

Tatjana TRAJKOVIĆ
University of Niš

SOCIO-LINGUISTIC RESEARCH OF THE DIALECT OF PREŠEVO IN THE SOUTH OF SERBIA

Abstract. This paper shows the results of the research of the dialect of Preševo, a small town in the south of Serbia. Since social and urban dialectology and socio-linguistic methods of research in Serbian linguistics are new, a theoretical consideration is given first. Then the methods used in processing the material from the dialect of Preševo are explained. The implication scales and diagram which show the level of representation of dialectological features in relation to the standard features are shown too. The conclusion is that the dialect in this city has the features of the standard Serbian language and it is exactly how it is distinguished from the dialect of the villages.

Keywords: Serbian; sociolinguistics; dialectology; Preševo.

1. Introduction

1.1. The socio-linguistic approach to dialect is still a new approach in Serbian linguistics though it has been present in the linguistic circles for a long time. The development of modern, urban and social dialectology started in the 20s and 30s of last century with the researches done by the linguists from the Prague linguistic school while the theoretical and methodological innovations in this field are related to the seventh decade of the XX century. The new dialectological approach was started by the American linguist William Labov. His book *The Social Stratification of English in New York City* (Labov, 1966) in which he showed that language variations are socially conditioned is of significant importance for social dialectology. The British linguist Peter Trudgill (1974), while describing the dialect of the city of Norwich in the book *The Social Differentiation of English in Norwich* used a similar methodology as Labov. Lesley Milroy (1987) studied the local dialect of Belfast and she introduced a new concept of social networks as a variable which refers to the contacts of the members of some micro-community such

as family, school, neighborhood, work place, etc. into sociolinguistics, with her book *Language and Social Networks*. In Bulgarian linguistics in 1988 the book *Социолингвистическо проучване на град Велико Търново* (the second edition published in 1999 with the title *Великотърновският език*) by Bojan Bajčev and Mihail Videnov was published. They give a profound analysis of the idiolects of more than 25 speakers of Bulgarian in Veliko Trnovo. In 1990, Mihail Videnov published the book *Съвременната българска градска езикова ситуация* as an approach to the theoretical and methodological problems in studying local Bulgarian city dialects. Sometime later, the book *Селото, градът и езикът в Ловешкия край* by Bojan Bajčev (1996) is published in which he applies a new socio-linguistic method of research. As an integral part of the book *Езикът на града* (2010) by Mihail Videnov, there is a chapter *Софийският език* given as an overview and explanation of the possible dialect research of the Bulgarian capital.

1.2. The first elements of socio-linguistics in Serbian dialectology are connected to the year of 1921 and the name of Miloš Moskovljević who recognized the social stratifications of a dialect in the local dialect of the people of Belgrade and who claims that there are differences in the dialects of certain city zones. According to the material gathered, mainly in schools, Moskovljević cited the features of Belgrade local dialect for which he thinks evolved as the result of the contact between a dialect and standard language. The application of the socio-linguistic methods can be found in the works of Rajić (1980–1981), Thomas (1994–1995; 1998), Stanković (1997), as well as in Jović (1968, 224–225; 1979), Nikolić (1991, 233).¹ The name of Dunja Jutronić (1983–84; 1986a; 1986b), is prominent in the application of the contemporary sociolinguistic methodology in dialectology researches done in Former Yugoslavian republics. She applied a contemporary approach to the description of the local dialect of cities in her book *Spliski govor* (2010). The project of observing the dialect of Novi Sad was started at the end of the first decade of the 21st century in Serbian linguistics. This research, done by a number of linguists from the University of Novi Sad, is mainly based on the parameters and methodology of social dialectology (see Bošnjaković 2009b; 2011).

¹ The long critical bibliographical overview of works from social dialectology can be found in Bošnjaković 2009a.

1.3. The question of choosing the right methodology is posed in the socio-linguistic research. How linguists approached that problem follows. Paul-Louis Thomas, while describing the dialect of Niš and nearby villages, tried to present the state of the folk dialect by combining the traditional dialectological description and socio-linguistic approach. However, there were objections because he didn't approach the other, non-traditional part, more completely (Bošnjaković 2009, 53). Jutronic-Tihomirović (2010) studied the dialect of Split through the prism of the age category. She observed four generations: older, middle-aged, younger, and the youngest (with two or three representatives whose names and second names were given explicitly). Particular language variables (phonological, morphological and syntactic) characteristic for the dialect of Split were studied on those representatives. The results of the research were given in percentage in the tables and graphs. Furthermore, Jutronic-Tihomirović gives detailed comments about the graphs and tries to foresee further changes in the dialect of Split. In Bošnjaković 2009b and 2011 the authors analyze language phenomena primarily by using the social variables of age, gender and education. The results and data are given in the tables, diagrams and usually through the index of frequency.

1.4. It is clear that an interference of qualitative and quantitative methods is present in social (urban) dialectology. The qualitative method is used to register a phenomena and the quantitative method is used to determine its range. Bošnjaković (2009a, 51–52) points to the use of the following quantitative methods:

- the index of frequency (which is the result of dividing the number of examples which are examined with the overall number of the recorded examples and then multiplied by 100),
- the scale of frequency or implication scale (in which the presence of a characteristic is marked by + and its absence by –),
- the schematic representations.

2. The research of the local dialect of the town of Preševo

2.1. Preševo is a small town in the south of Serbia populated by Serbs and Albanians. For the purpose of her doctoral dissertation, the author of this paper gathered material from a dialect of Serbian language – the Preševo dialect, which is comprised of the local dialects of 14 villages from the community of Preševo and the dialect of the administrative center of the

region – Preševo. The dialect of Preševo is part of the South-Morava type of the Prizren-Timok dialect zone of the Serbian language. After the traditional dialectological analysis of the folk dialects, the sociolinguistic examination of the gathered language material regarding the city dialect was undertaken.

2.2. This paper gives the methods through which the dialect of Preševo was approached and the results achieved by the analysis of the material gathered. The paper does not contain the examples from the processed language material because of the limitation of space.²

3. The methods of research

3.1. The selection of the method of the dialectological research from the sociolinguistic aspect should be conditioned by the aim of research, as according to L. Ra j i ć (2009, 34) says. He claims that the object of the research should not be adapted to the method, but vice versa, i.e., both quantitative and qualitative methods should be used depending on the aim of research. Accordingly, and following the possibilities given by the population structure of the small town of Preševo, the research of Preševo dialect is determined by the following goals on the social plane:

1. To represent the local dialect of Preševo through age groups;
2. To represent the local dialect of Preševo through the educational layers of the speakers;
3. To represent the frequency of the dialectological features through 13 language variables chosen as characteristic for the South-Morava area and which represent markers, as such.³

3.2. The social variables toward which the research was focused – the age and education – were chosen as relevant to determine the frequency of dialectological features in the dialect of Preševo because they can influence changes in it. The fact that the author co-lived for a long time with the people of Preševo along with the recordings made with the inhabitants, showed that the speakers' gender does not influence any language changes.

² The analyzed material is the constituent part of the author's doctoral dissertation The dialect of Preševo, defended on December 18, 2015 at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Niš. Still, the language material from the Preševo town dialect is based on 15 hour audio recording of spontaneous speech recorded by audio-tape. The whole processing of the dialect of Preševo takes up the page from 336 to 406 of the doctoral dissertation which is found in the archive of the University of Niš and Faculty of Philosophy.

³ The concept of marker is used by Labov (1976, 324–325).

All the examinees were categorized according to:

1. Age
 1. Pre-school children
 2. 7-20 years of age
 3. 21-40 years of age
 4. 41-60 years of age
 5. Above 60
2. Education
 1. with incomplete elementary school
 2. with high school education
 3. with college and higher education

3.3. The language variables examined with these groups were chosen as basic groups through which the dialect of Preševo as a South-Morava dialect could be recognized.⁴ The typical South-Morava dialect features were chosen. They are:

1. Semi-vowel
2. The form *kude*
3. The use of pronoun enclitics
4. Possessive dative
5. The doubling of personal pronouns
6. Analytic declination
7. Analytic comparison
8. Negation of the verb *jesam*

⁴ The South-Morava variant of the Prizren-Timok dialect zone of the Serbian language. The Prizren-Timok dialects are marked by numerous archaisms, but also by innovations; that's why they are separated from the rest of the dialects of the Serbian language. They are spread in the south-east of the Kosovo-Resava dialect zone to the border of Serbia with Macedonia in the south and Bulgaria in the east. The archaisms which mark these dialects are: semi-vowel, the preservation of the vowel *l* (or its different reflections from the standard one) or the preservation of the final *l*. The innovations of the Prizren-Timok dialects are balkanisms: the expiratory accent, the analytical declination, the analytical comparison, the loss of infinitive, the doubling of personal pronouns. At the border with Bulgaria, towards Macedonia, the features showing linguistic interference are recorded. Namely, in that region, there are places (in Serbia as well as nearby countries) where the influence of one language on another language is noticed (i.e., the influence of the Serbian dialect on the Bulgarian one, Bulgarian on Serbian, Serbian on Macedonian and Macedonian on Serbian). See Ivić (1985, 119-120).

9. Present of the 3. person plural in *-v*
10. Present participle, masculine, singular in *-(j)a*,
11. Verbs with the form *-na-*
12. The use of aorist and imperfect
13. The use of particles

3.4. The quantitative analysis was done by the implication scale of the chosen dialectological and standard forms for every examined group. Afterwards, the index of frequency of the dialectological type where the parallel use of the dialect and the standard was determined was used. The index of frequency was determined by the formula:

$$\frac{\text{All dialectological forms}}{\text{the whole number of examples}} \times 100$$

According to the index of frequency, the results are given in the diagram.

3.5. The material was gathered regarding the cohesion of the population structure of the town of Preševo, and, first of all, the examined groups. Namely, the informants whose speech was recorded were chosen in that way so that their parental origin and the place of birth were common. All the informants' parents were Preševo-born, the informants themselves were born in Vranje (because the hospital is in Vranje) or they all live in Preševo (or they had lived in Preševo up to the moment of this research). Therefore, the material was categorized according to the groups and variables given (age and education). The individual representation of the material according to the informant would have only burdened the paper and the results would have been more or less the same.

3.6. By describing the socio-linguistic factors of the language changes in the dialect of Župa, Dušan Jović (1979, 251) concludes that the differences between the city and village dialects are reduced and that this process could best be followed when small towns are studied comparatively with the nearby villages. The socio-linguistic approach to the local dialect of Preševo confirms these claims. The comparison of the state of Preševo dialect with older speakers and the ones living in villages to the state of the city dialect makes the difference of the partial approximation of the city dialect to the standard Serbian language clear. By changing the dialectological norm, the language idiom is created; however, it is done by adapting the standard norm to the dialectological one (Jović 1979, 251). The term used in the linguistic literature for such an idiom is vernacular which could be found in Labov (1976).

4. Quantitative analysis

4.1. The quantitative analysis of the Preševo dialect comprises the overview of the selected dialectological categories which are especially characteristic for it. These are the so called markers which speakers themselves recognize in specific circumstances (official communication, the presence of an unknown speaker, etc) and then they correct them by using the standard language. This analysis is comprised of the following steps:

1. Two implication scales with the same language variables and with two social variables are given (age and education). The aim of these scales is to gain a clear insight into the frequency or un-representation of the dialectological and standard forms within certain groups.
2. The indexes of frequency of the dialectological forms for every language variable in all groups are calculated. The aim of these indexes is to gain clear insight into the representation of the dialectological types with certain social groups.
3. The results of the analysis are given through two diagrams (the one refers to the frequency of dialectological features regarding the age groups and the other education groups). The diagram contains those language variables which showed a parallel use of dialectological and standard elements.

4.2. It should be mentioned that either full or partial representation of the dialectological forms does not mean the ignorance of the standard forms. Namely, it is about the material recorded under spontaneous circumstances while the examples found in other situations are left out (where diglossic behavior is recognized). So, the quantitative analysis shows everyday usual use of the dialect, i.e., the standard language features within these social groups. The relation of the use of a dialect and the standard language under special circumstances is different but that is not the subject matter of this analysis.

5. The implication scales and their analysis

5.1. The frequency of the selected language categories according to the age groups is represented by the first implication scale.⁵

⁵ There are two forms for every language variable: the first one is the dialectological form and the second is the form from the standard Serbian language. For this paper, tables 1 and 2 contain very important data about the presence of some dialectal and standard forms of the subject, which is more precisely given in the diagram.

Table 1. **The representation of some language categories within the age groups**

Language variable	Age				
	Предшколско Pre-school	7–20.	21–40.	41–60.	Above 60.
Səd	+	+	+	+	+
Sad [Eng. now]	+	+	+	+	+
Kude	+	+	+	+	+
Gde, kod [Eng. where, at]	+	+	+	+	-
Vu	+	+	+	+	+
Joj [Eng. to her]	+	-	-	+	-
S mene	+	+	+	+	+
Sa mnom [Eng. With me]	-	-	-	-	-
Postar	+	+	+	+	+
Stariji [Eng. older]	+	+	+	+	+
Nesam	+	+	+	+	+
Nisam [Eng. I am not]	+	+	+	+	+
Išja	+	+	+	+	+
Išao [Eng. went]	+	+	+	+	+
Tuj	+	+	+	+	+
Tu [Eng. here]	+	+	+	+	-

5.1.1. After the examination and analysis the following conclusions are reached, which is partly represented by the table.

1. Completely stable categories in their dialectological type within all age groups are:
 - a) the doubling of pronouns,
 - b) possessive dative,
 - c) verb forms with *-na-*,
 - d) present 3. person, plural in *-v*,
 - e) dialectological types of aorist and imperfect.

2. The categories which show a parallel use of the dialectological and standard forms in all age groups are:
 - a) the use of a semi-vowel and vocal *a* instead,
 - b) analytical and syntactic comparison,
 - c) the negation of the verb *jesam* in ekavian and ikavian pronunciation,
 - d) present participle, masculine, singular in *-(j)a* and *-o*,
 - e) the use of a particle.
3. There are categories which vary in relation to the use of the dialectological and standard forms according to the age groups:
 - a) within the oldest age group (above 60) two categories are used: the form *kude* and the particle with pronouns and adverbs;
 - b) the pronoun enclitics of the dialectological forms are completely stable in all groups except in the youngest (pre-school) one and with the speakers from 21 to 40 years of age;
 - c) analytical declination is completely present in one group – from 7 to 20 years of age.

5.1.2. The index of frequency of the dialectological forms is calculated with all language groups. Based on this datum, it could be concluded to which extent the dialectological types are an integral part of the town of Preševo dialect, within certain age groups.

The index of frequency regarding the use of particles with pronouns and adverbs shows an increasing tendency as it moves towards the older age group.

In three language categories, the index of frequency of the examples with the dialectological forms is the highest in the second age group (7–20). It is about the examples concerning the use of a semi-vowel (84,21%), analytical declination (100%) and ekavian pronunciation of the negated verb *jesam* (77,78%).

The index of frequency 100% is most present with the oldest age group in eight categories: the use of a semi-vowel, pronoun form, the doubling of pronouns, possessive dative, verb form *-na-*, present 3. person plural in *-v*, aorist and imperfect, particles. This group is followed by the age group 7–20 where the 100% index of frequency can be seen in seven variables. With the pre-school age, this index of frequency can be seen in three categories: the doubling of pronouns, possessive dative, aorist and imperfect.

The lowest index of frequency of the dialectological type is 36,84% and is related to the examples with ekavian pronunciation with the negation of the

verb *jesam* and is recorded within the youngest age group of informants. It is interesting to note that the highest index of frequency of the same variable (77,78%) is recorded within the group aged 7 to 20 years of age.

5.1.3. According to this analysis of the use of the dialectological forms in the city dialect of Preševó, some general conclusions can be drawn. The youngest group has the lowest index of frequency of the dialectological types except in the case of the use of present participle. This is a kind of a protected group which is still under the influence of the adults who take care of their verbal communication with them. Their parents (and sometimes their grandparents) try to teach them to speak the standard language as a higher form of expression and an appropriate behavior. The status of the group between 7 and 20 years of age is particularly singled out, which is more prominent than the previous one, because they return to the dialect, all of a sudden. This is the age of intensive socialized behavior with the tendency to be accepted and integrated into the society. The dialect marks the point of becoming closer to one another and the point of identifying with other people. After this life age, the time of language correction and adaptation starts, as conditioned by the way of life (the school age and work, which mark the encounter with the standard language). The dialectological features are most frequent with the oldest speakers.

5.1.4. The representation of the dialectological features regarding the age categories is represented in Diagram 1.

This diagram can be viewed as a picture of the changes in the so called apparent time.⁶ By observing the language changes in the apparent time, one can deal with the difficulties of viewing the language changes in the real time, which could last for decades (see Bugarski 2009, 20). The data from Diagram 1 show the tendency of the increasing use of dialect at the expense of the standard language with the group of 7 to 20 years of age. Some dialectological forms are not stable enough and that can be best seen in the analytical comparison, negation of the verb *jesam* in the ekavian pronunciation and present participle, masculine in *-(j)a*. The recorded lower index of frequency of these dialectological forms anticipates the decrease of their use. The status of other language variables shows a high frequency of the dialectological forms which presupposes their longer duration in language.

⁶ The concepts of apparent time and real time can be found in Labov (1976, 372).

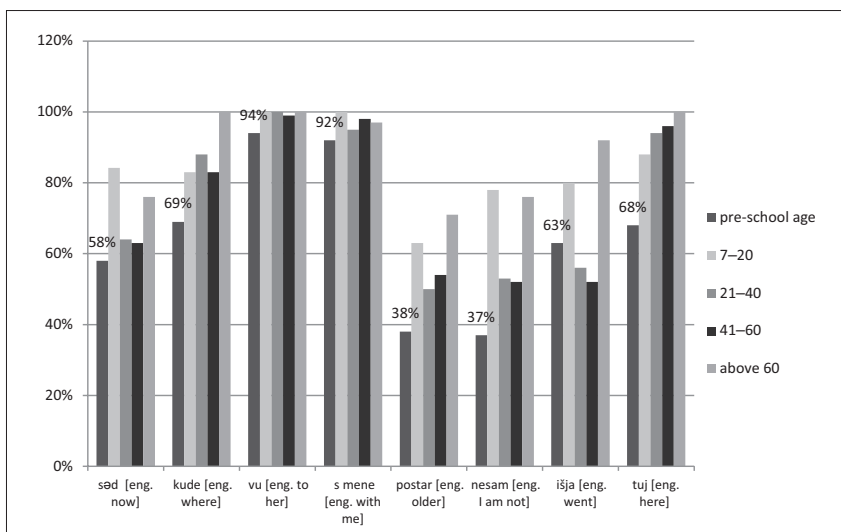


Diagram 1. **The representation of the dialectological features regarding the age categories**

5.2. The second implication scale represents the frequency of the selected language categories according to the speakers' education.

Table 2. **The frequency of some language categories in groups according to education**

Language variables	Education		
	Elementary school	High school	College and university
Säd	+	+	+
Sad [Eng. now]	+	+	+
Kude	+	+	+
Gde, kod [Eng. where, at]	+	+	+
Vu	+	+	+
Joj [Eng. to her]	-	-	+
S mene	+	+	+
Sa mnom [Eng. With me]	-	-	-

Language variables	Education		
	Elementary school	High school	College and university
Postar	+	+	+
Stariji [Eng. older]	+	+	+
Nesam	+	+	+
Nisam [Eng. I am not]	+	+	+
Išja	+	+	+
Išao [Eng. went]	+	+	+
Tuj	+	+	+
Tu [Eng. here]	+	+	+

5.2.1. After the analysis of the representation of the dialectal and standard elements in the speech of the subject grouped according to the degree of education, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Thoroughly stable categories of their dialectological type in all groups according to education are:
 - a) the doubling of pronouns,
 - b) possessive dative,
 - c) verb forms in *-na-*,
 - d) present 3. person plural in *-v*,
 - e) aorist and imperfect.
2. The categories which show parallel use of the dialectological and the standard forms in all groups according to education:
 - a) the use of semi-vowel and vowel *a* instead,
 - b) *kuđe* and *gde*,
 - c) analytical and syntactic comparison,
 - d) the negation of the verb *jesam* in the ekavian and ikavian pronunciation,
 - e) present participle, masculine, singular in *-(j)a* and *-o*,
 - f) the use of particles.
3. The categories which show changes in the parallel use of the dialectological and standard forms according to education are pronoun forms and declination. It is the last, the least educated group, which shows

the use of the standard pronoun forms apart from the dialectological forms. Besides the analytical declination, the syntactic declination can be heard among the speakers who finished high school, college and university.

5.2.2. The index of frequency of the dialectological types within the groups according to the level of education shows the decrease from the less educated to the more educated population. The only discrepancy in that sense can be seen in the comparison of the variables where the lowest index is recorded with the high school population. Six variables show the 100% index of frequency in the first group: pronoun forms, the doubling of personal pronouns, possessive dative, analytical declination, *-na-* verb forms, present in *-v* and aorist and imperfect. The number of variables has been reduced for one toward the more educated group. The speakers with the high school education level do not have the 100% index of frequency of the examples with the analytical declination. The speakers with university education do not show a complete use of the analytical declination in the dialectological pronoun forms.

5.2.3. The frequency of the dialectological features within the groups according to the level of education is represented by Diagram 2.

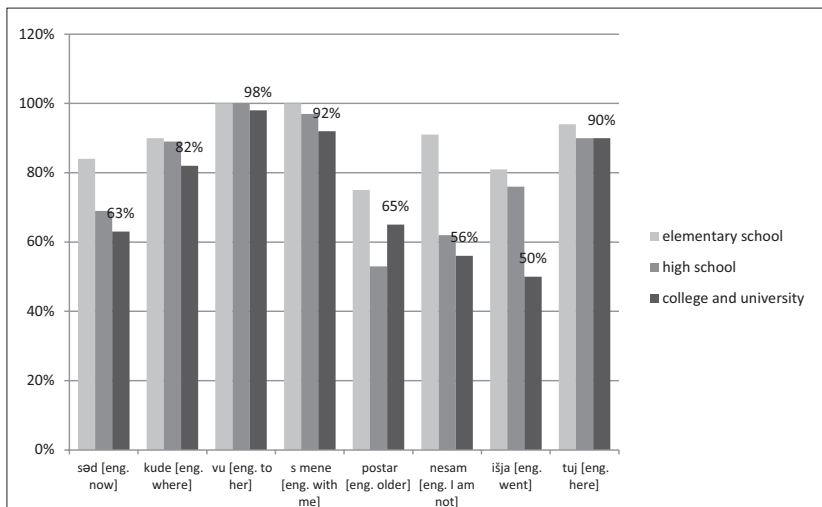


Diagram 2. The representation of the dialectological features within the groups according to the level of education

Diagram 2 shows that all dialectological features are present to a high degree at all levels of education. If you take into account the frequency of the use of the dialectological features among the university education speakers, it can be noticed that it is regularly over 50%, and sometimes it is above the use of some other group (in the case of the use of analytical comparison). This situation and the status of the speakers, even the ones with university education, according to the dialect, can be explained by the so called covert prestige,⁷ which denotes the loyalty to the local community (see R a j i ć 2009, 37). By the use of common speech elements, the speaker felt at home in their community.

Examinees⁸

Initials	Gender	The year of birth	Education
D. M.	f	1936. (75)	two years of elementary school
P. P.	m	1937. (74)	elementary school
D. T.	m	1940. (71)	high school
D. P.	f	1945. (66)	two years of elementary school
Z. T.	f	1947. (64)	high school
S. K.	f	1953. (59)	faculty
L. S.	f	1960. (52)	high school
M. S.	m	1960. (52)	high school
L. M.	f	1963. (49)	college
D. S.	f	1965. (47)	high school
Z. S.	m	1965. (47)	high school
P. P.	m	1966. (46)	faculty
S. S.	f	1968. (44)	faculty
P. T.	m	1972. (41)	college
A. P.	m	1972. (41)	high school
Z. C.	m	1974. (37)	high school
J. M.	f	1981. (31)	high school
B. M.	m	1986. (27)	faculty
J. M.	f	1989. (24)	high school
D. M.	m	1990. (23)	college
M. T.	f	1990. (23)	high school

⁷ The terms covert prestige and overt prestige were introduced by Trudgill (1972).

⁸ In the column of the year of birth, in brackets, there is the number which denotes the years of age of the informant when the research was done.

Initials	Gender	The year of birth	Education
A. S.	f	1993. (20)	high school
N. P.	m	1994. (17)	pupil
D. S.	m	1996. (16)	pupil
T. P.	f	1998. (14)	pupil
N. P.	m	2000. (12)	pupil
N. S.	m	2003. (9)	pupil
A. S.	f	2003. (9)	pupil
J. F.	f	2003. (9)	pupil
T. M.	f	2004. (6)	kindergarten
N. P.	f	2004. (6)	kindergarten
O. S.	m	2004. (6)	kindergarten
P. S.	m	2004. (6)	kindergarten

6. Conclusion

The research of the Serbian language as spoken in the community of Preševo in the south of Serbia showed that the dialect of the town of Preševo is different than the dialect of the nearby villages. Namely, the dialect of the cities is represented by the elements of the standard Serbian language. The dialect of the subjects from the city, apart from the dialect features, contains the standard features too, and that is the general state of the local dialect and not the feature of the diglossia found in the dialect of the subjects. The level of representation of the dialectological and standard language elements in the dialect of Preševo and their analysis were done according to the sociolinguistic methods. The indexes of frequencies of the dialectological forms pointed to their gradual, but not drastic, reduction. The analysis of the age groups showed that the lowest indexes of frequencies are the examples of the use of the ekavian form of the negative form of the verb *jesam*, with analytical comparison, semi-vowels, participle present, masculine gender and singular in *-(j)a* with particles. The rest of the language categories (the form *kude*, dialectal pronoun forms, the doubling of pronouns, dative possessive, analytical declination, the verb form in *-na-*, the Present of the 3rd person plural in *-v*, dialectal forms of aorist and imperfect) have a high frequency index which is sometimes 100%. The analysis within the groups regarding education showed the lowest index of frequency in the examples with present participle, masculine gender, singular of the verb *jesam*, the use of a semi-vowel, the analytical comparison. The rest of the variables (the form *kude*,

the pronoun forms, the doubling of pronouns, the dative possessive, the analytical declination, the verb forms in *-na-*, the Present of the 3rd person in *-v*, the forms of aorist and imperfect, use of particle) have a high index of frequency. The presence of the standard language forms anticipated the presupposition of possible changes in future development of the city speech which shows resemblance with the standard Serbian language. However, at this moment it cannot be predicted for how long some dialectological features would remain part of the dialect or whether some of them would disappear completely.

Acknowledgment

The author would like to express gratitude to Jasmine Passa for correction of English.

PREŠEVO TARMĚS SERBIJOS PIETUOSE SOCIOLINGVISTINIS TYRIMAS

Santrauka

Straipsnyje pristatomi Preševo miestelio, esančio Serbijos pietuose, tarmės tyrimo rezultatai. Kadangi socialinė ir miesto dialektologija bei sociolingvistiniai tyrimo metodai serbų kalbotyroje dar gana nauji, pirmiausia pateikiami teoriniai pasvarstymai, toliau paaiškinami tyrime taikyti Preševo tarmės medžiagos apdorojimo metodai, pateikiamos implikacinės skalės ir diagramos, rodančios tarminių požymių santykį su bendrinės kalbos požymiais. Daroma išvada, kad miesto kalbai būdingi tam tikri bendrinės kalbos požymiai, kuriais ji iš esmės skiriasi nuo kaimų kalbos.

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Tatjana TRAJKović

Cara Dušana 8/3

RS-18000 Niš

Serbia

[*tatjana.trajkovic@filfak.ni.ac.rs*]