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Problem of Variability and Stability in Language/Dialect

Abstract

1. I present my research of the changes in the Split dialect (4 chosen syntactic variables): a. Construction “of + genitive” (prsten od zlata – ‘a ring of gold’) instead of the adjectival attribute as in zlatni prsten (‘a golden ring’); b. The mixing of locative and accusative. An example of this feature would be the following sentence: Bija san u Split instead of Bija san u Splitu (‘I was in Split’). The second sentence has the correct locative ending –u; c. Contraction of mi je > me. The phrase Draga mi je Ravena is contracted into Draga me Ravena (‘Ravena is dear to me’); d. Čakavian dialect got its name from the interrogative-relative pronoun ča (example: Ča radiš? – ‘What are you doing?’) which is being replaced by the standard form što/šta.
2. I try to answer the question: What is left of the Split dialectal syntax? Why did some dialectal variables disappear, why are some in the state of variation and others still firmly used in this urban vernacular? The principle of salience is used as a theoretical tool for the explanation of the present trend in dialect change.
3. Finally, and most importantly, on the basis of my research I try to say something about the problem of variability and stability in language which is discussed in the philosophy of language. Namely, a view has been put forward by Georges Rey (2006) that standard linguistic entities (like phonemes, morphemes, etc.) do not exist, that they are intentional inexistents. One of the problems for the existence of linguistic entities is variability within a speech community. Rey tries to press the point that variability is a major (if not the crucial) problem in identifying standard linguistic entities (SLE’s). The same question can be asked about dialects. Is variability a problem for their identification and existence? I argue and try to show that variability is not the problem.

Keywords

language, dialect, variability, principle of salience, standard linguistic entities

I. Introduction

In this paper,¹ I proceed as follows: Firstly, I present my research of the changes in the Split dialect (four changes of the syntactic variables). Secondly, I try to answer the question: What is left of the Split dialectal syntax? Why did some dialectal variables disappear, why are some in the state of variation and others still firmly used in this urban vernacular? Thirdly, and most importantly, based on this research, I try to say something about the problem of variability and stability in a language which is discussed in the philosophy of language.

1

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I present some changes in the dialect of Split under the influence of the standard language.² It is necessary to know that there are three main dialect groups in Croatia: Štokavian, Čakavian, and Kajkavian, named after the interrogative-relative words for ‘what’ in each dialect, which are *što*, *ča* and *kaj*, respectively. According to their reflexes of proto-Slavic /e/ (called *jat*), these dialects are traditionally also subdivided into *ijekavian*, *ekavian*, and *ikavian* varieties. For example, the word for ‘milk’ is *mlijeko/mleko/mliko*, the first word being part of the standard Croatian language and the last two of the nonstandard varieties, ekavian and ikavian. I present the present-day changes in the Split vernacular spanning through different generations, thus encompassing changes through about half a century. The representatives of the oldest generation are Smoje and Ante. The middle generation is represented by Ćićo and Oliver, and the young generation by Robert and Arijana, and even younger Petra and Marijana.³ The stress is on what is changing, how it is changing and why the dialect is changing in this particular manner. For this paper, I present the changes of four syntactic variables. I am using the principle of salience as a theoretical tool for the explanation of the trend in syntactic change presented here. Peter Trudgill defined, explained, and used this principle in the context of dialectal contacts.⁴ If we say for a linguistic feature that it is salient, then we consider that feature to be perceptually and/or cognitively marked.⁵ For the present research it is defined as: *Those dialectal characteristics that the speaker feels as socially unacceptable and salient, or as some kind of “mistake”, disappear from the dialect first. Salient or stigmatised characteristics change faster while less stigmatised or non-salient slower.*

II. Syntactic variables

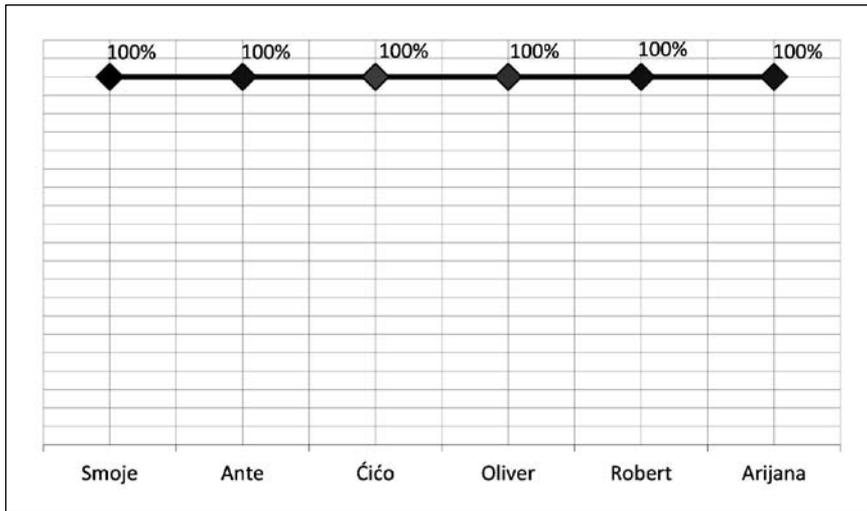
Little has been written about Čakavian syntax⁶ with the justification that “Čakavian syntax is not generally very different from the syntax of other Croatian dialects”.⁷ I have chosen to present changes in four syntactic variables.

a. Construction: of + genitive

Construction of + genitive (*prsten od zlata* – ‘a ring of gold’) instead of the adjectival attribute as in *zlatni prsten* (‘a golden ring’) is according to Finka a “quite widespread” feature in Čakavian.⁸

This construction appears with all generations in 100% cases. Why is this so if this construction is characterised as only Čakavian? I assume, although I do not have firm statistical grounds since I have not encountered any analysis of this construction in the standard language, that the use of this construction is nowadays not specific just for Čakavian.⁹ It is heard often in other dialects and in the standard language too, especially in its conversational style. This must be one of the reasons why it is used so much with the young generation, too. It is non-salient, and thus it is not sanctioned, and it stays firmly used in the Split vernacular.

Graph 1. The Use of the Construction from/of + Genitive



Example: *prsten od zlata* instead of *zlatni prsten* ('a ring made of gold' instead of 'a golden ring')

b. The mixing of locative and accusative

An example of this Čakavian feature would be the following sentence: *Bija san u Splitu* instead of *Bija san u Splitu* ('I was in Split'). The second sentence has the correct locative ending *-u*. This is the feature that varies but persists in the Split vernacular.

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Split is a city on the Adriatic coast in Croatia. Once a small town (18,500 inhabitants in 1900), it has grown rapidly since World War II. In 1991 it had 189,388 inhabitants, but according to the census from 2011, the number of inhabitants went down to 167,121. Available at: <http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv/censuses/census2011/censuslogo.htm> (accessed on April 7, 2017).

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Since the stress in this paper is on the philosophical question about stability and variability in language/dialect in general, I do not go into the linguistic methodology behind this research. For more information and a complete discussion of the methodology used, as well as other changes that happened in the Split dialect, see: Dunja Jutronić, *Spliski govor. Od vapura do trajekta*, Naklada Bošković, Split 2010. Petra and Marijana are included in the graphs no. 2 and 4, i.e. in the discussion of the mixing of accusative and locative and the use of interrogative-relative pronoun *ča*.

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Peter Trudgill, *Dialects in Contact*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1986.

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Paul Kerswill, Ann Williams, "'Salience' as an explanatory factor in language change: evidence from dialect levelling in urban Eng-

land", in: Mari C. Jones, Edith Esch (eds.), *Language Change: the interplay of external, internal and extra-linguistic factors*, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin 2002, pp. 82–109. Here they criticised and further elaborated Trudgill's view of salience.

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See Božidar Finka, "Čakavsko narječje", *Čakavska rič* 1 (1971) 1, pp. 11–71. See also: Petar Šimunović, "Čakavština srednjodalmatinskih otoka", *Čakavska rič* 7 (1977) 1, pp. 5–63.

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See Josip Lisac, "Čakavština kao narječje i u hrvatskoj književnosti", *Čakavska rič* 26 (2004) 1, pp. 5–11.

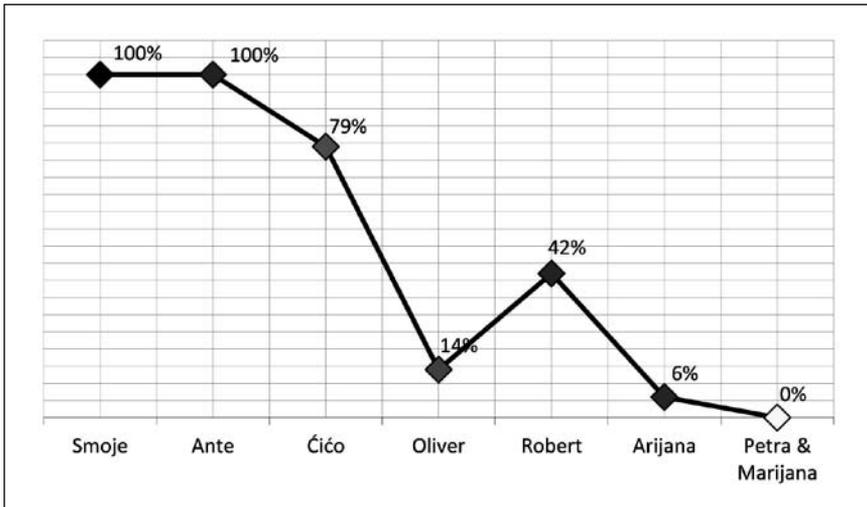
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B. Finka, "Čakavsko narječje", p. 62.

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In the past this construction came into Čakavian from Italian dialects (for example *anello d'oro*). See Ljerka Šimunković, "Jezične i stilske karakteristike hrvatskog teksta u novinama 'Il Regio Dalmata-Kraljski Dalmatin'", *Zbornik filozofskoga fakulteta u Splitu* 1/1 (2008), pp. 171–181. She calls this construction 'syntactic calque'. Special thanks to the anonymous reviewer for drawing my attention to this fact.

Graph 2. The Use of Accusative/Locative Distinction



Example: *Bija san u Split* instead of *Bija san u Splitu* ('I was in Split'; different grammatical case)

There seems to be a consensus that this feature came into the dialect from the times when Čakavian dialect was in contact with Italian.¹⁰ It is found in some south-eastern Čakavian dialects, too. As visible from the graphic presentation, this feature varies a lot especially in the middle (Čićo, Oliver) and young generation (Robert, Arijana). For example, Robert and Arijana are the same age, but we find a variation between 42% and 6%. Marijana and Petra (the representative of the youngest generation) do not use it, but when Marijana and Petra interviewed a popular pop singer from Split¹¹ who is their age, he used it up to 50%. How to explain this variation? It is not that easy to apply the principle of salience in this case, which we successfully used in some other cases. This is a syntactic feature that should be salient since the speakers use the wrong case endings which one hears as a “mistake” and consequently it should be stigmatised. It is interesting that Finka speaks about it as “the most serious *disorder* in Čakavian forms which was probably the result of the influence of the language called Dalmata” (my italics).¹² Thus, this feature should be dying out of the Split vernacular today – but it is not. It is not felt like a “disorder”, so we need another kind of explanation. It seems that this feature has covert prestige for the Split vernacular speakers. Although it should be socially stigmatized in the wider context of the standard language, it seems to be taken as an acceptable sign of localism, as something that every speaker of standard Croatian knows it is a “mistake” but takes it as a characteristic feature (a little quirk, so to speak) of the speakers from Dalmatia. And everything Dalmatian is in most cases taken as positive since it is connected to the sea, characteristic lazy Dalmatian attitude, and happy-go-lucky behaviour. Croatian sociolinguist Damir Kalogjera says:

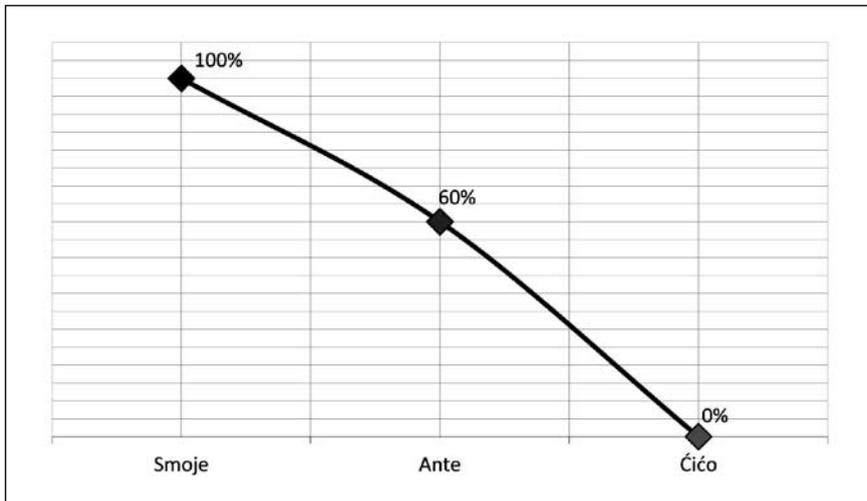
“Thus in Zagreb Dalmatian dialect is connected to vigorous temperament, fickleness in love, garrulousness, pleasant laziness, and at times with unscrupulous brazenness in social life.”¹³

A *Salient* syntactic characteristic in the Split vernacular is the contraction of *mi je > me* (*mi je* literally meaning ‘to me is’) and the interrogative-relative pronoun *ča*.

c. Contraction of *mi je* > *me*

The phrase *Draga mi je Ravena* is contracted into *Draga me Ravena* ('Ravena is dear to me'). This construction is found only with the older generation (Smoje, Ante). Here are a couple of examples from Smoje: *ruku me deboto izija* ('he almost ate my hand'), *draga me pulenta* ('I like corn mush'), *kad me skočija na posteju* ('when he jumped on my bed'), *puno me drago* ('I like it a lot').

Graph 3. The Use of Contracted Form: *mi je* > *me*



Example: *Puno me drago* instead of *Puno mi je drago* ('I like it a lot'; contracted)

This contraction in the dative case of a personal pronoun (*mi*) and the 3rd person singular of the verb to be (*je* – 'is') is stigmatized, and we do not find it in use with the middle generation (Čićo). The young generation does not even know about this feature. When one uses the phrase, they are rather surprised and often do not understand what you mean.

d. The interrogative-relative pronoun *ča*

Čakavian dialect and its various local manifestations got its name from the interrogative-relative pronoun *ča*. Finka says:

"Wherever we find a trace of the pronoun *ča*, there we find other very vital and essential Čakavian characteristics."¹⁴

¹⁰ P. Šimunović, "Čakavština srednjodalmatinskih otoka"; Radovan Vidović, *Čakavske studije*, Čakavski sabor, Split 1978.

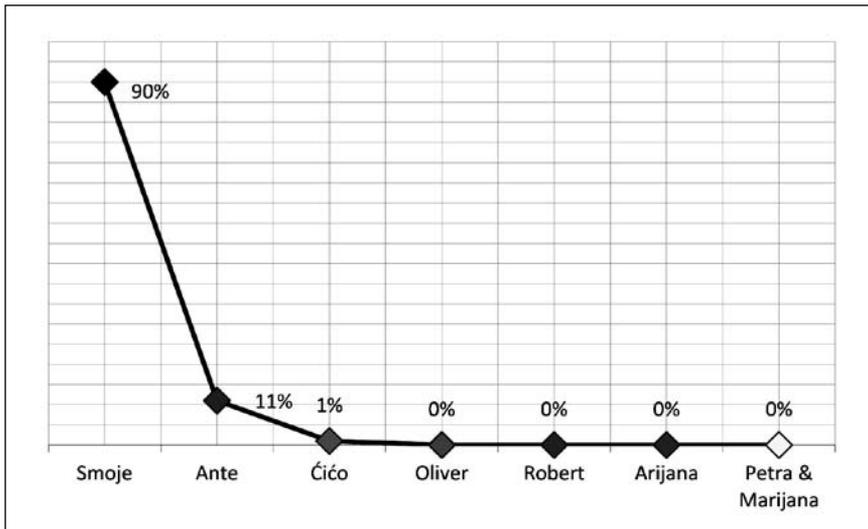
¹¹ The singer was Petar Grašo.

¹² B. Finka, "Čakavsko narječje", p. 46.

¹³ Damir Kalogjera, "O odnosu standardni jezik – regionalni dijalekt", *Jezik* 1 (1965), p. 29.

¹⁴ B. Finka, "Čakavsko narječje", p. 15.

Graph 4. The Use of the Interrogative-Relative Pronoun *ča*



Example: *Ča radiš?* ('What are you doing?')

It has been noted for a long time now that *ča* is not the vital characteristic of Čakavian dialect. Pronoun *ča* is not the main typical characteristic for placing some vernacular into Čakavian dialect. Moguš thought it was of prestige only in some urban centres such as Senj and Rijeka (on the northern coast), and Split in Dalmatia.¹⁵ However, if this was the situation at the time when Moguš was writing, it is not any more. The pronoun *ča* is not a matter of prestige in the Split vernacular. Štokavian pronoun *što* or its variant *šta* ('what') has replaced *ča* in all contexts. It is not consistently used even with the older generation (Ante). However, *ča* is used in 100% cases in the songs sung by a popular Dalmatian singer Oliver Dragojević and other singers from Dalmatia, and it is used in a kind of nostalgic way to strengthen the Dalmatian timber and spirit of those songs. Speaking about the use of some archaic dialectal forms, Kalogjera remarks:

"... using from time to time this (archaic) variety the speaker is aiming at the 'authentic' old, local speech. As if he/she had some covert feeling of 'historicity' of his local vernacular which 'today it is not as it used to be'.¹⁶

The classification of the syntactic variables is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Scale of the salience of syntactic variables

<i>salient</i> (<i>changed</i>)	<i>variable</i>		<i>nonsalient</i> (<i>unchanged</i>)
	(<i>varies</i>)	(<i>disappearing</i>)	
<i>ča</i> <i>mi je > me</i>	<i>A/L</i>	–	<i>of + G</i>

III. Variability and stability in language change

The contact between languages/dialects is the necessary condition for any kind of language/dialect change. But acknowledging this first condition, we still need much more to explain *how it came that some particular feature*

changed at a particular time and place. In connection with the changes presented, I used the *principle of salience* (as defined above) as an explanatory tool. I applied the principle of salience as extra-linguistic means of explanation of changes happening in the dialect. Socially more salient features are changing or/and disappearing faster than non-salient and socially non-stigmatised. It is clear that for the explanation of change we need to take into account extra-linguistic variables. In other words, the explanation cannot be just linguistic but includes sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic variables. However important language-internal factors may be, it is sociolinguistic factors that play the most important role in language/dialect change.¹⁷ For all the changes it was necessary to include sociopsychological and/or sociodemographic factors to explain why some feature either stays or has gone from the Split vernacular. A combination of cognitive, social, psychological, pragmatic, and interactional factors is responsible for the change. There is a need to look for multiple causes of any linguistic change in a wider social embedding. Looking for the extra-linguistic factors, Kerswill and Williams say “that might be linked to the salience (we find that) these factors might be extremely varied and sometimes complex”.¹⁸

Would that mean that there are no regularities in language change and that all the changes are *ad hoc*? I hope the research presented shows that the changes are far from *ad hoc*. And sociolinguists, the so-called variationists, are putting a lot of effort to show that there is, in spite of variability that is inherent in language, a *pervasive regularity in language change*. Such regularities are, for example, quite puzzling for the Chomskian orientation. In Chomskian perspective, the most natural way to conceive of language change is as “essentially a random ‘walk’ through the space of possible parameter settings”.¹⁹

Concerning the above-presented research and related to our main concern about the variability and stability in a language/dialect in general one could ask: How does a speaker of the Split vernacular know he/she is speaking a dialect when there is variation in different generations? Or more generally we could ask: How do we know we are speaking a certain dialect? Can we talk about some stability in this variability? Is there some kind of identity to the dialect? For this paper, the most important fact is that the *variability* that we find and try to explain does not mean that dialect does not exist or that it has died out or that we cannot delimitate it. This is the most important conclusion that serves as a link between this linguistic analysis and the philosophical speculations as presented in the next section.

IV. Georges Rey’s argument

In this section, and based on the research presented, I try to say something about the problem of variability and stability in the language in general which

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Milan Moguš, *Čakavsko narječje*, Školska knjiga, Zagreb 1977, p. 22.

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Damir Kalogjera, “Arhaizacija dijalektalnog teksta”, *Suvremena lingvistika* 34 (1992), pp. 127–132, p. 129.

¹⁷

See Dunja Jutronić, “Cognitive Pragmatics and Variational Pragmatics: Possible Interac-

tion?”, *The Croatian Journal of Philosophy* 15 (2015) 2, p. 233–245.

¹⁸

P. Kerswill, A. Williams, “‘Salience’ as an explanatory factor in language change”, p. 104.

¹⁹

This is in clear contradiction to the findings of sociolinguists who find much regularity in language change.

is discussed in the philosophy of language. Namely, a rather extreme view has been put forward by the philosopher Georges Rey who tried to show that standard linguistic entities (SLEs) (like phonemes, morphemes, etc.) do not exist. Linguists usually presuppose that sounds, inscriptions, and the like have phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic properties but Georges Rey argued in a number of papers for the contrary view, claiming that these linguistic entities, which he calls “SLEs”, do not exist. According to Georges Rey, they are “intentional inexistent”.²⁰ To give one example, in phonology there is a failure of segmentation. Phonetic types do not correspond to types. For example, phoneme /d/ in English is differently pronounced depending on the following vowel. There is simply no way to define a phonetic category in acoustic terms. According to Rey, the conclusion that follows is that SLEs, since they do not have any invariable identifiable form, do not exist.

Why would anyone think that standard linguistic entities (SLEs) do not exist? Rey thinks that the main problem for the existence of linguistic entities is their *variability* within a speech community. He tries to press the point that variability is a *crucial* problem in identifying standard linguistic entities. The same question can be asked about dialects. Is variability a problem for their identification and existence? I argued in the preceding sections that this is not the case. But let us go back to Rey’s argument about variability.

a. First problem: circularity

Variability between what people count as a token SLE would not be a problem *if there were enough facts independent of speakers’ responses* to tie the relevant structure down (*circularity problem*). This is presumably what is available in other “relational” cases of, e.g. Australians, cleaners, paperweights, etc. Rey argues that in the mentioned cases there are adequate facts about what originated where, what cleans what, and what is heavy enough to hold down the papers. It is this sufficiency of independent facts that is lacking in the case of SLEs. At best, there are only perceptual illusions of them, according to Rey.

But how different are the cases mentioned above and SLEs concerning the sufficiency of independent facts? Sometimes relational properties are correlated well with superficial properties and hence their presence is easily detected, but sometimes they are not. Thus, it is fairly easy to detect money but not so easy to detect Australians or Croatians or the unemployed. Such properties are *relational*, and we cannot simply observe whether an object has a relation property. Objects do not, we might say, wear their relational properties on their faces. SLEs are social objects like unemployed, money, and smokers. There is no difference in the insufficiency of independent facts.²¹

b. Second problem: extreme variability

Apart from circularity, Rey presses another argument, let us call it “extreme variability argument” as a major problem in identifying standard linguistic entities. Rey claims that *which* hearers understand *which* speakers under *which* circumstances vary far too wide for this to be other than an *ad hoc* and highly variable sociological suggestion. We could ask the same question about dialects. Is variability a problem for their existence?

There are two claims here: One is that variability is *much greater and more arbitrary*, i.e. *ad hoc* than can serve the interests of linguistic theory and the other one is that the variability *has a highly unpredictable sociological dimension*.

Concerning *arbitrariness*, Rey argues that in addition to dialectal and regional differences, there are differences merely in pronunciation between people due to, e.g., age, gender, anatomy, speech impediments, personality, social class, and even within a single person at a certain stage of life. Examples include the pronunciation of “whachadoin?”, subway announcements, the low mumbled drawl of a town drunk, a monotone produced by someone deaf, singing, whispering in a small room, bellowing to a crowd, emotional intensity, and relative inebriation.

My answer to this kind of objection is that individual (idiolectal) variations should be distinguished from variations on the group level.²² Above-individual/idiolectal variations should not be a problem for identification because they have a different status and thus are also important for linguistic theory. In other words, variations that theoretically count are those above idiolects. Individual variations might be rather big and arbitrary, but the variations above individual level are not arbitrary (as shown in the research presented) but consist of an interplay of various constraints, language-internal and language external.

Concerning *extreme variability as a sociological factor*, Rey believes that there are some *prima facie* difficulties in spelling out the relevant facts and relations. I tried to show that it can be done. Namely, going back to a dialect, or in this particular case the urban vernacular of Split, we distinguish its relevant properties in virtue of generational, psychological, and social factors. Thus, in spite of variation in their actual use, the members sufficiently agree in recognising the variant. Again, there is an important difference between individual and dialectic variation. Dialectal and sociolectal variability is not arbitrary, and it does not depend on the *ad hoc social dimension*. And sociolinguists, the so-called variationists, are putting a lot of effort to show that there is, in spite of variability that is inherent in language, a pervasive regularity in this variability and consequently in language change, too. As mentioned before, such regularities are quite puzzling for the Chomskyan orientation.

V. Discussion

Identifying language/dialect is a notorious problem for *everybody*. But it is not impossible to do and to incorporate it into linguistic theory. What I have in mind and what is also obvious from the presented case of the Split vernacular is that a number of factors are involved. This was well stressed a long time ago by American linguist Edward Sapir when he discusses language as

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There is an extensive exchange between Rey and Devitt on this issue. See: Georges Rey, “The Intentional Inexistence of Language – But Not Cars”, in: Robert J. Stainton (ed.), *Debates in Cognitive Science*, Blackwell, Oxford 2006, pp. 237–255; Georges Rey, “Conventions, Intuitions and Linguistic Inexistents”, *Croatian Journal of Philosophy* 6 (2006) 3, pp. 547–570; Georges Rey, “In Defence of Folieism: Replies to Critics”, *Croatian Journal of Philosophy* 8 (2008) 2, pp. 177–202. See also Michael Devitt, *Ignorance of Language*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 2006; Michael Devitt, “Defending Ignorance of Language: Responses to the Dubrovnik

Papers”, *Croatian Journal of Philosophy* 6 (2006) 3, pp. 571–606; Michael Devitt, “Explanation and reality in Linguistics”, *The Croatian Journal of Philosophy* 8 (2008) 2, pp. 203–231.

21

See M. Devitt, *Ignorance of Language*; M. Devitt, “Defending Ignorance of Language”, pp. 571–606.

22

Rey mentions some of them: dialectal and regional differences, different sociolects, but he puts them in the same category with idiolectal variations.

a historical product: drift.²³ In his attempt to look into the delimitation of a dialect he said that

“... giving the case of two closely related dialects, say English as spoken by the ‘middle classes’ of London and English as spoken by the average New Yorker, we observe that, however much the individual speakers in each city differ from each other, *the body of Londoners forms a compact, relatively unified group in contrast to the body of New Yorkers*. The individual variations are swamped in or absorbed by *certain major agreements* – say of pronunciation and vocabulary – which stand out very strongly when the language of the group as a whole is contrasted with that of the other group. This means that there is something like *an ideal linguistic entity dominating the speech habits of the members of each group, that the sense of almost unlimited freedom which each feels in the use of his language is held in leash by a tacitly directing norm.*”²⁴

Going back to Rey’s argument about variability, Mišćević had the following suggestion: One should introduce similarity classes: Speakers-hearers A, B, C, etc. parse sufficiently many of one other’s utterances in a sufficiently similar way, so we count them as being disposed to hear same SLE-structures in them. *The similarity* is what makes averages explanatory. This way one ends up with limited sociolects (a group talk), which is still better than strictly individual I-language.²⁵

Devitt makes a similar when he says that variation does indeed show that there can be difficulties in answering the rather uninteresting question of when people speak the same language. The point is not that linguists should be focusing on expressions in, say, Italian rather than French, or in, say, English rather than *x*-English for various values of ‘*x*’. And the point is certainly not about “who gets to own” a term like ‘English’. The point is that the primary focus should be on linguistic expressions that share meanings in the idiolects of a group of people. In other words, there is the stability in the matching of sounds pronounced (as well in syntax as presented here) with sounds heard.

VI. Conclusion

If the factors in language/dialect change are varied and complex, does this mean that there is variability which is *much greater and more arbitrary* than can serve the interests of linguistic theory?

I argue, against Rey, that in the discussion of variability it is essential to distinguish individual variations from dialectal, sociolectal, or group variations. And group variations are not arbitrary (as shown in the research presented) but consist of an interplay of various constraints, language-internal and language external. This suggests that there is something like a linguistic entity dominating the speech habits of the members of each group just as Sapir suggested and that we have to look into stability in language/dialect and from that standpoint work on and discuss variability. Furthermore, social factors are not a disruptive force in language, and it is becoming more and more obvious that language and social factors are mutually related in interesting and intricate ways. We could not but agree with Dell Hymes who, a long time ago, appropriately and aptly said that, in his opinion (to paraphrase), language forms and social variables slept in the same bed from the very beginning.

Dunja Jutronić

Problem varijabilnosti i stabilnosti u jeziku/dijalektu

Sažetak

1. *Iznosim svoje istraživanje o promjenama u splitskom govoru samo na sintaktičkom nivou: a. Konstrukcija »od + genitiv« (prsten od zlata umjesto zlatni prsten); b. Miješanje lokativa i akuzativa (Bija san u Split umjesto Bija san u Splitu); c. Konstrukcija mi je > me. (Draga me Ravena umjesto Draga mi je Ravena); d. Čakavski dijalekt dobio je svoje ime prema upitno-relativnoj zamjenici ča (ča radiš?) koje se sve više zamjenjuje sa standardnim oblikom što/šta.*
2. *Pokušavam odgovoriti na pitanja: što je ostalo od splitske dijalektalne sintakse? Zašto su neke varijable nestale, dok su neke u vrlo aktivnoj upotrebi u ovom urbanom vernakularu? Koristim se principom istaknutosti ('principle of saliience') u objašnjenju ovih jezičnih promjena.*
3. *Na osnovi predstavljenog istraživanja okrećem se filozofskom pitanju problema varijabilnosti i stabilnosti u jeziku o kojem se govori i raspravlja u filozofiji jezika. Naime, američki filozof Georges Rey (2006) brani mišljenje da standardni jezični entiteti (poput fonema, morfema itd.) zapravo ne postoje već su to sve intencionalno nepostojeći entiteti. Jedan od problema za postojanje tih jezičnih entiteta je upravo varijabilnost unutar jezične zajednice. Georges Rey tvrdi da je varijabilnost glavni (ako ne i krucijalni) problem u identifikaciji jezičnih entiteta. To isto pitanje o varijabilnosti možemo postaviti i za dijalekte. Je li varijabilnost stvarni problem za njihovu identifikaciju i postojanje? Ovdje pokušavam pokazati da Reveva tvrdnja nema osnove.*

Ključne riječi

jezik/dijalekt, varijabilnost, princip istaknutosti, standardni jezični entiteti

Dunja Jutronić

Das Problem der Variabilität und Stabilität in der Sprache / im Dialekt²⁶

Zusammenfassung

1. *Ich lege meine Forschung zu den Änderungen in der Mundart von Split nur auf syntaktischer Ebene dar: a. Die Konstruktion „od“ + Genitiv [zu Deutsch: aus + Dativ]²⁷ – prsten od zlata (Ring aus Gold) statt zlatni prsten (der goldene Ring); b. Die Mischung von Lokativ und Akkusativ [Bija san u Split statt Bija san u Splitu (in beiden Fällen: Ich war in Split)];²⁸ c. Die Konstruktion mi je > me (zu Deutsch: ist mir > mich) [Draga me Ravena statt Draga mi je Ravena (in beiden Fällen: Ravena ist mir lieb, oder: Ich habe Ravena lieb, Ich mag Ravena)];²⁹ d. Die čakavische Mundart erhielt ihren Namen nach dem Interrogativ-Rela-*

23

Most of it can be found in: Edward Sapir, *Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech*, Harcourt, Brace and World, New York 1921, especially in chapter 8.

24

Ibid., p. 121.

25

There is a long email exchange between Georges Rey, Michael Devitt, and Nenad Mišćević available at the request from the author of this article.

26

Bei einigen Ausdrücken ist es aufgrund unterschiedlicher Regeln, fehlender Kasus, Dialekte o. Ä. einfach nicht möglich, sie treffend zu übersetzen.

27

Im Kroatischen fordert die Präposition "od" den Genitiv, während im Deutschen die Präposition "aus" mit dem Dativ einhergeht.

28

Im Deutschen fordert die Konstruktion *Ich war in Split* den Dativ und lässt sich mit dem Akkusativ nicht ausdrücken. Zudem bleiben die Ortsnamen im Dativ indeklinabel.

29

Die Konstruktion *Ravena ist mir lieb* kann im Deutschen nicht mit dem Akkusativ (*mich*) ausgedrückt werden.

tivpronomen ča [Ča radiš? (zu Deutsch: Was machst du?)], das immer häufiger durch die Standardform što/šta [zu Deutsch ebenfalls: was]³⁰ ersetzt wird.

2. *Ich versuche, die Frage zu beantworten: Was blieb von der Dialektalsyntax aus Split übrig? Warum sind einige Variablen verschwunden, während andere in dieser urbanen Vernakularsprache in sehr aktiver Verwendung sind? In der Erklärung dieser Sprachänderungen bediene ich mich des „Prinzips der Salienz“ („principle of salience“).*
3. *Basierend auf den vorgestellten Forschungsergebnissen wende ich mich der philosophischen Frage des Problems der Variabilität und Stabilität in der Sprache zu, über die in der Sprachphilosophie gesprochen und diskutiert wird. Der amerikanische Philosoph Georges Rey (2006) verteidigt nämlich die Vorstellung, dass standardsprachliche Entitäten (wie Phonem, Morphem usw.) nicht wirklich existieren, sondern alle intentional nicht existierende Entitäten sind. Eines der Probleme bei der Existenz dieser Sprachentitäten ist eben die Variabilität innerhalb der Sprachgemeinschaft. Georges Rey argumentiert, dass Variabilität ein Hauptproblem (wenn nicht sogar ausschlaggebend) bei der Identifizierung von Sprachentitäten ist. Dieselbe Frage der Variabilität kann auch für Dialekte gestellt werden. Ist die Variabilität ein tatsächliches Problem für deren Identifizierung und Existenz? Hier versuche ich zu zeigen, dass Reys Behauptung keine Grundlage hat.*

Schlüsselwörter

Sprache/Dialekt, Variabilität, das Prinzip der Salienz, standardsprachliche Entitäten

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Les problèmes de la variabilité et de la stabilité dans la langue/le dialecte³¹

Résumé

1. *Je présente ma recherche sur les changements au niveau syntaxique au sein du dialecte splitois : construction de + génitif (prsten od zlata à la place de zlatni prsten – une bague en or) ; mélange du locatif et de l'accusatif (Bija san u Split à la place de Bija san u Splitu – j'étais à Split) ; c. construction mi je > me (Draga me Ravena à la place de Draga mi je Ravena – Ravena m'est sympathique) ; d. le dialecte ichakavien a reçu son nom sur la base du pronom interrogatif ča – quoi (ča radiš? – tu fais quoi?) qui est de plus en plus remplacé par la forme standard što/šta – quoi.*
2. *Je tente de répondre aux questions suivantes : qu'est-il resté de la syntaxe du dialecte splitois ? Pourquoi certaines variables ont-elles disparues, alors que d'autres sont utilisées de manière très active dans le langage courant ? J'utilise le principe de saillance ('principle of salience') dans l'explication de ces changements langagiers.*
3. *Sur la base de la recherche présentée je me tourne vers la question philosophique du problème de la variabilité et de la stabilité dans la langue qui est discuté et débattu dans la philosophie du langage. En effet, le philosophe Georges Rey (2006) défend l'idée selon laquelle les entités langagières standard (tels le phonèmes, morphèmes, etc.) à vrai dire n'existent pas, mais sont des entités intentionnelles inexistantes. L'un des problèmes concernant l'existence de ces entités langagières est justement la variabilité à l'intérieur des communautés langagières. Il est également possible d'interroger les dialectes sur la question de la variabilité ; la variabilité constitue-t-elle est un problème réel pour leur identification et leur existence ? Je tente ici de montrer que l'affirmation de Rey n'a pas de fondement.*

Mots-clés

langue/dialecte, variabilité, principe de saillance, entités langagières standard

30

Es bestehen zwar die mundartlichen Varianten von “was”, z. B. *wat* im Friesischen oder *wos* in Burgenland, jedoch kann das kroatische mundartliche Wort *ča* wegen des unterschiedlichen Akzents und des unterschiedlichen geografischen und kulturellen Hintergrunds damit nicht unbedingt treffend übersetzt werden.

31

La langue français n'ayant pas de délinéations, il est impossible de rendre compte des changements opérés dans le dialecte splitois.