

## DIALECT USAGE IN SLOVENIA

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### **Introduction**

Due largely to recent mobility of populations and the spread of standard languages, dialects, particularly among young people, are dying out (Vanderkerckhove 1998, Wolfram 2002), yet several recent studies indicate that this may not be the case in Slovenia. According to these surveys significant percentages of young people claim to be proficient dialect speakers (Smole 2004, Lundberg 2007). Although interesting, the studies cited above were small in number of informants and narrowly conducted among university students in Ljubljana and Maribor. This paper and the questionnaire on which it is based are meant to follow up on and expand earlier research among a more diverse group of informants. The survey was designed around two questions. 1) Who claims to speak dialect in Slovenia? 2) To what extent do Slovenes change the way they speak based on the social context? As part of the answer to these questions, this paper proposes an explanation for the discrepancy between the traditional view that dialects are dying along with the oldest generation of speakers and the finding that so many, including young people, claim to be proficient dialect speakers.

### **Background**

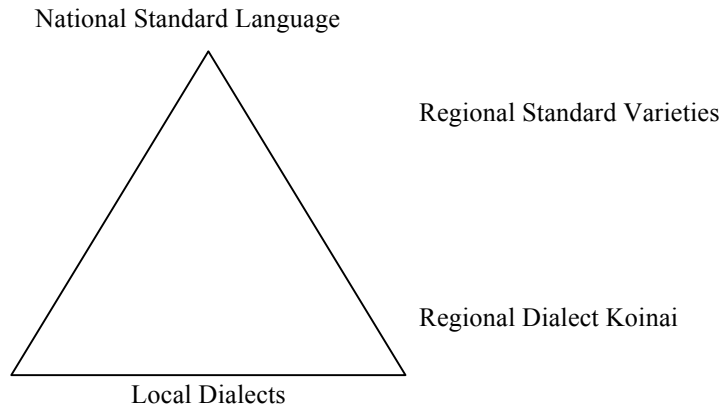
The language situation of Slovenia is often described as a kind of diglossia. Although, the traditional definition of diglossia does not perfectly fit the Slovene situation, the term does capture an important reality (Greenberg 2006: 14). The standard language did not arise organically from one dominant dialect but is a construct based on features from various dialects and historical periods. As a result there is significant distance, structurally, lexically and phonetically, between the standard language and the dialects. Rarely do Slovenes grow up with the standard language as their mother tongue.

There are various proposals for the categorization of the varieties of Slovene speech. The best known model, put forward by Toporišič, divides Slovene into literary and non-literary types, the literary standard and the spoken standard being literary and local and regional dialects being non-literary (13). Smole has recently proposed a division for the varieties of Slovene between systematic and non-systematic. She describes Slovene speech varieties between two systematic poles, the natural local dialect as one and the standardized literary language as the other. Non-systematic

variants such as regional or city dialects and the colloquial standard are, to a greater or lesser degree, departures from the systematic varieties (324).

Smole's model has much to recommend it, although the local dialect may not be as systematic as she claims. Unless we take a historical perspective or choose the dialect spoken only by the oldest speakers, modern dialects in Slovenia, and probably in most of Europe, are often quite fluid and variegated with clear age and social differentiation. Auer and Hinskens propose a continuum model, inspired by Chambers and Trudgill, for variation between a standard language and local dialects that is similar to Smole's approach.

Figure 1: Dialect-Standard Continuum



(Auer and Hinskens 7)

In figure 1 the standard language and local dialects form the poles of a continuum. The horizontal line represents the relative geographical diversity of local dialects. Intermediate forms arise, which may be more or less demarcated, because of convergence toward the standard language and because of regional koineization due to the mobility of the population (6). In Slovenia some intermediate varieties, regional dialects, have arisen around major cities through the process of koineization.<sup>1</sup> In general large cities play an important role in the development of regional dialects (Auer and Hinskens 10). For the Slovene speech territory Toporišič claims at least four regional dialects: Central Slovene, centered around Ljubljana and Kranj; South Styrian, around Celje; North Styrian, around Maribor and Ptuj; Littoral, around Nova Gorica and Koper (21).

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of koineization see Kerswill 671 and Auer and di Luzio 5.

Intermediate varieties as well as local dialects are also influenced by dialect leveling. For the local dialects some of this leveling is toward the colloquial standard, but most of it is toward the regional dialects. Dialect leveling toward a regional koine is a common process in contemporary Europe.<sup>2</sup>

Almost all Slovenes claim some competence in a local dialect, and, depending on their education level and other societal factors, they command a greater or lesser degree of the continuum toward the standard language. If a speaker is well educated and fully controls the entire continuum, then the speaker can switch between codes, local dialect, regional dialect and standard language, when the social context demands. If a speaker has less command of the standard language, making him unable to fully shift to the standard, or if the speaker is only accommodating his speech in a minor way from a local dialect to a regional koine, then it is difficult, if not impossible, to identify clear distinctions between codes. This is where the notion of a continuum is especially useful. It is also the place where the opinion of an outside observer may differ from that of an informant as to which code is really being used (Werlen 96).

### Questionnaire

Linguists divide the Slovene speech territory into seven dialect bases (figure 2). In this study informants have been categorized based on these dialect areas with several small changes. The dialect base of Rovtarska was not included because there were so few informants in that group that the results were not meaningful as an independent category. According to Greenberg (2000: 26) the dialects of Rovtarska are mostly transitional, so the informants were grouped with the corresponding Primorska or Gorenjska groups. Ljubljana was added as an area of residence and a speech variant even though it is not a traditional dialect base. It was included because a significant number of informants self identified as coming from Ljubljana or had strong opinions about the speech variety used in Ljubljana.<sup>3</sup>

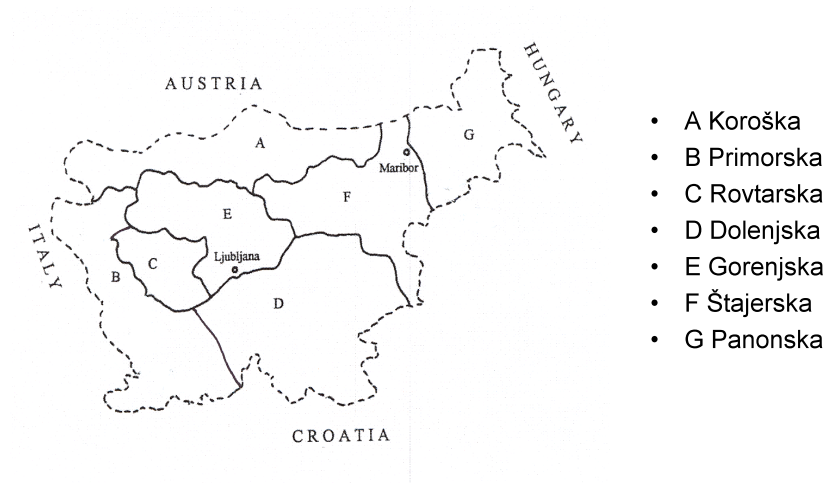
The survey (see appendix) was administered between June and September of 2007. The present study is based on 510 valid responses. 411 were gathered through a web-based survey, and another 99 paper

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of dialect leveling see Auer and Hinskens 14, Kerswill 671 and Trudgill 107.

<sup>3</sup> I suspect that when people speak of the Ljubljana dialect (*ljublansko* or *ljubljanščina*) they are not referring to the original city dialect but to the regional koine of central Slovenia that centers around Kranj and Ljubljana. Toporišič claims that it has replaced the local dialect in many parts of central Slovenia (17).

questionnaires were administered.<sup>4</sup> The respondents ranged between seven and eighty years of age. The mean age was twenty-eight. Of the 510 respondents, 66% were female. In terms of level of education, 8% had vocational high school or less, 57% had completed college-prep high school, and 35% had some form of post-secondary education.

Figure 2: Dialect map of Slovenia<sup>5</sup>



<sup>4</sup> I would like to thank Marta Pirnat-Greenberg of the University of Kansas for translating the questionnaire into Slovene and Domen Uršič, a student at the University of Ljubljana, for organizing the collection of the paper questionnaires.

<sup>5</sup> This dialect map is not intended to depict all of the subtleties of the dialect borders. It is meant to give a basic representation of the dialect groups discussed. The map and the subsequent charts are organized according to dialect bases or groups not according to geographical regions (pokrajina). The informants were asked to respond to the questionnaire based on their knowledge of regions or towns out of concern that they may not know the dialect boundaries. The researcher then organized the data within the framework of Slovene dialect bases.

Figure 3: Dialect Group of Residence

Dialect	Incidence	Percent
Štajerska	138	27
Koroška	15	3
Dolenjska	59	12
Gorenjska	44	9
Ljubljana	89	17
Primorska	131	26
Panonska	30	6
Total	506	100

The division of the population in the survey is a close approximation to the population of Slovenia. In 2008, a quarter of the population of Slovenia lived in the seven largest cities, Ljubljana, Maribor, Celje, Kranj, Velenje, Koper, and Novo Mesto. Ljubljana represented 13% of the population ([www.stat.si](http://www.stat.si)). Maribor, Celje and Velenje are in Štajerska, and Kranj, Koper, and Novo Mesto are in Gorenjska, Primorska, and Dolenjska, respectively.

### Part I

The first part of this study focuses on usage and, to some extent, attitude toward dialect. Several questions were designed to determine who used dialect and how well these people claimed to speak the local dialect. The questions follow. 1) Do you speak dialect at home (figure 4)? 2) Do you (would you) speak dialect with your children (figure 6)? 3) How important is dialect to your identity (figure 8)? 4) What is the level of your command of your local dialect, good (I understand and can speak), adequate (I understand and can make myself understood), weak (I only understand), or zero (figure 9)? Finally, we asked several questions that were designed to determine informants' perception of various Slovene dialects. 1) Where is the most beautiful Slovene spoken (figure 10)? 2) Where is the ugliest Slovene spoken (figure 11)? 3) Where are Slovenes the most loyal to their dialect (figure 12)?

The number of people who claimed to speak dialect at home is surprisingly high. Ljubljana, Štajerska (Maribor, Velenje, and Celje) and Gorenjska, all parts of the country where the population has been relatively mobile in the last fifty years, had the lowest numbers. Panonska was significantly higher and is known for dialect loyalty.

Figure 4: Dialect at home

Do you speak dialect at home?	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
	84%	16%
By Dialect Group of Residence:		
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Štajerska	81	19
Koroška	93	7
Dolenjska	93	7
Gorenjska	82	18
Ljubljana	71	29
Primorska	90	10
Panonska	97	3

(Chi-Square = .000)<sup>6</sup>

For the question about dialect usage at home there was no statistically significant difference for age or gender. 85% of males and 83% of females claimed that they spoke dialect at home. Education level was the only statistically significant factor for this question.

Figure 5: Dialect at home by educational level

	<u>Vocational</u>	<u>Coll. Prep</u>	<u>Post-Secondary</u>
Yes	95%	86%	77%
No	5%	14%	23%

(Chi-Square = .004)

As might be expected, the same statistical picture is found for the parents' education level. The higher the education level of the informants themselves and the higher the education level of their parents, the less likely they were to speak dialect at home. It is interesting to note that when those who claimed not to speak dialect at home were asked what they spoke 53% said the colloquial standard (pogovorno), 33% said the literary language and 11% said the Ljubljana dialect (ljublansko or ljubljansščina).

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<sup>6</sup> All of the statistical analyses in this study were performed using SPSS 16.0.

Figure 6: Dialect with children

Do you (would you) speak dialect with your children?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
	84.5%	14.5%
By Dialect Group of Residence:		
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Štajerska	80	20
Koroška	87	13
Dolenjska	91	9
Gorenjska	85	15
Ljubljana	73	27
Primorska	95	5
Panonska	97	3

(Chi-Square = .000)

Again Ljubljana, Štajerska, and Gorenjska had the highest number of informants who claimed that they did not or would not speak dialect with their children. It is noteworthy that the positive response to this question was very high in Panonska and Primorska, perhaps indicating a desire to see the dialect maintained. In most areas the percentage of those who said they wanted to speak dialect with their children was slightly higher than those who claimed to speak dialect at home. The exceptions to this were Štajerska, Koroška and Dolenjska, although the differences were small. Again only education level was a statistically significant factor for this question. Men and women of all age groups answered this question in a similar way.

Figure 7: Dialect with children by education level

	<u>Vocational</u>	<u>Coll. Prep</u>	<u>Post-Secondary</u>
Yes	92.5%	89%	77%
No	7.5%	11%	23%

(Chi-Square = .000)

The higher the education level of the informant, the less likely they were to use dialect with their children. When asked what they would, or did, use if they did not speak dialect with their children, 63% said the literary

language, 30% said the colloquial standard, and 7% said the Ljubljana variant of the language.

Figure 8: Identity and local dialect

How important is your local dialect to your identity?

<u>Very</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>Unimportant</u>
52%	35%	13%

By Dialect Group of Residence:

	<u>Unimportant</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>
Štajerska	42	40	18
Koroška	53	40	7
Dolenjska	49	46	5
Gorenjska	39	54	7
Ljubljana	42	31	27
Primorska	67	27	6
Panonska	86	7	7

(Chi-Square = .000)

As indicated by the Chi-Square, there were statistically significant differences in the way people answered this question according to the dialect groups. Ljubljana, Štajerska, and Gorenjska were the lowest, and Primorska and Panonska were the highest. Štajerska and, especially, Ljubljana stand out from the rest in that within these groups we find a relatively large number of respondents who said that dialect was unimportant to their local identity. Age, education level, and gender played no statistically significant role in the way people answered this question.

The results for the question about proficiency in the dialect (figure 9) seem to run counter to the claim that local dialects in Slovenia are disappearing as the older generation dies. Both men and women of all age groups and of all education levels claimed to have the ability to understand and proficiently use their local dialect. It is true that self evaluation of language proficiency is of questionable reliability (De Bot 1992: 139), still, this high percentage of proficient dialect speakers needs to be explained. We will return to this point in more detail later, but, for now, it will suffice to say that this high number, like some of the other results in this study, says a lot about attitude toward dialect.



Figure 9: Proficiency in the local dialect

My command of my local dialect is:

<u>Zero</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Adequate</u>	<u>Weak</u>
1%	87%	10%	2%

By Dialect Group of Residence:

	<u>Zero</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Adequate</u>	<u>Weak</u>
Štajerska	86	9	4	1
Koroška	100	0	0	0
Dolenjska	86	14	0	0
Gorenjska	84	7	7	2
Ljubljana	86	8	2	4
Primorska	86	12	2	0
Panonska	97	3	0	0

(No statistical significance for group)

In general the results so far are very positive for dialect maintenance. 84% out of 490 respondents said they spoke dialect at home. 84% said they spoke dialect with their children. 87% said that dialect was very or somewhat important to their identity. 87% said that they had a good command, in both production and comprehension, of their local dialect. Slovenes represented in this study do not seem to agree that local dialects are falling out of use.

As has been noted, there were some variations in the answers to questions about dialect use at home, with children, and about dialect's importance to local identity according to dialect groups. Dialect seems to be most valued in Panonska and Primorska, on the periphery of the speech territory, and less valued in areas of heavier migration like Ljubljana, Štajerska, and Gorenjska. There were no differences in the results here based on age or gender, but education level was statistically significant for speaking dialect at home and with children. The connection to mobility and education is a clear negative indicator for the future of local dialects. People in areas of heavier migration use dialect less. Movement to larger cities and the spread of suburbs are likely to continue. Additionally, education level is rising steadily in Slovenia. Between 1982 and 2002 enrolment in post-secondary education gradually rose from 14 per 1000 to 51 per 1000.<sup>7</sup> Similar changes in levels of secondary education enrolment have been

<sup>7</sup> UNESCO UIS Data / UNESCO Institute for Statistics via NationMaster.com.  
[http://www.nationmaster.com/time.php?stat=edu\\_edu\\_enr\\_by\\_lev\\_ter\\_lev\\_per\\_cap-enrolment-level-tertiary-per-capita&country=si-slovenia](http://www.nationmaster.com/time.php?stat=edu_edu_enr_by_lev_ter_lev_per_cap-enrolment-level-tertiary-per-capita&country=si-slovenia)

observed. 90% of children of secondary-school age are now enrolled.<sup>8</sup> This forms a sharp contrast to the situation with many of the author's rural informants now in their seventies and eighties, who only went through the fifth or sixth grade.

It remains to be explained why Slovenes claim to speak dialect in such high numbers and what the dialect that they are speaking actually corresponds to. Part of the explanation is that dialect is valued in Slovenia, although at different levels in different areas. Figures 10, 11 and 12 contain the answers to three questions from the field of perceptual dialectology. Informants' esthetic judgments about various dialects provide another way to determine the value Slovenes place on their dialects.<sup>9</sup>

Figure 10: Where is the most beautiful Slovene spoken?<sup>10</sup>

Dialect	Overall	By Residence	
	Percent	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Štajerska	34 <sup>11</sup>	Štaj=72%	Pri=7%
Koroška	2	Štaj=50%	Kor=21%
Dolenjska	13	Dol=48%	Lj=16%
Gorenjska	10	Gor=29%	Lj=27%
Ljubljana	11	Štaj=30%	Pri=29%
Primorska	26	Pri=54%	Gor=14%
Panonska	4	Štaj=37%	Pan=30%

It is significant that overall Štajerska was considered to be the most beautiful and Panonska the ugliest. There is good reason to believe that these are not simple esthetic judgments. Comprehensibility and perceived closeness to the standard language has been associated with beauty in the

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/slovenia\\_statistics.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/slovenia_statistics.html)

<sup>9</sup> The results discussed here are similar to those of an exclusively perceptual study done in 2005 (Lundberg 2007).

<sup>10</sup> The first half of the chart is overall percentages. For example, 34% of all respondents said that the most beautiful Slovene was spoken in Štajerska. The second half of the chart is broken down by residence. For example, of respondents from Štajerska, 72% said Štajerska was the most beautiful and, in second place, 7% chose Primorska. The same organization holds for figures 11 and 12.

<sup>11</sup> The survey asked, "In what town or region is the most beautiful Slovene spoken?" The author later categorized the responses according to the dialect groups in the chart. Some respondents answered "Štajerska" directly or a small town or village in that area, but the majority answered "Celje." It is likely that they are referring to the southern Styrian regional koine with its center in Celje.

secondary literature on perceptual dialectology, and incomprehensibility has been associated with ugliness (Van Bezooijen 2002: 15). It is also noteworthy that the majority of respondents considered their own dialect to be the most beautiful. This is another indication that people value their dialects highly.

Figure 11: Where is the ugliest Slovene spoken?

Dialect	Overall	By Residence	
	Percent	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Štajerska	10	Pan=51%	Lj=28%
Koroška	2	Pan=54%	Lj=31%
Dolenjska	11	Pan=28%	Lj=24%
Gorenjska	6	Pan=58%	Štaj=15%
Ljubljana	27	Lj=27%	Pan=25%
Primorska	7	Lj=37%	Pan=32%
Panonska	37	Dol=35%	Pan=21%

Figure 12: Where are Slovenes the most loyal to their dialect?

Dialect	Overall	By Residence	
	Percent	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Štajerska	16	Pan=71%	Štaj=18%
Koroška	4	Pan=46%	Kor=39%
Dolenjska	8	Pan=47%	Štaj=22%
Gorenjska	3	Pan=32%	Dol=30%
Ljubljana	1	Pan=48%	Štaj=18%
Primorska	17	Pan=34%	Pri=33%
Panonska	51	Pan=86%	Pri=7%

The results of the first part of the present study emphasize the need to begin thinking differently about the status of Slovene dialects. From the perspective of the historical linguist or descriptive dialectologist it seems clear that dialects are dying. It is objectively true that many of their most distinctive features are being lost. Many of the most distinctive words and grammatical structures, as well as pronunciation features are not used by younger speakers. There is comparative evidence that some of these changes are moving in the direction of the standard language (Lundberg 2005). Yet, large numbers of Slovenes, including the younger

generation, report that they are proficient dialect speakers. This is the case partly because the typical dialect speaker is changing. The geographically isolated monolingual speaker with little formal education, who was the traditional informants of a descriptive dialect study, is almost gone. Even a rural dialect speaker now has more education in and exposure to the standard language. He may live in one community, work in another, and travel for healthcare to a third. He has multiple linguistic systems available to him. Therefore, the continuum model of the varieties of Slovene, which was described earlier in this paper, is a helpful model to approach the way a dialect speaker uses the varieties of his language.

## Part II

The second part of this paper is a study of variation in usage between the standard language and local dialects. The portion of the survey that corresponds to this area was designed to determine the social contexts in which Slovenes claim to speak dialect and those in which they claim to speak the literary language, or something in between. Informants were asked to rate their own language use on a scale from 1 to 7 in seventeen different social contexts (figure 13). A rating of 1 meant that in this context or situation they spoke completely in the local dialect, and a rating of 7 meant that in this situation they spoke as close to the literary standard as possible.

In figure 14 the overall mean of the responses for each of these social contexts is given. They appear in ascending order from most like the dialect to most like the standard language. As might be expected the order also represents contexts that move from local to a broader social interaction.

Although the overall rankings are not surprising, there are some observations to be made. It is interesting that even in the context “at home,” which was given as the example of a 1 on the scale, people overall did not see themselves as speaking purely in the dialect. The mean score for the way people spoke at home was 2.07. It is also noteworthy that even for “at school” and “formal talk or presentation” the overall mean is one to two points below 7. Informants did not see themselves as perfectly using the standard literary language or as pure dialect speakers. The results are also informative when we separate them out by dialect area.

Figure 13: Dialect and social context

In the following situations, on a scale from 1 to 7, do you speak in dialect or in the literary language, for example, the way they speak on the TV news? (1) would be most like the local dialect, and (7) would be most like the literary language.

At home	Local dialect	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Literary language
At work	Local dialect	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Literary language
With friends	Local dialect	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Literary language
Shopping	Local dialect	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Literary language
On the street or public transport	Local dialect	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Literary language
At the doctor	Local dialect	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Literary language
Athletic event	Local dialect	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Literary language
At the theater or a concert	Local dialect	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Literary language
At a movie	Local dialect	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Literary language
At school or university	Local dialect	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Literary language
At a community gathering	Local dialect	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Literary language
In government offices	Local dialect	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Literary language
At church	Local dialect	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Literary language
On the internet	Local dialect	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Literary language
If I travel to Ljubljana	Local dialect	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Literary language
Outside my home area	Local dialect	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Literary language
Formal talk or presentation	Local dialect	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Literary language

Figure 14: Order from Local to Public

<u>Context</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Original Order</u>
home	509	2.07	1
friends	505	2.58	3
sports	491	2.77	7
local gather.	483	3.13	11
movie	497	3.30	9
church	433	3.43	13
shopping	507	3.66	4
public trans	505	3.69	5
not local	505	3.95	16
Ljubljana	500	4.02	15
theater	505	4.02	8
internet	498	4.05	14
doctor	507	4.27	6
work	483	4.51	2
gov. office	503	4.69	12
school	503	4.98	10
speech	497	5.98	17

The ANOVA test showed statistically significant differences between dialect groups in all social contexts except “travel to Ljubljana” and “formal talk or presentation,” two of the most formal contexts. Because there were statistically significant differences in all other contexts, including the most informal, it is interesting to look at the distance from group to group between the most formal version of speech, “formal talk,” and the level of dialect spoken “at home.” The largest gap between the dialect spoken at home and the most formal attempt to use the literary language is in Panonska. Informants from this group claimed a larger gap between their local dialect and the standard language. Panonska is followed by Primorska and Dolenjska. These are also the areas where people were most likely to speak dialect at home and wanted to speak it with their children. Panonska was also judged to be the ugliest form of Slovene, which probably means the most different from other dialects and, therefore, difficult to understand. The distance between the most formal and informal contexts is smallest in Ljubljana, Gorenjska, and Štajerska, also places where people were least likely to use dialect at home and to speak it with their children. These are places where the differences between the dialect and the standard language are perceived to be smaller.

Figure 15: Social context by dialect group of residence

<u>Context</u>	<u>Štaj</u>	<u>Kor</u>	<u>Dol</u>	<u>Gor</u>	<u>Lj</u>	<u>Pri</u>	<u>Pan</u>
home	2.53	2.67	1.76	2.16	2.51	1.52	1.1
friends	2.94	3.36	2.51	2.32	3.19	2.15	1.2
sports	2.89	3.27	2.93	2.84	3.13	2.54	1.35
local gather.	3.58	4.07	3.24	3.45	3.29	2.53	1.85
movie	3.62	3.67	3.53	3.37	3.57	2.89	1.85
church	3.95	3.86	3.74	3.58	3.57	2.83	2.18
shopping	3.89	3.87	3.78	3.57	4.47	3.22	1.87
public trans	3.99	4.2	3.78	3.86	4.1	3.27	2.2
not local	4.11	4.53	3.9	4.11	4.42	3.45	3.53
Ljubljana	3.95	4.8	4.1	4.07	3.95	3.81	4.83
theater	4.39	4.8	4.15	4.26	4.42	3.41	2.71
internet	4.19	4.07	3.72	3.34	4.51	3.74	4.92
doctor	4.66	4.8	4.41	4.27	4.91	3.64	2.77
work	4.92	5.0	4.85	4.16	4.89	3.95	3.13
gov. office	4.97	5.2	5.07	4.82	5.0	4.04	4.03
school	5.27	5.6	5.02	4.95	5.13	4.41	5.11
speech	6.24	6.4	5.88	5.84	6.03	5.7	6.0
distance	3.71	3.73	4.12	3.68	3.52	4.18	4.9

The analysis of social contexts according to gender indicated that there were only a few areas of statistical significance. Women were statistically more formal in their usage than men in four of the most formal contexts, “at work,” “on the internet,” “in a government office” and “formal talk.” There were also statistically significant differences in all categories except “at work,” “in a government office,” and “formal talk” for age, with older speakers being closer to the standard. Finally, when analyzed by education level there were statistically significant differences in every category. Informants with post-secondary education, as opposed to one or both of the other two categories, were closer to the standard language for each context.

Figure 16: Social context by education level (post hoc Turkey)

<u>Context</u>	<u>Vocational</u>	<u>College Prep</u>	<u>Post Secondary</u>	
home	1.65	1.81	2.61	(3 v 1,2)
friends	1.85	2.37	3.12	(3 v 1,2)
sports	2.56	2.6	3.1	(3 v 2)
local gather.	2.21	2.94	3.67	(3 v 1,2)
movie	3.16	3.02	3.81	(3 v 2)
church	2.24	3.39	3.87	(1 v 2,3)
shopping	2.68	3.51	4.15	(all)
public trans	3.03	3.55	4.08	(3 v 1,2)
not local	3.48	3.78	4.38	(3 v 1,2)
Ljubljana	3.69	3.88	4.38	(3 v 2)
theater	3.32	3.81	4.58	(3 v 1,2)
internet	3.67	3.81	4.55	(3 v 1,2)
doctor	3.63	4.1	4.74	(3 v 1,2)
work	3.39	4.38	4.92	(all)
gov. office	3.62	4.66	4.99	(1 v 2,3)
school	4.5	4.82	5.36	(3 v 1,2)
speech	5.44	5.94	6.15	(3 v 1)

Finally, informants were asked what they changed in their speech when they did not speak in dialect.

Figure 17 provides insights into what non-linguists perceive as the differences between dialect and the standard language. The finding that people change both pronunciation and lexical choice is straightforward. It is noteworthy that, although dialect is clearly valued in Slovenia, many people

view the local dialect as a less correct variant than the standard language. This is illustrated by the 22% who claimed to use correct grammar when they moved toward the standard language.

Figure 17: Changes

Pronunciation	80%						
Lexical Items	70%						
<u>Change</u>	<u>Štaj</u>	<u>Kor</u>	<u>Dol</u>	<u>Gor</u>	<u>Lj</u>	<u>Pri</u>	<u>Pan</u>
Pron	83%	87%	88%	61%	80%	80%	67%
Words	69%	87%	58%	64%	67%	75%	83%
Other (45 responses)							
accent / intonation (24%)							
correct grammar (22%)							
drop local characteristics (22%)							
speak slower (16%)							
use the dual (9%)							

The material presented in the second half of this study supports the notion that respondents did not see themselves as switching from one discrete code to another based on the social context but rather as accommodating to a greater or lesser degree toward the standard language while never fully attaining the standard. At the extremes the systems of local dialect and literary language are more clear. In the middle the distinctions are fluid, so to make discrete groupings or draw clear lines is difficult. The study shows that there are interesting differences in usage in the most informal social contexts. Primorska and Panonska are closer to the dialect, and Štajerska, Ljubljana and Dolenjska are closer to the literary language. The clearest differences can be seen in gender, age and especially education level. The better educated a speaker is in the literary language, the more command of levels of the continuum he has and the easier it is to shift from informal to formal.

## Conclusions

As has been noted, changes in education policies, the spread of the standard language through mass media and mobility in the population have altered the dialect situation even in the remotest parts of Slovenia. There are now several different kinds of dialect speakers. The oldest, often least educated and most isolated speakers may only have the local dialect. There are very few of these speakers left. Middle-aged speakers are better



educated in the standard language and more exposed to other forms of the language. They may be married to someone from outside of the dialect area. They likely work outside of the local dialect area as well. In their speech they do not use some of the most distinctive features when compared to the usage of their parents. They are exposed to multiple variants of the language and, therefore, may accommodate their speech to the regional dialect or the colloquial standard. The younger generation generally has some schooling outside of the local dialect. In Haloze, for example, children go through eighth or ninth grade in the village, then they go to Ptuj for at least two or three more years. They may also go to Maribor. For post-secondary education, and likely for work, they will leave the dialect area all together. As a result of this mobility intermediate varieties, contact koinai or regional dialects, have developed. These regional koinai, which often develop around large towns, are based on dialects (Toporišič 2000: 21) but may not faithfully preserve the forms of the base dialects. Zorko's phonological description of the Maribor dialect is a good example of this. The vocalic system does not correspond to any of the dialect bases that border the city. It is a simplified system with complete loss of diphthongs (346). The lexicon lacks extreme dialect forms but has numerous Germanisms and slang words (350). Intermediate forms play an important role in the Slovene speech continuum.

Another development that often arises from mobility of dialect speakers is local dialect leveling. As local dialect speakers have more intense contact with other dialects or regional koinai, the most characteristic dialect features can be lost in cross-dialect leveling (Auer and Hinskens 1988: 14). Only some speakers maintain the most distinctive features. Many dialect speakers still use the basic pronunciation, but they often abandon exclusive lexical items and some grammatical structures as well as the most salient pronunciation features.<sup>12</sup> Local pronunciation differences still exist, but the dialect is a less and less distinct variant of the language. The dialect becomes more like a local accent that has much in common with the regional koine.

Dialect is valued in Slovenia. It is also an important part of local identity. Some people may over report dialect use because of a desire to be connected to that local identity, but there is more here than over reporting. One of the reasons that people claim high dialect use, even as many distinctive local features are being leveled, may be that people identify this

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<sup>12</sup> The author's observations of dialect leveling in Haloze include the abandoning of exclusive lexical items and grammatical structures such as male verb agreement for females and local forms of the dual. Younger people and also those with regular contact with the regional koine have lost some of the most striking pronunciation features such as diphthongal pronunciation of vowels, fronted *u* and epenthetic *v* before *u*.

regional koine or partially leveled dialect as one and the same. The non-linguist may not clearly differentiate between the local and the regional dialect, especially if they are growing more alike. This helps to explain why people claim to be speaking dialect even though they have accommodated to the regional spoken language or even to the colloquial standard. Blom and Gumperz claim a similar phenomenon for dialect speakers in Norway. After going away to school these informants returned speaking a significantly leveled form of the local dialect but claimed to be pure dialect speakers (428). This variant that they claim to be their local dialect is, after all, what they associate with their local area and what they use in informal contexts. It is also clearly not the literary language.

Dialect in contemporary Slovenia is not easily defined as a uniform code because speakers have such varied exposure to and proficiency in different varieties of the language. The type and number of archaisms and innovations in the speech of individuals will be different. Even though the dialect speech of an informant may be quite archaic or significantly leveled toward the regional dialect or the colloquial standard, this variety is, for the informant, his local dialect.

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## POVZETEK

### RABA NAREČIJ V SLOVENIJI

Čeprav se zdi, da se pestrost narečij v Sloveniji zmanjšuje, mnogo mlajših Slovencev zatrjuje, da tekoče govorijo v narečju. V tem prispevku so predstavljeni izsledki anketne, ki je bila zasnovana z namenom ugotoviti, kdo v Sloveniji govori v narečju ter do kakšne mere Slovenci prilagodijo način govora glede na družbeno situacijo. V splošnem so rezultati te ankete v prid vzdrževanju narečnega govora. 84% od 490 anketirancev je izjavilo, da doma govorijo v narečju. 84% vprašanih govori v narečju s svojimi otroci. Za 87% anketirancev je narečni govor zelo ali nekoliko pomemben za izražanje njihove identitete. 87% anketirancev dobro obvlada govor in razumevanje njihovega lokalnega narečja. Prispevek navaja tudi s kakšno

*gotovostjo Slovenci uporabljajo narečje v različnih družbenih situacijah. Navidezno protislovje med trditvami jezikoslovcev in anketirancev o uporabi narečij je v prispevku pojasnjeno z izenačevanjem narečij z regionalnim standardnim jezikom.*

## Appendix

### Vprašalnik

#### Raba narečja in odnos do narečja

Pričujoča anketa ima dvojni namen. Prvič, z njo želimo ugotoviti, kakšen odnos imajo ljudje v Sloveniji do krajevnih in pokrajinskih narečij. Drugič, pokazala naj bi, v kakšnih okoliščinah ljudje uporabljajo narečje in kdaj ter do kakšne mere skušajo uporabljati knjižni jezik. Anketa je anonimna in z njo zbrani podatki bodo uporabljeni izključno v raziskovalne namene. Za sodelovanje se vam avtor že vnaprej lepo zahvaljuje.

1. Ali govorite doma v narečju? ☐ da ☐ ne
2. Če ste na prvo vprašanje odgovorili z *da*, s kom govorite v narečju? (Označite vse ustrezne odgovore.)  
☐ s starimi starši ☐ s starši ☐ s celo družino ☐ s prijatelji in znanci
3. Če ste na prvo vprašanje odgovorili z *ne*, kako govorite doma?
4. Svoje krajevno narečje obvladam:  
☐ dobro (govorim in razumem.)  
☐ zadostno (razumem in se za silo sporazumevam)  
☐ slabo (samo razumem)  
☐ nič
5. Ali imate otroke? ☐ da ☐ ne
6. Če bi imeli (imate) otroke, ali bi govorili (govorite) z njimi v narečju? ☐ da ☐ ne
7. Če ste odgovorili na peto vprašanje z *ne*, kako bi govorili (govorite) z njimi?
8. V katerem kraju ali pokrajini po vašem mnenju govorijo najlepšo slovenščino?

9. V katerem kraju ali pokrajini po vašem mnenju govorijo najgršo slovenščino?

10. V kateri pokrajini so po vašem mnenju ljudje najbolj zvesti narečju?

11. Ali vas skrbi prihodnost vašega krajevnega narečja?

a. ☐ da ☐ ne

12. Za mojo pokrajinsko pripadnost je narečje:

☐ zelo pomembno.

☐ malo pomembno.

☐ nepomembno.

13. Označite z vrednostmi od 1 do 7, ali v navedenih položajih govorite bolj v narečju ali bolj v knjižnem jeziku, tj. bolj po domače ali bolj kot govorijo na televiziji. (1) pomeni najbolj v narečju, (7) pa najbolj v knjižnem jeziku. (Obkrožite.)

doma	krajevno narečje	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	knjižni jezik
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v službi	krajevno narečje	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	knjižni jezik
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s prijatelji	krajevno narečje	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	knjižni jezik
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pri nakupo- vanju	krajevno narečje	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	knjižni jezik
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na cesti ali v javnih prevoznih sredstvih	krajevno narečje	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	knjižni jezik
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pri zdravniku	krajevno narečje	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	knjižni jezik
na športnih tekмах	krajevno narečje	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	knjižni jezik
v gledališču ali na koncertu	krajevno narečje	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	knjižni jezik
v kinu	krajevno narečje	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	knjižni jezik
v šoli ali na fakulteti	krajevno narečje	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	knjižni jezik
na zboru krajanov	krajevno narečje	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	knjižni jezik
v krajevnih/ državnih uradih	krajevno narečje	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	knjižni jezik
v cerkvi	krajevno narečje	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	knjižni jezik
na spletu	krajevno narečje	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	knjižni jezik
če grem v Ljubljano	krajevno narečje	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	knjižni jezik
izven domačega kraja	krajevno narečje	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	knjižni jezik
pri javnem nastopanju	krajevno narečje	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	knjižni jezik

14. V položajih, ko ne govorite v narečju, kaj spremenite v svojem jeziku? (Označite vse ustrezne odgovore.)

☐ izgovarjavo    ☐ besede    ☐ drugo (pojasnite)

15. V položajih, ko ne govorite v narečju, zakaj ne uporabljate narečja?

16. Spol: ☐ m ☐ ž

17. Starost:

18. Vaša stopnja izobrazbe: ☐ OŠ-PŠ ☐ SŠ-Viš. Š ☐ Vis. Š-Podipl

19. Stopnja izobrazbe vaših staršev:

☐ OŠ-PŠ ☐ SŠ-Viš. Š ☐ Vis. Š-Podipl

20. V kateri pokrajini ali kraju ste se rodili?

21. V kateri pokrajini ali kraju zdaj živite?