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The Border between South Slavic and Balkan Slavic: Key Morphological Features in Serbian Transitional Dialects

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The goal of this work is to shed light on the morphological features character-istic of the nominal declension and verbal conjugation in the Serbian dialects spoken in the region of Paraćinsko Pomoravlje. The region of Paraćinsko Pomoravlje stretches along the boundary line between the southwest Kosovo-Resava dialects and the northwestern Southern Morava subdialects of the Prizren-Timok (Torlak) dialect group. The Paraćinsko Pomoravlje dialects are transitional between the two dialect groups; in some of their principal features they diverge from the Kosovo-Resava dialect group, to which they essentially belong.[1] Thus, they reveal clear Kosovo-Resava dialectal traits, while at the same time, they admit layers of Balkan features originating from neighboring southeastern Serbian (Torlak) dialects.

In earlier studies, scholars have considered the Kosovo-Resava dialects to be transitional between "Balkan Slavic" and "Western South Slavic" (*cf.*

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[1] Like other Kosovo-Resava dialects, the dialects of Paraćinsko Pomoravlje maintain three tones: long falling, short falling, and long rising, and vowel length is maintained only in pre-tonic position. This system is classified as an Old Štokavian accentual pattern. *Cf.* Alexander (1993) for a typology of the accentual patterns in South Slavic.

Birnbaum 1965, Friedman 1977, Belyavski-Frank 1983, Alexander 1984–85, Greenberg 1996). The current study reveals that the Paraćinsko Pomoravlje dialect—located on the very boundary between Kosovo-Resava and Torlak dialects—strictly maintains prosodic features of the Serbian Old Štokavian dialects, while admitting a number of Balkan Slavic innovations, seen especially in the loss of case endings and in the adoption of Balkan verbal morphology.

The region of Paraćinsko Pomoravlje (Central Pomoravlje) is comprised of 33 villages on an area of 542 square kilometers, with a population of about 65,000. Its administrative center is Paraćin, a town situated on the 156th kilometer of the international highway between Belgrade and Niš. Some 3.5 kilometers to the west of Paraćin flows the Great Morava river, the largest river in Serbia.

The southwestern boundary of the Kosovo-Resava dialect, which is simultaneously also the northwestern edge of the Southern Morava subdialects of the Torlak dialect group, stretches from along the slopes of Mount Rtanj to Mount Bukovik. It then goes down Mount Bukovik's western crest, and gradually descends into the Morava valley near the small town of Stalać (see the map on pp. 312–13).

According to Pavle Ivić,[2] the boundary between the Kosovo-Resava and Prizren-Timok (Torlak) dialects passes near the villages of the Paraćin district. He further asserts that the Kosovo-Resava dialects along that line exhibit many characteristics of the Prizren-Timok type. Among these features can be counted simplifications in the case system, as well as certain common developments in verbal morphology and morphosyntax. It is precisely such features, together with some other typically Balkan Slavic features, on which we will focus in the remainder of this paper. Specifically, we will treat the erosion in the case system and characteristics of the verbal system. While the Paraćinsko Pomoravlje dialect preserves vestiges of the Kosovo-Resava case distinctions, its verbal morphology reveals a strong presence of typically Balkan Slavic features.

The Case System

The contrast between the Kosovo-Resava and Prizren-Timok declension types is striking. The latter is characterized by the loss of case and the use of prepositions with a *casus generalis* (CG); the former preserves all synthetic case forms. The Paraćinsko Pomoravlje dialect deviates markedly from the basic Kosovo-Resava declensional system, although the analytic case system here is less pronounced than that of the Prizren-Timok type. As a result, this

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[2] *Cf.* Ivić 1985: 10.

dialect fully admits only the following cases: nominative, vocative, accusative and dative. The forms of the other cases—genitive, locative and instrumental—in the Paraćinsko Pomoravlje dialect are frequently substituted with the equivalent analytic constructions with CG. The CG is formally rendered by the accusative for the singular and the nominative for the plural. Our field data suggest that synthetic forms of the genitive may be admitted only under certain circumstances; otherwise, it is replaced by the CG. The findings from the data collected in the field further indicate that the genitive forms occur more frequently in combination with prepositions, while the CG is preferred in nearly all other contexts.

The conditions under which the synthetic genitive is preserved or lost in favor of its analytic rivals with the CG can be described in terms of semantic categories.[3] These include:

- Adnominal use of genitive (1) or the CG (2), *e.g.*:

(1a) *imalo zapalenje mozga* 'there was inflammation of the brain'
(1b) *razdvoj braka* 'collapse of marriage'

(2a) *mašina za pranje veš* 'a washing machine'
(2b) *bilo berba grožđe* 'there was a harvest of grapes'
(2c) *išli na kopanje kukuruz* 'they went to dig in the corn fields

- Use of genitive (3) or CG (4) with the meanings of partitivity (3, 4a), existentiality (4b), and negation (4c–f), *i.e.*, genitive/CG functioning as a syntactic complement without prepositions. Examples include:

(3)   *bilo j(e) vode* 'there was some water'
(4a) *napila se vodu ladnu* 'I had my fill of cold water'
(4b) *nabere se grožđe* 'grapes would be picked'[4]
(4c) *nisam pio mleko* 'I didn't drink milk'
(4d) *nisam vido lepšu ženu* 'I haven't seen a prettier woman'[5]
(4e) *u štalu poso nemaš* 'you have no business in the stable'
(4f) *tanjir u kuću nemam* 'I don't have a plate in the house'

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[3] For a discussion of the genitive in one of the villages of the area, *cf.* Rakić-Milojković (1994).
[4] In this example, we interpret the verbal form to be in the historical present with a perfective verb. Compare also example (7d).
[5] Note that in this dialect the contraction in the *l*-participle (*vido*) occurs nearly always when the accent falls on the stem. By contrast, when the accent falls on the thematic vowel, we find non-contracted forms as in (7) above, *e.g. živeo*

Kosovo-Resava Dialects

Torlak Dialects
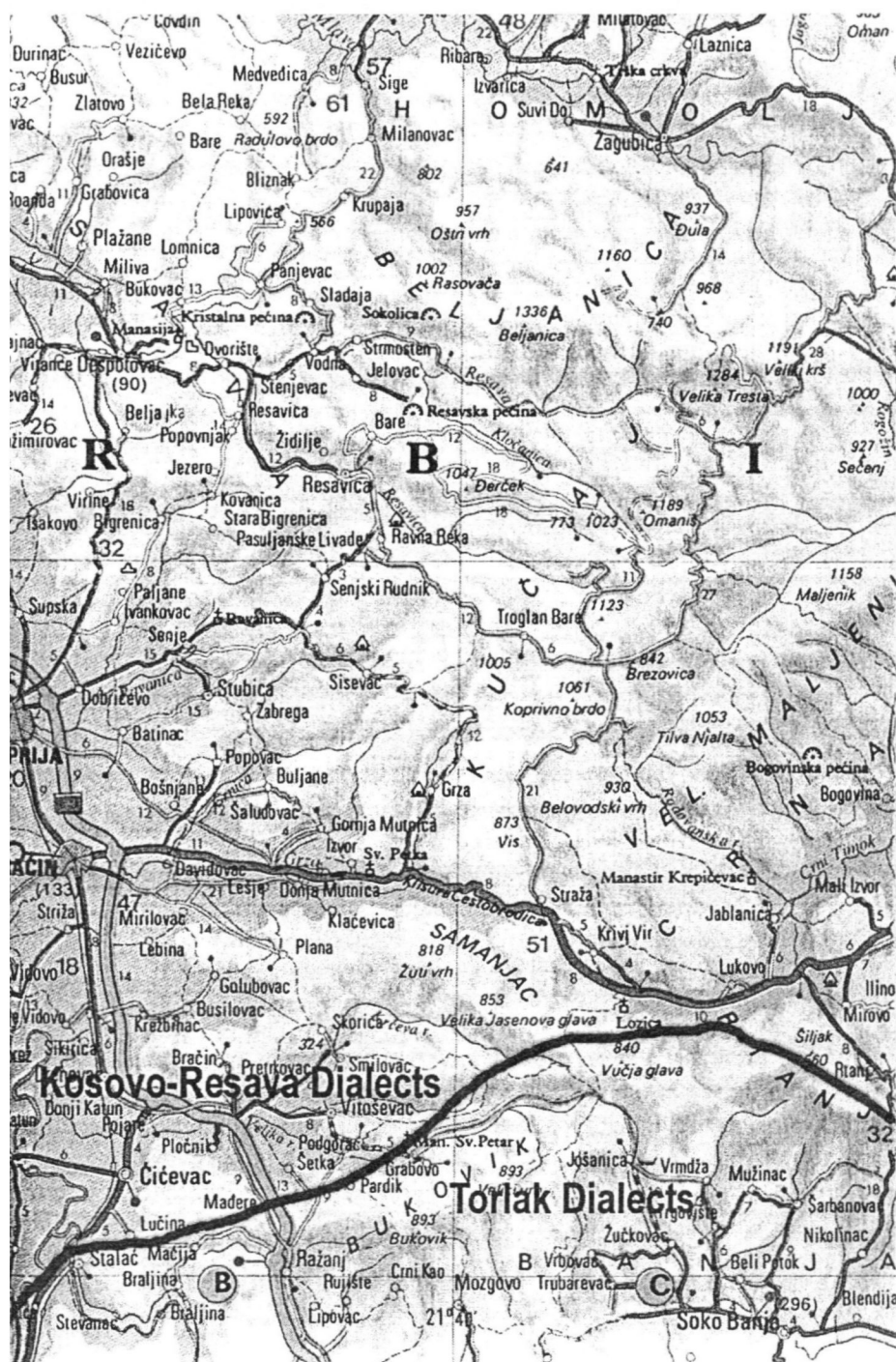
- Use of genitive (5) or CG (6) in expressions of time, *e.g.*:

(5a) *radili smo i prošle godine* 'we also worked last year'
(5b) *došla pretprošle godine* 'she came the year before last'
(6a) *ovu godinu nema gorivo* 'this year there is no fuel'
(6b) *iduće leto smo rasturali* 'the next summer we were dispersing'
(6c) *podje on jedan dan* 'he goes off one day'
(6d) *dodjite drugi dan* 'come another day'

- The use of the partitive genitive or CG in adnominal constructions; the typical lexical markers denoting quantification may be: numbers (7a, 7b), nominal forms used for expressing partitivity (7c), and various quantifiers (7d–f), *e.g.*:

(7a) *deset godina otac živeo* 'father lived for ten years'
(7b) *će ti damo pet ari* 'we'll give you five square meters'
(7c) *uzneš komat proju* 'you take a piece of corn bread'
(7d) *kilo mleko popije* 'he would drink a kilo of milk'
(7e) *ektor imam zemlju* 'I have a hectare of land'
(7f) *turi manje brašno* 'put less flour'

- The genitive (8) or CG (9) with prepositions, *e.g.*:

(8a) *nije se odvajao od kuće* 'he hasn't separated himself from the house'
(8b) *vozili do toga grada* 'we drove up to that city'
(8c) *d-ide kod lekara* 'he should go to the doctor's'
(8d) *diže iz kreveta* 'he gets out of bed'
(8e) *begali preko vode tam* 'they fled through the water there'
(8f) *ostala sam bez majke* 'I remained without a mother'
(9a) *begamo od babu* 'we're running away from grandma'
(9b) *sad se neće bez meso* 'now he won't go without meat'
(9c) *(u)oči Uskrs se mesi* 'bread is prepared on the eve of Easter'

In the Paraćinsko Pomoravlje dialects there is a trend toward the extension of the dative at the expense of the adnominal possessive genitive (10). Further erosion of the genitive case can be found in nominal phrases functioning as the subject in existential sentences, where the genitive is replaced by the nominative. Here we find three kinds of examples: sentences with the form *ima*, wherein the subject is a non-count noun (11a–c); sentences in which the verb is a negative plural form of the copula (11d); and sentences in which the form *ima* is negated (11c), *e.g.*:

(10a) *ja sam Rade Despotovem sin* 'I am Rade Despot's son'

(10b) *tu mi sinu kuća* 'here is my son's house'

(10c) *onem Janku ćerka došla* 'the daughter of that Janko came'

(11a) *de ima vatra* 'where is there a fire?'

(11b) *sad ima prašak* 'now there is powder'

(11c) *pa bilo je patnja, onda bilo poštovanje* 'first there was suffering, then there was respect'

(11d) *nikad deca i pare nesu mlogo* 'there is no such thing as too many children or too much money'

(11e) *ikaki stranac nema* 'there is not a single foreigner here'

The synthetic forms of the instumental and locative are almost completely lost. When they do occur, they are either remnants of an older declension (12a), or they have been adopted recently under the strong influence of the standard language forms (12b–d). Otherwise, the CG is used in the function of the instrumental (13a–f) and locative (13g–k), *e.g.*:

(12a) *s kamionem otišli* 'they left by truck'

(12b) *pozvale telefonom njega* 'they called him by phone'

(12c) *išo putem* 'he went on his way'

(12d) *što otišli po belom svetu, i na kraju, svirali u kvizu* 'they went all around the wide world, and in the end they performed in a quiz program'

(13a) *sa starca bila za seno* 'she went with the old man to get hay'

(13b) *ne govori s muža* 'she is not speaking with her husband"

(13c) *on dodje s kamion* 'he would come with a truck'

(13d) *pred glavni ulaz ima zvonara* 'there is a bell tower in front of the main entrance'

(13e) *imamo to pred kuću* 'we have this in front of the house'

(13f) *da sam uspešna medju društvo* 'may I be successful in company'

(13g) *pili kavu u komšiluk* 'we drank coffee in the neighborhood'

(13h) *živeo malo u grad* 'he lived for a while in the city'

(13i) *nije na mozak* 'he is not in his right mind'

(13j) *kod mene su na čuvanje* 'they are with me for safe keeping'

(13k) *pričekaj na put* 'wait on the road'

(13l) *išli po selo* 'they went around the village'

In the plural, the CG is used exclusively, instead of the oblique cases, *i.e.*, the genitive (14a–e), the instrumental (14f–j) and the locative (14k–o). This development confirms that the synthetic case forms in the plural are the most unstable case forms in the entire nominal declension paradigm, *e.g.*:

(14a) *sklonio se od žandari* 'he hid from the policemen'
(14b) *od Nemci ne mlogo bilo stra* 'there wasn't much fear of the Germans'
(14c) *do momci se vaća d-igra* 'he's grabbing the guys' [hands] to dance'
(14d) *to dolazi iz gradovi* 'this comes from the cities'
(14e) *nešto oko zubi mu radi* 'he has some business with his teeth'
(14f) *ide polako sas papuče* 'he walks slowly with slippers'
(14g) *dolazili s konji* 'they were coming with horses'
(14h) *grebe s nokti* 'she's scratching with fingernails'
(14i) *pod prsti oseća* 'he feels (it) under his fingers'
(14j) *ona medju drugarice vrhunac za sve* 'among her friends she is the best in everything'
(14k) *sakupljala društvo u mladje dane* 'in our younger days, people would gather together'
(14l) *ispriču tam u sela* 'there in the villages they would tell stories'
(14m) bila sam na velike muke i bede 'I went through great sufferings and misfortunes'
(14n) *smuca se po brda* 'he is roaming around the hills'
(14o) *samo o momci razgovaru* 'they only talk about boys'

As to the endings of the oblique cases, the Paraćinsko Pomoravlje dialect differs somewhat from literary Serbian, while agreeing with other Kosovo-Resava dialects. These differences include:

The dative singular ending of second-declension nouns is -*e* (15), *e.g.*:

(15a) *kazujemo majke* 'we're telling mother'
(15b) *da mi se duše lakne* 'that my soul should be lightened'
(15c) *rekli ju snaje* 'they told her sister-in-law'
(15d) *dobro mi ćerke* 'my daughter is fine'
(15e) *pevamo pesme mladoženje* 'we're singing songs to the bridegroom'

Accusative plural forms of masculine (16a–d) and neuter collective nouns (16e, 16f) are identical to nominative plural forms, *e.g.*:

(16a) *ona gleda momci* 'she's looking at the boys'
(16b) *rani bikovi* 'he's feeding the bulls'
(16c) *penjemo se u vagoni* 'we are boarding the train cars'
(16d) *jurila sam za ti telefoni* 'I rushed for those telephone calls'
(16e) *dobili smo unučići* 'we got grandchildren'
(16f) *narani pilići* 'feed the chicks'

In the instrumental singular of masculine and neuter nouns the -*em* ending of originally soft stems sporadically occurs instead of the -*om* ending of hard stems (12a, 17), *e.g.*:

(17)   *ge ćeš s-tim detetem* 'where are you off to with that child'

In the dative and instrumental plural of second-declension feminine nouns the -*ema* ending sporadically occurs instead of the -*ama* ending (18), *e.g.*:

(18a)   *dava kravema* 'he is giving (it) to the cows'
(18b)   *će da pravimo lutkema odelca* 'we'll make clothes for the dolls'
(18c)   *viljuškema će da jedu* 'they'll eat with forks'
(18d)   *i mi sas parema umemo* 'we're adept with money'

The locative singular meanings of the second declension feminine nouns are also attested in forms with the ending -*e*, regularly in conjunction with the preposition *po* (19), *e.g.*:

(19a)   *to po ove mode* 'this (is) in that fashion'
(19b)   *da se ne truća više po škole* 'he should not lose more time with (going to) school'
(19c)   *gledam po crkve* 'I'm looking around the church'

The Paraćinsko Pomoravlje dialect differs from standard Serbian in using the nominative instead of the vocative forms in some masculine nouns and in feminine nouns ending in -*ica* (20). The principal vocative ending of feminine nouns is -*o* (21), but in this dialect it may also occur with some other nouns which in the standard language have the nominative for the vocative, *e.g.*:

(20a)   *bre drugar* 'hey, comrade'
(20b)   *ej kovač* 'hey, blacksmith'
(20c)   *slušaj Slavica* 'listen Slavica'
(20d)   *Božica—će da dodješ kod nas* 'Božica, will you come to our place?'
(21a)   *ajde babo da pevaš* 'come on sing, old lady'
(21b)   *moj sin kaže—mamo* 'my son says "Mamo"'
(21c)   *ge si tetko* 'where ya been, Auntie?'
(21d)   *dedo—si dolazio* 'grandpa, you came by'

Another divergence from the standard language occurs with feminine Type IV nouns ending in consonants, which exhibit masculine agreement (22):[6]

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[6] Type IV nouns in traditional Serbian grammars refer to feminine nouns terminating in a consonant (*e.g.*, *kost* 'bone'); in this dialect, all such nouns have merged with Type I nouns, *i.e.*, masculine nouns ending in a consonant.

(22a)   *glad ga satro* 'hunger has destroyed him'
(22b)   *došo jesen* 'fall has come'
(22c)   *propao stvar* 'the thing has fallen apart'

The Verbal System

The system of verbal forms in the dialect of Paraćinsko Pomoravlje is not completely identical with the corresponding systems in other Kosovo-Resava dialects, due to the mixing of elements from both the Kosovo-Resava and Torlak dialects. The old Resava conjugational system has been preserved to a certain degree. The majority of verbal categories found in standard Serbian are also present in the Paraćinsko Pomoravlje dialect. Categories which are completely absent in this dialect are the past gerund and the infinitive. The loss of the infinitive brings this dialect closer to the Prizren-Timok dialects. What follows are some of the pecularities of the Paraćinsko Pomoravlje verbal system. These features are grouped according to their dialectal context, *i.e.*, (1) features shared with most Kosovo-Resava and Torlak dialects, (2) features shared only with Kosovo-Resava dialects, (3) features shared only with Torlak dialects, and (4) isolated features characteristic mostly of the Paraćinsko Pomoravlje dialect and a few neighboring speech communities.

(1) Features Shared with Both Kosovo-Resava and Torlak Dialects

    a. The aorist is productive in this dialect (23). The ending *-(h)mo* is common in the first-person plural of the aorist (24), *e.g.*:

(23a)   *ja mu zakla kokošku* 'I slaughtered a chicken for him'
(23b)   *te se ja najedo* 'and so I stuffed myself'
(23c)   *dade mu otac* 'his father gave it to him'
(23d)   *odoste l(i) vi jučer* 'did you leave yesterday?'
(24a)   *digomo mi ljuljku* 'we lifted the cradle'
(24b)   *razletemo se* 'we flew in different directions'
(24c)   *skidomo se iz autobus* 'we got off the bus'

    b. The use of the perfect without an auxiliary verb is very productive (25), *e.g.*:

(25a)   *jedna došla i donela* 'someone came and brought it' (instead of *jedna je došla*)
(25b)   *tako i moj deda radio* 'that's what my grandfather did'

    c. The future is typically formed periphrastically, usually without the conjunction *da*, by means of the non-conjugated form *će* in all persons and both numbers, except the first singular, which uses *ću* (26), *e.g.*:

(26a) *će me vodi* 'he'll lead me'

(26b) *će pogine* 'she'll perish'

(26c) *će izatkamo pamuk* 'we'll weave cotton'

(26d) *el će dodju jutre* 'will they come tomorrow?'

d. The forms of the imperative admit all the phonetic changes also occurring in the present tense, *e.g.*: *vuči* 'pull!'; *seči* 'cut!'; *uzni* 'take!'; *pušti* 'let!'; *stizaj* 'arrive!'[7]

e. The forms of the past passive participle may admit jotations under certain conditions. Some forms, especially second-conjugation verbs with stem-final *-st*, display reflexes of the original Common Slavic jotations, *e.g., kršćen* 'baptized,' *pušćen* 'allowed.' Several stems in the first conjugation, particularly those ending in dental consonants reveal a later analogical jotation, *e.g.*: *donešen* 'brought,' *spašen* 'saved,' *dovežen* 'transported.' Still other verbs, namely second-conjugation verbs, whose stems terminate in a labial consonant, show no jotations whatsoever, *e.g., zaroben* 'taken captive,' *spremen* 'prepared,' *polomen* 'broken.'[8]

f. The present gerund may be formed by adding the suffix *-ući* to the third-person plural present-tense form, *e.g.*: *radeući* 'working,' *noseući* 'wearing,' *pevaući došo kod kuće* 'he came home singing.'

g. The auxiliary verb *hteti* has the following forms of the imperfect tense: *ća, ćaše, ćamo, ćaste*; hence the past active *l*-participle admits doublet forms, *e.g.*: *ćao* and *teo*.

h. Auxiliary and modal verbs tend to generalize a single form for all persons, *e.g.*: *bi* (conditional particle), *će* (future particle); *treba* 'it's necessary,' *mož(e)* 'it's possible,'[9] *mora* 'it must.'

2) Features Shared with Other Kosovo-Resava Dialects

a. In first-conjugation verbs with the stem ending in *-eju* and second-conjugation verbs we find the ending *-du*, *e.g.*: *umedu* 'they are able

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[7] The verb *jesti* 'eat' has the old imperative form *jedji*, while in the second-person plural the form *jete* is more common than *jedjite*.

[8] The non-jotated forms occur in second-conjugation verbs with thematic *-i-* and stem-final labial consonants. Such non-jotation is typical of Bulgarian and Macedonian, as opposed to Serbian and Croatian. This feature has been used to differentiate East South Slavic from West South Slavic, *e.g.*, (Standard Serbian) *zemlja* vs. (Standard Bulgarian) *zemja*.

[9] For the first person, the form *mog(u*

to,' *smedu* 'they dare,' *sededu* 'they are sitting,' *letedu* 'they are flying'; *trčedu* 'they are running.'[10]

b. The imperfect, pluperfect and gerund are unproductive. Their extremely low frequency suggests that they are probably on the verge of extinction in this dialect.

(3) Features Shared Mostly with the Torlak Dialects

a. The infinitive is completely eliminated; it is replaced by *da* + non-past.

b. The future-in-the-past is widely used (27),[11] *e.g.*:

(27a) *ća i ja da umrem* 'I would have died too'
(27b) *čaše da izginu* 'they would have perished'

(4) Isolated Features Found in a More Limited Geographic Region

a. The contracted forms in the third-person plural present with stems terminating in *-aj* are frequent, *i.e.,* the standard forms in *-aju* are rendered by forms in *-u*. Examples include *gledu* 'they look,' *spremu* 'they prepare,' *kopu* 'they dig.'[12]

b. An additional periphrastic future tense is formed by *ima da* + present tense (28),[13] *e.g.*:

(28a) *ima da pevaš* 'you will sing'
(28b) *ima da bidne* 'it will be'

c. The non-past forms of the auxiliary verb *biti* 'be' feature the stem vowel *-i-* (as opposed to the stem vowel *-u-* in the standard language), and the suffix *-n-* before the personal endings: *bidnem, bidneš, bidne;*

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[10] This ending is not found in the neighboring Torlak dialects; it is more frequent in the Kosovo-Resava dialects of Trstenik and Levač; *cf.* Jović 1968 and Simić 1972, respectively.

[11] These forms are found in the Kosovo-Resava dialect of Trstenik, some Montenegrin dialects (*cf.* Greenberg 2001), and in neighboring Balkan Slavic dialects.

[12] In most of the Kosovo-Resava dialects, the third-person present-tense forms are rendered by non-contracted endings in *-au*. In neighboring Torlak dialects the ending *-au* has undergone further phonetic developments, yielding the ending *-av*. The Paraćinsko Pomoravlje dialect shares the contracted ending *-u* with the dialect of Resava; *cf.* Milanović and Peco 1968.

[13] While *ima da* forms are found in other Serbian and Balkan Slavic dialects (*cf.* Bogdanović 1979) with the meaning of a command, in the Paraćinsko Pomoravlje dialect these forms function as a marked, expressive future retaining some imperative overtones, but not the strict imperative connotation found in the other dialects.

therefore the imperative form is: *bidni tam* 'be there,' *bidnite kod kuće* 'be at home.'[14]

In this study, we have brought forth some of the key morphological features which link the Paraćinsko Pomoravlje dialect with the highly Balkanized neighboring dialects. The study reveals that in the case system, the oblique case forms have been the first to be lost, and case syncretism is greatest in the plural. The verbal system reveals high productivity of archaic aorist forms and the innovative grammaticalization of Balkan markers for the future tense and conditional constructions. The rich data presented from the region of Paraćinsko Pomoravlje should prove valuable for further study of the process of Balkanization of the Serbian dialects.

Appendix

List of Villages in the Paraćinsko Pomoravlje District

The data for this paper were taken from informants in the following villages:

Bošnjane	Izvor	Sikirica
Buljane	Klačevica	Striža
Busilovac	Krežbinac	Stubica
Čepure	Lebina	Šavac
Davidovac	Mirilovac	Šaludovac
Donja Mutnica	Plana	Tekija
Donje Vidovo	Potočac	Trešnjevica
Drenovac	Raševica	Zabrega
Gornja Mutnica	Svojnovo	

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[14] The stem vowel *-i-* is found in neighboring Kosovo-Resava and Torlak dialects; however, the suffix *-n-* is geographically limited to the area around Paraćinsko Pomoravlje

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