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DIALECTOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE BASIC PHONOLOGICAL AND MORPHOLOGICAL FEATURES IN THE LOCAL DIALECT OF LOVINAC (MUNICIPALITY POLIČNIK)

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*This paper provides a dialectological description of the local dialect of Lovinac, a village in Zadar County (Municipality of Poličnik). The purpose of the study is to analyze this Ravni Kotari local dialect, which has not yet been mentioned in dialectological literature, and thereby contribute to a more complete linguistic picture of the broader Zadar area. Based on audio recordings of the speech of the oldest resident of Lovinac, the paper presents the most important phonological features, along with selected data from morphological level. Certain characteristics of the Lovinac dialect are observed in the context of Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialects of the Zadar region and the broader Zadar mainland linguistic area in general. The description shows that the Lovinac dialect, in its main phonological features, is a typical Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialect of the Zadar hinterland: it is characterized by the use of štakavizam (consonant group *sk'/st' > št), the distinction between pairs of palatal affricates, the reduction of unstressed vowel i, and the change of the vowel o to u before nasal sonorants. Among the general linguistic features of the broader Zadar mainland area, the following stand out: the interrogative-relative pronoun što [what], a modified present tense of the verb ići [to go] ("ižen", "ižeš", etc.), and a significant number of fully preserved infinitives.*

Keywords: *dialectology; Neo-Štokavian Ikavian; Lovinac; Zadar area*

1. Introduction

The Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialects of the broader Zadar area have been studied in more detail in recent times (see Magaš 2022a; Magaš 2022b), and several of them are also included in the LinGeH¹ project (see bibliography). The Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialect of Lovinac,² a village in the Municipality of Poličnik, has not yet been mentioned in dialectological literature, so this paper presents its most important dialectological features.³ According to the 2021 population census of the Republic of Croatia, Lovinac has 290 inhabitants (source URL 1), while it had the highest number of residents in 1991 – 617 (source URL 2). The dialectological description of the Lovinac local dialect is based on data drawn from several hours of audio recordings of the oldest resident of Lovinac, all of which were recorded in 2025. The respondent therefore spoke mostly freely about topics that marked his life (childhood, youth, military service, marriage, poetry writing, etc.). The second respondent (female) who was intended to be interviewed passed away in July 2025.

All examples mentioned in the description are given in forms that are attested in speech, and square brackets are used, as needed, to provide a more detailed or less detailed grammatical description of the example. The meanings of the examples are also those confirmed in speech. If the meaning cannot be determined precisely, the sign \approx is used; otherwise, the symbols commonly used in Croatian dialectology (e.g., *r*, *l̥*, *ž*, $<$, $>$, etc.) are employed in the description.⁴ As is typical in Croatian dialectology, the description is dominated by the phonological (vocalic, consonantal) features

¹ Short for: The Linguistic Geography of Croatia in the European Context (Croatian: *Lingvistička geografija Hrvatske u europskome okružju*; highlighted by the author of this paper). The project was funded by the Croatian Science Foundation from 2020 to 2024.

² The most important data about the village are summarized in: Feldbauer et al. 2004: 429. Lovinac is not treated separately in the monograph *Ravni kotari i Bukovica* (2018) by Ante Juric, which deals with the history of settlements in these two regions. Presumably, this is because Lovinac was a hamlet of the settlement (village) of Poličnik all the way until 1991 (Feldbauer et al. 2004: 429).

³ The Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialect of Lovinac in Lika (Municipality of Lovinac, Lika-Senj County) has been well covered dialectologically (Драгичевић 1980; Dragičević 1982; Dragičević 1983; Dragičević 1987).

⁴ Likewise, the text does not explain in detail certain terms common in Croatian dialectology (e.g., *type II verbs*).

of the local dialect,⁵ with somewhat fewer morphological features highlighted. The most important features are observed in the context of the Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialects of the broader Zadar area and the mainland local dialects of the Zadar region in general.⁶ Naturally, a larger number of the described features also characterize other (local) dialects (e.g., the change *-m* > *-n*, the change *o* > *u* next to nasal sonorants, etc.), but a broader contextualization has been omitted due to the limited scope of this paper. A longer and more precise description—using data collected from more respondents and with the help of an extensive dialectological questionnaire, and one that would include a broader contextualization of the selected features—would more faithfully show the place of the local dialect of Lovinac within the dialect landscape of the Republic of Croatia and beyond.

2. The Most Important Vocalic Features of the Local Dialect of Lovinac

The vowel system of the local dialect of Lovinac consists of five vowels (*a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*),⁷ and the sonorant *r* (*ɾ*) also occurs as a syllabic sound. All the listed sounds, including *ɾ*, can be either long or short.

2.1. Reflection of the older vowel *jat* (**ě*)

The most important vocalic feature of the Lovinac local dialect—one that is classificatory within the context of the Štokavian dialect—is the dominant Ikavian reflex of the older vowel *jat* (**ě* > *i*). Some recorded examples from the dialect include: *bīlī* (def. adj., nom. sg., masc., ‘white’), *bīsan* (indef. adj., nom. sg., masc., ‘angry’), *čòvik* (n., nom. sg., masc., ‘man’), *lipòtica* (n.,

⁵ The accentual system, with respect to both the inventory and distribution of segments, is Neo-Štokavian and exhibits no significant deviations from what is characteristic of Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialects in the wider Zadar region (for an overview, see Magaš 2022: 194–209).

⁶ The broader Zadar mainland, which includes both the coastal and hinterland areas, is dialectologically extremely interesting due to the presence of three well-represented dialects — two Štokavian (Western Ikavian and Eastern Herzegovinian) and one Čakavian (Southern Čakavian). In addition, in Belafuža, a district in the city of Zadar itself, the Central Čakavian dialect is on the verge of extinction, currently spoken only by the oldest residents, descendants of settlers from the island of Ugljan (see Magaš and Špralja 2025).

⁷ The pronunciation of vowels corresponds to their pronunciation in standard Croatian.

nom. sg., fem., ‘beauty’), *prīsnac* (n., nom. sg., masc., ‘a type of cheese pie’), *svīst* (n., nom. sg., fem., ‘consciousness’), *trīšnje* (n., nom. pl., fem., ‘cherries’), *vriću* (n., acc. sg., fem., ‘sack/bag’), *vriime* (n., nom. sg., neut., ‘time’). For potential future research into the areal distribution of these forms within the Neo-Štokavian Ikavian dialect and beyond, it is important to also mention forms such as: *tīrat* (v., inf., ‘to force’), *trībalo* (active past part., sg., neut., ‘was necessary’), *ūvik* (adv., ‘always, every time’), as well as examples like: *pribácije* (active past part., sg., masc., ‘transferred’), *prid* (prep., ‘in front of’), *prīšli* (active past part., pl., masc., ‘passed’), in which we observe the shift of the older initial cluster **prě-* into *pri-*. However, it is also necessary to mention a few examples that reflect the development **ě > e*: *óde* (adv., ‘here’), *sēno* (n., nom. sg., neut., ‘hay’), (*na*) *železnōme* (def. adj., loc. sg., masc., ‘(on) iron [adj.]’); these forms are not uncommon in Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialects of the Zadar region (cf. Magaš 2022a: 119–120) and they are also found in various Southern Čakavian local dialects of the broader Zadar mainland (see Šprljan 2020: 377–378). There are also a few confirmed Jekavian examples: *odjelo* (n., nom. sg., neut., ‘suit’), *pjěškē* (adv., ‘on foot’), *rjékā* (n., gen. pl., fem., ‘rivers’), (*u*) *Rjėku* (n., acc. sg., fem., ‘(to) Rijeka’); these examples are the result of various external linguistic influences. There is one confirmed example of *i-je*: *prijē* (adv./prep., ‘before’).

2.2. Reflections of other older syllabic sounds (**ę*, **q*, **l̥*, **ǝ*)

The reflex of the old front nasal vowel (**ę*) is *e*: *grēde* (n., acc. pl., fem., ‘beam’), *jėzik* (n., nom. sg., masc., ‘tongue’), *mēsa* (n., gen. sg., neut., ‘meat’). The reflex of the old back nasal vowel (**q*) is *u*: *mūkē* (n., gen. sg., fem., ‘torment’), *pūta* (n., gen. sg., masc., ‘way’), *rúka* (n., nom. sg., fem., ‘hand’), *žėludac* (n., nom. sg., masc., ‘stomach’). The reflex of the old syllabic sonorant *l̥* (**l̥*) is also *u*: *pūno* (adv., ‘a lot’), *sūnce* (n., nom. sg., neut., ‘sun’), *žūkī* (def. adj., nom. sg., masc., ‘bitter’), *žūtē* (def. adj., gen., sg., fem., ‘yellow’). The old semivowel “schwa” (**ǝ*) developed into *a*: *dān* (n., nom. sg., masc., ‘day’), *dānas / dānaskā* (adv., ‘today’), *dāske* (n., acc. pl., fem., ‘planks’), *māglu* (n., acc. sg., fem., ‘fog’), *pòsā* (n., nom. sg., masc., ‘job/work’), (*òd*) *rāži* (n., gen. sg., fem., ‘(of) rye’). The development **ę > e*, **q > u*, **l̥ > u*, and **ǝ > a* is common to all dialects of the broader Zadar mainland, and in the Southern Čakavian local dialect of Novigrad, the change **ę > a* after *j* has also been recorded (see Šprljan 2020: 378).

2.3. The syllabic sonorant *r* (*ɾ*)

The syllabic sonorant *r* can be long or short, stressed or unstressed. Some examples include: *bṛšlan* (n., nom. sg., masc., ‘ivy’), *bṛdo* (n., nom. sg., neut., ‘hill’), (*ù*) *čṛkvu* (n., acc. sg., fem., ‘church’), *čṛnā* (def. adj., nom. sg., fem., ‘black’), *grḍòsija* (n., nom. sg., fem., ≈ ‘giant’), *sṛna* (n., nom. sg., fem., ‘doe’), *Ŭskṛs* (n., nom. sg., masc., ‘Easter’). An initial syllabic *r* is also possible, as in: *se ṛvat* (v., inf., ‘to wrestle’). The presence of long *r* in the system, whether stressed or unstressed, characterizes almost all studied local dialects of the broader Zadar mainland (see Magaš 2022a: 126–128 for various Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialects, Magaš 2019: 367 for the Neo-Štokavian Jekavian local dialect of Biljane Donje, Šprljan 2020: 377 for various mainland Čakavian local dialects); the exception is the local dialect of Stanovi in the city of Zadar (see Šprljan 2020: 376–377).

2.4. Reduction of short unstressed vowels

One of the most recognizable features of the Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialects of the Zadar region is the reduction of the unstressed short vowel *i* (see Magaš 2022a: 138–148). Below are examples of this reduction in the local dialect of Lovinac: *al* (< *ali*; conj., ‘but’), *dòl* (< *dòli*; adv., ‘down’/‘south’), *dṛžav* (< *dṛžavi*; n., dat. sg., fem., ‘state’), *gòr* (< *gòri*; adv., ‘up’/‘north’), *mèn* (< *mèni*; pers. pron., dat., ‘me’), *nèdla* (< *nèdila*; n., nom. sg., fem., ‘Sunday’), *nàpravti* (< *nàpraviti*; v., inf., ‘to make’), (*u*) *Rjék* (< (*u*) *Rjéki*; n., loc. sg., fem., ‘(in) Rijeka’), *stòlce* (< *stòlice*, the unreduced form is also attested; n., nom. pl., fem., ‘chairs’), *živli* (< *živili*; active past part., pl., masc., ‘lived’). The examples *nàpravti* and *živli* confirm the tendency to reduce the first of two unstressed *i* vowels – as we can see, the final vowel *i* is not reduced. Some examples confirm that the reduction of the unstressed vowel *i* is optional; that is, it does not always have to be carried out even in positions where it is possible: *čòvik* (n., nom. sg., masc., ‘man’), *òbičnè* (adj., gen. sg., fem., ‘ordinary’), *pòmilovā* (active past part., masc., sg. ≈ ‘to have mercy’), *pribácije* (active past part., masc., sg., ‘to transfer’), as well as the previously mentioned example *stòlice* (which appears alongside *stòlce*, where the reduction has been applied). In terms of the optional nature of this reduction, the local dialect of Lovinac aligns with other Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialects of the broader Zadar area (cf. Magaš 2022a: 146–148). The reduction of the unstressed vowel *i* also characterizes Neo-Štokavian Jekavian local dialects of the broader Zadar mainland, for example the local dialect of Biljane Donje (see Magaš 2019:

366–367). In the local dialect of Lovinac, the unstressed short vowel *e* is often reduced, especially in examples where the post-stress *je* (literally meaning ‘is’) appears: *îmā j* (‘he had’), *kāko j* (≈ ‘how s.b. did’), *kō j tō* (‘who is that’), *tāj* (≈ ‘she is’). Some other examples of the reduction of the short post-stress vowel *e* have also been recorded, e.g., *drūže kaptāne* (< *kāpetāne*) meaning ‘comrade captain’ (voc.). Other unstressed vowels (*a*, *o*) in some examples undergo apheresis: *ko* (< *ako*; conj., ‘if’), *nākō* (< *onākō*; adv., ‘like that’), *vākā* (< *ovākā*; dem. pron., nom. sg., fem., ‘this kind of’), *vākō* (< *ovākō*; adv., ‘like this’).

2.5. Closing of the vowel *o* > *u* before sonorants

One of the characteristic vocalic changes found in many Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialects of the broader Zadar region is the closing of the vowel *o* to *u* before the nasal sonorants *m* and *n*. A larger number of such instances have been recorded in the local dialect of Lovinac: *dūnila* (< *dōnila*; active past part., fem., sg., ‘brought’), *kūmād* (< *kōmād*; n., nom. sg., masc., ‘piece’), *ūn* (< *ōn*; pers. pron., nom. sg., masc., ‘he’), *ūni* (< *ōni*; dem. pron., nom. sg., masc., ‘that one’), *ūndā* (< *ōndā*; adv., ‘then’), etc. One example *kūn* (< *kōn*; n., nom. sg., masc., ‘horse’) was recorded, but alongside that, the form *kōne* (acc. pl.) was confirmed multiple times. There are numerous confirmed examples of the closing of *o* > *u* before the nasal sonorant *n* in the instrumental singular ending of masculine nouns of the *a*-declension, as well as masculine and feminine nouns of the *e*-declension. This vocalic change is regularly preceded by a consonant change—namely, the replacement of final *m* with final *n*. Examples include: *àsvāltun* (< *àsvāltōn*; n., instr. sg., masc., ‘asphalt’), *cěstūn* (< *cěstōn*; n., instr. sg., fem., ‘road’), *Jōlūn* (< *Jōlōn*; n., instr. sg., masc., ‘Jole’); *Stójūn* (< *Stójōn*; n., instr. sg., fem., ‘Stoja’), *nèdļūn* (< *nèdļōn*; n., instr. sg., fem., ‘Sunday’). A few examples have also been recorded in which the possible vowel closing was not carried out, e.g., (*sa*) *siron* (n., instr. sg., masc., ‘(with) cheese’). Unlike some other Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialects of the broader Zadar area (see Magaš 2022a: 153–154, 298, 303), the local dialect of Lovinac does not exhibit the closing of *o* > *u* after the nasal sonorants *m* and *n*: *mōst* (n., nom. sg., masc., ‘bridge’), *mōtala* (active past part., sg., fem., ‘to roll’), *smōkvē* (n., gen. sg., fem., ‘fig’), *sinóvac* (n., nom. sg., masc., ‘brother’s son’), *dān ì nōć* (‘day and night’; *dan* = n., nom. sg., masc., ‘day’; *i* = conj., ‘and’; *noć* = n., nom. sg., fem., ‘night’; the accent has shifted from the noun *noć* to the conjunction *i*: *ì nōć* < *i nōć*).

2.6. Other vocalic features and changes

The examples *kòjō* (interrog.-rel. pron., nom. sg., neut., ‘which’), *nèmo-gūčo* (adj., nom. sg., neut., ‘impossible’), and *òčovi* (n., nom. pl., masc., ‘fathers’) should also be mentioned, because in these forms the first sound after the root morpheme is not the vowel *e*, but *o*, meaning that umlaut has not been carried out after the consonants *j*, *č*, and *ć*. In the example *bòlě* (adv. comp., ‘better’), the umlaut has been applied (for the spread of this same example in other Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialects of the broader Zadar area, see Magaš 2022a: 130). Vowel assimilation is confirmed in the example *nè mere* (< *nè more*; v., 3rd sg., pres., ‘cannot’) and, consequently, *nè mere* (< *nè more*; v., 2nd sg., pres., ‘you cannot’). For the purpose of possible future study of the areal distribution of the confirmed variants, I cite the Lovinac examples *rašěto* (n., nom. sg., neut., ≈ ‘sieve’; elsewhere *rešěto*) and (*na*) *lìvodu* (n., loc. sg., fem. ‘(to) meadow’; elsewhere (*na*) *livadu*), which are also present in other Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialects (cf. e.g., Lisac 2008: 107).

3. The Most Important Consonantal Features of the Local Dialect of Lovinac

The consonant system consists of obstruents *p, b, f, t, d, c, s, z, ć, ź, č, ž, š, ž, k, g, h* and sonorants *v, m, l, r, n, j, ĺ, ŋ*. Naturally, the stability of each of these consonants varies.

3.1. Reflection of the older cluster **sk’/st’*

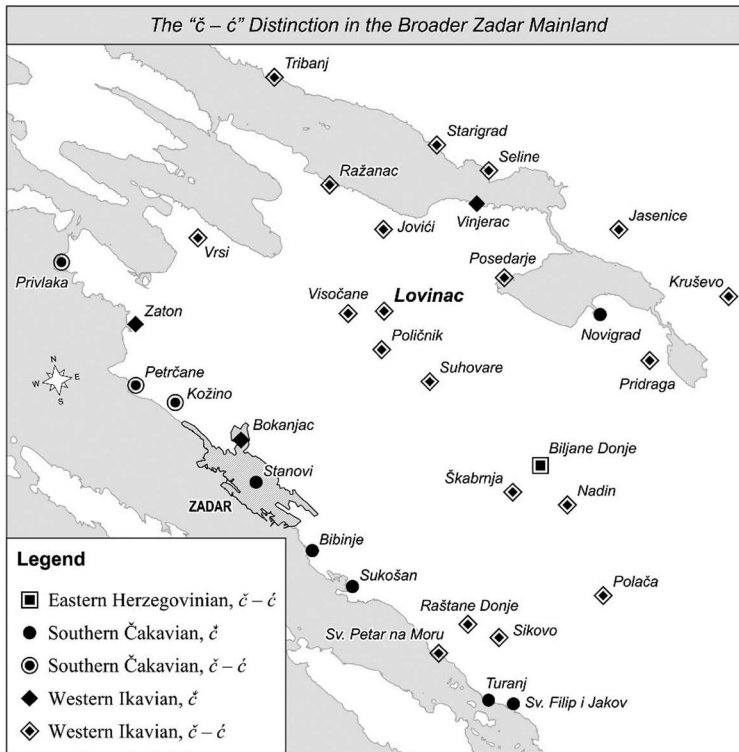
For the classification of the local dialect of Lovinac, the fate of the older consonant clusters **sk’/st’*—that is, their *št*-reflex—is especially important, e.g., *štāp* (n., nom. sg., masc., ‘stick’), *štětu* (n., acc. sg., fem., ‘damage’). It should be noted here that almost the entire inland Zadar region is *štakavian*, meaning that all well-represented dialects (Southern Čakavian, Western Ikavian, Eastern Herzegovinian) exhibit the development *sk’/st’ > št*.⁸

⁸ An exception among the local dialects studied so far is the Belafuža local dialect in the city of Zadar, which shows an *ščakavian* reflex (**sk’/st’ > šć*), e.g., *čāp* (‘stick’), with simplification of the initial consonant cluster (*šč-* > *ć-*) and neutralization of the sounds *č* and *ć* (see Magaš and Špralja 2025: 228). As already mentioned, speakers of the Belafuža local dialect are descendants of settlers from the island of Ugljan, speakers of the Central Čakavian dialect.

3.2. Consonants č, ć, ž, ź

While in many Čakavian and Štokavian local dialects of the broader Zadar area the distinction between the sounds č and ć (see Šprljan 2020: 381, and Magaš 2022a: 157-158, 299, 303) or ž and ź, is not maintained, in the local dialect of Lovinac these two pairs of palatal affricates are clearly distinguished, e.g. *čovik* (n., nom., sg., masc., ‘man’), *dòčekā* (active past part., sg., masc., ‘to welcome’), *šīnōvče* (n., voc. sg., masc., ‘brother’s son’); *čāca* (n., nom. sg., masc., ‘father’), *kūća* (n., nom. sg., fem., ‘house’), *nēmogūco* (adj., nom. sg., neut., ‘impossible’); *mlàži* (adj., nom. sg., masc., ‘younger’), *ròžāk* (n., nom. sg., masc., ‘relative’), *žīpovi* (n., nom. sg., masc., ‘jeeps’); *žāba* (adv., ‘in vain’). The distinction between sounds č and ć, as well as ž and ź,⁹ are stable—whether inherited from an older linguistic system (*č > ć; *ž > ź; *d’ > ź), formed through morphophonological changes, or borrowed from other languages (such as Turkish, English, etc.).

⁹ Although the pronunciation difference between the sounds ž and ź (*žaba* ~ *žipovi*) is clear, the stability of the phoneme /ž/ within the system would need to be established on the basis of a larger number of attestations.



Map 1. The “č – ć” Distinction in the Broader Zadar Mainland¹⁰

Brief analysis: on the map, the distinction between the sounds *č* and *ć* is shown in the wider Zadar mainland area. The articulation of the sound *č* and the articulation of the sound *ć* are not the same in all local dialects that recognize the distinction between these two sounds. However, the distinction, regardless of the articulation of the sounds, is for now stable. It should be noted that in none of the mainland Čakavian local dialects that recognize the “*č – ć*” distinction is the sound *ć* pronounced as a voiceless palatal plosive (*tʃ*). Regarding this characteristic, the local dialect of Lovinac fits well into the majority Neo-Štokavian Ikavian area in which it is located.¹¹

¹⁰ I sincerely thank Dr. Hrvoje Bazina (University of Zadar) for his selfless assistance in creating the map.

¹¹ For greater precision and a better understanding of the context, data on the distinction between the sounds *č* and *ć* in Poričnik and Jovići have been included with the map, although such data are not yet available in the published linguistic literature. I am grateful to Marko Marinović (Poričnik) and Petra Jović (Jovići) for supplying the data on the linguistic situation in these settlements.

3.3. Consonants *f, h*

The fricative *f* is relatively stable, but substitution of *f* > *v* has been confirmed: *àsvaltun* (< *àsfáltom*, n., instr. sg., masc., ‘asphalt’; indirectly, along with a series of other sound changes), *vàžō* (< *fàžōl*; n., nom. sg., masc., ‘beans’). There are many more examples in which *f* appears in its expected position: *Fráne* (n., nom. sg., masc., ‘Frane’), *kàfeni* (def. adj., nom. sg., masc., ‘brown’), (*u*) *kafícu* (n., loc. sg., masc., ‘(in) café’), *Šèrif* (nom. sg., masc., name ‘Šerif’), *šèrif* (nom. sg., masc., common noun ‘sheriff, boss’), *šèf* (n., nom. sg., masc., ‘boss’). The initial consonant cluster *hv-* has also yielded *f*: *fála* (excl., ‘thanks’), *fālīn se* (v., 1st sg., pres., ‘I boast’); however, the cluster *hv* is preserved in the example *zahvāļivān* (v., 1st sg., pres., ‘I give thanks’). This could be interpreted as the influence of the standard form (*zahvāļujēm*), which has been morphologically adapted to the Lovinac local dialect. Aside from this latter example, other occurrences of the sound *h* are rare: *grāh* (n., nom. sg., masc., ‘beans’), but in intervocalic position *grāva* (*gen. sg.*); also (*u*) *hotèlu* (n., loc. sg., masc., ‘(in) hotel’) and *hrānu* (n., acc. sg., fem., ‘food’). All these instances with realized *h* are likely more recent and modeled on standard Croatian. There are many more examples in which the etymological sound *h* is not realized, and some of them are listed here: *ðčeš* (< *hðčeš*; v., 2nd sg., pres., ‘to want’), *ðdmā* (< *ðdmāh*; adv., ‘immediately’), *òvī* (< *òvīh*; dem. pron., gen. pl., ‘of these’), *rástovi* (< *hrástovi*; n., nom. pl., masc., ‘oak trees’), *rātnī* (< *rātnīh*; adj., gen. pl., ‘of war’), *vātat* (< *hvātat*; v., inf., ‘to catch’). In intervocalic position, the substitution *h* > *v* occurs: *skūvala* (< *skūhala*; active past part., sg., fem., ‘cooked’), *nā uvo* (< *nā uho*; prep., ‘on’ and n., acc. sg., neut., ‘ear’, with a shift of stress to the pretonic syllable; ‘to the ear’). The instability of the sound *h* is a general feature of the Štokavian and Čakavian local dialects of the broader Zadar mainland (see Magaš 2019: 367–368, Magaš 2022a: 160–165, Šprljan 2020: 387–388).

3.4. The consonant *l* in final position (-*l*)

Phonologically—and consequently morphologically—interesting is the change of the final sonorant *-l*. On the mainland around Zadar, the final sonorant *l* is generally vocalized, but with different outcomes across dialects. This difference is especially evident in the masculine singular active past participles of verbs. For example, many mainland local dialects of the broader Zadar region exhibit the change *-il* > *-ija* (i.e. *-il* > *-ia*, with the subsequent insertion of the intervocalic sonorant), a pattern typical of the

coastal area. In contrast, the local dialect of Lovinac consistently shows *-il* > *-ije* (i.e. *-il* > *-ie*, also with the insertion of *j*), a result that is relatively rare along the coast but dominant in the hinterland among Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialects.¹² Some Lovinac examples include: *bìje* ('was'), *dòbije* ('got'), *ìje* ('ate'), *pòginije* ('died in battle or accident'), *pòpije* ('drank'). Final *-al* has become *-a* in the Lovinac dialect, as in all other dialects of the Zadar region. Listed here are active past participles: *čùvā* ('watched over'), *dā* ('gave'), *dòšā* ('came'), *ì mā* ('had'), *ìšā* ('went'), *kòpā* ('dug'), *otkázā* ('cancelled'), *pā* ('fell'), *písā* ('wrote');¹³ among other examples, *pòsā* (n., nom. sg., masc., 'job') and *žā* (adv., 'sorry') are common. Final *-el* has become *-eje* (e.g., *pòčēje* 'started', *ùzēje* 'took'), while final *-ul* has become *-uje* (e.g., *čùje* 'heard'). The change *-ol* > *-o* is confirmed in examples such as *pō* (adv., 'half'), *stōci* (< *stolci*; n., nom. pl., masc., 'chairs'), and *vāžō* ('beans'). If *-l* became final following the reduction of an unstressed vowel, it is not further vocalized: *dōl* (< *dōli*; adv., 'down'), *kolko* (< *kōliko*; adv., 'how much'), *ìmal* (< *ìmali*; active past part., pl., masc., 'had'), *kōlna* (< *kōlina*; n., nom. pl., neut., 'knees'), *Pòlčnik* (< *Pòličnik*; n., nom. sg., masc., 'Poličnik'), *slūšalce* (< *slūšalice*; n., nom. pl., fem., 'headphones'), *stōlce* (< *stōlice*; n., nom. pl., fem., 'chairs').

3.5. Change of the consonant *m* > *n* in final position (*-m* > *-n*)

Particularly interesting is the change of final *-m* to final *-n* in certain grammatical categories. This Adriatism (for an explanation and scope of the term *Adriatism*, see Brozović 1984 and source URL 3) characterizes the entire Zadar region, although it does not cover the same grammatical categories in all dialects. In Lovinac, the change *-m* > *-n* applies to the following categories:

1. First person singular present tense: *ìžēn* ('I go'), *mètnēn* ('I put'), *nàpīšen* ('I write'), *nísan* ('I am not'), *san* ('I am');
2. Instrumental singular of declinable words: *kāron* (n., masc., ≈ 'cart'), (*š*) *nīn* (pers. pron., masc., '(with) him'), (*sa*) *sīron* (n., masc., 'cheese'), *Stójūn* (proper name, fem., 'Stoja');

¹² The final *-ije* is also attested in the local dialect of Trnovac (Lisac 2003: 55) and other local dialects in Lika (see Драгичевић 1980: 193–210).

¹³ In short, *-al* has developed into *-ā*; this is the result of the automatic merging of two short *a* vowels, the second of which arose through the vocalization of *-l*. In some coastal local dialects, *-al* has yielded *-aja* (i.e., *-aa*, with the insertion of the intervocalic sonorant *j*) (see Magaš 2022a: 173–174).

3. Indeclinable words: *sèdan* (num., ‘seven’), *osin* (prep., ‘except’); to this should be added the confirmation of *van* (pers. pron., dat., ‘to you [plural]’).

In all the grammatical categories mentioned, the change *-m* > *-n* is also carried out in all Southern Čakavian (see Šprljan 2020: 384) and other Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialects (see Magaš 2022a: 180–183) of the broader Zadar region.

However, final *-m* does not change in the local dialect of Lovinac in the dative and locative of declinable words: *nam/nàm* (< *nàmi*; pers. pron. ‘to us’), (*u*) *Ľùbuškôm* (n., loc. sg., masc., ‘in Ljubuški’), *svàkom* (indef. pron., dat. sg., ‘to everyone’). Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialects along the coast of the broader Zadar region also exhibit the *-m* > *-n* change in these grammatical categories (see Magaš 2022a: 184), which links them to Southern Čakavian local dialects (see, for example, Šimunić 2013: 30 for the local dialect of Bibinje or Magaš 2025: 198 for the local dialect of Kožino); for instance, in the local dialect of Bibinje, one finds *na tvôn* (poss. pron., loc. sg., neut., ‘your’) (Šimunić 2013: 116), and the same final *-n* would also appear in the coastal Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialects of Zaton and Vrsi, while in the Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialect of Lovinac, the form would be *nà tvôm*.

3.6. Other consonantal features and changes

Several examples with an added *n* have been recorded: *mômen* (poss. pron., dat. sg., masc., ‘my’), *òklèn* (adv., ‘from where’; a synonymous form *òklē*, without the added *n*, has also been recorded). Assimilation of sounds by place of articulation in the local dialect of Lovinac crosses word boundaries, as seen in two adjacent palatal sounds in the examples *š ñîma* (< *s ñîma*; *s* = prep., ‘with’; *ñîma* = pers. pron., instr., ‘them’; together ‘with them’), *š ñîn* (‘with him’). A particularly interesting example is *nètjāk* (n., nom. sg., masc., ‘sister’s son’), in which the sounds *t* and *j* did not merge into *č*—that is, palatalization (jotation) was not carried out. The form *nètjāk* is derived from the older form **netbjakъ* (cf. Matasović et al. 2016: 691), in which the semivowel *ɨ* in the cluster *tbj* strengthened to vowel *i*, and the unstressed vowel *i* was later reduced. In contrast, the local dialect of Lovinac confirms the form *ròžāk* (n., nom. sg., masc., ‘cousin’) in which the neighboring sounds *dj* merged into *ž*, meaning that palatalization (jotation) was carried out. In all attestations, the metathesis *vs-* > *sv-* has been carried out: *svākā* (indef. pron., nom. sg., fem., ‘each’), *svākī* (indef. pron., nom. sg., masc.,

‘each’), *svè* (indef. pron., nom. sg., neut., ‘everything’). This is the general state across the Zadar region. It is also worth noting the change *-er > -e*, characteristic of Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialects in the broader Zadar region (see Magaš 2022a: 180): *màtē* (n., nom. sg., fem., ‘mother’), *ùvečē* (adv., ‘in the evening’), *vèčē* (n., nom. sg., fem., ‘evening’). Weakening of the sound *ž* to *r* in intervocalic position (rhotacism) is confirmed by the examples: *mòre* (< *mòže*; v., 3rd sg., pres., ‘can’), *nè mere* (v., 3rd sg., pres., ‘cannot’; with vowel assimilation *e-o-e > e-e-e*); it is a general feature in the broader Zadar mainland (see Šprljan 2020: 390). In the examples *pètnājst* (< *petnaest*; ‘fifteen’), *sedāmnājst* (< *sedamnaest*; ‘seventeen’), etc., we see that two adjacent vowels (a hiatus) have been resolved by turning the second into the sonorant *j*, as is the case in most other Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialects of the broader Zadar mainland (see Magaš 2022a: 137). Indirect assimilation of consonants is reflected in the example *osušije* (< *osušije*; active past part., masc., sg., ‘to dry’); for similar examples in other Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialects of the broader Zadar area, see Magaš 2022a: 167. Simplification of initial consonant clusters, as expected, can be seen in the examples *šencu* (*š-* < *pš-*; n., acc. sg., fem., ‘wheat’) and *nì tica* (*t-* < *pt-*; part., ‘not even’ and n., nom. sg., fem., ‘bird’). The simplification of the consonant cluster *-nd-* to *-d-* was carried out in the example *kumadànt* ‘commander’; the omission of the nasal sonorant *n* was probably influenced by the proximity of the nasal sonorants *m* and *n* before and after the cluster *nd*.

4. Selected Morphological Features of the Local Dialect of Lovinac

As the subchapter title suggests, only selected morphological features of the local dialect of Lovinac are presented here, primarily those typically discussed in dialectological descriptions of Croatian Štokavian dialects. It is assumed that the reader is familiar with the morphological categories typical of Neo-Štokavian Ikavian (Western Ikavian) dialect, and therefore a complete account of the current state is not provided. The description is, in other words, selective and dialectologically oriented.

4.1. Plural of selected masculine nouns of the a-declension

Masculine nouns of the a-declension are interesting in a broader context because of their plural forms, which can be shorter, without the extension *-ov-*, or longer. In the local dialect of Lovinac, both types have

been recorded; shorter forms: *jārci* (nom., ‘billy goat’), *pāñe* (acc., ‘vine shoot’), *vòle* (acc., ‘ox’; alongside the shorter form, the longer *vòlove* is also recorded); longer forms: *lèdovi* (nom., ‘ice’), *òčovi* (nom., ‘father’), *rástovi* (nom., ‘oak’), *rògovi* (nom., ‘horn’), *po stògovin* (loc., ‘haystack’), *vòlove* (alongside the mentioned shorter form *vòle*). The coexistence of shorter and longer forms also characterizes other Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialects in the broader Zadar area (cf. Magaš 2022a: 214–216), as well as Southern Čakavian local dialects, for example in Bibinje (cf. Šimunić 2013: 41 et al.), the Stanar speech in the city of Zadar (cf. Šprljan 2019: 133), and others (cf. Šprljan 2019: 133 n. 41).

4.2. Genitive plural of nouns

In the genitive plural of nouns of the e-declension and nouns of the a-declension in the local dialect of Lovinac, the general suffix is *-a*: *bròdòvā* (masc., ‘ship’), *dānā* (masc., ‘day’), *gòdīnā* (fem., ‘year’), *jārūgā* (fem., ‘gully’), *jāzbīnā* (fem., ‘den’), *kónā* (masc., ‘horse’), *kózā* (fem., ‘goat’), *kūcā* (fem., ‘house’), *kumádā* (masc., ‘piece’), *mètārā* (masc., ‘meter’), *ovácā* (fem., ‘sheep’), *pšāmā* (fem., ‘song’), *rjékā* (fem., ‘river’), *smòkāvā* (fem., ‘fig’), *težākā* (masc., ‘peasant’), *zúbā* (masc., ‘tooth’), *žlicā* (fem., ‘spoon’). Feminine nouns of the i-declension have the expected genitive plural ending *-i* (e.g., *stvári* ‘thing’), but the noun *kòkòš* (‘hen’), which originally belonged to the i-declension, has adopted the plural endings of the e-declension (nom. *kokóše*, gen. *kokóšā*). The noun *sāt* (masc., a-declension, ‘hour’) also has the suffix *-i* in the genitive plural (*sátī*). The suffix *-u* is attested in the example *rùkū* (fem., e-declension, ‘hand’), which is a remnant of the former dual number. All of the aforementioned fits well into the overall picture of Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialects of the broader Zadar area (cf. Magaš 2022a: 210–212), while the Southern Čakavian local dialects retain their particularities, with both conservative and innovative suffixes (cf. e.g., Šimunić 2013: 40; Šprljan 2019: 133; especially Vuletić 2021: 2).

4.3. Dative, locative, and instrumental plural of nouns

In the dative, locative, and instrumental plural, the endings of feminine nouns of the e-declension have been leveled in two different ways — with the suffix *-an* (e.g., dat. *k óvcān* ‘sheep’, loc. *na lètvan* ‘on the plank’, loc. *u Plītvican* ‘in Plitvice’) and with the suffix *-ama* (dat. *k óvcāma* ‘sheep’, loc. *ù šumāma* ‘in the forests’, instr. *màzgāma* ‘with mules’). The examples *k óvcān* / *k óvcāma* demonstrate the interchangeability of the suffixes *-an* and *-ama*,

although *-an* is attested more frequently. In the dative, locative, and instrumental plural of masculine and neuter nouns of the *a*-declension, the dominant suffix is *-in*: *u Arbànasìn* (loc., masc., ‘in Arbanasi’), *u kokùruzìn* (loc., masc., ‘in corn’), *po tìn gràdovìn* (loc., masc., ‘through those towns’), *pò poļìn* (loc., neut., ‘through fields’), *ràstičìn* (instr., masc., ≈ ‘with an oak’), *po stògovìn* (loc., masc., ‘on the haystacks’). Additionally, there is a *plurale tantum* form *u Višočanìn* (loc., ‘in Visočane’), for the feminine noun *Višočane* (nom.), where the rest of the plural paradigm follows the (masculine) *a*-declension, although the nominative plural suffix *-ane* originally marked masculine gender. The suffix *-ima* is also attested (instr. *kòñima* ‘with horses’, dat. *ļúdima* ‘to people’). The suffixes *-ama* and *-ima* are standard Croatian language endings that have penetrated the local dialect of Lovinac, while *-an* and *-in* are typical of Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialects of the broader Zadar area (cf. Magaš 2022a: 212–214).

4.4. Selected pronominal forms

Among the pronominal forms of the local dialect of Lovinac, those that are significant for potential future studies of their areal distribution should be highlighted. From personal pronouns, there are the enclitics *je* (acc., fem., ‘her’) and *joj* (dat., fem., ‘to her’), as well as prosodically interesting accusative forms like *pó me* (≈ ‘for me’), *ú ñe* (≈ ‘in them’), *zá ñe* (‘for them’) (cf. Magaš 2022a: 200). Noteworthy is also the form *mèn* (dat., ‘me’) for comparison with *mèni*, which, alongside *mèn/mèni*, is also attested in neighboring Visočane (Magaš 2022a: 220–221). Furthermore, in the local dialect of Lovinac, the form *ñèmu* (dat., masc., ‘to him’) is confirmed, while the neighboring local dialect of Visočane is characterized by the form *ñèmùn* (Magaš 2022a: 221). Among demonstrative pronouns, the relationship *tāj* (nom., masc., sg., ‘that’) ~ *tā* (nom., fem., sg., ‘that’) ~ *tō* (nom., neut., sg., ‘that’) stands out, although the form *òtō* (for neuter) also appears occasionally. Additionally, forms like *òtē* (nom., pl., fem., ‘those’) and *na òtōme* (loc., sg., masc./neut., ‘on that’) have been recorded, featuring a non-etymological initial vowel *o*, which was adopted by analogy with established forms like *òvāj* (nom., masc., sg., ‘this’).¹⁴ Due to their interesting accents, the at-

¹⁴ For the distribution of comparable phenomena in other Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialects of the wider Zadar region, see Magaš (2022a: 222). Morphological variation like Lovinac *tō/òtō* also characterizes the Southern Čakavian local dialect of Bibinje, where it is even more apparent (cf. Šimunić 2013: 75).

tested forms of the reflexive pronoun should be mentioned: *sèbī* (dat., ‘to oneself’) and *přīdā se* (acc. *se*, ‘in front of oneself’). One of the most distinctive pronouns of the local dialect of Lovinac is the interrogative-relative pronoun ‘*what*’, which appears in Lovinac exclusively in the form *štò* (unstressed: *što*). This is also the most common form in almost all local dialects of the broader Zadar mainland, whether Neo-Štokavian Ikavian (cf. Magaš 2022a: 224) or Southern Čakavian (cf. Šimunić 2013: 76 for Bibinje, Magaš 2025: 201 for Kožino, Šprljan 2019: 133 for the local dialect of Stanovi in the city of Zadar, etc.); in the Neo-Štokavian Jekavian local dialect of Biljane Donje, the forms *što* and *šta* coexist (see Magaš 2019: 379).

4.5. Infinitive

In the local dialect of Lovinac, both full and shortened infinitives are attested. The shortened infinitives are a result of the reduction of the unstressed final vowel *i*; some examples include: *dôć* (‘to come’, perf. v.), *îć* (‘to go’, imperf. v.), *kòpat* (‘to dig’, imperf. v.), *napísat* (‘to write’, perf. v.), *opísat* (‘to describe’, perf. v.), *òtīć* (‘to leave’, perf. v.), *poràvnat* (‘to level’, perf. v.), *pùštat* (‘to let’, perf. v.), *tīrat* (‘to drive/chase’, imperf. v.). Full infinitives, which are otherwise characteristic of all Štokavian and Čakavian local dialects of the broader Zadar mainland (cf. for example: Magaš 2022a: 225–228 for various Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialects; Magaš 2019: 379 for the Neo-Štokavian Jekavian local dialect of Biljane Donje; Šimunić 2013: 79 for the Southern Čakavian local dialect of Bibinje; Vuletić 2021: 3 for the Southern Čakavian local dialect of Filipjakov; Magaš 2025: 201 for the Southern Čakavian local dialect of Kožino), are also frequent in the local dialect of Lovinac: *ìsti* (‘to eat’, imperf. v.), *nāći* (‘to find’, perf. v.), *nàisti* (‘to fill oneself up’, perf. v.), *nàpravti* (‘to make’, perf. v.), *odrāditi* (‘to carry out’, perf. v.), *priupítati* (‘to inquire’, perf. v.), *pùnti* (‘to fill’, imperf. v.).

4.6. Present tense of the verb *ići* (‘to go’)

Like all other local dialects of the broader Zadar mainland—except for the Neo-Štokavian Jekavian local dialects (cf. Magaš 2022a: 230)—the local dialect of Lovinac features a modified present tense of the verb *ići* (‘to go’): *īžēn* (1st sg.), *īžēš* (2nd sg.), *īžē* (3rd sg.), *īžēmo* (1st pl.), *īžū* (3rd pl.). Such a present-tense form arose through analogy, following models such as *dožen* ‘I come’, *nažen* ‘I find’, *naižen* ‘I come upon’, and the like.

4.7. Type II verbs

Type II verbs have the formative suffix *-ni-*, which is confirmed by a series of active participles in the masculine singular: *mètnije* ('placed'), *pòginije* ('perished'), *zìnije* ('gaped'), *zòvnije* ('called'). The suffix *-ni-* characterizes all Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialects of the broader Zadar mainland (cf. Magaš 2022a: 244), as well as certain Southern Čakavian local dialects, such as that of Bibinje (cf. Šimunić 2013: 92) and Filipjakov,¹⁵ while in other Southern Čakavian local dialects, for example in Kožino (cf. Magaš 2025: 201) and Sukošan,¹⁶ the suffix *-nu-* has been confirmed.

4.8. Past tenses – basic notes

In addition to the perfect, the Lovinac dialect also features other past tenses, such as the pluperfect, which is formed using the perfect tense of the verb *biti* ('to be') and the active participle (e.g., *ùndā su ti bíli nāpravli* 'then they had made'), and the aorist, with particularly high frequency in the third person singular (e.g., *dóže* 'came', *òde* 'left', *pròčita* 'read', *úže* 'entered'). The presence of the pluperfect and aorist in the verbal system is an expected feature of the Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialects of the broader Zadar mainland (cf. Magaš 2022a: 236–238), and both tenses are also attested in the Neo-Štokavian Jekavian local dialect of Biljane Donje (Magaš 2019: 380). In contrast, the Southern Čakavian local dialects use the pluperfect (cf. e.g., Šimunić 2013: 80, Vuletić 2021: 3, Magaš 2025: 201), while the aorist is either residual (cf. Šimunić 2013: 80 for the local dialect of Bibinje) or absent (cf. Vuletić 2021: 3 for the local dialect of Filipjakov).

4.9. Future tenses – basic notes

Among the future tenses in the verbal system of the local dialect of Lovinac, both future I and future II are present. In the formation of future I, the infinitive is regularly apocopated when it precedes the auxiliary verb (e.g., *čūće* 'he/she will hear' < *čut + će*; *pròpašće* 'he/she will perish' < *propast + će*). In the formation of future II, the active participle is used (e.g., *kad bùdē mi što trībalo* 'By the time I need something'), which is typical for Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialects of the broader Zadar area (cf. Magaš 2022a:

¹⁵ I thank Prof. Dr. Nikola Vuletić for the data.

¹⁶ I thank Antonio Rogoznica for the data.

238–239), as well as in the Neo-Štokavian Jekavian local dialect of Biljane Donje (cf. Magaš 2019: 380). In the Southern Čakavian local dialect of Bibinje, however, the infinitive may optionally appear in place of the active participle (cf. Šimunić 2013: 81), while in the Southern Čakavian dialect of Filipjakov, the use of the infinitive in the formation of future II is standard (cf. Vuletić 2021: 3).

4.10. Other grammatical features

It is also important to note that in the local dialect of Lovinac, the present gerund can be formed either with the preposition *sa* or without it, without a clear difference in meaning: *pùzēci* ((while) crawling'), *sa jàšūć* ((while) riding'), *sa sìdēc* ((while) sitting'). Among the invariable words, several forms of local adverbs stand out, potentially interesting for future research on their areal distribution: *blízo* ('near'), *izdaļē* ('from afar'), *óde / ódekā* ('here'), *di bílo* ('anywhere'), *òtudā* ('from there'), *òzgō* ('from above' / 'from the north side').

5. Short Conclusion

This paper briefly describes the local dialect of Lovinac in the Zadar hinterland, focusing on dialectologically important phonological and morphological features (the reflex of *jat*, the reflexes of other older vowels, the reduction of unstressed vowels, plural declensional endings, specific verbal forms, etc.). The characteristics of the local dialect of Lovinac are placed in the context of the dialectal landscape of the broader Zadar mainland, with special emphasis on Neo-Štokavian Ikavian (Western Ikavian) local dialects. According to most of the identified features, the local dialect of Lovinac is a typical Neo-Štokavian Ikavian local dialect of the Zadar area and does not stand out with any significant peculiarities. In the future, the local dialect of Lovinac can also be studied on other linguistic levels (accentuation, syntax, lexicon, etc.), which may reveal more specific traits.

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SAŽETAK

Ivan Magaš

DIJALEKTOLOŠKI OPIS OSNOVNIH FONOLOŠKIH I
MORFOLOŠKIH OBILJEŽJA GOVORA LOVINCA
(OPĆINA POLIČNIK)

Rad dijalektološki opisuje govor Lovinca, sela u Zadarskoj županiji (Općina Poličnik). Svrha je rada obraditi u dijalektološkoj literaturi nespomenut ravnokotarski govor i tako dopuniti jezičnu sliku širega zadarskog područja. Na temelju audiosnimaka govora najstarijega mještanina Lovinca navode se dijalektološki najvažnija fonološka obilježja, uz izabrane podatke na drugim jezičnim razinama. Pojedine značajke lovinčkoga govora promatraju se u kontekstu novoštokavskih ikavskih govora zadarskoga područja i širega zadarskoga kopnenoga jezičnog areala općenito. Opis pokazuje da je lovinčki govor u glavnim fonološkim crtama tipičan novoštokavski ikavski govor zadarskoga zaobalja: obilježava ga štakavizam, razlikovanje parova palatalnih afrikata, redukcija nenaglašenoga vokala *i* te promjena vokala *o* u vokal *u* ispred nazalnih sonanta; među općim jezičnim crtama širega zadarskoga kopnenog područja ističu se upitno-odnosna zamjenica *što*, izmijenjen prezent glagola *ići* (*ižen, ižeš...*) i značajan broj zabilježenih punih infinitiva.

Ključne riječi: *dijalektologija; novoštokavski ikavski; Lovinac; zadarsko područje*