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VARIETIES OF SPOKEN SLOVENIAN IN AUSTRIAN CARINTHIA AND THE SPEECH PRACTICES OF YOUNG MEMBERS OF THE MINORITY

This article presents an overview of findings on the varieties of spoken Slovenian in Austrian Carinthia, focusing in particular on the changes perceived by researchers in the last two decades and on contemporary speech practices. Findings by other researchers are built upon with the results of biographical interviews conducted with seven students of Slovenian at the University of Klagenfurt. Three topics are at the forefront: the attitude toward the local dialect, the use of standard Slovenian variety, and speech accommodation in groups.

KEYWORDS: Austrian Carinthia, Slovenian, standard language variety, dialect, speech accommodation

Prispevek prinaša pregled dognanj o različicah govornje slovenščine na avstrijskem Koroškem, zlasti se osredotoča na spremembe, ki jih raziskovalci zaznavajo v zadnjih dveh desetletjih, in na sodobne govorne prakse. Ugotovitve drugih avtorjev so nadgrajene z izsledki iz biografskih intervjujev, opravljenih s sedmimi študenti slovenščine na Univerzi v Celovcu. V ospredju so tri tematike: razmerje do lokalnega narečja, raba knjižnega jezika, govorno prilagajanje v skupinah.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: avstrijska Koroška, slovenščina, knjižni jezik, narečje, govorno prilagajanje

1 INTRODUCTION

Visible changes have taken place in bilingual Austrian Carinthia in recent decades. Official statistics show a steady increase in applications for bilingual programs in primary schools (e.g., Doleschal 2009: 97), and the Slovenian ethnic community once again includes people in areas where it previously barely had any declared members (e.g., in Klagenfurt and Villach). This is partly due to the migration of members

of the minority within the province of Carinthia (Steinicke 2001: 255) and partly due to a more open affiliation with the Slovenian ethnic community. The changes are certainly also related to improvement of the minority's educational structure, which exceeds the national average (an important role is played by the Slovenian high school and other educational institutions at the secondary and tertiary levels), and to the strengthening of its cultural and economic capital (Zupančič 2007: 143, 146).

However, researchers also point out that the number of native speakers of Slovenian, especially speakers of Slovenian dialects, is nevertheless declining (for numerical data and estimates, see Zupančič 2007; Steinicke 2001). At most, there is an increase in the number of individuals that become acquainted with Slovenian for various reasons later (in primary school or in language courses), but often this is limited and only involves the standard variety. Interest in Slovenian increased when Slovenian became a national language with Slovenia's independence in 1991 (and with the simultaneous collapse of communism), and even more so after Slovenia joined the European Union (Busch 2010: 179). Many people in Austrian Carinthia learn Slovenian not because it is the language of a minority there, but because it is economically or culturally interesting to them, and they view it as the language of a neighbouring country (Doleschal 2009: 98). Still others are aware of the language's presence in Carinthia and learn it as a second language of the province; some socialize their children in it to revive a family tradition (Busch 2008: 58). Among the reasons for increased interest in learning Slovenian and enrolling children in bilingual programs are also more recent motivations associated with a strong appreciation of the ethnic dimension of regional identity (Steinicke 2001: 255) and multilingualism (Kern 2009: 79).

In addition to the general research findings, insight into (linguistic) life and experiencing changes at the individual level is also important. Many recent works are based on the personal accounts of members of the minority as well as other Slovenian speakers in this area (e.g., Vavti 2012; Busch 2008). Their testimonies reveal the great complexity of today's sociolinguistic situation, which is often conditioned by the traumas of previous generations (Vavti 2012: 98; Piko - Rustia 2019: 122); at the same time, some shared features of especially younger

interviewees, who often engage in bilingualism with less of a burden, are presented (Prilasnig 2013: 88). An effective method is “linguistic biography” which covers different life stages of respondents (e.g., childhood, professional activity, and creating a family) and is a form of report on an individual’s life in a certain social environment with a thematic emphasis on linguistic aspects (Wildgen 2003: 203). This article presents some findings from biographical interviews with seven respondents conducted in February 2020.¹ These are students (four female and three male) in the University of Klagenfurt’s teacher education program for Slovenian, all members of the Slovenian minority (hereinafter referred to as R1 to R7, regardless of sex). This group was addressed for two reasons. First, they had chosen an academic program in which they can develop their Slovenian language skills to the highest level possible in their regional environment. Second, in the interviews I was mainly interested in the varieties of Slovenian that they spoke (or still speak),² and for this group I could reasonably assume that they possessed the necessary metalinguistic knowledge for such a conversation. Below, I present three topics that were at the forefront in all the interviews: the attitude toward the local dialect, the use of standard Slovenian at the individual and community levels, and speech accommodation in groups.

¹ The interviews were completed as part of my three-month study stay at the University of Klagenfurt’s Slavic Studies Institute. They are between 35 and 60 minutes long, and the recordings are kept in my personal archive.

² When the students agreed to speak to me, I sent them the following text in advance (which turned out to be good because they were able to think things through in advance, and some even discussed them with their parents at home): “All individuals are involved in constantly changing daily or long-term situations to which they also accommodate verbally. Our language behavior is always determined by our earliest familiarization with a language (or languages) as well as all later socialization. I am interested in your language path: through a conversation I would like to find out how your spoken Slovenian has changed and been accommodated from the earliest years onwards. I am especially interested in what happened at different turning points in your lives: when you entered preschool and/or primary school and all subsequent new environments (including outside school: perhaps in a social club, music school, sports, etc.). I am also interested in how you accommodate your speech today; for example, when you talk to your family, when you hang out with friends or peers, when you talk to professors, when you speak (or if you speak) in public, and so on.”

2 DIALECT AS A NATIVE LANGUAGE – OR NOT

Lundberg (2015) found that speakers of Carinthian Slovenian dialects³ in Austria have a very positive attitude toward these dialects and perceive them as an important element of their own identity,⁴ but more than half of his respondents were convinced that younger generations no longer speak predominantly in Slovenian. Priestly (2003: 110) argues that the language attitude toward Slovenian is developing more positively than in previous times, especially among younger members of the ethnic community; however, a process of levelling specifically dialect features toward a regional or even standard variety,⁵ common across Europe, is apparently also taking place in Austrian Carinthia (Lundberg 2010: 45). The linguistic character of the region is changing under the influence of various processes, including migration within the region (in recent decades, especially from rural to urban and suburban areas), socioeconomic and educational changes within the minority, immigration, and commuting by Slovenians from Slovenia, as well as the emergence of “Slovenian with an accent” (Busch 2008), which is spoken by immigrants from other former Yugoslav republics.

Researchers have found that especially highly educated parents in younger families or in a more urban environment no longer speak with their children in dialect, but in a form of Slovenian that is close to the standard language (Reiterer et al. 2000: 15; Busch 2008: 62). Vavti (2012: 99, 106) writes that such young people understand the lack of dialect as a loss and a deficit, or even a barrier to contact with others or affiliate with a community. Among my respondents, two were initially linguistically socialized in such a variety of Slovenian for various reasons. R6 says that his parents were afraid that he would not learn “real” Slovenian, and so they only spoke to him in standard Slovenian

³ These are three dialects corresponding to three Carinthian valleys: Jaun, Ros, and Gail (in Slovenian: Podjuna, Rož and Zilja). The dialect diversity is in fact even greater because all three of these dialects are further divided into many local varieties.

⁴ The fact that dialect is really at the centre of Carinthian Slovenian identity is shown by a statement by an employee of Radio Agora, who said that some members of the minority do not like producing material only in standard Slovenian because for them “the dialect is the native and true language” (Lengar Verovnik 2020: 47). Similarly, Busch (2008: 60) reports that the motif of the dialect as “real” Slovenian, which distinguishes “real” Slovenians from others, also comes up repeatedly in her interviews.

⁵ For more on the categorization of varieties of Slovenian speech see Lundberg (2010: 43–45).

at home (in an urban environment). However, other relatives (in the countryside) spoke to him in dialect, and so over time he learned their dialect himself and no longer replied to them in standard Slovenian. This early experience obviously also served him well later because he learned another dialect, spoken by his best friend and those he hung out with the most in primary school. R1 also relates that she had classmates that came from Klagenfurt and did not speak a dialect at home,⁶ but apparently accommodated to dialect speakers and learned some of it themselves. The story of R5 is different because she learned Slovenian in early childhood from her grandmother, who came from Upper Carniola in Slovenia and married a Carinthian. She spoke to her in “beautiful”⁷ Slovenian, not in dialect. Her grandmother babysat her until she entered preschool, and it was only there that she encountered the local dialect and started learning it (although at home they apparently did not like hearing her speak even a word in dialect). The fact that she still visits friends in the local environment and tries to speak in their dialect shows how important it was for her to also learn this variety. She is still learning it, and her friends are in favour of this. Sometimes they correct her and tell her how to say something in their dialect.

Another dialect is difficult to learn later in life, according to R3; he knows someone that speaks two dialects and switches between them like switching between two languages, but this is because his mother is from the Jaun (Podjuna) Valley and his father is from the Ros (Rož) Valley. A similar albeit slightly less pronounced “dialect bilingualism” is reported by R1 and R4; both have parents from different parts of Carinthia, and one also moved during childhood. For R1, this experience probably provided early insight into the diversity of varieties of spoken Slovenian, as illustrated by the following anecdote. Her mother told her that once she came back from preschool where she had been speaking standard Slovenian with the teachers, and she also started speaking to her mother in standard Slovenian. Suddenly, however, she stopped and said, “Wait, you don’t understand me,” and continued in

⁶In addition to the fact that her classmates’ parents probably spoke standard Slovenian with them, R1 also points out that in Klagenfurt it is not possible to hear indigenous Slovenian dialects because the city lies beyond the borders of the Slovenian dialects. Nevertheless, it is an important cultural, media, educational, economic, and political center for the Slovenian minority.

⁷“Beautiful” in this context really means “proper”, “standard”.

dialect – she realized that this was a different linguistic code that she had never heard from her mother, and that she did not know from her environment or from the media (the media are mostly German; there is only one weekly television show in Slovenian, and the all-day radio program in Slovenian was only launched in 2011).

In the accounts of all the respondents, dialect as the language of their primary or at least very early socialization is seen to be a strong identifying and emotional factor. The story of R2 confirms the conclusion that dialect has a limited scope of use and that “the existence of a standard variety and a more or less uniform standard speech is crucial for the preservation of the minority language” (Bogataj 2008: 209). R2 comes from a family in which they spoke their Slovenian dialect a lot and sang in it, and she mainly learned German from children that vacationed in the village. However, in primary school she was the only child taking extra Slovenian lessons, and she remembers that she and her teacher only read sports news most of the time. Her Slovenian did not progress as well as her German; she had lexical deficiencies because she did not have certain words in her dialect. Consequently, at age fifteen she found herself in a difficult situation and, after some deliberation, decided on her own to think about “hard things” in German. This is still her main language today. It is only while studying Slovenian that she gradually manages to think again about more complex topics in Slovenian, especially during creative writing.

At this point, it should be mentioned what seems crucial to her story. Namely, R2 also relates negative experiences in her youth, which were not directly connected with her dialect, but with the presence of the Slovenian language as such. Personal experiences repeatedly let her know that Slovenian was not desired; this included insults, such as being called *Tschuschenkind* ‘southern brat’,⁸ and hatred for Slovenian people that she felt at the primary school in a nearby larger town. R6 and R7 also report similar negative experiences. R6 experienced them at sports matches, when the fans shouted insults at the Slovenian team; they were also hassled by a referee that wanted to ban the use of Slovenian during the match. R7 recalls opposition from villagers and problems that his parents encountered when they demanded bilingual

⁸ According to Wikipedia, *Tschusch* [tʃuːʃ] is a derogatory term for a member of any of the peoples of southeast Europe or the Middle East. A *Tschuschenkind* is therefore the child of such a person.

classes for him at a school that had not had bilingual students for thirty years. However, these experiences did not impact these two respondents as strongly as R2. The monolingualism or bilingualism of one's parents does not seem to be decisive either because R5, for example, speaks a German dialect all the time with her mother, who is not a member of the Slovenian minority, but she says that she finds German more difficult, and that even when she considers how to say something in (standard) German she thinks about it first in Slovenian. It is thus confirmed that (un)confident use of Slovenian in this area is influenced by a mix of "causes and effects of psychological, sociological, and linguistic factors at the individual and social levels" (Zorčič 2019: 527), which I could not gain insight into through interviews alone.

3 THE STANDARD LANGUAGE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The respondents encountered standard Slovenian or a variety very close to it either at home (R5 and R6) or at least from preschool or primary school onward. Regarding preschool, some also report that the teachers spoke more in dialect, but from primary school onward they consistently say that the teachers spoke to them mainly in standard Slovenian. Only R5, who speaks standard Slovenian herself, noticed in high school that the teachers occasionally switched into the Jaun (Podjuna) dialect, which was also spoken by most of her Carinthian classmates. This bothered her because she did not understand this dialect as well and she thought to herself that the teachers should make a better effort. Regarding themselves, the respondents say that before going to college they mainly used standard Slovenian in school communication with teachers and in public performances they might have had (and also in social clubs; e.g., in theatre groups). R6 says that they also relied on this language variety when talking to classmates that came from Slovenia (there are many of these, especially at the secondary level). I did not check with the respondents what exactly they understand by the term *standard language*, nor did I ask them about how well they felt they knew this variety before starting college. Very informative is the testimony by R4, who lived in Ljubljana for some time after high school and, when he arrived there, he found that it was very difficult for others to understand him, even though he was convinced that he spoke in standard Slovenian. It was only there that he noticed how much vocabulary he was lacking. When he could not

find a word, he would simply say it in German, but did not realize this at all until others pointed it out to him. Code-switching into German is an automatic strategy in a bilingual environment; the respondents themselves say they usually do not think about it at all, and that they mainly use it due to the pragmatic circumstances of communication.

After examining written texts related to minority education in Slovenian, Piriš Svetina (2013) concluded that writers use a variety of standard Slovenian in them that is established in this environment and that differs in many respects from what is used in central Slovenia. Her thesis is that users are not and cannot be relaxed or confident when faced with the central Slovenian standard, and so there are other standard language varieties on the margins of Slovenian ethnic territory that should be investigated and recognized as equally valid. The specific features of standard Slovenian in Carinthia were already discussed by Anton Schellander (1988: 265), who pointed out that the issue of formal speech in particular should not be resolved “by arbitrarily moving the formal norm toward the dialect of the central region, which only part of the Slovenian speakers adhere to.” For the Carinthian area, he describes a special Carinthian standard spoken variety that was developed or preserved among the “alternative public” within minority societies, churches, and institutions. It is said to differ mainly in terms of its vowels and accentuation, and lexically and morphologically it is based on standard elements that are considered obsolete in central Slovenia today. Tanja Schellander (2018: 43) explains the use of obsolete words in modern Carinthian print media by “remoteness from the modern Slovenian language in Slovenia, which often adds new words to its vocabulary that do not make their way into the language of Slovenian media in Carinthia and thus not into the everyday language of the Carinthian Slovenians.”

Busch (2008: 62) reports that the existence of a Carinthian variety of standard Slovenian was confirmed to her by a long-term Slovenian instructor at the University of Klagenfurt. In a conversation she had with her, the instructor “listed a number of special Carinthian features that she does not correct in language courses to conform to the norm of the central Slovenian area. These include deviations in pronunciation, prosody, vocabulary, and syntax”. Among the respondents, only R4 mentioned an example of such a special feature; namely, the verb *čuti* ‘to hear’, which has the unmarked synonym *slišati* in the modern

central standard. Otherwise, everyone answered the explicit question about a possible difference in the Carinthian standard language in a similar way. On the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF) radio program, which is created by members of the minority, they notice that not exactly the same standard language is spoken as can be heard on the radio in Slovenia. They perceive differences mainly at the level of pronunciation, stress, and intonation; it is similar to how Austrian German sounds different from German German, R3 explains. According to R5, the speakers simply cannot hide they are from Carinthia, but, according to R6, the differences are not extreme. In this, he draws on his own early experience and says that the differences are certainly smaller than those between the standard variety and dialects, as he felt them as a child when he was initially linguistically socialized into a standard language variety. There is still no qualitative research to show the alleged special features of written and spoken material or to even confirm the existence of a Carinthian standard language variety.

4 IS THERE ALSO A REGIONAL COLLOQUIAL VARIETY?

Ever since the 1980s, there have been occasional suggestions in the literature about a regional colloquial variety of Slovenian in Austrian Carinthia. Domej (1980: 102) wrote about its absence, which he saw as a shortcoming because "for many centuries German encroached upon communication spaces reserved for non-dialect varieties, thus disturbing the balanced development of Slovenian language varieties." In contrast, Anton Schellander (1984: 261) argued that the mode of communication that moves between standard and dialect is becoming "increasingly current and used by increasingly more speakers, even though everyone in a concrete conversation somehow realizes it in his own way based on his own idiolect. It could be concluded that this is a process of the organic formation of the Carinthian colloquial language." The author defined indigenous Carinthian Slovenian elements, the influence of the standard language, and the phenomenon of inter-dialectal equalization as the factors that shape this regional variety. Busch (2008: 61) writes that the slow emergence of this colloquial variety became more dynamic only in the new millennium; her interviewees reported that it replaces local dialects in some colloquial situations, and she herself perceived it in Radio Agora's contact broadcasts in its first years of broadcasting (before the media decided on a different

language policy; namely, consistent standard language). The author connects the appearance of a regional colloquial variety with the gradual abandonment of the sharp polarization between dialects and the standard language, which has its roots in political factors: Slovenians loyal to their homeland (Austria) identified only with the dialect, whereas “nationally oriented” Slovenians also identified with the standard language. This is said to be the cause of

great uncertainty as to which variety of Slovenian each conversational partner will consider appropriate in a given situation, so that speakers often switched to German. [...] There was a fairly widespread rule that you did not speak Slovenian at all with people you did not know because of a certain fear of revealing how well or how poorly you knew Slovenian (Busch 2008: 60).

The respondents only indirectly confirm the existence of a common colloquial variety of Slovenian. R7 says that regional Slovenian is at most a matter of smaller groups of individuals that mutually form such a code. The stories of others also show that this is true, and that this kind of practice is not uncommon, but it is conditioned by language skills that go beyond the local dialect, as well as a willingness for speech accommodation and additional language learning. All the respondents came into more pronounced contact with other dialects in middle school. Their primary schools mostly had classmates that spoke the same dialect; if they had classmates that spoke other dialects or were just learning Slovenian, German usually predominated among all of them. The same was true in middle school, but R1, for example, says that the longer they were together, the more they spoke Slovenian. This happened when they got used to other dialects and had at least somewhat learned them themselves – or, as she says, they simplified their language a little or accommodated their own dialect to others. In the college-preparatory high school or business high school (respondents had attended one or the other) they were also joined by classmates from Slovenia; they accommodated to them by speaking more standard Slovenian because the newcomers did not yet know German well enough. German is often a common code even at the high school level, but its use is not the rule. Perenič (2006: 53) writes that without exception her Slovenian high school respondents spoke German to each other during breaks when they were not talking to classmates from the same dialect group. According to her, German fills a gap that a regional colloquial language otherwise would (she denies its existence). However, among my respondents, only R5 and

partly R2 confirmed such a practice, and I present the practices of others below.

The most common hypothesis for why Carinthian Slovenians from different dialect groups choose German in conversation is that the differences between these dialects are too great to be able to communicate in them without difficulty. However, this is clearly not the only reason or necessarily a valid one. R4, for example, says that he had some friends in high school with whom he exclusively spoke Slovenian and others with whom he exclusively spoke German – even though they all knew Slovenian, and he already knew the two most common dialects from his home (the Jaun (Podjuna) and Ros (Rož) dialects). He says that this was a matter of habit, and decisions about languages were always spontaneous and automatic. Most respondents also report that the longer they were at the college-preparatory high school or business high school, the more they used Slovenian; Kern (2009) reached the same conclusions. In part, the impact of the school's development of general language skills in Slovenian can be felt, and in part it also takes time for students to get to know each other linguistically and accommodate. R7 reports that this was a process: from the start, they were unfamiliar with the forms of Slovenian brought by classmates from other parts of Carinthia. Suddenly, however, they developed a kind of colloquial language of their own (he even reports the characteristics of slang and their own expressions), which they realized only by looking back when they found that they were suddenly speaking differently than they had at the beginning.

Today, all the respondents are open to dialect varieties of Slovenian – not only Carinthian, but also those from Slovenia. They get to know them either in the Slovenian student club or in local associations that also include immigrants from Slovenia. R1 and R4 say that they always accommodate to those that join the conversation – they either speak closer to their dialect (if they are Carinthians) or use the standard variety (if they are from Slovenia). R2 feels that she would now be able to learn any Carinthian dialect if she moved to another environment, and when R6 switched to a different sports club he actually learned the new dialect enough to now communicate easily with his teammates. R3 also overcame her initial uncertainty and in conversations with speakers of other dialects she tries to stay in her dialect, or to switch to the standard variety only for individual words. She says that it is

always possible to somehow communicate and that there is no need to switch to German if a person just listens carefully. The fact that the decisive factor in this is age or language skills is confirmed by R7, who says that over time a person gets used to the speech, rhythm, and vocabulary of other Carinthian dialects and understands them. The hypothesis is thus confirmed that the regional colloquial variety, as far as one can talk about it, is closer to an idiolect than a community code, which Anton Schellander (1984) only attributed to an earlier stage of the development of this variety.

5 CONCLUSION

In the interviews, the young respondents offered at least brief insight into the development of their communication skills in Slovenian and their past and current speech repertoires, and especially in their ability to accommodate their speech to interlocutors with different Slovenian varieties. It was confirmed that a person's dialect is still a very strong identifying and emotional factor, even among young members of the minority. Two respondents that knew only the standard language variety from home learned the dialects later, especially from their peers. This enabled them to avoid a barrier between themselves and others, which is reported elsewhere in the literature by some speakers that were not primarily linguistically socialized into a dialect. The talks confirmed the hypothesis about the special features of the Carinthian standard variety, as it is known to the respondents especially from the minority media. They observe differences at the phonetic level and to some extent in the lexicon, but they do not consider them large. Empirical verification of the hypothesis on a sufficient corpus of written and spoken texts would certainly be necessary to determine which specific features at which levels are characteristic of a possible Carinthian variety of standard Slovenian, and which errors should be eliminated by schooling at all levels of education. The respondents did not directly confirm the existence of a common regional colloquial variety, which some authors write about. However, at the secondary education level at the latest everyone developed the ability to accommodate to speakers of other Carinthian dialects, which was conditioned by their otherwise increasingly developed language ability in Slovenian. Today, when talking to speakers of a different dialect, they generally do not switch to German. This at least partially calls into question the

otherwise widely accepted idea about enormous differences between the Carinthian dialects as the reason for switching to German when speakers come from different dialect groups. I am aware that the sample is too small for any generalizations, but the purpose of the biographical interviews conducted was primarily to illustrate the linguistic practices of young speakers in this sociolinguistically complex area. As students of Slovenian, all the respondents are highly linguistically competent, and so it would be interesting to conduct similar interviews among different populations of young Carinthian Slovenians.

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SUMMARY

VARIETIES OF SPOKEN SLOVENIAN IN AUSTRIAN CARINTHIA AND THE SPEECH PRACTICES OF YOUNG MEMBERS OF THE MINORITY

In bilingual Austrian Carinthia, visible changes have taken place in recent decades; for example, applications for bilingual programs have increased, and the Slovenian ethnic community includes residents in areas where it previously did not have any declared members. On the other hand, the number of individuals primarily linguistically socialized in the dialect is decreasing, and new varieties of spoken Slovenian are appearing (e.g., the Slovenian of immigrants from other former Yugoslav republics and the Slovenian of immigrants from Slovenia, as well as the Slovenian of German speakers learning

Slovenian at school and in language courses). In addition to general research findings, insight into (linguistic) life and experiencing changes at the individual level is also important. This article presents the results of biographical interviews conducted with seven students of Slovenian at the University of Klagenfurt. Three topics are at the forefront: the attitude toward the local dialect, the use of standard Slovenian variety, and speech accommodation in groups. At the dialect level, the linguistic character of Carinthia is changing under the influence of various processes, including migration within the region, socioeconomic and educational changes within the minority, and immigration from Slovenia. There are increasingly more families in which parents with children consciously use the standard language variety. Research and interviews confirm that a person's dialect also appears to be a strong identifying and emotional factor among young members of the minority. Two respondents, who knew only the standard language variety from home, learned the dialects later, especially from their peers. This enabled them to overcome a possible barrier between themselves and others, which is reported by some speakers that were not primarily linguistically socialized into a dialect. Other respondents encountered standard Slovenian in preschool or school, and today they personally rely on it, especially in conversations with speakers of more distant Carinthian or Slovenian dialects. In the interviews, they confirmed the hypothesis about the special features of the Carinthian standard variety, as they know it especially from the minority media. They observe differences at the phonetic level and to some extent in the lexicon, but they do not consider them large. The respondents did not directly confirm the existence of a common regional colloquial variety. However, during secondary education at the latest, they developed the ability to accommodate to speakers of other Carinthian dialects, which is conditioned by their more developed language ability in Slovenian. Today, when talking to speakers of a different dialect, they generally do not switch to German.

RAZLIČICE GOVORJENE SLOVENŠČINE NA AVSTRIJSKEM KOROŠKEM IN GOVORNE PRAKSE MLADIH PRIPADNIKOV MANJŠINE

V prostoru dvojezične avstrijske Koroške se zadnja desetletja odvijajo pomembne in vidne spremembe, npr. rast prijav k dvojezičnemu pouku, k slovenski narodni skupnosti se prištevajo prebivalci na območjih, kjer jih prej ni bilo. Po drugi strani pa se manjša število posameznikov, primarno jezikovno socializiranih v narečje, pojavljajo se nove različice govorne slovenščine (npr. slovenščina priseljencev iz nekdanjih jugoslovanskih republik in slovenščina priseljencev iz Slovenije; slovenščina nemško govorečih posameznikov, ki se slovenščine učijo v šoli in na tečajih). Ob splošnih ugotovitvah raziskav je pomemben tudi vpogled v (jezikovno) življenje in doživljanje sprememb na ravni posameznikov. V prispevku so predstavljeni izsledki iz biografskih intervjujev, opravljenih s sedmimi študenti slovenščine na Univerzi v Celovcu. V ospredju so tri tematike: razmerje do lokalnega narečja, raba knjižnega jezika na individualni in skupnostni ravni, govorno prilagajanje v skupinah. Na ravni narečja se jezikovna podoba Koroške spreminja pod vplivom različnih procesov, med drugim zaradi migracij znotraj regije, družbeno-ekonomskih in izobrazbenih sprememb znotraj manjšine, priseljevanja iz Slovenije. Vedno več je družin, v katerih starši z otroki zavestno uporabljajo knjižno različico. Raziskave in intervjuji potrjujejo,

da se narečje tudi pri mladih pripadnikih manjšine kaže kot močan identifikacijski in čustveni dejavnik. Respondenta, ki sta od doma znala zgolj knjižno različico, sta se narečja priučila kasneje, zlasti od vrstnikov. To jima je omogočilo, da med njimi ni bilo bariere, o kateri sicer poročajo nekateri govorce, ki niso bili primarno jezikovno socializirani v narečje. Drugi respondenti so se s knjižno različico srečali v vrtcu ali šoli, danes se nanjo zasebno opirajo zlasti v pogovorih z govorce bolj oddaljenih koroških ali slovenskih narečij. V intervjujih so potrdili tezo o posebnostih koroške standardne različice, kot jo poznajo zlasti iz manjšinskih medijev. Razlike opažajo na fonetični in delno besedni ravni, a se jim ne zdijo velike. Obstoja skupne regionalne pogovorne različice respondenti niso potrdili. Vendar pa so najkasneje na stopnji sekundarnega izobraževanja razvili sposobnost prilagajanja govorcem drugih koroških narečij, ki je pogojena z njihovo tudi sicer bolj razvito jezikovno zmožnostjo v slovenščini. Danes ob pogovarjanju z govorce, ki govorijo drugo narečje, praviloma ne preklapljajo v nemščino.