

## **SLOVENE AS A MINORITY LANGUAGE: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND SOCIOLINGUISTIC PROSPECTS**

**Albina Nećak-Lük and Dušan Nećak**

### **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to present an overview of the past and present situation of the Slovene language in those parts of the Slovene ethnic territory where native speakers of Slovene live in their historical speech communities, i.e., as national minorities. As is well-known, these speech communities exist in the linguistically-mixed border regions of contemporary Hungary, Austria, and Italy.

### **2. The Historical Background**

The Slovene language, and the Slovene nation itself, are characterized by a circumstance that is difficult to find anywhere else in Europe: almost throughout their whole history they have been in a minority position and have played the role of subordinate. Only after the First World War, with the establishment of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes [SHS] in 1918, did the major part of the Slovene national body begin to frame its own statehood on its autochthonous territory; only then did Slovene gain the status of a national, majority language. Nevertheless, even through today it has remained in a minority position within Yugoslavia, given its relationship vis-à-vis the Serbo-Croatian-speaking population. Despite the official policies of linguistic (and cultural) pluralism, there has been a strong tendency to accord to the Serbo-Croatian language the role of *lingua franca*, and even many native speakers of Slovene have conformed to this tendency.

Throughout Slovene history, which at least since the last century has been oriented towards national emancipation, one crucial factor has been the development, maintenance, and spread of the national language. Literary Slovene has its origins in the mid-16th century. It lived and developed in the framework imposed by foreign states—German, Italian, Hungarian—while neither the ethnic nor the linguistic borders of Slovene territory changed from the 14th to the 19th centuries. During this period, even though there were some feudal lords competent in Slovene, the use of the Slovene language was more or less limited to the lower social strata and to informal speech domains. At that time, however, Slovene had not yet come to be systematically threatened by any of the surrounding nations or languages. Such a state of affairs could be designated diglossia without bilingualism. Only in the 19th century, when modern political nations were being formed in Europe and when the Great German national idea, Italian expansionism based on *risorgimento*, and the Hungarian Kossuthian state-nation idea were all being shaped, was the Slovene nation and its language in any direct danger.

#### **2.1. The period before the First World War**

##### **2.1.1. Austria**

The Slovene ethnic territory was an obstacle to all three of these nationalistic movements, and especially for the Great German ideology which aimed at the unification of all

the German ethnic territories, from the Baltic to the Austrian provinces. Whereas there were no obstacles between Greater Germany and the Baltic, the non-Germanic Slovene-speakers were a barrier to the Adriatic. The only solution to this problem was Germanization, which in the second half of the 19th century and in the 20th became the basis of the policy of "the bridge to the Adriatic," to which end a great amount of financial means and energy was invested, in the form of the *Schulverein*, the *Alpenverein*, and other ventures. The most successful possible way of putting Germanization into practice was the elimination of the Slovene language. Under an accompaniment of extensive propaganda to the effect that everything Slovene was inferior, the Slovene language was expelled from public communication (use on public signs, in schools, in administration, and so on.)

The existing federal administrative organization of Austria, with its relatively independent provincial units, helped to promote Germanization: for the Slovene ethnic territory did not comprise one unit but was divided among the provinces of Carinthia/Koroška/Kärnten, Styria/Štajerska/Steiermark, Carniola/Kranjska/Krain and Gorizia/Goriška, of which only Carniola was completely Slovene. Carinthia, where the Slovenes still live as a national minority, had in the 19th century nearly a third of its inhabitants with Slovene as their first language.

### 2.1.2. Italy

The Slovene western border was also threatened by Italian irredentism, to which various expansionistic plans were linked. The liberation of Trst/Trieste, Istria, Dalmatia and Albania was foreseen as a means of achieving domination: first, over the Adriatic, which was proclaimed as *mare nostrum*; then, over the whole Mediterranean, which would then be an open door for further ventures. From the viewpoint of Italian nationalistic circles, the *italianità* of Trieste and Gorizia/Gorica could be saved only if these regions were annexed to the Kingdom of Italy. But because the greater part of the Slovene ethnic territory along the western border, with Trieste and Gorizia as the most important cities in this territory, was still in Austrian hands, the Italianization of the Slovenes did not make any progress in the cities. Thus the 1910 census showed Trieste as the biggest 'Slovene city,' with 56,916 inhabitants having Slovene as first language.<sup>1</sup>

The position of those Slovenes who came under the Kingdom of Italy after the 1866 plebiscite was somewhat different. These were the Venetian Slovenes, in the northern part of this ethnic border zone, who from 1816 (after they had lost the autonomy they had had under the Venetian Republic for more than 300 years) through 1866 had lived in Austria. Italy had promised many things to these Slovenes, above all in the area of national-linguistic rights, but it did not keep its promises. It did not renew the privileges which these Slovenes had enjoyed under the Venetian Republic: the official language became Italian, without any exceptions. Slovenes could not speak Slovene in court, whereas at least a few civil servants and judges under Austrian administration had understood Slovene. There was no schooling in Slovene. The Slovene language was preserved only in the churches, while it came to them from neighbouring Gorizia and Carinthia in both written and spoken form. For these reasons, the political and especially the national and linguistic development of the Venetian Slovenes was much curtailed, a state of affairs which—despite some progress—is still noticeable today.

### 2.1.3. Hungary

The political and national-linguistic situation of the Slovenes in Prekmurje was even worse than that of the other Slovenes living in the Dual Monarchy or in the Kingdom of

Italy before the First World War; for they lived in the Hungarian part of the Monarchy, in the least developed part of the Slovene ethnic territory. Their marginal socio-economic position was also reflected in the undeveloped Slovene national-political movement, owing to the non-existence of a Slovene intelligentsia (other than the clergy) and of a Slovene middle class. In compensation for the lack of contact with Slovene culture and with Standard Literary Slovene, a written form of the Prekmurje dialect was developed, in which religious books, poetry, and (later) newspapers were published. For a considerable period, Hungarian orthography was utilized. Slovene cultural and political activity was therefore linked to the activity of the Catholic and Protestant clergy, and to the Catholic People's Party, until the downfall of the Dual Monarchy. Their policy toward the Slovene question is encapsulated in the following: "The Slovenes in Hungary should preserve their old tongue [i.e., the Prekmurje dialect]. This language must be defended and cultivated. Everything that is historical in the Slovene province is to be listed, e.g., old churches, folk customs, folk dress, church and school objects. Politics and wild nationalism are excluded."

#### 2.1.4. Overview

The Slovenes fought a battle on two fronts for national emancipation during the growth of the modern European nations in the 19th century. On one front—the political one—the battle succeeded to a great extent, at least in the greater part of the Slovene ethnic territory, and the Slovenes began to develop as a modern European political nation. The other battlefield was for the equality of the Slovene language in all fields of public life, and for the affirmation of Slovene culture. On this front there was less success. The equality of Slovene in education, administration and law was never achieved. Slovene schooling was never successfully implemented; it was, in all respects, the least in those parts of the Slovene ethnic territory where the Slovenes still live as national minorities—in Carinthia, Austrian Styria, Venetian Slovenia, and the surviving part of Prekmurje still in Hungary: Porabje. In all three, the internal official language (i.e., communication among administrative units) remained German, Italian and Hungarian, while the use of external official language (i.e., administrative communication with clients) was, for a number of reasons, not always to the advantage of the Slovenes. Although the use of the relevant languages was allowed in the Austro-Hungarian Parliament (parliamentary oaths of office in Slovene were first sworn in 1867), stenographic records in any languages other than German and Hungarian were begun only in the last years before 1914. Matters were even worse for the Slovene language in the provincial assemblies; it was equal to German only in the Carniolan assembly, and was equal to Italian only in the Gorizian assembly. The question of the use of Slovene in the clerical professions, which made little progress, was connected to the inequality of Slovene in education and in the civil service. It is however not possible to say that the Slovenes had no success in this part of their battle for national emancipation; but the battle was hard and very long. The outlook was brighter for culture, for the arts and sciences, which bore fruits that surpassed mere provincialisms and found their appropriate place in the contemporary European framework.

#### 2.2. The period 1918-1945

The Slovene ethnic community was in a completely new situation after the First World War and the downfall of the Dual Monarchy. The greater part was now in the new South Slavic state (first the SHS, after 1929 Yugoslavia); but approximately one third of the Slovenes remained in the neighbouring states: over 300,000 in Italy, about 100,000 in

Austria, and about 5,000 in Hungary. All of these peoples<sup>2</sup> belong to national minorities today; the status and functions of their language are discussed below.

### 2.2.1. Austria

Some 100,000 Carinthian and Styrian Slovenes found themselves north of the Yugoslav border—in Southern Carinthia and the “Radkersberg Corner”—after the First World War. The Carinthian Slovenes remained in Austria following the negative result of the October 10, 1920 Plebiscite, in which voters were asked in which state they would prefer to live, not what their national affiliation was. The German-speaking Carinthians, like the Italians during the national Venetian Plebiscite of 1866, promised a great deal but fulfilled few or none of their promises. The period immediately after the Plebiscite was one of German nationalist pressure on the Carinthian Slovenes; a number of murders of well-known Slovenes were attempted. The task of centrally enforcing anti-Slovene policies was assumed by an organization founded before 1920, the *Kärntner Heimatdienst* (which is still at work with similar aims). This organization also put into effect the German-nationalistic policy of colonizing Southern Carinthia. One of its tasks was the preparation of the ground for the affirmation of the nationalistic and discriminatory *Windischentheorie*: according to this theory there existed a group, named the *Windischer/vindišarji*, a kind of intermediate nationality between the Germans and the Slovenes. This group was supposed to be well-disposed to the Germans, and was alleged to speak *Windisch*, a language that was supposedly more German than Slovene. This political denationalization theory, based on a change in meaning of the old term *vend-/vind-*, was developed so that the German nationalists could the more easily assimilate the Slovenes in Carinthia, using the principle “Divide et impera.” The German nationalists—and later official Austrian policy—were prepared to acknowledge a Slovene character only to those Slovenes who actively demanded their national rights. After the Second World War, this group received the additional pejorative name of “Titoists.”

The Slovene language was especially affected by the nature of the primary school system in Carinthia. The so-called “utraquistic” school system was supposedly bilingual, but its basic purpose was to prepare Slovene-speaking children for the earliest possible transition to being taught entirely in German. Already in 1922 the representatives of the minority protested about the educational system to the League of Nations. The so-called clerical-fascist régime which ruled Austria from 1933 to 1938 made some attempts to solve the minority schools question, but the situation became even worse as far as the Slovene language was concerned. From 1936 it was no longer permitted to write place-names in Slovene, and all publications—even those published for the Slovenes—had to be bilingual.

The Anschluss of 1938 did not only affect the German-speaking population of Austria; it was especially decisive for the Slovenes of Carinthia. As a final blow to the Slovene language, the utraquistic school system had been abolished in the 1938/39 school year. The *Windischentheorie* was finally legalized during the Nazi period. The use of the Latin alphabet was forbidden; Slovene orthography disappeared from public use; and Slovene teachers were transferred to schools in German-only parts of the province. The zenith of Nazi denationalization violence was reached after the Nazi invasion of Yugoslavia in April 1941, when the last tactical barrier to destructive policies crumbled; the violence was crowned by the plan, which began in April 1942 and was only partly put into effect, of deporting Carinthian Slovenes. This was an important reason why Carinthia was the only region within the Third Reich where any widespread anti-Nazi armed resistance was organized. When after the war the Slovenes came to total their wartime damage, they

ascertained that the Slovene community—which had numbered about 50,000—had lost 43 Slovene cultural societies and 18 institutions; and that a great deal of property had been confiscated, and Slovene books and periodicals had been destroyed. Thirteen cultural centers and 26 theatres and halls had also been wrecked. Everything had to be begun anew, even the cultivation of the Slovene language.

The fate of the Styrian Slovenes was similar to that of the Carinthian Slovenes, but even worse in some areas. The few thousand speakers of Slovene<sup>3</sup> enjoyed minority protection neither in the First Austrian Republic nor in the Second. Here, too, the *Windischentheorie* was applied; and—although the minority is officially safeguarded by Article 7 of the 1955 State Treaty—the very existence of a Slovene minority in Styria is denied even today.

### 2.2.2. Italy

With the signing of the Rapallo Treaty between Italy and the SHS on November 12, 1920 (valid from February 5, 1921), the Julian March (the former Austrian provinces of Gorizia-Gradišćanska, Trieste, and Istria, with part of the Carniolan and Carinthian provinces), together with Zadar and the surrounding area, and some islands in the Adriatic—i.e., the territory promised to Italy by the Allied Forces already at the Treaty of London in 1915—officially became part of the Austrian state. Although approximately 550,000 Slovenes and Croats now lived in Italy, the contract did not contain any provision for the protection of national minorities.

During the two-year Italian occupation of this territory (1918-20) the liberties of Slovene population were already being suffocated, but the real genocidal anti-Slovene policy began to develop under Fascism in 1922. Mussolini tolerated the continuation of the Slovene presence in the Julian March for the first few years, but the abolition of democratic forms of state administration and the introduction of a Fascist totalitarian régime in 1926 brought with them the end of tolerance toward the Slovenes. Closings of Slovene and Croatian schools began in 1923 with the so-called *Gentile* reform, and a systematic denationalization pressure continued; the 1927 plan for the total denationalization of the Slovenes was no more than the peak of eight years' activity with this aim. The Slovene language was abolished in practice from the law courts in 1922 and officially by decree in 1925. With the provincial and community law of 1923 Italian became the only language of administrative communication, and all public signs in Slovene—names of shops, inns, and other institutions—had to be removed. In 1923 it was decreed that Italian should be the only language on tombstones. Place-names began to be Italianized during the occupation in 1918; this process was legalized by decree on April 27, 1923. The same fate befell surnames beginning in 1927. Slovene societies were abolished; their property was confiscated; and in 1929 the Slovenes of the Littoral were left without any newspapers or magazines written in their language. Only a few Slovene-language books were preserved, and the language—despite persecution—was maintained under the protection of the Church. In addition, besides destroying the political and cultural superstructure of the Slovenes, the Fascist government also undertook the destruction of their economic foundations. In spite of occupying a great part of Slovenia during the Second World War, however, the Fascists did not succeed in destroying the existence of the Slovenes before they themselves met their downfall; for the battle for Slovene self-preservation moved into the underground and remained there until the end of the war. It is not therefore surprising that, in reaction to this genocidal policy, one of the broadest and most organized anti-Fascist resistance movements in Europe was that of the Slovenes in Italy.

### 2.2.3. Hungary

After the Trianon Peace Treaty of 1920 the territory of Szentgotthard/Monošter and its surrounding area—ten villages in all—remained as part of Hungary. The border was not officially final at that time, but it remained unchanged after the 1922 Paris Conference of Ambassadors of the then Great Powers. The Slovenes of this area, Porabje, were methodically Hungarianized between the two World Wars. All Slovene place-names and personal names were Hungarianized. The Slovene language was banned from public life. As in Carinthia, a version of the *Windischentheorie* developed, which we may call the “Vend theory:” according to this theory, there were no Slovenes living on the east side of the river Mura, only the “Vendi,” a distinct nationality, remnants of the ancient Vandals.

### 2.3. The Postwar period.

During the first days of May, 1945, the national political program of the Slovenes—a United Slovenia—became true for a short time: all the regions inhabited by Slovenes were united into one country. The Slovene army had to move out of Porabje, however, as soon as the Soviet Army arrived; it had to leave Carinthia on May 22, after the treaty signed by the Allies; and it had to leave “Zone A” of the Julian March on June 12, 1945. Despite the firm belief that after the victory over Nazism and Fascism the principle of self-determination would be applied, this did not materialize. All the Slovenes who in 1920 had been left beyond the northern border, in Austria, were still there after 1955, when the Austrian State Treaty was signed. In the west, the majority of Slovenes who had lived as part of Italy since the First World War were now united with Slovenia; but a true ethnic border was not achieved, and today there are several tens of thousands of Slovenes living in Italy. The border with Hungary was not altered, in spite of the demands made by the Slovenes of Porabje, because the new Yugoslav government expected that the development of socialism in Hungary would solve the minority national question automatically. Thus the Slovenes living beyond all three borders had to begin again the battle for the preservation of their national identity and national language; the forms of denationalization which had been previously imposed continued, in somewhat modified form, in all three regions.

## 3. The Sociolinguistic Situation

### 3.1. Overview

The Slovenes who live beyond the borders of Slovenia all face the same problem with respect to their linguistic self-expression, namely the unequal social position of Slovene vis-à-vis the language of the respective ethnic majority—Hungarian, German, Italian. All lack an independent means of communication that might allow their language equal possibilities of development alongside the majority language. The Slovene language is confined to informal, unofficial domains.<sup>4</sup>

Within the borders of present-day Slovenia, during the gradual historical changes in its system of social networks, Slovene advanced both on the institutional level and in terms of language-varieties. In particular, the development of the Standard language and of functional styles was closely linked to the transformation of the Slovene nation into a modern political and economic society. In contrast, beyond the Slovene borders the Slovene-speaking minorities continue to face different developments. The lack of possibility for Slovene to function as an equal and official means of communication has resulted in deficiencies in the multifunctional communicative capabilities of the Slovene popula-

tion. In particular, the situation is critical with respect to the Standard language, which does not occupy its expected position in the domain of public communication due to restrictions on its use; it has been reduced, more or less, to having symbolic value, to a token existence, with little scope for practical or obligatory use.

The state of affairs is further aggravated by the relatively large differences among the Slovene dialects and between each of the dialects and the Standard.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the linguistic alienation was fostered time and again by nationalistic hostile measures, whose aim was to split the Slovene communities along linguistic lines (see above, on "Windisch," "Vend," etc.). The large number of local dialects, and the lack of language varieties which might enable the construction of social networks, are a consequence of administrative divisions, of centuries of contact with neighboring languages, and also of topography.<sup>6</sup> Over time, each official state language expanded at the expense of Slovene, whose status was undermined, and which was not permitted to function in official and institutional domains. Consequently, intercommunication in Slovene is still on the decline, both with respect to its share of public channels of communication and with respect to the number of its speakers; and therefore its verbal repertoire is diminishing in favor of the respective majority language. An exception to this rule is offered by Porabje and Beneška Slovenija, where "the process of merging the local dialect with the Slovene language has not yet come to an end" (Orožen 1981: 422). In all other cases the lack of contact with Standard Slovene has caused a standstill in the development of the local Slovene dialects. Even when Standard Slovene is spoken, archaic expression and incongruent hypercompensation (e.g., the interweaving of different stylistic elements with exaggerated pedantry) are frequent.

In its contact with the language of the respective nations, the language of each Slovene minority has undergone strong influences on its pronunciation, lexis, morphology and syntax. These impacts have manifested themselves in all the Slovene dialects concerned, and act as an additional cause for the instability of Slovene as a spoken language in these regions. The preclusion of the Slovene language from channels of public communication in the past and today has resulted in the loss of many mutually-shared characteristics in the different dialects, thereby widening the gaps among them even more than might have happened normally. In other words: the social discrimination against the Slovene language is negatively reflected in terms of competence, of language cultivation, of self-consciousness, and of linguistic usage.

In modern times, characterized as they are by the developments in communications and the post-industrial society which cause extensive changes in vertical and horizontal population mobility, ever more members of the Slovene-speaking minority are experiencing modern reality in the majority language. Possibilities for interaction in the Slovene mother tongue are, in the modern world, limited. Hence, linguistic development is lagging more and more behind social development; and the vicious circle spins on and on. The lack of public speech domains in which the appropriate use of Standard Slovene would be suitable is thrusting Slovene individuals into limited interactions within their own ethnic group, and they are unable to internalize all the linguistic and extralinguistic systems of their own ethnic community.

In the Slovene minority areas a one-way bilingualism is being developed: only the Slovenes are bilingual, while members of the majority maintain their own monolingualism. A generational transition can be observed from Slovene monolingualism through Slovene/majority language bilingualism to majority language monolingualism.

The Slovene minority is particularly exposed in those regions where their language has no access to the channels of public communication, i.e., in every region where the state

has not guaranteed the functioning of Slovene on an institutional level. Intensive social restructuring and the breakthrough of (in particular) audio-visual means of mass communication have caused Slovene (both Standard and dialects) to lose its place in primary socialization. Children are in contact with Slovene only in kindergarten or grade school, only if their parents enrol them in Slovene-speaking schools, and only where such institutions exist.

With some qualifications, the role played by Slovene in the speech communities where it exists as a minority language may be conceived in two ways: either as a language in total diglossia, i.e., where Slovene functions only as a dialect in the life of the larger community, and in private conversations within families and among friends and colleagues, whereas the majority language functions as the literary/written/public language (Gruden 1983); or, as a language in a partial diglossia situation, i.e., where—as well as in informal domains—Slovene is also used in a number of formal situations. These formal areas are however limited to communication within the Slovene minority (intra-group communication), whereas the language of the majority functions as the means of communication in the wider community (inter-group communication).

The first of these two, total diglossia, can be observed in Styria, in Porabje and in the Province of Udine/Videm; in these regions the Slovene communities show a weak social stratification. These are for the most part rural areas lacking a Slovene urban center; here, the weakest point in the social composition of the Slovenes is located precisely in those strata which should be encouraging the need for linguistic competence in the Standard and in functional styles of Slovene. The second, partial diglossia, obtains with respect to the Slovene language in Carinthia, Trieste, and Gorizia.

### 3.2. Total diglossia

#### 3.2.1. Austrian Styria

The position of the Slovene language is exceptionally unfavorable in Austrian Styria, where (see above) the provisions of the State Treaty have never been affirmed. Until recently communication in Slovene was limited solely to the most narrow family circles. The fact that Slovene in this region experienced the fate of a forgotten orphan is to a great extent also due to disinterest of the Slovene motherland in its fate. However, open borders and the involvement of regional intellectual circles (especially journalists of the *Pomurski vestnik*) in the fate of the Styrian Slovenes have recently brought about a revitalization of the consciousness and cultural activities of the minority group.

#### 3.2.2. Porabje

Matters are apparently somewhat better in the Porabje region with respect to the public use of Slovene. It is however uncertain whether the 20-to-30-year Hungarian state protection of the public use of Slovene—a principle expressed in the constitution—is carried out in practice. It seems that the provisions for its public use in the courts and in administration are not actualized. In the one South Slavic weekly newspaper there is one page reserved for Slovene, but this is often left empty. There are but fifteen minutes' broadcasts from the radio station at Győr. Here and there one may see Slovene signs alongside Hungarian ones on public buildings, but the Slovene is often misspelled. There is thus little chance for Slovene to break through into public speech domains; and, with the recent death of the last Slovene priest in Porabje, one of the most important formal speech domains was also lost to Slovene. On the other hand, Slovene is preserved in cultural activities, for there is



an understanding in Hungary that folklore traditions should be maintained, whatever the ethnic composition of the region. There is, also, some attention to Slovene language instruction: it is taught for three or four hours per week in the primary schools and has also been introduced into kindergartens for about the same hours. Also, during the last few years, some subjects have been taught in both Slovene and Hungarian.<sup>7</sup> That the centuries of isolation from Slovenia, the assimilatory pressures, and the closed borders have done their worst, is proved by the fact that the number of children in kindergartens with a knowledge of Prekmurje Slovene dialect is now zero. The Government of Hungary has become aware of this situation, and due its own increased interest in the Hungarian minorities in neighboring states (especially Rumania) has begun a program for the revitalization of Slovene (and of other Slavic minority languages) in kindergartens and schools. Slovene children will thus pass from monolingualism in Hungarian to a state of bilingualism. There are some hopes that this plan will be realized, given the concurrent destruction of the Iron Curtain and the opening up of borders, and the chance of closer communication between Porabje and Slovenia. There is however reason to doubt these hopes, in view of the trends in the social restructuring of the Slovene minority population: the Slovene community is escaping from its rural isolation by means of intensive industrialization, and its members either commute daily or move permanently to Hungarian urban centers; the opportunities and demands for the public use of Slovene are decreasing.

### **3.2.3. Udine province**

Geographic isolation and administrative separation from the central core of the Slovene lands have contributed to the preservation of Slovene in the Udine province—more in Beneška Slovenija and Rezija, and less in Kanalska dolina. The Church has played an important role in this preservation. The combination of the distance from Ljubljana and Italianization has however left linguistic and psychological scars. There is no properly-acknowledged place for Slovene in public communication (although there are signs that opportunities are occurring here). Local Slovene dialects are used in cultural and political events. Interestingly, a transition from spoken dialect to written dialect has been achieved, with the latter being used in a regional newspaper and in theatrical and literary activities. On the one hand, therefore, a basis for literate instruction in Slovene is provided; on the other, the lack of terminology in the dialect calls for the use of Standard Slovene, and consequently communication is enriched, and the frustrations of native speakers and their negative attitudes toward the Standard are being overcome. Private educational initiatives are intensive: the first such establishment in the Udine province, a private bilingual Slovene/Italian kindergarten/primary school, was founded a few years ago. Consequently—and also because of close cooperation with Slovene cultural and scientific institutions in the Gorizia and Trieste provinces—the use of Slovene in the province of Udine has at least been maintained, if not actually expanded.

## **3.3. Partial diglossia**

### **3.3.1. Gorizia and Trieste provinces**

The position of the Slovene language in the provinces of Gorizia and Trieste is different from a legal point of view; with respect to the opportunities for the public use of Slovene, however, the picture is much the same as in the Udine province. The provisions of the Special Statute (a supplement to the London Memorandum) which prescribed a special

status for Slovenes and for their language in the province of Trieste until the Osimo Treaty came into effect, were only modestly fulfilled. Slovenes in both of these provinces are trying to achieve for their language an equal place alongside Italian, i.e., beyond its use in social and political organizations and cultural, educational and sports establishments. Linguistic opportunities in administrative functions, at both regional and state levels, are few; provisions for the use of Italian in law-courts and in public offices date from the Fascist era. Public services and work-places are totally dominated by Italian, which is also reserved for most leisure activities.

One important success for the Slovenes in the provinces of Gorizia and Trieste has been the Slovene school law: in designated schools Slovene is both a curriculum subject and the language of instruction, and Italian is taught as a second language. The educational network is far from ideal: there is a particular vacuum in technical education, and the distribution of schools does not parallel demography; it offers, however, communicative competence and allows for the affirmation of Slovene in various domains, including the following, which have attracted special attention from the Slovenes:

- The mass media: besides the Slovene programs on radio and television (which are of course overwhelmed by the more numerous and very attractive Italian programs), Slovenes can obtain information in their own language from political, professional and literary newspapers, as well as following the printed and audio-visual media in Slovenia;
- Cultural and scientific collaboration: among active organizations are Slovene theatre, a musical school, a study library, research institutes in Trieste, Cividale/Čedad and Gorizia, numerous regional cultural societies and sports associations;
- Commerce: especially, in trade and in tourism. Here, the use of Slovene depends on the strength of the Slovenes' economy and on the activities of the Slovene professional associations which encourage business in Slovene. In addition, the open borders and strengthened international commercial collaboration plays an important role, forcing Italian businesses to employ Slovene-speaking workers for communicative effectiveness.

One must also mention that Slovene is attracting the interest of Italian-speakers in this region, especially because of the increasing number of mixed marriages. Enrolments of children with Italian as their first language in Slovene kindergartens and schools are expanding. This influx of Italian-speakers into Slovene-language schools is causing a dilemma for the Italian Slovenes, who still have to respond with communicative strategies.

In both the Trieste and Gorizia provinces—in spite of the variety of situations that the Slovene language finds itself in—one may say that the well-developed social structure of the Slovenes contributes to rich linguistic opportunities in the community with respect to the polyfunctional use of Slovene in public communication. We may conclude, without fear of contradiction, that the Slovene language in both provinces demonstrates the greatest vitality of all the Slovene minority situations described.

### 3.3.2. Carinthia

The position of Slovene in Austrian Carinthia is the best known to the wider professional public. According to the provisions of the State Treaty, Slovene is (with German) the official language of the administrative regions of the province with mixed Slovene/German populations. The activities of the German nationalist organization described above continues unabated, however, causing disfunction in the public use of Slovene and hindering the advancement of the Slovene language. Continued administrative manipulation has resulted in the contraction of the Slovene ethnic territory and in the diminution of the formal

domains where the use of Slovene is considered appropriate, and therefore in marked assimilative trends. The contemporary model of the educational system for the Carinthian Slovenes, which is nominally "bilingual," is overtly transitory: Slovene is the language of instruction for a limited number of subjects, only in the first three grades, and only if the parents especially register their children in the "bilingual" curriculum. It thus approximates the pre-war "utraquistic" system, and does no more than ease the transition to classes in German. Slovene-language education in the middle and high schools is available, but only within a very limited framework, e.g., in the *Slovenska gimnazija* and the Domestic Science School. Consequently, there is a lack of expertise in Slovene instruction, and the speech repertoire is unstructured; and the linguistic networks for the Slovene community are not highly elaborated. There are few radio programs (eight hours per week) and modest local television programs. The television signals from Ljubljana cannot be received by most Carinthians; hence, Standard Slovene is little heard within Slovene homes. Audio-visual communicative needs are satisfied in German, and this results in the intrusion of German methods of communication into Slovene speech.

On the other hand, more frequent contact with Slovenia and the acceleration of interdependent economic, cultural, scientific and other activities has brought about a greater awareness and has contributed to the creation of speech situations which demand that speakers rise above dialect speech and use the Standard. This causes, however, inner conflict in the Slovenes themselves, a kind of emotional tension, because many feel that the selection of Standard Slovene functional styles is a disturbance in communication, or even leads to the neglect of the significance that the Carinthian local dialects have as a uniting factor in their ethnicity.

#### 4. Conclusion

With respect to the future prospects of Slovene as a minority language we may conclude as follows. All the Slovene minority communities beyond the national borders are concerned with day-to-day efforts for maintaining their language and the number of its speakers, and enhancing its use in formal speech domains. The development of a multi-functional role for Slovene and the expansion of the Slovene community's speech repertoire—a precondition for its full realization in the area of public communications—have been hindered by a number of barriers: the undeveloped social structure of the Slovene community in some of the regions concerned; insufficient legal protection; and—as compared with the languages of the majorities—the weak social value of Slovene as a language. Moreover, insufficient institutional support (especially the non-competitiveness of Slovene in public communication, at work and in leisure activities) has, in combination with the social restructuring of the Slovene community in some regions, resulted in the rejection of the use of Slovene from specific domains.

Under these circumstances, the role of the Standard language as a uniting force has a particular significance; for bilingual members of the minority communities it not only represents a means of communication but also has an important socio-psychological dimension in its function as a means of self-identification and the achievement of prestige. It is apparent that a fully-developed communicative competence in the mother tongue and a structured speech repertoire are indispensable for the linguistic realization of bilingual speakers; otherwise, they are forced to resort to the majority language in linguistically more demanding circumstances. Members of the minority Slovene communities are aware of the significance of the standard language. The continuing regard on the part of the Slovene nation for those parts of its community living beyond its political frontiers, recently

enhanced by a rise in national self-awareness; the acceptance of ideological diversity and of democratization; and greater co-operation among the Alpe-Adria countries;—all these factors may have a beneficial effect on the future development of linguistic relations along the Slovene ethnic borders.

Pedagoški inštitut Univerze v Ljubljani  
Filozofska fakulteta Univerze v Ljubljani

## NOTES

1. That is, 26.9% of the total population of Trieste without its suburbs.
2. With one exception, viz., those Slovenes who came under Italy after the First World War but became Yugoslav citizens after 1945.
3. The Nazi census of 1938 gave 4,250 people in Austrian Styria with Slovene mother tongue.
4. For example, Gumperz (1982) reports that newcomers have to live for quite a while in a Carinthian Slovene village before they will notice the existence of a second language, other than German.
5. The dialects of the Slovene-speaking populations living beyond the Slovene borders may be classified as extensions of the following dialects that are spoken within the respective borders: the Pannonian dialect—the dialect of Prekmurje with extensions to Porabje in Hungary and to Slovene villages in Austrian Styria; the Carinthian dialect—in the three areas of Jauntal/Podjuna, Rosental/Rož and Gailtal/Ziljska dolina on Austrian territory and in the Val Canale/Kanalska dolina in Italy; and the Littoral dialects—Karst/kraški, Venetian/beneški, Natisone/nadiški and Gorizia/goriški in Italy.
6. For example, in the Alpine and Dolomite regions a different sub-dialect is spoken in virtually every large village.
7. This follows the example provided by the bilingual schools in the ethnically-mixed regions of Slovene Prekmurje, where Hungarian-speaking and Slovene-speaking children attend mixed classes and are taught in both languages.

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## POVZETEK

### SLOVENŠČINA KOT JEZIK MANJŠIN V ZAMEJSTVU: ZGODOVINSKO OZADJE IN SOCIOLINGVISTIČNE PERSPEKTIVE

*Namen članka je podati splošni pregled položaja slovenskega jezika in slovensko govorečih manjšin na slovenskem etničnem ozemlju jezikovno mešanih obmejnih področjih današnje Italije, Avstrije in Madžarske. V prvem delu članka so podane bistvene sestavine zgodovinskega razvoja slovenskih skupnosti teh treh področij, vse od stanja pred prvo svetovno vojno in s posebnim poudarkom na obdobje med 1918 in 1945. Drugi del članka je posvečen pregledu sociolingvističnega položaja v posameznih skupnostih teh področij. Najprej je opisan položaj onih delov slovenskega zamejstva, na katerih po avtorjevi sodbi prevladuje popolna diglosija, to je na avstrijskem Štajerskem, v Porabju in v videmski pokrajini v Italiji; nato pa razmere v področjih, za katera bi lahko govorili o delni diglosiji. V zadnjem delu članka govorimo o zedinjevalni funkciji knjižne slovenščine pri ohranjanju jezika slovensko govorečih manjšin v Italiji, v Avstriji in na Madžarskem.*