic of more central Kajkavian varieties, including eastern Međimurje (see Vermeer, 1983, Šojat, 1981, Lončarić, 1996: 71).

PRLEŠKI

In terms of accentual developments, prleški as well as prekmurski agree with Ivšić's accentual developments as described in class A.1₇, though this in itself is insufficient to characterize fully the accentual development of either of these two dialects. In particular, prleški has carried through the advancement of the Proto-Slavic falling tone, an innovation that has taken place throughout the territory, though with restrictions on the development in the easternmost varieties (e.g., in

⁵ I have substituted IPA notation for Ivšić's traditional accent diacritics in order to be consistent with the examples elsewhere in the paper.

Središče it occurs only onto a word with a closed second syllable, on which see Greenberg 1993, 1999). The Gibina dialect, to date the easternmost variety of prleški to be documented (in this paper), apparently has further, lexically based restrictions on this innovation.

With respect to vocalic developments, prleški and međimurski form a gradual transition, more so than between prekmurski and međimurski, with a tendency towards monophthongal stressed vowel systems having nine to ten qualitative distinctions among them (see Kolarič, 1968: 632; Lončarić, 1985: 41–43). Of particular note is the parallel raising of Proto-Slavic vowels *ě, *o, that is part of the southeastern Slovene dialect development, though the distinction has been obscured in easternmost varieties of prleški through mergers with other vowels (Gibina, presented below, being an example). There is at least some evidence suggesting that monophthongization may of relatively recent vintage, as the merger of sequences of –Vj(V) indicate, e.g., Središče *čæ'ne*: 'cheaper', *moč'ne*: 'stronger', *š'te*: 'count! IMPER' (Greenberg, 1999:131).

PREKMURSKI

In words with the Proto-Slavic falling tone, the first syllable has become short and unstressed, the second syllable has become or remained long and become stressed, e.g., **mè:so* > *mæ'so:ɥ* 'meat'. The retention of morphophonemic alternations produced by this shift is more conservative than in more central Slovene dialects, e.g., prekmurski typically contrasts *g'la:va* – *gla'vo:ɥ* 'head NOM SG – ACC SG', whereas this contrast tends to be leveled in Upper Carniolan *g'lá:va* – *g'lá:vo*. However, in contrast to most dialects of Slovene to the west, the shift does not take place if the second syllable contained a hypershort vowel (jer), e.g., **ṛòbṛa:ɫ* > *ṛouḃrau*. The change took place early on in the development of Slovene, including prekmurski, as all instances of the newly stressed long vowels have the same reflexes as long vowels from other sources (Greenberg, 2000: 91–92, 105–110).

The present tense of *e*-theme verbs of the mobile paradigm have a lengthened theme vowel, e.g., **nese'ɫ* > *næ'se:* 'carries 3SG'. This is a morphologically-defined manifestation of a phonetic process whereby short vowels were lengthened before a final stressed weak jer. This innovation was removed by analogy in most Slavic dialects, but it is preserved in Carinthian and prekmurski as well as in central Slovak (Greenberg, 2000: 93).

The inherited Slavic "old acute" tone (possibly glottalized) – having shortened throughout western South Slavic – was relengthened in non-final syllables in most Slovene dialects, but not in prekmurski, where short stress is reflected, e.g., **k'ra?va* > *k'rava* 'cow', cf. Standard Slovene *'krá:va* (Kortlandt, 1989: 54, 56; Greenberg, 2000: 89–90, 128–130).

Retraction of stress from short final syllables has been carried through. In contrast to the development in central dialects of Slovene, the newly stressed syllable has preserved quantity distinctions, e.g., **zi:'ma* > *'zi:ma* 'winter',

**po'tokb* > *potok* 'stream', **že'na* > *žena* 'wife' (Greenberg, 2000: 120–121, 143–144).

As in Kajkavian, prekmurski has innovative length in the types *'ko:uža* (< **kòz'a*) 'skin' and *f'hi:ži* (< **v̄b* 'xyži) 'in the house'.

Tonal distinctions have been lost, as is characteristic of north-eastern ("Pannonian") Slovene dialects. Stressed syllables typically have a non-distinctive falling contour in neutrally intoned phrases (Greenberg, 2000: 159–161).

A rounded reflex of **a* is preserved – in the dolinski variety of Prekmurje (along the Mura) it occurs in long (stressed) syllables; elsewhere in Prekmurje, in ravenski and gorički varieties, short-stressed and unstressed are rounded [ø]. I have argued that roundedness in Proto-Slavic **a* was present early on and persevered in the formation of northern and eastern dialects of Slovene, Kajkavian, as well as here and there in other varieties of dialectal Slavic, preventing merger with the reflexes of vocalized jers, as is otherwise the case in western South Slavic (Greenberg, 1993; Greenberg, 2000: 65–66; though see also Vermeer, 1983: 454 for a different view).

The Proto-Slavic vowels **ě*, **o* developed in a parallel fashion into falling-sonority diphthongs *eĭ*, *ou*, together with the southern and eastern dialects of Slovene, e.g., *g'vėž'da* > *z'vė:izda* 'star', **'mòstb* > *'mo:ust* 'bridge' (Greenberg, 2000: 121–124).

Proto-Slavic **u* has become front rounded *y*, an innovation found throughout southern and eastern dialects of Slovene, as well as in Kajkavian (Vermeer, 1979, 1987; Greenberg, 2000: 116–117).

OTHER FEATURES

The phonological features discussed above show that the two systems arose from discrete, if typologically similar, systems. In addition, both western međimurski and prekmurski lay at the peripheries of the respective Proto-Slovene and Proto-Kajkavian systems and thus both fail to carry through some innovations characteristic of more central dialects (e.g., the non-merger of **ě* and **o/b* in western međimurski) that allow the dialects to have commonalities that are not diagnostic of shared innovation. Nevertheless, contact through intervening periods has resulted in cultural and linguistic innovations in both directions (see Rieger, 1968); moreover, parallel innovations due to structural similarity are more than possible.

It would be impossible to give here an exhaustive list of commonalities and distinctions between the three dialects, but a few striking ones might be mentioned in passing. In terms of commonalities, as suggested above, sentence and word prosody show a high degree of similarity. Though this facet is yet to be studied in any systematic way, it can be readily observed that both areas share the innovation of having lost pitch contrasts at the word level and having preserved quantity distinctions (at least in less innovative local varieties) in stressed vowels. At least prekmurski and međimurski were historically in contact with Hungarian,

a quantity-sensitive language lacking pitch oppositions, and it would thus not be surprising to discover that this general trend reflects areal diffusion from the direction of Hungarian (further Hungarian-centered innovations may be found in the northern and eastern varieties of prekmurski, which are closer to the contact zone; see Greenberg 1993 for details and references).

Among differences that are clearly divided by the Mura River, there is variation in the declension of nouns, e.g., (međimurski || prekmurski) INST SG FEM *-om* || *-of*;⁶ DAT/LOC SG MASC/NEUT *-o* || *-i*; and lexicon, e.g., *jajce* || *belica* 'egg'; *japa* || *oča* 'father'; *spominati* || *gučati* 'to speak, converse'; *treba* || *trbei* 'it is necessary'.

A CLOSER LOOK AT SOME MEĐIMURSKI VOWEL SYSTEMS

A close look at some western međimurski vowel systems is warranted, as there is little available published material; most of what is known about the dialect is known about the eastern part (Ivić, 1961, Šojat, 1981, Lončarić, 1985). The following sketches of vowel systems should be regarded as tentative, as they are based on the review of only a few hours of material for each village (I have in my possession considerably more and hope to supplement this exposition in later publications). It proved exceptionally difficult to discern the underlying values of the numerous and subtle distinctions among mid-vowels. My demoralization is attenuated by knowing that I am not the first to encounter this difficulty with međimurski vowels (note the variability of vowel realization within individual lexemes as well as from lexeme to lexeme in the description of Prelog, Šojat 1981; for a similar expression of frustration, see also Oblak 1896: 45, footnote 1).

KNEZOVEC

To get a sense of how a centrally-located međimurski vowel system is structured I investigated the village of Knezovec, a few kilometers north-west of Čakovec, following a suggestion from Dr. Bartolić. The speakers I interviewed in Knezovec identified their dialect as similar, if not identical, to that heard in Zasadbreg, Šenkovec, Ravninec, Savska ves, Ivanovec, Pribislavec, Mihovljan, and Mačkovec, i.e., around the northern outskirts of Čakovec (*goričanci*). Differences were noted to the west, in Frkanovec, Lopatinec and further in the direction of Štrigova; eastwards of Čakovec, including the villages Gardinovec, Belica, Draškovec, and Pustakovec (*do'lvanci*). How accurate this perceived distinction is, and what diacritic features are involved, lay outside the scope of my field investigation and so I did not follow up on this. Nevertheless, the received picture makes sense insofar as it defines concentric rings around Čakovec, the locus of the primary regional prestige speech pattern and whence, presumably, many local innovations originate.

⁶ Both *-on* (< *-om*) *-of* were noted for Bistrica. I found no other localities in Prekmurje that displayed this variation.

The Knezovec vowel system is quite subtle and complex. In Figure 2 the distinction between long and short vowels is indicated in part along diachronic rather than synchronic lines. The stressed high and close-mid vowels are clearly distinguished by quantity, e.g., *'bi:lo* 'was NEUT SG', *poro'di:lo sæ* 'was born NEUT SG', *poro'diti* 'to give birth INF', *'hiža* 'house'; *'lu:di* 'to buy', *'ku:piti* 'to buy', *k'rub* 'bread', *'buha* 'bedbug'; *'ro:ka* 'hand', *'mo:š* 'husband', *'no:č* 'night' vs. *'rodilo* 'born NEUT SG' *'voda* 'water', *'pop* 'priest', but the low vowels, already marked by quality distinctions, have apparently lost any trace of their former quantity in polysyllabic words, e.g., *'ba:bica* 'midwife', *'ja:bokæ* 'apples NOM PL', *nap'ra:viti* 'to make', *m'lv:ka* 'pond', *'sæ:lo* 'village', *s'pæ:pælom* 'with ash', *p'læ:læ* 'they plaited FEM PL'. Presumably, this disparity in the phonetic realization of quantity has to do with the inherent greater sonority of the low vowels. Some examples in monosyllables appear to have preserved phonetic shortness, e.g., *p'raf* 'right MASC SG', but both *k'raj* 'place' and *k'ra:j* were noted. A few tokens with diphthongal reflexes were noted in the forms *ko'lo:uvrat* 'spinning wheel', *'mo:uš* 'husband' and *'ro:up* 'edge'.

A contrast is kept between two very similar diphthongs, one with a close-mid on-glide followed by a low-mid center (*'l'eto* 'year', *h'l'ebi* 'loaves NOM PL'; after *v* the on-glide is somewhat fronted, *'v'era* 'belief'), and one with a high on-glide and a low-mid center (*'m'ěšo* 'Mass ACC SG', *p'l'es* 'dance NOM SG'). There is some vacillation between diphthongal and monophthongal realizations of what one may assume is an underlying phoneme /e/, which is the reflex of the Proto-Slavic shortened stressed *ě. Thus, one hears both *'l'eto* and *'l'eto*, *'d'enæ* 'puts 3SG' and *'denæ*, most likely occurring in differing tempos or position of focus in the utterance, where the slower tempo or emphatic pronunciation allows the diphthongal realization. However, no such vacillation was evident for the diphthong *'iε*. The remaining stressed vowels are distinguished by qualitative differences, e.g., *'de:taε* 'child, baby', *z've:zdaε* 'stars NOM PL', *'le:po* 'nice'; *'mε:so* 'meat', *'dε:m* 'day', *d'nε:væ* 'days ACC PL'. Some vacillation is found between *e/ej*, but only in those lexemes in which we know the stressed vowel to have come from Proto-Slavic long *ě, whereas long from other sources does not display this variation. In terms of frequency, the diphthongal reflex is less common. In the corpus the only certain cases of this diphthongal realization were *'dejlaš* 'make 2SG' and *præ'mejšaš* 'mix up 2SG'.

Another set of overlaps occurs with the open-mid front vowel. Quite consistently are found long open-mid reflexes continuing Proto-Slavic long *e, and lengthened *e,*b/b, as in the examples *'mε:so*, *'dε:n*, *d'nε:væ*. However, some iterations were realized with close-mid *e*, *væ'čær*, *'ve:zalo*, albeit with some variation, e.g., *na' ve:čær* 'for the evening' and *na'vε:čær*. The most reasonable assumption here is that an underlying phoneme /ε:/ is in free variation between [e:] and [ε:], whereby the former realization overlaps with the monophthongal realization of the phoneme /e:/. In only one lexeme did the low front vowel *æ* occur when *ε* would be expected, i.e., in *'læ:m* 'flax'. Interestingly, the speaker produced *'læ:m* twice—with a non-etymological palatalized *l'*—before stating that the form *'læ:m* was what "used to" be said. The complementarity between the palatalized consonant and the front realization of the vowel, as well as the

speaker's metalinguistic observation, suggests that the native form is *'læ:n* and that the form *'l'a:n* may be borrowed from another dialect or even, with local adaptation, standard Croatian.

Figure 2. Knezovec vowel inventory

Stressed				Unstressed		
Long		Short				
i	u	i	u	i	u	
e/ej	o/ou	e/°e	o		o	
ε/e		i ⁱ ε				
æ	a	ɒ		æ	a	+ ɾ

PEKLENICA

The vowel system in Peklenica is structurally similar and closely related to that of Knezovec, but the inherited quantitative distinctions have become more thoroughly rephonologized as qualitative ones. Hence, Figure 3 is organized into stressed vs. unstressed vowels without consideration of quantity as a phonemic contrast (quantity designations in the examples should accordingly be understood as matters of phonetic detail). The phonetic realization and the distribution of some variants differ subtly, as will be discussed below.

Figure 3. Peklenica vowel inventory

Stressed				Unstressed		
eĭ/iĭ/i:		ou/uu/u:		i	u	
i		u				
eĭ		ou			o	
i ⁱ ε		o/°o				
e						
æ	a	ɒ		æ	a	+ ɾ

Peklenica has innovated further than Knezovec in differentiation of high vowels. Historically long high vowels tend to be realized as diphthongs with the first element usually showing a mid-vowel realization, e.g., *ro'de:ĭla* 'gave birth FEM SG', *do'be:ĭli* 'received MASC PL', *krom'pe:ĭra* 'potato GEN SG' but also *do'bi:li*, *'bi:li* 'were MASC PL'; *'ku:uⁱpimo* 'we buy', *s'lu:uⁱžili* 'served MASC PL', *'m~~u~~:ura* 'Mura', but the variants *s'lu:žili*, *'m~~u~~:ra* were also recorded. Monophthongal realizations, at least of long *i* are noted particularly in word-final position, e.g.,

væ'li: 'says 3SG', *ži'vi:* 'lives 3SG'. In some examples, particularly before consonantal *r*, historically long *u* is slightly fronted and centralized. The same speaker produced the following four pronunciations for 'Mura' in a single stretch of narrative: *'mø:ura*, *'m̩:ura*, *'mø:ra*, *'m̩:ra*. There does not appear to be a distinction between the reflexes of etymological **u* and **ɨ*, though I note in the examples of long from **ɨ* there is no evidence of diphthongization, e.g., *'du:go* 'long', *'du:žæ* 'longer'. Tentatively, I confess, because these are the only clear examples discovered so far and may even be the result of code-switching with standard Croatian (though this was not particularly characteristic of the speakers in question), so there may yet turn out to be a contrast that has not been accounted for. Examples of the historically short (and, phonetically speaking, still short) high vowels: *'išl̩i* 'went MASC PL', *lo'vit̩i* 'to catch INF', *pro'sit̩i* 'to ask INF'; and in the case of the short *u*, whatever its source, there is no fronting or centralization, e.g., *'čuda* 'a lot', *na'pun̩i* 'filled MASC SG', *'vun* 'out'.

In contrast to Knezovec, the Peklenica falling-sonority diphthong *ɛi* is consistently realized as such, e.g., *'de:it̩æ* 'child', *'le:it̩* 'years GEN PL', *sæ'de:ila* 'sat FEM SG', *b'ɛ:ik* 'riverbank', *s'le:ičæ* 'removes 3SG'; *na ve:ik* 'always, forever'.

Similarly, the back counterpart, the continuation of Proto-Slavic **o* and lengthened **o*, is consistently rendered diphthongally, e.g., *'ko:ɥpat̩i sæ* 'to bathe INF', *'mo:ɥš* 'husband', *'mo:ɥčl̩i* 'suffered MASC PL', *'mo:ɥdra* 'bright FEM SG'; *'to:ɥ* 'that', *'bo:ɥk* 'God', *'no:ɥr̩i* 'crazy MASC PL', *s̩'ko:ɥl̩i* 'with carts INST PL'. The reflex of short stressed **o* remains monophthongal, e.g., *'ko:sit* 'to cut grass SUP', *f̩'po:tok* 'into the stream'.

The rising-sonority diphthong is the continuation of historically short-stressed **ě*, and both shortened and, in some instances, long **e*, e.g., *'l̩e:to* 'year', *'m̩e:ɥ* 'had MASC SG'; *'z̩e:ti* 'to take INF', *'ž̩e:tvo* 'harvest ACC SG', *'p̩e:t* 'five', *g'l̩e:dat̩i* 'to look INF'. There is good reason to believe that these reflexes are in the process of merging and in fact still represent separate underlying phonemes, insofar as I noted variation among examples for long Proto-Slavic **e* such as *na'v̩e:zal̩i* 'tied on MASC PL' as well as *z'v̩æ:zal̩i* 'tied up MASC PL', *'ž̩æ:l̩i* 'harvested MASC PL'. I am inclined to believe that the basic underlying phoneme that continues long **e* and lengthened **e*, **ɛ/ɛ̄* is /*ǣ*/, as evidenced by examples such as *p'l̩æ:la* 'plaited FEM SG', *'l̩æ:žæ* 'easier', *'l̩æ:ko* 'it can be'. The picture is complicated by tokens such as *'p̩æ:j* 'stump', *'de:m* 'day' (3x) varying with *'de:ij* 'day' (1x), *'de:mæs* 'today' *proš'č̩e:jæ* 'blessing of forgiveness'. It is conceivable that the surrounding consonant environments have caused the reflexes to be assigned to different phonemes—certainly the following nasal segment, which with varying consistency nasalizes the preceding vowel, is a likely factor (a similar phenomenon is noted for Središće, see Greenberg, 199: 131). It is hoped that review of further material will allow the sorting out of these variants. Much clearer (because they were more frequent in the corpus) and consistent cases of /*ǣ*/ are found in instances of historically short **e*, e.g., *'ž̩æ:mæ* 'wives', *'ž̩æ:msko* 'woman ACC SG', *pæk'l̩æ:m̩ica* 'Peklenica', *'m̩æ:mæ* 'me ACC SG', *'n̩æ:sl̩i* 'carried MASC PL', *'m̩æ:l̩in* 'mill'.

A BORDERLINE PRLEŠKI DIALECT: GIBINA

The village of Gibina lies close to Bistrica, from which it is divided by the Mura, and to Sv. Martin, from which it is divided by the Slovenian-Croatian border. The three speakers I interviewed in Gibina included one who was born in 1905 and lived in Ciganjšćak, Croatia, just on the other side of the border, until the mid-1920s, when she married and moved to Gibina. All three speakers identified the speech of Ciganjšćak (*ci'gɔ:jšćek*) as identical to Gibina and I noticed no systemic differences among the three. The Gibina dialect differs in certain respects from both međimurski and prekmurski, e.g., the INST FEM SG desinence of *a*-stem nouns is *-oj* (*z'bosoj 'nogoj* 'with bare feet'); the LOC PL in *-ah* (*na 'ji:vah* 'in the fields'); the demonstrative (anaphoric) pronoun *toti*.⁷ Unlike prekmurski, Gibina lacks the forward shift in open-ultima forms (*'me:so* 'meat', *'v#:ho* 'ear'), though it does occur in certain closed-ultima forms (*ve'če:r* 'evening', but not *'novet* 'fingernail'). In these respects it agrees with the prleški dialect, except that in contrast to it the diphthongal realizations of historical long mid-vowels prevails (*'le:ta* 'years NOM PL').

Like the međimurski systems examined above, not only has phonemic quantity become largely supplanted by qualitative distinctions, but phonetic quantity has become neutralized in a parallel fashion, with the low vowels becoming phonetically long, regardless of historical length, and the mid and high vowels retaining non-distinctive quantity. For example, stressed *a* corresponding to shortened Proto-Slavic old-acute-stressed **a*, is phonetically long: *š'ka:f* 'tub for watering livestock', *k'ra:ve* 'cows ACC PL', *'da:ti* 'to give', *'ja:bokε* 'apples ACC PL', *spoz'na:li* 'met MASC PL'. The plain reflex occurred unexpectedly in *b'φa:la* 'bogi' 'thank God' and *'za:sika* 'rendered fat', though these are apparently borrowings—the native term for the latter is *'zɔ:biy*. The corresponding long Proto-Slavic **a* is reflected not only by rounding, but diphthongization, e.g., *d'vɔ:ɥ* 'two MASC SG', *g'lɔ:ɥva* 'head', *z'nɔ:ɥla* 'knew FEM SG', *g'rɔ:ɥc* 'Graz', *kos'mɔ:ɥti* 'hairy NOM PL'. Stressed *æ* from any historical source is also realized as long, e.g., *'čæ:lo* 'forehead', *k'mæ:tam* 'farmers DAT PL', *'ræ:čæjo* 'say 3PL', *'læ:ko* 'easy', *p'læ:tæno* 'woven NEUT SG'. The examples *'ræ:čæjo*, *p'læ:tæno* also illustrate Gibina vowel harmony, which, as best as I can tell from the small sampling, consists of lowering any unstressed /*ɛ*/ to [æ] if there is a stressed *æ* in the same phonological word.

High vowels have the following distribution and peculiarities. Long stressed reflexes of Proto-Slavic high vowels are realized facultatively either as long *i:*, *#:* or diphthongized *i:j*, *#:y*. However, in contrast to the corresponding historically short vowels, these diphthongs are marked, especially under phrasal focus, by an expansion of the pharynx that gives the first, more sonorant portion of the diphthong the impression of an indefinite, centralized vowel. Exactly what this

⁷ In the varieties of međimurski and prekmurski I have encountered, *-aj* is the normal shape of the LOC PL desinence.

distinction consists of is uncertain and I believe it bears further investigation.⁸ Moreover, speakers keep apart the reflexes of **u* and **ɫ* in the following way: the former is realized optionally as a slightly fronted *ʉ* and sometimes as a plain *u*, whereas the reflex of syllabic **ɫ* is always plain *u*. Examples: (**i*) *'zi:ma/zi:ima* 'cold ADV', *'bi:lal/bi:ila* 'was FEM SG', *'vi:idi se* 'likes 3SG', *'ži:ivi* 'alive NOM PL MASC'; *žæ'nili se* 'were married MASC PL', *z'dignati* 'to raise'; (**u*) *d'rʉ:go* 'other NEUT SG', *'vu:ha* 'ears NOM PL', *zas'luužila* 'earned FEM SG'; *k'rʉje* 'breads ACC PL', *'čuda/čuda* 'a lot', *s'kup* 'together', *'vun* 'out'; (**ɫ*) *'vu:ki* 'wolves'; *'dugo* 'long NEUT SG', *'čun* 'tub used in gutting a pig'.

The reflexes of long **ě*, **e* and lengthened **e*, **o/ɔ* have merged in stressed syllables, becoming long *e* with a slight facultative *i* off-glide, e.g., (**ě*) *s'ne:gals'ne:ga* 'snow GEN SG', *m'le:ko/m'le:ko* 'milk', *'le:pol/'le:po* 'nicely ADV'; (**e*) *'ve:zati* 'to tie', *p'le:sali* 'danced MASC PL', *'pe:ta* 'fifth FEM SG'; (**e*) *od 'me:ine* 'from me GEN SG', *pro'se:ine* 'of millet NOM PL FEM'; (**o/ɔ*) *'de:n/'de:j* 'day'. The token *v're:mena* 'weather GEN SG' was realized with a low-mid vowel, which apparently is conditioned by the preceding and/or following sonorant. Short-stressed **ě* is reflected as a short close-mid *e*, optionally realized as short diphthong *eɛ*, e.g., *'delali/'de:li* 'did, made MASC PL', *'denɛ/'de:ne* 'puts', *zgo'r'elo* 'burned down NEUT SG', *ne'vesto* 'bride ACC SG'. In one instance the reflex was anomalous: *ko'læ:mo* 'knee'. Secondarily lengthened **e* is realized as *eɛ*, e.g., *'pe:rje* 'feathers', *ve'se:lje* 'fun'.

The back nasal and lengthened *o* have merged in long stressed syllables as *o*, e.g., (**o*) *'so:sedi* 'neighbors NOM PL', *v'ro:čɛ* 'remember 1SG'; (**o*) *'no:č* 'night', *s'po:tim* 'remember 1SG', *'go:le* 'bare GEN SG FEM' (in the phrase *z'go:le 'ro:ke* 'of/with one's bare hand'). Short-stressed **o* and shortened **o* are reflected as a short diphthong *uo* with an optional *u* on-glide e.g., *h'odil'hodi* 'walks 3SG', *'n'otri* 'inside ADV', *'r'o:ena* 'born FEM SG', *'dobro* 'well ADV'; (**o*) *'m'očnik* 'a baked sweet', *'bomo* 'we shall'. Secondarily stressed and unlengthened (Proto-Slavic circumflex) **o* is realized consistently as a short monophthong, e.g., *o:gen* 'fire', *'voda* 'water', *'noga* 'leg'; *'pole* 'field', *'oko* 'eye'.

In words in which a long-stressed syllable is expected in final position, the vowel is frequently shortened with a concomitant adjustment to the vowel quality. Some examples include *poka'di* 'smokes 3SG', *'sin* 'son', *s'nek* 'snow', *'zub*, *'nus* 'nose'. Similar examples are found in Sv. Martin (O b l a k, 1896: 46–47).

⁸ In virtually the same set of reflexes I have noticed this phenomenon in the speech of Martinje, a village in Prekmurje near the borders of Austria and Hungary. In Greenberg 1993 and other works I marked instances of Martinje long *as* [ə] in an attempt to render this peculiarity in writing.

Figure 4. Gibina vowel inventory

Stressed					Unstressed			
Long			Short					
ij̣/i	u/uu	u	i	u	i	u		
e/e ⁱ		o ^u	e/ε	o		o		
ε				o				
æ	a	ou	+ εr/ɾ		+ ɾ	ε	a	+ ɾ

A LOOK ACROSS THE RIVER AT A PREKMURSKI VOWEL SYSTEM: BISTRICA

In most respects, the Bistrica vowel system corresponds to the system of Polana described in Greenberg 1993: 468ff. Like Polana, it has preserved quantity distinctions in stressed syllables, including non-contrastive quantity in low vowels that are otherwise differentiated by quality. As in the međimurski systems examined here (as well as in prekmurski systems all the way to the northern limit of the speech area), the long high vowels have become diphthongized, so that there is almost no phonemic contrast that is signaled by quantity alone, e.g., *'ky:uran* 'hens DAT PL, *k'ryba* 'bread GEN SG'; *'ko:uža* 'skin', *'bodila* 'walked FEM SG'; *do'mo* 'at home', *'žaba* 'frog'. A triad of front-vowel diphthongs (e.g., *'že:ivo* 'lived MASC SG', *'č're:ivo* 'gut', *'piet* 'five') is opposed to three monophthongal (short) front vowels (e.g., *'it̩* 'to go', *'met̩* 'to have', *'næsla* 'carried FEM SG'). Nevertheless, the phonetic quantity distinctions are kept apart consistently by speakers, so that it seems appropriate to reflect this in the organization of the inventory in Figure 5. This is a typical dolinski variant of prekmurski and is moderately innovative insofar as it has not lost all traces of quantity in the stressed syllable, as in, for example, the system in Martinje (see Greenberg, 1993 for details).

Figure 5. Bistrica vowel inventory

Stressed					Unstressed			
Long			Short					
eḷ	y/yu	u	i	y	u	i	u	
eḷ		ou	e		o		o	
iε								
		ɒ	æ	a	+ ɾ	æ	a	+ ɾ

CONCLUSION

The new material presented above adds some details and confirms facts that were previously known in sketchier terms. For example, the Knezovec and Peklenica material confirm the archaic position of western međimurski with respect to the merger of the reflexes of *ě and *ь/ѣ, and the Gibina material confirms the archaic position of eastern prleški with respect to the realization of the advancement of the Proto-Slavic falling tone. Moreover, while prleški forms a gradual transition to međimurski, a somewhat sharper disjuncture is found between the vowel and accentual systems of prekmurski on the one hand and prleški and međimurski on the other. Several other innovations that transcend these dialects (e.g., 'zá:bava retraction, lengthening in the types 'kò:ža, f_hì:ži, fronting of *u, loss of distinctive pitch with concomitant retention of quantity) show that throughout their formation all of these areas were open to innovations from various directions.

The Mura has proven to be, at least in recent times, a unifying, rather than a dividing factor. Close to the river the local dialect varieties tend to retain or develop anew falling-sonority diphthongs of the type *ei*, *ou* that are uniformly manifested in prekmurski, e.g., in Gibina and Peklenica, but to a very restricted degree in Knezovec. Further examples of this phenomenon are found in the descriptions of Sv. Martin (O b l a k, 1986) and Sv. Marija (L o n č a r i ć, 1985: 43). The removal of fronted reflexes of Proto-Slavic *u, on the other hand, has apparently failed to spread north of the Mura and, conversely, the retention failed to occur where we might have expected it in areas along the river. This may be because the reasons for the deprecation of fronted y did not hold for prekmurski as they did in međimurski (V e r m e e r, 1976: 179) and, by extension, eastern prleški, such as Središće (which has plain *u*). This retention, as well as the tendency toward the retention of monophthongs in more central varieties of međimurski as well as eastern prleški may be due to the prestige of the speech of Varaždin, which also displays these attributes (see L o n č a r i ć, 1988).

Knezovec, Peklenica, and Gibina share with some varieties of prekmurski (as in, for example, Martinje, as described in G r e e n b e r g, 1993) a tendency toward elimination of distinctive quantity in stressed syllables as the functional load is carried predominantly by qualitative oppositions. A consequence of this is the tendency to develop new falling sonority diphthongs (*ie*, *uo*) replacing formerly short-stressed vowels, as evidenced in the same three dialects (see also G r e e n b e r g, 2000: 136–138). These innovations are not necessarily a consequence of dialect contact, as they are clearly structurally motivated and may have arisen at different times.

It is hoped that this brief sketch of dialect features gives at least a "tip of the iceberg" suggestion of the interaction between dialects in this dynamic and richly variegated region. Desiderata for the future would be to obtain a more detailed picture of the spread of individual features through data collection and mapping, as well as in-depth monographic treatments of the grammars of selected localities.

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SAŽETAK

NARJEČNO RAZLIKOVANJE UZ RIJEKU MURU

U radu se iznose samoglasnički sustavi i nekoliko prozodijskih osobina manje poznatih govora u selima uz rijeku Muru u istočnoj prleštini, zapadnoj međimurštini i južnoj prekomurštini, tj. na području gdje su ta tri dijalekta u dodiru. Uz prikaz nove građe sakupljene terenskim istraživanjem autora, raspravlja se o inovacijama kao rezultatu jezičnoga dodira u daljoj prošlosti i novijem vremenu. Potvrđuje se prijelazna priroda odnosa između međimurštine i prleštine kao i relativnog rascjepa između tih dvaju i prekomurštine. U opažanja o međusobnim utjecajima u novije vrijeme može se uključiti: širenje dvoglasnika tipa *ei*, *ou* u južnom smjeru sa strane prekomurštine preko Mure, čuvanje sjeverne granice zamjene stražnjeg *u* (zamjena pomicanog refleksa praslavenskoga **u*), i usporedni razvoj tendencije ukidanja količinskih opreka i zamjeni inherentnim oprekama u naglašenom slogu, što ima za posljedicu nastanak novih dvoglasnika tipa *ie*, *uo* kao zamjene nekadašnjih kratko naglašenih srednjih samoglasnika.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI: *dijalektologija, međimurština, prleština, prekomurština, kajkavština, slovenština, jezični dodir, akcentologija, glasoslovlje, tipologija samoglasničkih sustava*