



Kolloquium Slavistische Linguistik (online)

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The linguistic complexity of South Slavic dialects

The talk presents the results of a quantitative study of South Slavic dialects, based on their linguistic complexity. We measure what Johanna Nichols (2009: 111) calls *grammatical complexity* – “complexity of the strictly linguistic domains of phonology, morphosyntax, lexicon, etc. and their components” and follow “the usual understanding of a complex system as one consisting on many different elements each with a number of degrees of freedom”. We survey phonological and morphological traits (elements of the systems), and a range of variant forms of inflectional morphemes (paradigmatic variants). All of them are represented as binary features rather than mere numbers of vowels, consonant phonemes, cases, tenses, and allomorphs.

The overall sample consists of 735 observations, each of them representing a single Balkan Slavic variety spoken in a certain locality. For measuring complexity scores and distance between the varieties, 29 features from the linguistic domains of phonology and morphology were selected. The complexity score for each variety was calculated as a simple sum of the true-values.

Our goal is to examine the complexity variance throughout the South Slavic territory and to explain if and how complexity levels correlate with the (non)involvement of the different dialects in past and present language contact situations.

Mittwoch, 25. November 2020, 16:00-17:30

Gäste sind herzlich willkommen.

Ein Zoom-Link wird auf Anfrage (s. Kontakt) gerne zur Verfügung gestellt.

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