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ON THE 21ST-CENTURY LOCAL DIALECT OF MRZLA VODICA

In the region of Gorski Kotar, numerous local dialects from all three Croatian dialect groups have coexisted for centuries. Among these dialects is the Čakavian Ekavian local dialect of Mrzla Vodica, which constitutes the focus of this paper. This locality is situated in the immediate vicinity of Crni Lug and its surrounding hamlets where, as in most of Gorski Kotar, Kajkavian is spoken. The local dialect of Mrzla Vodica, as established in earlier studies, belongs to the Western Čakavian group of dialects and it is the only Ekavian dialect in Gorski Kotar. In addition to the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica, this group largely includes the Ikavian-Ekavian dialects spoken in Benkovac Fužinski, Slavica, Sljeme, Brestova Draga, and Stari Laz. Since field research has shown that only a few native speakers remain in these localities today, which also confirms their imminent disappearance, the study of the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica was essential and urgently needed to document its status in the 21st century. This paper thus presents data collected during conversation with several inhabitants of Mrzla Vodica. The dialectological analysis conducted examines phonological and morphological features of this local dialect. Thus, both its status as an autochthonous local dialect of Gorski Kotar and its Čakavian Ekavian origin have been determined. Furthermore, certain verified features confirmed the coexistence of two different dialect systems – Čakavian in Mrzla Vodica and Kajkavian in Crni Lug. Remnants of certain morphological forms in the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica indicate a former system currently in the process of dying out, and some particularities are recalled by the speakers only from the speech of their ancestors, confirming their absence in today's communication.

1. Introduction

The settlement of Mrzla Vodica (*Mrzla Vodica*)¹ in Croatia is situated in the western part of Gorski Kotar in the Municipality of Lokve, at an altitude of 790 m. It is surrounded by two lakes: Mrzla Vodica Lake, located within the settlement itself, and Lake Lokve to the east and southeast. It is 33 km away from Rijeka – the largest urban centre. To the east lie the first inhabited villages – the hamlets of Zelin of Mrzla Vodica (2 km) and Zelin of Crni Lug (3.5 km), followed by Crni Lug (7 km away), a settlement located in the central part of Gorski Kotar, situated beneath Mount Risnjak. In Crni Lug and the surrounding hamlets, Kajkavian is spoken, as it is in most of Gorski Kotar (Kovač and Malnar 2016: 485).

A significant transportation route, constructed by the Frankopans in the 17th century, runs through Mrzla Vodica, connecting it to Crni Lug and Gerovo, linking various parts of Gorski Kotar, and historically connecting them to the Port of Bakar. On the other side, towards the sea, Mrzla Vodica is directly connected to Gornje Jelenje – serving as a natural border between Primorje and Gorski Kotar, and providing a direct connection to the rest of the Kajkavian-speaking regions of Gorski Kotar.

Mrzla Vodica had existed as a settlement before the construction of the Louisiana Road. With the construction of the said thoroughfare, the village flourished. In 1805, 44 inhabitants were recorded, growing to 1000² by 1850, while today, according to the 2021 census, there are only 14 inhabitants.³ Mrzla Vodica is the only Čakavian Ekavian locality in Gorski Kotar.⁴ Other Čakavians

¹ The settlement was officially named in the plural form, Mrzle Vodice, but the local population continued to use the singular form. Probably under the pressure of local authorities, the village regained its autochthonous name at the beginning of the 21st century (cf. <https://uprava.gov.hr/naseljena-mjesta-i-maticnapodrucja-2168/primorsko-goranska-zupanija-8145/rijeka-8691/8691>). According to Iva Lukežić (1990: 27–28): »There are no historical sources whereby the date of the settling of Mrzla Vodica, a village in the territory of Gorski Kotar, can be determined. However, among today's inhabitants of this village it is said that they came from Krasica in Primorje, no more than a few generations ago, according to oral tradition. Awareness of familial ties with Krasica continues to live on, alongside the awareness of ancestral genealogy. The locals point out that Mrzla Vodica was in the possession of the inhabitants of Krasica. Until recently, both villages were connected through stronger economic ties. It should also be mentioned that the inhabitants of Mrzla Vodica refer to their village in the singular: Mrzla Vodica (rather than in the plural, as it is officially named: Mrzle Vodice), and they are eager to show to any chance visitor the spring after which the village was named«.

² See Strohal (2005: 34).

³ See <https://dzs.gov.hr/u-fokusu/popis-2021/88>.

⁴ As stated by Strohal, »a mixture of Čakavian and Kajkavian is spoken in Mrzla Vodica«, which is debunked by interpretations in the scientific literature of the past century, where there is no record of Kajkavian ever being spoken in the locality of Mrzla Vodica. However, since in previous studies, as well as this one, certain Kajkavian features have been found in the local dialect of

in Gorski Kotar belong to the Čakavian Ikavian-Ekavian dialect.



Map 1. Geographical position of Mrzla Vodica (Designed by: Matija Mužek)

2. Coexistence of three dialects in Gorski Kotar

In Gorski Kotar, Čakavian, Kajkavian, and Štokavian have long coexisted. Within a relatively small area, all local dialects are intertwined, with Kajkavian dialects being the most prevalent. These dialects have been the subject of numerous individual studies as well as monographs dedicated to the dialectology of Gorski Kotar. On the former linguistic map of Croatia, this area was marked as mostly Kajkavian and, to a lesser extent, Čakavian, which has permanently changed in the 16th century by the arrival of Ikavian and Ijekavian Štokavians to Gorski Kotar. The reasons for this are to be found in the historical and economic conditions between the 15th and 18th century, when the families of Frankopan and Zrinski settled the Čakavian populace from their estates in Vinodol and Primorje into Gorski Kotar, »in particular its peripheral areas – from the southeast to the northwest«⁵ (Barac-Grum and Finka 1981: 419). The diversity of the linguistic mosaic of Gorski Kotar has been greatly influenced by broad

Mrzla Vodica, it can be concluded that Strohal based his conclusion on what he had heard, without conducting a thorough analysis. See Strohal (2005: 36).

⁵ All direct quotes used in this article have been translated from Croatian into English.

metanastasic movements whereby Štokavians arrived into all parts of Croatia, including several villages in Gorski Kotar.⁶ Large-scale migrations caused many dialects to be dissociated from each other, mutually disconnected – as they are partially today.

All dialects of Gorski Kotar (Čakavian, Kajkavian, and Štokavian)⁷ are divided into western and eastern ones, according to the division in Božidar Finka and Vida Barac-Grum's paper published in the monograph *Gorski kotar* (1981). The same division is applied to Čakavian dialects of Gorski Kotar: western group of dialects, similar to littoral Čakavian dialects, and eastern group, related to Čakavian dialects of the Lika-Pokuplje region. Apart from the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica, all Čakavian dialects in Gorski Kotar are Ikavian-Ekavian, though they belong to different subdialects: eastern ones (around Vrbovsko) to the continental, and western ones (around Slavica⁸) to the littoral subdialect.⁹ The Western Čakavian group of dialects of Gorski Kotar comprises idioms of two Čakavian dialects and subdialects. The first group (so-called *Slavica type*) belongs to the littoral subdialect of the Ikavian-Ekavian dialect and comprises local dialects in the following localities: Benkovac Fužinski, Slavica, Sljeme, Brestova Draga, and Stari Laz.¹⁰ The second group includes the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica, which belongs to the littoral subdialect of the Ekavian dialect.

⁶ »The diversity and entanglement of local dialects are to a great extent due to the following: population structure (Croats, Serbs), population stratification (natives, immigrants), historical circumstances (affiliation to different political and religious structures, that is, political and economic dependence thereof and exposure to their influence), geographical position (positioning between the littoral, Slovenian ethnic border, and the area of Lika, with all their particularities), configurational characteristics (predominantly mountainous area covered in forests), climate specifics (long and cold winters, but short and cool summers), and other circumstances in Gorski Kotar (...)« (Finka 1977: 146).

⁷ See more in Crnić Novosel (2019: 13–39).

⁸ The division of Čakavian local dialects of Gorski Kotar is adopted from the said paper published in 1981, when these villages must have had autochthonous inhabitants. Nowadays, unfortunately, we cannot talk about Čakavian Slavica despite its description in the paper as the focal point of Čakavians belonging to the same type. Data collected through field research conducted over the past five years in Čakavian-speaking settlements of Gorski Kotar, most recently in 2024, show that, alongside the dialect of Mrzla Vodica, other Čakavian dialects of Gorski Kotar (e.g. Stari Laz, Brestova Draga, Benkovac Fužinski) are also on the path to extinction. Cf. Crnić Novosel and Marinković (2022).

This study also confirmed that finding a native speaker (according to previously established rules in dialectology) is almost impossible in areas that were once the stronghold of Čakavian in Gorski Kotar. The example of Mrzla Vodica applies to all localities listed, which like other, not exclusively Čakavian, villages in Gorski Kotar will soon become holiday settlements, leaving no trace of their local dialect.

⁹ Cf. Lukežić (1990).

¹⁰ These are local dialects that most probably came from the Vinodol region (Lukežić 1990: 106, 108).

All local dialects are characterised by the preservation of conservative features, with only a few innovations.¹¹

3. Previous research

In previous research, the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica was included in comprehensive overviews and monographs dedicated to the study of a particular dialect or local dialects. At the forefront of this line of inquiry is Vida Barac-Grum (1993), who in her book on Čakavian-Kajkavian contacts in Gorski Kotar established the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica to be a representative of the Čakavian macrosystem (alongside Vrbovsko and Senj), comparing it to other local dialects of that area (with regard to similarities and differences between phonetic-phonological elements – vocalic features, consonant features, and prosody). Before that, in an article on the local dialects of Gorski Kotar in the book *Gorski kotar* (1981), together with Božidar Finka, she gives an overview of the idioms of Gorski Kotar and includes the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica in the western group of Čakavian dialects of Gorski Kotar, further describing it as the only Ekavian dialect in the Gorski Kotar region. This is confirmed by all papers researching the region of Gorski Kotar in its entirety, as well as those exclusively dealing with Čakavian dialects within a broader area. These are monographs describing the local dialects of Trsat-Bakar, Crikvenica (Lukežić 1996), and the Ekavian dialect of Čakavian (Vranić 2005), which the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica is part of. The local dialect of Mrzla Vodica is also mentioned in the context of the coexistence of three dialects in Gorski Kotar in a book by Mirjana Crnić Novosel (2019) and in individual papers on the local dialects of Gorski Kotar (Malnar 2010; Crnić Novosel 2013; Kovač and Malnar Jurišić 2016), a particular distinctive feature (Zubčić 2017), etc.

4. Methodology

In the 21st century, in the area of Čakavian local dialects of Gorski Kotar, the number of autochthonous inhabitants has been steadily in decline; in other words, native speakers are virtually extinct. Mrzla Vodica suffered the same fate, as confirmed during the collection of dialectological data for the analysis of its local dialect. Therefore, this paper presents data collected in multiple field studies – including recordings of natural speech and a custom questionnaire during conversation with several inhabitants of Mrzla Vodica.

Field research was conducted on several occasions in 2024 in Mrzla Vodica and the hamlet of Zelin Mrzlovodički, inhabited by the locals of Mrzla Vodica.

¹¹ Cf. Crnić Novosel (2019: 29).

Among the 14 registered residents of Mrzla Vodica, two sisters participated in the study: Katarina Scrobogna (born in 1946) and Nedjeljka (Neda) Rajičević (1949–2025), née Malnar. In addition, valuable support was provided by Ms. Jadranka Andrić-Maravić, President of the Society for the Preservation and Development of the Settlement of Mrzla Vodica, as well as by Mr. Željko Malnar (born in 1957), a native of Mrzla Vodica.

Apart from the informants previously mentioned, one of whom passed away earlier this year, no native speakers remain in Mrzla Vodica in the 21st century. The data collected as part of this research are therefore crucial for documenting and preserving this endangered local dialect.

Based on the data collected, a dialectological analysis of selected phonological and morphological particularities was conducted, thereby establishing its centuries-long presence in Gorski Kotar and Čakavian Ekavian origin. Furthermore, some verified features have confirmed the co-existence of two different dialect systems — Čakavian in Mrzla Vodica and Kajkavian in Crni Lug.

5. Phonology

The phonological system of the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica is a typical littoral Čakavian system comprising five vowels and the syllabic *r*, as well as 24 consonants. On the one hand, there is uncertainty regarding the status of the phoneme *ʒ*, which is not a stable element of the consonant inventory of this local dialect, while on the other, as expected, there is no phoneme *ž*. Previous research¹² has confirmed a closer contact between this local dialect and western-type Kajkavian dialects (for example, closely related systems of Crni Lug and Lokve), although few such specific features can be found in the present-day local dialect of Mrzla Vodica.

5.1. The vowels

The vowel system of the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica consists of five long and five short vowels, including stressed and unstressed vowels, as well as the always short syllabic *r* (*cŕkva/crĭkva* – *Grĕmo va cŕkvu.*, *sekŕva*, *štòkŕl* ‘4-leg chair with no backrest’, *četŕtāk* ‘Thursday’, *vŕt*). Previously recorded articulation changes and the presence of the diphthong (Barac-Grum 1993: 36–37) can no longer be confirmed in field research.¹³ Unstressed long vowels have not been

¹² Cf. Barac-Grum (1993: 143).

¹³ In the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica, which is »more extensively surrounded by neighbouring western Kajkavian dialects of Gorski Kotar«, allophonic variants of the vowels *e* and *o* have been recorded, which may also be realised as [ē], [ej], or [ō] by the same speaker (Barac-Grum 1993: 35). More closed variants of long vowels such as these are typically found in Kajkavian local

recorded, except in a stylogenic function by the speakers interviewed, e.g., *dītě* (alongside the more common *ditě*), *pěták* (alongside the more common *peták*).

The most important vocalic feature is the Ekavian reflex of *jat* (which remains unchanged compared to the state previously recorded in the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica¹⁴): *cvět, cvěće* (alongside the more common *rožice*), *cěla, Rečina, vėtar, tělo, strělaně, srěda, mēsec, mexūr, běli sněg, těsto, črěvo, lěpo* (*Lěpo za videt. Viš káko je lěpo!* // alongside: *fála līpa, līpa divōjka, baš si līpa*), *sěno, pėsak, lěto, vrěme, nėvreme, mlekārna, mlěko, rěč – rěči pl., směx, směšno, uvrědiš* 2SG PRES, *povėdat, nevėsta, lěva, neděļa, ponděļak, medvėd, susėda, zamėsit, poměša se* 3SG PRES, *měšamo* 1PL PRES, *vávek, dvě, góre, dóle, rozumėli* PAP M PL, *razumet*. A number of examples with Ikavian reflexes in word stems have also been recorded: *crikva, čovik, jist – jīn, jīš, jīdu, pojist, dōspit, divōjka* (*līpa divōjka*), *ditě* (*mājxino ditě*) / *dīte, dīca, līpa* (alongside *lěpo*), *šmrika*. Based on the reflex of *jat*, the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica belongs to the Čakavian dialect group of Trsat–Bakar and Crikvenica (Lukežić 1996), which also includes the following localities: Trsat, Sušak (Pećine), Gornja Vežica, Donja Vežica, Kostrena, Bakar, Draga (Tijani, Brig I.), Sveti Kuzam (Vitoševo), Meja, Kukuljanovo, Škrljevo, Krasica, Praputnjak, Ponikve, Plosna, Gornje Jelenje,¹⁵ and Crikvenica.¹⁶ Its connection to the Ekavian dialect is further confirmed by the primarily Ekavian reflex of *jat*, alongside a secondary Ikavian system (mostly in lexical morphemes), which classifies it as a littoral subdialect within the same dialect group.¹⁷ Regarding the presence of the Ikavian reflex in this Ekavian local dialect, it is important to highlight the interpretation of the origin of the inhabitants of Mrzla Vodica, who migrated to the Gorski Kotar region from the area of Krasica, whose local dialect, like that of Mrzla Vodica, partly belongs to the aforementioned Trsat-Bakar dialect group.¹⁸

dialects in the immediate vicinity of Mrzla Vodica (see Kovač and Malnar Jurišić 2016: 500), so it is not surprising that in the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica, apart from the typical littoral Čakavian vowel inventory, a different type of realisation of the long vowel had also been recorded in the past. At the same time, the absence of diphthongisation in the local dialect of Crni Lug is evidence of the co-existence of »two different speech systems within a very small geographical area«, which has »certainly affected their development« (ibid).

¹⁴ Cf. Lukežić (1996), Barac-Grum (1993), Vranić (2005).

¹⁵ Gornje Jelenje is listed as a geographical unit, but today we can no longer speak about an inhabited village, let alone one with an autochthonous population.

¹⁶ »Indeed, in local dialects that he [Belić 2011.; A/N] lists as those of Trsat-Bakar, I have identified a specific Čakavian Ekavian type, due to a number of linguistic features different from other known types of Ekavian local dialects belonging to the northwest Čakavian complex: Cres-Lošinj, Liburnian, and central Istrian type. For that Ekavian type I have suggested the name littoral type or Čakavian Ekavian dialects of the Trsat-Bakar and Crikvenica type« (Lukežić 1996: 14).

¹⁷ These local dialects are linguistically compact »with no dispersions in the development of most linguistic features« (Vranić 2005: 345), including the circumflex (cf. Zubčić 2017: 154).

¹⁸ See Lukežić (1996).

In both strong and short positions, the schwa evolved into the vowel *a*, showing instances of heightened vocalic presence characteristic of the Čakavian dialect: *dān*, *petāk*, *tā*, *čāst*, *dānas*, *pās*, *čā*, *vān*, *kadē*, *pāsić*, *vāvek*, *mānun* ISG of personal pronoun, *mālinac*, *māša*, *va* ‘in’, *pāsa* GSG.

The front nasal became *e*: *dēset*, *petāk*, *svēt*, *ōpet*, *mēso*, *pēt*; exceptionally replaced by *a* after *j*: *jáčmik*.

The back nasal became *u*: *mūž*, *pūt*, *rūbac*, *susēda*. Syllabic *l* also manifested as *u*: *dūg*, *dūžan*, *pūn*, *sūnce*, *sūza*. In second-type verbs the suffix *-ni-* is generalised, as well as in other Čakavian dialects of Gorski Kotar: *mētnit*, *pomāknit*, etc.

5.2. The consonants

The consonant inventory of the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica is made up of the following phonemes: *b*, *c*, *č*, *ć*, *d*, *ž*, *f*, *g*, *x*, *k*, *p*, *s*, *š*, *t*, *z*, *ž*, *j*, *l*, *l̥*, *m*, *n*, *ń*, *r*, *v*. There is some uncertainty regarding the status of the phoneme *ž*, which is realised with a mid-articulation value (*ž̥*). It has been confirmed in only a few examples: *rōžak*, as a reflex of the secondary cluster **daj*; then *řžav*, influenced more recently by a foreign language; and *grōžže*, as a lexeme imported from a culture unfamiliar in this area. In addition, the phoneme *ž* is not established in the system, so in the expected lexemes the fricative *ž* appears in that position as a result of assimilation — as an allophone of the phoneme *č*: *svedōžba*, including in loanwords: *frānže* ‘bangs’, *žép*, *žigerica* ‘liver’.

The phoneme *ć* was created through the iotation of the primary **í* and secondary **taj*: *nóć*, *kúća*, *svěća*; *bráća*. Its phonetic realisation was previously recorded as typically Čakavian [tʰ],¹⁹ but the present study of the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica has shown that the pronunciation of the phoneme *ć* is closer to mid-articulation. Although we cannot currently observe the realisation of the typical Čakavian *ć* in the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica, there remains a clear distinction between two affricates in this dialect, e.g. *čovik* ≠ *kúća*.

The reflex of PSI. **đ* in the analysed local dialect is the inherently Čakavian *j*: *rōjen*, *rōjendan*, *slāje*, *mlāje*, *tūji*, *prēja*, *mēja*, *rāja*, *sāja* ‘soot’, and of the secondary **daj* in the reflex *ž*: *rōžak*, as well as of **zdj*: *grōžže*.

The iotation of **stj* and **skj* clusters consistently results in a Ščakavian reflex, as shown by examples *klěšća*, *ognišće*, *ščáp*, *proščěnie*, *křšćen* PPP M SG, *křščěnie*,

¹⁹ According to the interpretation of Vida Barac-Grum (1993: 143): »Alongside the *č* ≠ *ć* distinction, the consonant phonological inventory of the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica is typically Čakavian (...). This, in fact, means that it is the only one among all Gorski Kotar idioms with realisations such as: *čđvek*, *četřti*, *rěčes*. In contrast, there are also: *ćŭ*, *kŭća*, *slěć*«. In other (not necessarily all) western Čakavian dialects of Gorski Kotar the same division has been confirmed (cf. Crnić Novosel and Marinković 2022).

zarāšćeno PPP N SG, *zapūšćen* PPP M SG, *iščemo* 1MN PRES ‘to ask’, *pūšćat*, *spūšćali* PAP M PL; in the meaning ‘courtyard’ the lexeme *privrāt* is used.

The consonant *x* is well preserved in all positions: *xōdit* (*Xōdi mālō simo!*, *Xōdi na čāšicu rakije!*), *xarmōnika*, *xāļa*, *xōdalo* PAP N SG, *xīļada*, *nītx* GMN of pronoun, *sākakovix* GMN of pronoun, *mexūr*, *ūxo*, *jūxa*, *mūxa*, *būxa*, *krūx*, *orēx/orēxiāča*, *plēx*, *sūx*, *siromāx*, *smēx*, *vīx*, *tībux*.

The consonant *f* is also part of the consonant inventory, mostly attested in loanwords: *fālit* ‘to miss’, *famīlija*, *fīrunge* ‘curtains’, *frānže* ‘bangs’, *frižak* ‘fresh’, *frizērka*, *ofīrat* ‘to seduce’, *fundāce* ‘black coffee residue’, *ofēndļiv* ‘easily offended’, *kāfa*, *frājar* ‘stylish man’; or is a result of the *xv-* (> *f*) cluster: *fāla* ‘thank you’, *pojāliš* 2SG PRES ‘to praise’.

The phoneme *l* is preserved at the end of the final syllable in the singular masculine form of present active participles: *nāšal san te*, *šāl je* (*Ōna je šlā.*), *zacrvēnil se*, *zēl* (*Vrāg vas zēl!*), *bil je*, *osnōval*, *videl*, *dēlal*, *razjādil* ‘to anger’; nouns: *čāval*, *ūgal*, *kotāl*, *posāl*, *kābal*, *misal*; adjectives: *bēl*, *cēl*, *vēsel*, *tēpal*, *nāgal* and adverbs: *pōl*.

The substitution of *-m* with the consonant *-n* is attested in grammatical morphemes and is consistently carried out at the endings of numerals and uninflected words: 1SG PRES *znān*, *mōren*, *sān* ‘I am’, *izājden*; IMN of pronoun *nīmin*; ISG of pronoun *s* (less often *z*) *mānun* (*Grēš s mānun!*); *sēdan*, *ōsan*; *sāsvin*, *većīnon*.²⁰

Weakening of the sound *ž* to *r* in intervocalic positions (rhotacism) is confirmed in present tense forms of the verb *mōc*: *mōren*, *mōreš*, *mōre*; *ne mōreju* (*Ōni tō ne mōreju.*) and in the adverb *mōrda*.

As a characteristic feature of dialects in the northwestern Čakavian area, the verbal prefixes *zi-* (< **izə-*) and *z-* (< **sə-*)²¹ stand out, as demonstrated in the following examples: *zīprat* ‘wash out’, *zrūšit* ‘tear down’, as well as positionally conditioned variants: *spēc*, *spēkla* PAP F SG. Prepositions *iz* and *z* occur as variants depending on the phonological environment, e.g. *s/z mānun*, *š nōn*, *z frātrimin*, *sa sēstramin*, *Dōšla san iz Dēlnic*.

²⁰ This phenomenon is not rare in primarily Čakavian (even Štokavian), particularly coastal dialects, but it is also confirmed in several idioms of Gorski Kotar belonging to different dialects. For example, in Kajkavian local dialects of Fužine, Brod na Kupu, Delnice, Tršće, Prezid, Čabar, Skrad, and Gerovo (Barac-Grum 1993, Malnar and Vukša Nahod 2012), Štokavian Ikavian local dialects of Lič, Mrkopalj, and Sunger (Crnić Novosel 2019), Čakavian local dialect of Stari Laz (Crnić Novosel and Marinković 2022), as well as in some eastern Čakavian dialects (Matešić 2006).

²¹ Cf. Vranić (2005: 271).

The loss of *v* in the old consonant cluster **vs* has been recorded in the following examples: *se* ‘everything’, *si* ‘everyone’, *sákakov* ‘all manner of’, *sáki – sáka – sáko* ‘every’, *sekj^hva* ‘mother-in-law’.

Contact assimilation of *s* to *š* before *n* has also been attested: *š n^hn*, *š n^hon* and *z > ž* in front of *n*: *bež néga*, *iž né^h*.

Reductions of obstruent consonants have been attested in the initial syllable: *č^her*, *šenica*, *tica*, *č^hela*.

The cluster *čr-* is preserved: *črešna*, *čr^hl^heno*, *črevo*, *črn*.

Sibilarisation was not carried out: *rādniki*, *ūnuki*, *l^hěšniki*, *or^hexi*.

5.3. Prosody

Initially, the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica had three pitch accents (neoacute, long falling, and short) in historical distribution positions, but with the potential for neoacute neutralisation in all primary positions, albeit inconsistently.²² In this local dialect, a tendency to equalise the accent position and accent type within a paradigm, that is, the same grammatical categories, has previously been identified, and the neutralisation of unaccented lengths has also been documented.

Today the system of Mrzla Vodica has two accents – short and long with no difference in intonation:²³ (short) *dāž* ‘rain’, *pās*, *pōp*, *ž^hep*, *gāce*, *pōle*, *rōgi* PL, *jáčmik* ‘barley’, *jūtra* ‘tomorrow’, *krāva*, *māčka*, *m^hžzla*, *t^hebuh*, *v^hh*, *d^helat*, *m^hesec*, *r^hemen*, *štōkrl* ‘4-legged chair without a backrest’, *tōrak* ‘Tuesday’, *šūma*, *ūnuk*, *zrūšit*, *j^hezero*, *kapūla*, *kopice* ‘hand-knitted woolen socks’, *kobasica*, *korīto*, *košūla*, *gorica* ‘coniferous forest’, *borovica* ‘blueberry’, *pogatica* ‘rolled up dough’, *stenica*, *sestrična*, *subōta*, *šenica* ‘wheat’, *vodica*, *č^hetrtāk*, *petāk*; (long) *br^heg*, *gāj*, *gr^hěš* (*Kāmo gr^hěš?*), *nōc*, *p^hir*, *pōc*, *rōg*, *s^hin*, *tō*, *zōb*, *vrāg*, *žūt*, *ōkno* (*Zāpri ōkna!*), *lājbek* ‘vest’, *mājka*, *m^herlin* ‘carrot’, *m^hěšali* PAP M PL, *stōlnāk*, *kantrīda* ‘chair with a backrest’, *mlad^hći* PL, *staklārna*, *zarāslo* PAP N SG, *bujōl* ‘bucket’, *č^hesān* ‘garlic’, *kuš^hin* ‘pillow’, *kapatūr* ‘cover’, *kop^herta* ‘decorative cover’, *krump^hir*, *lept^hir*, *ormār*, *pomidōr* ‘tomato’, *t^hrv^hez* ‘apron’.

Furthermore, this accent system displays a number of accentual innovations – such as a regressive accent shift from the ultima: *ōna*, *kāko*, *nōga*, *vōda*, *žēna*, *zēm^hla* (*L^hen ko č^hrna zēm^hla.*), *m^hžzla*, *t^hebuh*, *zāpri* 2SG IMPV, *ūnuk*, including even category-level shifts, as observed in several forms: *krōvi*, *stōli*, *k^hl^hūci*, *zūbi*, etc.²⁴

²² Cf. Vranić (2005: 160).

²³ Lukežić (1990: 49) designates the local dialects »of the littoral type in the municipality of Delnice« (Benkovac Fužinski, Slavica, and Sleme), except Brestova Draga where the neoacute has been confirmed, as two-accent systems retaining only the pretonic lengths.

²⁴ Since the number of field-collected examples is limited, the analysis of accentual features is conducted on the basis of the available data, without engaging into a more detailed prosodic examination.

Alongside a considerable number of accent innovations, e.g. *óna, káko, nóga, vóda, žéna, zémļa* (*Lén ko čřna zémļa.*), *gránici* LSG F, this local dialect still preserves older accent positions. Examples with medial-stress placement (*goríca, subóta, koríto, vodíca, povédát, koltrína, ofěndít*), and stress placement in closed ultimas (*peták, medvéd, četřták; krumpřr, pomidör, bujöl, kotál, posál, leptřr*) have been attested. Stresses long final syllables place this local dialect among other Čakavian dialects of Gorski Kotar, which still preserve this isogloss.²⁵

6. Morphology

This chapter presents selected morphological features of the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica, recognised as general Čakavian particularities, but also non-Čakavian, largely of Kajkavian origin. These non-Čakavian features have been observed both in nearby Kajkavian local dialects and regionally, as particularities of Gorski Kotar systems. Furthermore, the morphological system of the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica has preserved archaic forms typical of most Čakavian dialects within the same group, with only a few innovations.

These morphological particularities are manifested in the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica across several categories.

In GSG and NAVPL of feminine nouns the most common form is the former palatal-stem morpheme of all nouns regardless of the stem ending, as confirmed by examples such as: *konóbe, lopáte, žéne, nóge*.

In GPL F the zero morpheme is confirmed, demonstrating archaic origins in this, as well as other Gorski Kotar dialects of all three dialect groups:²⁶ *pět kůc, děvet ůr, iz Dělnic, pũno óvac, brěsak, čřěšan, šřřv, crřkav* and morpheme *-i* in M *vóli, šřni, prřsci, mētri, kólci*, etc.

The dialect is also characterised by syncretic morphemes *-imin* for M and N and *-amin* for F in DLIPL of nouns: DPL *ščápimin, žénamin, íglamin, divójkamin* (alongside *žénan, divójkan, íglan*); LPL *na cěstamin, ravnicamin, króvimin, dřřvimin, kólimin, po stáblimin, po sělamin*; IPL *z frřřrimin, sa sěstramin, s krávamin, rúkamin, žénamin, stárcimin*. Relict forms of the old locative endings are found (as recalled by the participants): *po skalřmax, po lójtrax, po ravnicax, na brěgix*, while earlier research recorded alternations of the morphemes *-ex/-ix* in LPL and *-imi/-imin* in IPL, alongside unchanged morphemes in DPL.²⁷

²⁵ Cf. Crnić Novosel and Marinković (2022).

²⁶ Cf. Barac-Grum and Finka (1981: 422), Lukežić (1990: 108), Malnar Jurišić (2017: 206–207), Marinković (2018: 138, 144, 149), Crnić Novosel (2019: 131–133), Crnić Novosel and Marinković (2022: 42).

²⁷ Cf. Crnić Novosel (2019: 32).

The ISG F of the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica²⁸ has the syncretic grammatical morpheme *-un*, an archaic feature within Čakavian systems of Gorski Kotar area, which is also confirmed in the western Ikavian-Ekavian local dialects of Benkovac, Brestova Draga, and Slavica,²⁹ as well as eastern Čakavian dialects.³⁰ In the local dialect of Stari Laz, the grammatical morpheme *-on* is most commonly found.³¹

In masculine nouns only the short plural has been recorded: *kròvi*, *zùbi*, *stòli*, *ključì*, *mùži*.

The interrogative-relative inanimate pronoun is *čà* (*Čà dèlaš? Čà ću jà? Čà govòriš? Nèmaš ti čà dèlat tù!*), GSG *čèsa/nìčesa* (*Čèsa tu fàli? Nìčesa.*), and its compound forms have also been attested: *nìš* ‘nothing’ (*Nìš od tèga.*), *zàč* ‘why’, *nèč* ‘something’ (*Dàj mi nèč za pojìst!; Òni nèč kupòvaju.*).

Sometimes *Kàj dèlaš?* is also heard, *Po kàj grěš ćà?*, which is interpreted by the locals as the influence of nearby surrounding Kajkavian settlements: *Mì smo čakavci tù na grànici. Měšalo se i jèdno i drùgo. I si smo se razumèli.*

The interrogative-relative animate pronoun is *kì* (*Kì je tò?*), alongside *niki* ‘someone’ (*Niki je bìl.*), *niko* ‘nobody’, but it is also used in the meaning ‘where’: *kadè* or *ki* (*Kadè si?, Kì si bìl?*). *Kì* as a particularity of Kajkavian systems in Gorski Kotar; but also *Kàmo grěš?*, alongside *Kàm grěš?*.

In the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica, the infinitive is consistently apocopied, as observed across all Gorski Kotar dialects:³² *čitat*, *xòdit*, *iskat*, *govòrit*, *kùpit*, *mislet*, *plàkat*, *pomàknit*, *povèdat*, *veròvat*, *zìprat* ‘wash out’.

3PL PRES has the generalised morpheme *-ju*:³³ *bùju*, *ćèju*, *dòjdeju*, *govòriju* (alongside *govòre*), *krèćeju*, *pokòsiju*, *ràdiju*, *rèčeju*, *zèmeju*, *kupòvaju*.

The grammatical morpheme *-šte* in 2PL PRES has been confirmed in the following verbs: commonly *bùšte*, *grěšte* (*Vì grěšte va gràd.*),³⁴ less commonly *govòrište* (alongside the more common *govòrite*). As interpreted by Josip Lisac (1999: 152), this morpheme originates from the analogy to the morpheme *-š* in 2SG, adopted from thematic stems.³⁵ In the Čakavian local dialect of Mrzla Vodica

²⁸ Cf. Vranić (2005: 300).

²⁹ Cf. Lukežić (1990: 107).

³⁰ Cf. Matešić (2006).

³¹ Cf. Crnić Novosel and Marinković (2022: 42).

³² Cf. Barac-Grum (1993: 192), Lisac (2006: 107), Malnar Jurišić (2017: 211), Marinković (2018: 174).

³³ Cf. Lukežić (2015: 316).

³⁴ As in many Čakavian, as well as non-Čakavian local dialects (differing in 2PL PRES), the following present tense forms of the verb ‘to go’ have been attested: *grèn*, *grěš*, *grè*, *grèmo*, *grěšte*, *grèju*.

³⁵ Cf. also Lukežić (2015: 293–299).

this feature is an areal characteristic confirmed throughout the wider Kajkavian area of Gorski Kotar,³⁶ and it was directly introduced into the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica from neighbouring Kajkavian dialects. The same morpheme is also attested in the Ikavian-Ekavian Čakavian local dialect of Stari Laz.³⁷

The future tense – as in most Kajkavian dialects of Gorski Kotar³⁸ (and Kajkavian in general) – is formed with the perfective present of the verb *biti* ('be') and the present active participle: *bùn* (*Jā bun šāl.*) – *būš* – *bù* – *būmo* (*Jutra būmo to napravili.*) – *būšte* – *būju* (*Ōni būju šli.*).

7. Remarks on the lexis

As expected, apart from fully adapted loanwords, the lexis of the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica contains a large number of lexemes of Romance origin, such as *broštulīn* 'an old coffee grinder' (< ven. *brustolin*), *bujōl* (< ven. *bugiol*, *buiol*) / *sić* (< ven. *sechio*) 'bucket', *čikabērnica* 'ashtray' (hybrid word *čik* < it. *cicca* and hr. *-bernica* from the verb *brati*), *kantrīda* 'chair with a backrest' (< dalm. rom. lexical residue from lat. *cathedra*), *kapatūr* 'cover' (< dalm. rom. lexical residue from lat. *coopertorium*), *kašēta* 'grated crate' (< vec. *casseta*), *koltrīne* 'curtains' (*koltrine* < ven. *coltrina*), *kopēta* 'decorative cover' (< it. *coperta*), *fundāće* 'black coffee residue' (< ven. *fondachio*) (also: *zòc*, see later in the text), *kušīn* 'pillow' (< ven. *cussin*), *ofēndit* 'offend' (< it. *offendere*), *pikābit* 'low wardrobe with deep drawers; dresser' (< ven. *picabiti*), *plāca* 'market, fair' (< dalm. rom. lexical residue from lat. *platea*), *pomidōr* 'tomato' (< ven. *pomod'oro*), *škāle* 'stairs' (< ven. *scala*), *škartōc* 'paper bag' (< ven. *scartozzo*), *štērna* 'well' (< dalm. rom. lexical residue from lat. *cisterna*), *štrīga* 'witch' (< ven. *striga*), *trvěz* 'apron' (< ven. *traversa*). In addition, lexemes of German origin are also present, for example: *firunge* (*firunge* < dt. *Vorhang*), *fājercag* 'lighter' (< dt. *Feuerzeug*), *frājar* (*frājarica*, F) 'stylish man, one that tries to stand out in their surroundings' (< dt. *Freier*), *zòc* (< dt. *Satz*) 'black coffee residue' (also: *fundāće*), *fūrman* 'forest worker operating a horse-drawn wagon' (< dt. *Fuhrmann*), *lājbek* 'vest' (< dt. *Leibchen*), *lōjtre* 'ladder' (< dt. *Leiter*), *mērlin* 'carrot' (< dt. *Möhre*), *šòs/kikļa* 'skirt' (< dt. *Schoss* / dt. *Kittel*), *ofīrat* 'flirt, seduce' (< dt. *hofieren*), *štòkřl* '4-legged chair, without a backrest' (< de-AT *Stockerl*), *žāga* 'saw' (< ahdt. *saga* (> dt. *Säge*)), *žāgat* 'cut with a saw' (from *žaga*). Such a lexical inventory is determined by historical and political circumstances, not only in the history

³⁶ This ending is a feature of western Kajkavian dialects of Gorski Kotar (cf. Barac-Grum 1993: 193–196, Lisac 1999: 152; 2006: 107–108, Malnar Jurišić 2017: 212), while it is not found in eastern dialects (cf. Marinković 2018: 175).

³⁷ Cf. Crnić Novosel and Marinković (2022: 42–43).

³⁸ Cf. Barac-Grum (1993: 201), Lisac (2006: 108–109), Malnar Jurišić (2017: 213), Marinković (2018: 190), Crnić Novosel (2019: 192), Crnić Novosel and Marinković (2022: 42).

of Gorski Kotar, but also in other regions of Croatia. Most of these lexemes are familiar to speakers of various local dialects of Gorski Kotar, as well as to speakers of Croatian vernaculars across the country, in particular Čakavian ones containing a high number of lexemes of Romance origin. Lexemes of German origin are also present to a high degree in Gorski Kotar, as confirmed by recent studies of this linguistic area.³⁹

8. Conclusion

Data presented in this paper, collected during field research in the area of Mrzla Vodica, confirm that the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica, as the only representative of the Ekavian dialect of Čakavian, continues to exist alongside other native dialects of Gorski Kotar. This solidifies its status on today's map of Gorski Kotar dialects. Its Kajkavian surroundings notwithstanding, basic general Čakavian features are still present in this local dialect. It is marked by the preservation of conservative features, but also by several innovations not previously recorded, although hinted at in earlier studies. The accent system thus shows the neutralisation of the acute and the long falling accent, alongside the complete absence of unstressed lengths, with a common shift of the accent from the final syllable. The morphological analysis, on the other hand, shows syncretism of plural case forms, with certain Kajkavian particularities recorded in the verbal system of this dialect that connect them to the Čakavian-Kajkavian contact across the Gorski Kotar area. Previously attested features of the vocalic system no longer exist, namely the closing of the long vowels that connected this local dialect to that of Kajkavian Crni Lug. We can, therefore, conclude that the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica has not escaped the fate of disappearance of Čakavian dialects of Gorski Kotar. This is also seen in the fact that certain particularities are recalled by the speakers only from the speech of their ancestors, confirming their absence in today's communication. In addition, relicts of certain morphological forms in the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica point to a former system in the process of dying out.

Such a situation, which pertains also to other localities of the same dialect type in Gorski Kotar, confirms the disappearance of Čakavian dialects of Gorski Kotar in recent times, and a small number of speakers suggests that studying vernaculars in certain parts of Croatia is a challenge that should be embraced. This study, therefore, was conducted with the aim of documenting the local dialect of Mrzla Vodica in the 21st century, so that the data collected may serve future dialectological analyses of local dialects in this narrow area of Croatia.

³⁹ Crnić Novosel and Macan (2011), Marinković (2018), Crnić Novosel (2019), Malnar Jurišić (2023). See also Stojić (2020).

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O mrzlovodičkome govoru 21. stoljeća

Sažetak

Na području Gorskoga kotara već stoljećima supostoje brojni govori koji pripadaju svim trima hrvatskim narječjima. Jedan od njih čakavski je ekavski punkt Mrzla Vodica koji se obrađuje u ovome radu. Taj je punkt u neposrednome susjedstvu Crnoga Luga i njegovih zaseoka, u kojima se kao i u najvećem dijelu Gorskoga kotara govori kajkavskim narječjem.

Mrzlovodički govor, prema podjeli inauguriranoj u dosadašnjoj literaturi, pripada tzv. skupini zapadnih čakavskih govora i jedini je ekavski govor na području Gorskoga kotara. Uz govor Mrzle Vodice, tu skupinu najvećma čine ikavsko-ekavski govori Benkovca Fužinskog, Slavice, Sljemena, Brestove Drage i Staroga Laza.

S obzirom na to da je situacija na terenu danas pokazala minoran broj izvornih govornika u navedenim punktovima, a isto tako potvrdila nestajanje ovih govora u skorije vrijeme, ispitivanje je govora Mrzle Vodice bilo neophodno i krajnje potrebno sa svrhom dokumentiranja njegova statusa u 21. stoljeću.

U ovome se radu stoga donose podatci prikupljeni u razgovoru s nekoliko Mrzlovodičana. Izvršena dijalektološka analiza obuhvaća fonološke i morfološke specifičnosti mrzlovodičkoga govora. Time je utvrđena njegova autohtonost na gorskokotarskome području te njegovo čakavsko ekavsko podrijetlo. Uz to, neke su ovjerene značajke potvrdile supostojanje dvaju različitih govornih sustava – čakavskoga u Mrzloj Vodici i kajkavskoga u Crnome Lugu. Relikti pojedinih morfoloških oblika u mrzlovodičkome govoru ukazuju na nekadašnji sustav koji je danas već u izumiranju, a nekih se specifičnosti govornici sjećaju iz govora svojih starih, potvrđujući njihov izostanak u današnjoj komunikaciji.

Ključne riječi: Mrzla Vodica, čakavski ekavski dijalekt, gorskokotarski govori, zapadni tip, dijalektološka analiza

Keywords: Mrzla Vodica, Čakavian Ekavian, local dialects of Gorski Kotar, western type, dialectological analysis

