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## Perceptual Dialectology and the Future of Slovene Dialects

Članek je opis in analiza ankete, v kateri smo zastavljali vprašanja o rabi narečij in odnosu do narečij v Sloveniji. Izvedena je bila novembra 2005 na univerzah v Ljubljani in Mariboru. Na splošno je anketa študentov pokazala stanje v prid ohranjanju narečij, ki pa je na nekaterih narečnih področjih precej neenotno.

This paper is a description and analysis of a survey designed to ask questions about dialect usage and attitudes in Slovenia. The questionnaire was administered during November of 2005 at the University of Ljubljana and the University of Maribor. Overall, the survey of university students depicts a situation that is positive for dialect maintenance, but there is significant variation in some dialect regions.

### Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Slovenia is well known as a small European country with an exceptionally diverse dialect territory. Because of this native diversity, Slovenes have long experienced pressure to assimilate in order to solidify the Slovene linguistic and national identity. “Kot Slovenec se ne rodiš, v Slovenca se asimiliraš” [‘You are not born a Slovene. You assimilate into a Slovene’] (Ošlak 2002).<sup>2</sup> Urbanization is also an important factor in reducing Slovenia’s linguistic diversity. Between 1963 and 1993 the population of Slovene cities and suburbs increased by fifty percent (Ravbar 1997: 87). At the same time the rural population of most regions of Slovenia decreased. For example, the population of the eastern border region of Haloze decreased by fifty percent between 1948 and 1998. Finally, Slovenia and the Slovene language are changing under the assimilating pressures of Europeanization and globalization, highlighted by Slovenia’s entrance into the European Union in 2004.

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<sup>2</sup> “Kot Slovenec se ne rodiš, v Slovenca se asimiliraš. Sam se še prav dobro spominjam, kako travmatični so bili včasih trenutki v šoli, ko so se sošolci ali učitelji norčevali iz mojega ali mojih sošolcev narečnega govora ali posameznih narečnih besed in zvez.” I would like to thank Peter Weiss for bringing this editorial to my attention.

It is received wisdom that these assimilating processes naturally lead to dialect death. The notion is that, if a population which speaks a diverse range of dialects is educated exclusively in the standard language, and if many of them relocate to large cities where village dialects are not productive, the dialects will disappear. There is evidence that the younger generation does not speak in the same way as the older generation and that much of the change in the dialect of the younger generation can be connected to assimilation in the direction of the standard language (Lundberg 2005). This alone is not necessarily a sign of dialect death. Dialects, like other human behaviors, change through time. Some recent research takes a relatively optimistic view of the status of Slovene dialects (Smole 2005: 328).<sup>3</sup> This paper is a description and analysis of a survey designed to ask some questions about dialect usage and attitudes in Slovenia. First, are Slovene dialects being used by young people, and are they likely to be passed on to future generations? Second, can perceptual dialectology, subjective judgments about different dialect regions, tell us anything about the future of Slovene dialects?<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 1: Dialect Map of Slovenia<sup>5</sup>**



<sup>3</sup> Smole administered a dialect-usage survey to some of her students. Over 75 percent of the respondents to her survey, all university-aged students of Slovene, said that they speak and understand their local dialects well. Smole concludes the article with an optimistic statement: “Narečij torej le ne čaka tako črna prihodnost.”

<sup>4</sup> Perceptual dialectology is the study of folk beliefs about language. The field is interested in what non-specialists think about dialect variation and dialect boundaries. Researchers in perceptual dialectology also ask non-linguists to make aesthetic judgments about language variants. The study of folk beliefs about language may help explain why some dialects are retained and some are lost.

<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 regions discussed. The map and the subsequent charts are organized according to dialect bases or groups. 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.

### Questionnaire<sup>6</sup>

The questionnaire was administered during November of 2005 at the University of Ljubljana and the University of Maribor. This study is based on 490 valid questionnaires. The respondents were all native Slovene students studying at one of the two institutions. Just over 75 percent of the informants were students of the Slovene language, 11 percent were studying Russian and 12 percent were studying English. 92 percent of the respondents were female.<sup>7</sup> All major Slovene dialect regions were represented, but the largest group, 40 percent, came from Štajerska.

**Figure 2: Home Region of Respondents<sup>8</sup>**

	Frequency	Percent
Dolenjska	35	7.1
Gorenjska	53	10.8
Koroška	45	9.2
Ljubljana <sup>9</sup>	77	15.7
Prekmurje <sup>10</sup>	31	6.3
Primorska	30	6.1
Rovtarska	4	.8
Štajerska	214	43.7
Bela Krajina	1	.2
Total	490	100

### Dialect Usage

The first topic of discussion from the study is dialect usage among university-aged Slovenes. In this survey questions 3, 4, 5 and 10 directly or indirectly deal with dialect usage.

#### Question 3: Do you speak dialect at home?

In response to this question, 85 percent of informants said that they did speak dialect at home. This correlates well with Smole's positive statement about the future

<sup>6</sup> The full questionnaire can be found at the end of this article in Appendix 1. I would like to thank Dr. Marc L. Greenberg for his advice on the wording of parts of the questionnaire. Any mistakes or deficiencies are my own doing.

<sup>7</sup> This results from the fact that over 70 percent of my informants were students of Slovene. The overwhelming majority of this major is female.

<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that this is a pilot study. The analysis of the data has revealed several weaknesses in the questionnaire. One of those is that the informants were only asked about their place of birth and not about their permanent residence.

<sup>9</sup> Students were asked what region they were from. Just over 15 percent gave Ljubljana as the answer. Ljubljana is not a dialect base, although there is a distinct city dialect in Ljubljana. The city is included in the usage figures because such a large percentage gave it as the region of birth. It is assumed here that, when informants speak of dialect in Ljubljana, they are referring to the city dialect.

<sup>10</sup> Prekmurje is the most well known part of the Panonska dialect group.

of Slovene dialects, which was cited earlier. Of that 85 percent, 70 percent claimed that they spoke in dialect at home with everyone they knew. Only 9 percent said they spoke in dialect exclusively in the family, and 5 percent said they spoke only with their grandparents. These responses seem to point in the direction of general dialect maintenance, although some interesting differences are revealed when the responses are analyzed by region of birth.

**Figure 3: Dialect at Home by Region**

	Yes	No
Dolenjska	89%	11%
Gorenjska	66%	34%
Koroška	87%	11%
Ljubljana	73%	27%
Prekmurje	94%	6%
Primorska	90%	8%
Rovtarska	75%	25%
Štajerska	90%	10%
Bela Krajina <sup>11</sup>	100%	0%
Total	414	74

While a majority of informants from all regions indicated that they spoke dialect at home, the responses from Ljubljana and Gorenjska are significantly lower than the average from the other regions, 16 points lower for Ljubljana, and 23 points lower for Gorenjska.

**Question 4: Do you speak in dialect outside of your home region?**

It is not surprising that in response to this question only 37 percent of informants answered positively. Of the remaining 63 percent, 39 percent said they never used dialect outside of their home region, and 24 percent said they used dialect only with friends from home. When the data are analyzed by region some differences become clear. In Dolenjska, Koroška, Ljubljana and Štajerska the students responded positively about using dialect outside of their home region about 40 percent of the time. Only 20 percent of those from Primorska, 23 percent from Prekmurje and 19 percent from Gorenjska responded positively. The explanation for not using dialect outside of the home region is also not surprising. They did not think they would be understood.

**Question 5: If you had a child, would you speak with him in dialect?**

This question is not directly about dialect usage because it is hypothetical, but it does indicate how the informants feel about their dialect and about their desire to see it passed on. The numbers are quite positive. Just over 70 percent said they would

<sup>11</sup> The percentages from Rovtarska and Bela Krajina should be viewed with caution because the survey includes only one informant from Bela Krajina and four from Rovtarska.

speak to their children in dialect. The remainder indicated that they would not speak dialect at home with their children.<sup>12</sup> As with other questions, the responses differ somewhat from region to region.

**Figure 4: Dialect with Children by Region**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Dolenjska	77%	20%
Gorenjska	55%	43%
Koroška	76%	24%
Ljubljana	58%	39%
Prekmurje	84%	16%
Primorska	77%	23%
Rovtarska	75%	25%
Štajerska	70%	29%
Bela Krajina	100%	0%
Total	337	147

It is interesting that, while 85 percent grew up speaking dialect, only 70 percent plan to teach it to their children. It is also interesting that 84 percent of informants from Prekmurje want their children to speak their native dialect, but only 58 percent and 55 percent of those from Ljubljana and Gorenjska, respectively, plan to use dialect with their children. When this same response is cross tabulated with the student's major, an interesting pattern takes shape. Nearly 75 percent of Slovene majors plan to teach their native dialect to their children, while only 60 percent of English majors and 51 percent of Russian majors intend to speak dialect with their children. It follows that those studying Slovene, who plan to teach the language or work in a field that requires a detailed knowledge of it, would be more interested in the preservation of all variants of the language. It is also true that many of these students have studied the dialects as a source of historical linguistic information. Students studying other subjects are less interested in passing on their native dialect to their children. It would be interesting to know if this pattern extends to the society at large. Would all of these numbers be less optimistic or positive about dialect maintenance if the respondents were not associated with the university? There is some indication from research on other European language territories that the educated elite are more interested in the preservation of regional dialects than are other members of society (Ammon 2003: 166).

#### **Question 10: How important is dialect to your local identity?**

This question is also indicative of the attitude of the informants to their own dialect. Half of those surveyed said that dialect was very important to their local identity, while 41 percent said it was somewhat important, and only 8 percent said that it was

<sup>12</sup> The negative response is interesting because it is not clear what variant of the language these informants would use with their children. There is no national spoken standard in use throughout the country.

not important at all. Again these numbers are more revealing when they are analyzed by region of birth.

**Figure 5: Importance to Local Identity by Region**

	Very Important
Dolenjska	89%
Gorenjska	42%
Koroška	58%
Ljubljana	30%
Prekmurje	90%
Primorska	73%
Rovtarska	25%
Štajerska	48%
Bela Krajina	0%
Total	246

It is striking that Ljubljana and Gorenjska are relatively low in this category, as they are in all of the usage questions. On the other hand, the highest percentage of positive responses to this question is from Prekmurje, as it is for other usage questions. If we exclude Bela Krajina and Rovtarska because the number of informants is so small from those areas, then Prekmurje is clearly differentiated. Primorska, Dolenjska and, to some extent Štajerska, also have positive results. Gorenjska and Ljubljana have the lowest numbers in each of the three areas.

**Figure 6: Comparison for Dialect Usage**

	at home	with children	identity
Dolenjska	89% (3)	77% (2)	89% (2)
Gorenjska	66% (6)	55% (6)	42% (6)
Koroška	87% (4)	76% (3)	58% (4)
Ljubljana	73% (5)	58% (5)	30% (7)
Prekmurje	94% (1)	84% (1)	90% (1)
Primorska	90% (2)	77% (2)	73% (3)
Štajerska	90% (2)	70% (4)	48% (5)

### Dialect Attitudes

Within Slovenia most regions are characterized by stereotypes about the people who live there. Dialects are closely associated with these stereotypes, some positive and some negative. One of the proposals of perceptual dialectology is that there is a connection between attitudes about dialects and the likelihood that those dialects will be maintained or lost. “It seems obvious that instances of language change... might be profoundly influenced by folk beliefs about language, particularly beliefs about the status of language varieties and the speakers of them” (Preston 1999: xxiv). Renee van Bezooijen makes a similar claim for language varieties of Dutch (2002: 13). More specifically, Priestly writes that it is a “near certainty” that there is a cause-and-

effect relationship between the negative attitudes of the Slovene minority toward their own dialects and the rapid Germanization of southern Carinthia (Priestly 1990: 145). These are interesting statements. The literature in the field of perceptual dialectology is full of claims regarding the connection between language attitudes and language change, but there is little direct evidence of causation. One reason for this lack of evidence may be that the field is relatively young, and there is a lack of information on dialect attitudes from earlier historical periods, which could be used to corroborate or dispute claims about causation. The remainder of this discussion of dialect attitudes in Slovenia will serve as a historical reference for future discussions of the connection between language attitudes and language change.

### Questions 6: In what city or region is the most beautiful Slovene spoken?

It should be noted that the secondary literature indicates that the answer to this question may not be an aesthetic judgment at all. Beauty in language is often associated with correctness.<sup>13</sup> The closer a dialect is to the standard language, the more likely it will be considered beautiful (Kontra 2002: 206). Intelligibility also correlates with beauty. That is one of the reasons that people judge the standard language and their own dialect as beautiful (van Bezooijen 2002: 15).

#### Figure 7: Most Beautiful Slovene<sup>14</sup>

Celje	31%
Gorenjska	12%
Primorska	12%
Ljubljana	10%
Dolenjska	9%
Štajerska	5%
Maribor	3%

It is interesting that 38 percent of respondents indicated that the most beautiful Slovene is spoken in Štajerska. If we break the response down by region of birth, it is not surprising that within each group the highest percentage went to the respondents' home region, for example 47 percent of respondents from Primorska said that the most beautiful Slovene is spoken in Primorska. The next highest response for informants from Primorska was 10 percent for Celje. The informants from two regions, Koroška and Prekmurje, did not find that the most beautiful Slovene was spoken in their home region. Only 7 percent of those from Koroška and 10 percent of those from Prekmurje judged their own dialect to be the most beautiful. On the other hand, 60 percent of those from Koroška and 33 percent from Prekmurje said that the most beautiful Slovene was spoken in Celje or Štajerska.

<sup>13</sup> With an earlier version of this questionnaire, I asked 40 students where the most correct and incorrect Slovene was spoken instead of where the most beautiful and ugliest varieties were spoken. The top answers for most correct and incorrect in the pilot study are the same as the top answers for most beautiful and ugliest in the current study, Štajerska and Prekmurje.

<sup>14</sup> The total in this chart does not add up to 100%. The remaining percentage is made up of multiple individual answers.

### Question 7: In what city or region is the ugliest Slovene spoken?

There was some resistance to this question. Several students commented that no Slovene dialect should be considered ugly, and 12 percent of the respondents (60 out of 490) left the question blank. Of those who did answer, 36 percent said that the ugliest Slovene was spoken in Prekmurje, and 21 percent said the ugliest Slovene was spoken in Ljubljana. All other responses were in the low single digits. When this question is analyzed by region of birth, the same unified opinion is found in all regions, except, understandably, in Prekmurje and Ljubljana.

**Figure 8: Ugliest Slovene**

Dolenjska	Prekmurje	43%	Ljubljana	11%
Gorenjska	Prekmurje	28%	Ljubljana	15%
Koroška	Prekmurje	42%	Ljubljana	18%
Ljubljana	Prekmurje	33%	Gorenjska	10%
Prekmurje	Ljubljana	26%	Prekmurje	19%
Primorska	Prekmurje	30%	Ljubljana	17%
Rovtarska	Prekmurje	25%	Ptuj	25%
Štajerska	Prekmurje	40%	Ljubljana	30%
Bela Krajina	Prekmurje	100%		0%

### Question 8: In which region are people the most loyal to their dialect?

Nearly half (45%) of the respondents said that people in Prekmurje are the most loyal to their dialect. Only 12 percent chose Štajerska, and 11 percent chose Primorska. All other choices were in the low single digits. When this question is analyzed by region of birth, the proximity of the dialect to the home dialect of the respondent plays an important role. Those in neighboring dialects are judged to be loyal to their dialect.

**Figure 9: Most Loyal (top two responses)**

Dolenjska	Primorska	46%	Prekmurje	14%	
Gorenjska	Prekmurje	32%	Štajerska	17%	
Koroška	Prekmurje	67%	Koroška	13%,	Štajerska 9%
Ljubljana	Prekmurje	31%	Štajerska	20%	
Prekmurje	Prekmurje	55%	Štajerska	10%,	Ljubljana 10%
Primorska	Prekmurje	40%	Primorska	13%,	Štajerska 10%
Rovtarska	Prekmurje	50%	Štajerska	25%	
Štajerska	Prekmurje	53%	Primorska	9%,	Štajerska 9%
Bela Krajina	Prekmurje	100%		0%	

In question 9 the students were asked to rank all of the major dialect groups, including the variety of the language spoken in Ljubljana, on a scale from 1 to 7, 1 being the most negative and 7 being the most positive, for comprehensibility, beauty and prestige. The mean score for each dialect area is given below.



**Figure 10: Comprehensibility**

Štajerska	5.7
Ljubljana	5.68
Gorenjska	5.32
Dolenjska	4.97
Primorska	4.7
Koroška	4.11
Prekmurje	2.68

**Figure 11: Beauty**

Primorska	5.22
Štajerska	4.94
Gorenjska	4.56
Dolenjska	4.51
Koroška	4.03
Prekmurje	3.99
Ljubljana	3.41

**Figure 12: Prestige**

Gorenjska	4.3
Primorska	4.24
Ljubljana	4.18
Štajerska	4.14
Dolenjska	3.87
Koroška	3.51
Prekmurje	2.93

There is not a great deal of difference between most of the dialect groups for question 9. In some cases only the extremes stand out. In the category of Comprehensibility we see Štajerska and Ljubljana at the top and Prekmurje at the bottom. This corresponds well with the earlier questions about the most beautiful and ugliest varieties of Slovene. It also follows that Ljubljana would be judged highly for comprehensibility because it is the dialect of the capital city. Prekmurje is the most difficult to understand. For Beauty Primorska stands out as the most beautiful. For Prestige the regions are closely grouped. Prekmurje stands out as being the least prestigious. This, again, corresponds to it being considered the ugliest or most incorrect as regards the standard language.

**Conclusion**

The analysis of this questionnaire does not definitively answer questions about the future of Slovene dialects. We can only propose several interesting possibilities. First, to the extent that the attitudes of 490 Slovene university students are representative of the general population, the outlook for dialect usage is relatively positive. 85 percent of informants said they grew up speaking in dialect. 70 percent said they

would raise their own children speaking their native dialect. 50 percent said their local dialect was very important (41 percent: somewhat important) to their identity. 54 percent said they were hopeful or optimistic about the future of dialect use in Slovenia. This does not, of course, mean that every village dialect will survive, but it is a positive sign for dialect maintenance in general. Second, while most of the major dialect groups are judged to be aesthetically similar, there are several dialects that stand out in positive and negative ways. If Preston (cited earlier) is right that there is a connection between dialect attitudes and language change, we may be able to see that idea expressed in the Slovene dialect territory. Prekmurje is judged to be the dialect that differs the most from the standard language (the ugliest). This may also be a good thing for its survival (Ammon 2003: 169). As regards dialect usage by informants it turns out to be the highest in several categories. People from Prekmurje are considered to be the most loyal to their dialect. 94 percent said they were raised speaking dialect at home. 84 percent said they would raise their own children speaking dialect. 90 percent said their native dialect was very important to their identity. Dialect attitudes about Primorska and Štajerska are also very positive in the areas of beauty, loyalty and identity. These three dialects seem most likely to be maintained. On the other end of the spectrum we have Gorenjska. This area has many of the lowest usage and perceptual scores. Only 66 percent said they grew up speaking dialect. Just 55 percent said they would teach their children to speak their native dialect, and 41 percent said that dialect was important to their identity. Finally, only 36 percent said that the future was hopeful or good for dialect use in Slovenia. Gorenjska seems to be a likely candidate for dialect loss. Time will tell.

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### Appendix 1

		Vprašalnik	
		Odnos do narečja	
		M	Ž
1.	Spol (obkrožite)		
2.	V katerem kraju ste se rodili?		
3.	Ali govorite doma v narečju? Če ja, s kom? S starši? S starimi starši? S sestro ali bratom? Z znanci in prijatelji?		
4.	Ali govorite v narečju izven domačega kraja? Če ne, zakaj?		
5.	Če bi imeli otroke, ali bi govorili z njimi v narečju?		
6.	V katerem mestu ali pokrajini po vašem mnenju govorijo najlepšo slovenščino?		
7.	V katerem mestu ali pokrajini po vašem mnenju govorijo najgršo slovenščino?		
8.	V katerih pokrajinah so po vašem mnenju ljudje najbolj zvesti narečju?		
9.	Ocenite z 1 do 7 vaš odnos do navedenih narečij ali vtis o njih. Npr., pri nasprotju grdo – lepo, 1 pomeni najgrše, 7 pa najlepše. Če nimate mnenja o posebnem narečju, obkrožite ‘ne vem.’		
A. ljubljansko			
	nerazumljivo – razumljivo	grdo – lepo	neprestično – prestižno
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
	ne vem		
B. prekmursko /panonsko			
	nerazumljivo – razumljivo	grdo – lepo	neprestično – prestižno
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
	ne vem		
C. štajersko			
	nerazumljivo – razumljivo	grdo – lepo	neprestično – prestižno
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
	ne vem		
Č. dolensko			
	nerazumljivo – razumljivo	grdo – lepo	neprestično – prestižno
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
	ne vem		

- |                           |               |                         |
|---------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| D. gorenjsko              |               |                         |
| nerazumljivo – razumljivo | grdo – lepo   | neprestično – prestižno |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 7             | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7           |
| ne vem                    |               |                         |
| E. koroško                |               |                         |
| nerazumljivo – razumljivo | grdo – lepo   | neprestično – prestižno |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 7             | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7           |
| ne vem                    |               |                         |
| F. primorsko              |               |                         |
| nerazumljivo – razumljivo | grdo – lepo   | neprestično – prestižno |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 7             | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7           |
| ne vem                    |               |                         |
10. Za mojo pokrajinsko pripadnost je narečje ... (obkrožite)
- zelo pomembno.
  - malo pomembno.
  - nepomembno.
11. Kaj mislite o prihodnosti slovenskih narečij?
12. Bi še kaj dodali?

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### Perceptivna dialektologija in prihodnost slovenskih narečij

Članek je opis in analiza ankete, v kateri smo zastavljali vprašanja o rabi narečij in odnosu do narečij v Sloveniji. Prvič, ali se slovenska narečja uporabljajo med mladimi in ali se bodo prenesla v naslednjo generacijo? Drugič, ali nam perceptivna dialektologija, tj. subjektivna presoja o posameznih narečnih področjih, lahko kaj pove o prihodnosti slovenskih narečij?

Vprašalnik so anketiranci izpolnjevali novembra 2005 na ljubljanski in mariborski univerzi. Raziskava temelji na 490 veljavnih vprašalnikih. Vsi anketiranci so bili študentje ene od dveh univerz in rojeni govorniki slovenščine.

Če je odnos slovenskih študentov reprezentativen za slovensko prebivalstvo v celoti, so izgledi za rabo narečij sorazmerno pozitivni. 85 % vprašanih je izjavilo, da so v otroštvu govorili v narečju. 70 % jih je reklo, da bodo svoje domače narečje naučili tudi svoje otroke. 50 % jih je izjavilo, da je narečje zelo pomembno (41 %, da je precej pomembno) za njihovo identiteto. 54 % anketirancev gleda na prihodnost rabe narečij v Sloveniji z upanjem ali optimizmom.

Prekmurje velja za narečno področje, ki se najbolj razlikuje od knjižnega jezika (najgrše). Prekmurci naj bi bili najbolj zvesti svojemu narečju. 94 % anketirancev je reklo, da so v otroštvu doma govorili narečje. 84 % jih je reklo, da bodo svoje otroke vzgajali v narečju. 90 % jih je izjavilo, da je narečje zelo pomembno za njihovo identiteto.

Druga skrajnost je Gorenjska, ki ima najnižje rezultate tako glede rabe kot glede vtisa. Samo 66 % anketirancev je reklo, da je odraščalo z narečjem. 55 % jih name-rava naučiti govoriti narečje svoje otroke in samo 41 % jih je menilo, da je narečje pomembno za identiteto. 36 % jih gleda na prihodnost rabe narečij v Sloveniji z upa-njem ali optimizmom.

Izhajajoč iz teoretičnih spoznanj perceptivne dialektologije, avtor prihaja do za-ključka, da so možnosti za izgubo narečja največje na Gorenjskem.

### Perceptual Dialectology and the Future of Slovene Dialects

This paper is a description and analysis of a survey designed to ask questions about dialect usage and attitudes in Slovenia. First, are Slovene dialects being used by young people, and are they likely to be passed on to future generations? Second, can perceptual dialectology, subjective judgments about different dialect regions, tell us anything about the future of Slovene dialects?

The questionnaire was administered during November of 2005 at the University of Ljubljana and the University of Maribor. This study is based on 490 valid questionnaires. The respondents were all native Slovene students studying at one of the two institutions.

To the extent that the attitudes of Slovene university students are representative of the general population, the outlook for dialect usage is relatively positive. 85 percent of informants said they grew up speaking in dialect. 70 percent said they would raise their own children speaking their native dialect. 50 percent said their local dialect was very important (41 percent: somewhat important) to their identity. 54 percent said they were hopeful or optimistic about the future of dialect use in Slovenia.

Prekmurje is judged to be the dialect region that differs the most from the literary language (the ugliest). People from Prekmurje are considered to be the most loyal to their dialect. 94 percent said they were raised speaking dialect at home. 84 percent said they would raise their own children speaking dialect. 90 percent said their native dialect was very important to their identity.

On the other end of the spectrum is Gorenjska. This area has many of the lowest usage and perceptual scores. Only 66 percent said they grew up speaking dialect. Just 55 percent said they would teach their children to speak their native dialect, and 41 percent said that dialect was important to their identity. Finally, only 36 percent said that the future was hopeful or good for dialect use in Slovenia.

Based on the theoretical claims of perceptual dialectology, this paper argues that Gorenjska is the most likely candidate for dialect loss.