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### **On dialect polyphony in the Central South Slavic continuum**

This paper discusses some of the methodological issues related to constructing the research paradigm and conducting research into the actual state of (multi)dialectal variation in one area of the Central South Slavic dialect continuum. With the Ijekavian Neo-Štokavian dialect of south-western Serbia as a case study, the paper brings an analysis of the evolution of a traditional dialect in contact with the Ekavian-based standard language, in order to point out a range of methodological issues that arise in the study of present-day (dia)lect variation and the relationship between the standard language and non-standard dialects. Although typologically interesting, with the Ijekavian-based traditional dialect and the Ekavian-based superstrate in now over a century-and-a-half-long contact, the resulting dialect variation and change in this zone has remained largely underdescribed—as the traditional dialectology has aimed chiefly for ‘vernacular authenticity’ (Ilić 2016) and therefore largely ignored innovations in dialects brought by modernization.

Following Petrović’s (2016) ‘dialect as performace’ approach, by examining the use and distribution of dialect features with different degrees of perceptual salience in dialogues situated in different socio-pragmatic contexts, the paper points out the importance of speakers’ meta-linguistic awareness and identity negotiation strategies for the processes of traditional dialect features retention and change. This creates polyphony-like effects, in which speakers develop different accomodation strategies for different in-group and out-group interlocutors in different situational contexts, by making various choices from the inventory of traditional and more innovative dialect features, based on their perceptual salience.

### **References**

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