

ZAKAJ, ZAKOJ, WARUM, OR WHY? MULTILINGUALISM IN AUSTRIAN CARINTHIAN POPULAR MUSIC

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V prispevku je obravnavano vprašanje jezikovne izbire v popularni glasbi slovenske manjšine na avstrijskem Koroškem. Opazovanje večjezičnosti ali izbire jezika je v manjšinskih kontekstih večplastno in zahteva razumevanje vpetosti obravnavanih pojavov v prostor, zgodovino, politike, razmerja moči, kolektivno zavest, ravni socializacije in osebne izkušnje.

Ključne besede: Avstrijska Koroška, popularna glasba, izbira jezika, manjšina

The article deals with the issue of linguistic choice in the popular music of the Slovenian minority in Austrian Carinthia. The observation of multilingualism or language choice in minority contexts is multifaceted; it demonstrates the need to understand the embeddedness of these phenomena within space, history, politics, power relations, collective consciousness, levels of socialization, and personal experience.

Keywords: Austrian Carinthia, popular music, language choice, minority

The research described in the article focuses on the Carinthia region (Ger. Kärnten) in Austria,¹ which borders Slovenia and Italy; therefore, the discussed area is, in effect, borderland and the home to the Slovenian minority in Austria. The cultural, social, and political life and activity of the Slovenian minority in Austrian Carinthia intertwine with the Austrian and Slovenian conceptual and physical spaces, within which the minority repeatedly defines and positions itself.² The cultural, social, and other dynamics connected to the area cannot be examined only through the territorial perspective – or those of national and political borders. Contemporary research approaches, such as the borderscape concept, point out that “institutional, cultural and economic activities in sensitive border areas can produce viable alternative territorial imaginaries,” as they take into account “the plurality of interactions that cross and redefine [those borders] every day” (Ambrosino, 2021: 6). However, they do not ignore the role of state borders; they merely underscore the need for these borders to be observed through immaterial dimensions. In this way, the research can show “the inconsistency between everyday practices and schematic social relations [...] that [occur] on a situational level [...] as they do] not necessarily follow the logic of hegemonic discourses of ethnicity or political nation-building” (Pisk, 2020: 81).³ The ‘(cross)bordering’

¹ Slovenian language defines this area as *avstrijska Koroška* (Austrian Carinthia), as *Koroška* is also the area in Slovenia that now borders its Austrian counterpart. The names and geographical position both indicate their historical connections.

² This was a single administrative-political region until 1918.

³ Some research and events that were part of the project *Pesemski odsevi medkulturnega bivanja* (Sung Reflections of Intercultural Existence) show that multilingual folk songs, very much present in folk music practices, did not reflect in the official national discourse of the countries involved. The discourse

in the border area can also be discussed from the perspective of the use of languages in cultural practices, including popular music.

In this article, I examine popular music production in Austrian Carinthia and connect it with the social and cultural participation of youth, which is also affected by the historical events taking place in the border areas in recent decades. However, popular music is a broad and difficult-to-define concept; in Austrian Carinthia, it could also include folk-pop music. Therefore, I focused on those genre expressions that primarily address the youth population and those that present a diverse use of language. In the first part of the article, I briefly outline, based on scientific sources, the social and linguistic participation of minority youth. This participation consequently also affects the young in popular music spaces, which in some cases represents an identification refuge to the Slovenian minority.

The central part of the article draws on the research done between 2019 and 2022, examining popular music activities of the Slovenian minority in Austrian Carinthia. I focused on popular music musicians who express themselves in different languages: in standard language (either German, Slovenian or English) or in Slovenian Carinthian dialects. Analysis of sound and video recordings, lyrics, and interviews with musicians was used to understand when, in what way, and why they decided to use a specific language or dialect. Consequently, on the one hand, examined are language choices in the field of popular music as a distinctly global phenomenon, whose choice of language can often be attributed to economic interests; while on the other addressing specific answers to the question of choice of language that can be provided by popular music research in the context of a minority, considering historical, social and political circumstances (co)determining the position of the minority in the region.

At this point, the research position that has provided the research results should be stated: I sourced the historical, political, social, and cultural interpretations from presentations of the Slovenian-speaking community in Austrian Carinthia, both written and oral. It is also worth noting that the policies of memory that form the discourse of cohabitation of Slovenian and German-speaking⁴ communities in Austrian Carinthia are twofold and affect all people in the area.⁵

included researchers whose preferences in collecting material affected the image of “the repertoire of authorized songs of a particular community” (Pisk, 2020: 88). Only the research of the living folklore traditions of the people in the area discovered other levels of a boundless intertwining of places and lives with language and music.

⁴ The designation of “German-speaking community” refers to the part of the population that speaks German language exclusively. The Slovenian-speaking community is bilingual.

⁵ Maruša Pušnik presents lived experiences between two opposing museum interpretations of the same event, while the people there are forced to “constitute their identity in relation to both national memories, and both perceptions of the past” (Pušnik, 2008: 49–61). This twofold policy of memory, or the predominance of one political and historical discourse over the other, can be also seen in commemoration celebrations, monuments and commemorative plaques, street names, and in the fight for the “occupation of public space” (Peball, Schönberger, 2021: 72).

HISTORY, LANGUAGE, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH

The historical intertwining of Slovenian and German cultural space(s) has been strongly affected by the relations between the Slovenian and German-speaking communities in Austrian Carinthia. On the one hand process of Germanization, on the other the efforts of the Slovenian minority to have their minority rights acknowledged, which placed the fight for language rights to the forefront along with the struggle for the recognition of historical injustice and the eradication of discrimination, have led to numerous conflicts which can still be felt on the every-day level and the political level. As a result, all questions on bilingualism in this area present the basis for understanding the social, political, and historical circumstances that shaped past and present dynamics among the people in the area. The question of bilingualism is a highly exposed polygon for numerous conflicts, which even today reveal the intolerance between people, the dangers of nationalism, right-wing populism, and the general social, economic, legal, and political inequalities among the local inhabitants. Although the article does not go into a detailed explanation of these issues, it is essential to note that the history of ethnic tensions in this area, which have been most exposed in the last century, expresses itself as a collective trauma, in turn being transferred to younger generations, although they have no direct experience with some of the problems (Wutti, 2013). My discussions with some musicians on their musical creativity confirmed this.

In the recent past, the political situation following the year 1991 (linked to the dissolution of Yugoslavia and Slovenian independence), and also from 2004 on (related to the accession of Slovenia to the European Union) have led to changes in political, social, cultural and economic relations between Slovenia and Austria on the formal level. Indirectly, it also affected the attitudes of the German-speaking community toward the Slovenian-speaking community in Carinthia.⁶ After a long decline in the use of the Slovenian language among the Slovenian minority, the status of the Slovenian language improved to an extent.⁷ It is

⁶ Initiatives to create a common regional borderless area called Alpe Adria have emerged at different levels – economic, scholastic, and cultural. These most often include Slovenia, Croatia, Austrian Carinthia, Upper Austria and Austrian Styria as well as the Italian region of Friuli Venezia Giulia (Ambrosino, 2021: 37).

⁷ I would like to thank Martina Piko-Rustia from the Urban Jarnik Slovenian Ethnographic Institute (www.ethno.at) for the additional explanation, including the fact that the interest in Slovenian language learning has been on the increase in the last decades also among the German-speaking population in the bilingual area of Austrian Carinthia. A compromise has also been achieved on the issue of bilingual topography; the municipalities have the option of putting up additional bilingual traffic road signs. There are still issues concerning the official languages since not everyone has access to bilingual legal services. Since the 1970s, positive developments have also been seen in the Catholic church. A Synod document has been approved in Austrian Carinthia called *Sožitje Nemcev in Slovencev v koroški Cerkvi* (Cohabitation of Germans and Slovenians in the Carinthian Church) (Kirche, 1972: 554–566). The dialogue between the two communities has also improved since 2000, when Carinthian

worth mentioning that bilingualism, although protected by the Austrian constitution, cannot be taken for granted and has often required considerable effort and struggle from the Slovenian minority to secure the respect of language (and other minority) rights in the area.⁸ Understanding the issue is essential, as the generation taking part in this research is mostly aware of the latest but also some of the more distant history of the fight for minority rights in Austrian Carinthia. Still, the newest research (Obid, 2018; Jagodic, 2018; Piko-Rustia, 2016; Vavti, 2012, 2015) show that nowadays young people in Carinthia are less sensitive to social and political inequalities and less burdened by the traumatic experience of their parents and grandparents. They perceive the issue of minorities differently; for the most part, it does not affect their self-worth negatively.⁹ Some musicians mentioned that their parents had tried to shelter them from their disenfranchised position as a minority in their childhood, and so they had not been aware of it in their day-to-day life as children.

In her book, the findings of Štefka Vavti based on comparative research of Slovenian youth in Austrian Carinthia show that the decline of young people active in traditional political and cultural societies is the result of the fact that today's youth are more interested in broader global socio-political issues; such as ecology, war, and racism. On the other hand, values like family and friends have emerged at the forefront. The Slovenian minority youth population also has different reasons for their lack of activity in these societies, e.g., they do not find their content attractive, the monopoly of the older generation over decision-making, their emigration, being overwhelmed by schoolwork or jobs or trying to settle down and have a family. Their social and political level of engagement is often linked to the family's socialization since children of socially, culturally, and politically engaged parents are more often active in a way similar to their parents' (Vavti, 2015: 97, 98).

Milan Obid, the editor of the book *Identitetne opredelitve mladih v slovenskem zamejstvu* (Identity Identifications of Youth in Slovenians Abroad), finds that "in the modern society with its numerous worlds and alternatives on offer to create meaning, the fact that ethnic identification retains its importance for the minority members cannot be taken for granted" (Obid, 2018: 40). They are much more susceptible to integration and assimilation into

Slovenian Jože Marketz was appointed the Bishop of the Krško Diocese. Some important societies of Slovenians in Carinthia are also: *Narodni svet koroških Slovencev* (www.nsk.slo.at); *Zveza slovenskih organizacij* (www.zso.slo.at); *Skupnost koroških Slovencev in Slovenk* (www.skupnost.at); *Krščanska kulturna zveza* (www.kkz.at) and *Zveza slovenskih organizacij* (www.spz.slo.at).

⁸ For example, as late as in the 1970s, the Slovenian minority experienced a painful continuous loss of minority rights, such as the removal of bilingual signs (the so-called *Ortstafelstrum*) and the census of the minority population (so-called "specific census", see Klemenčič, Klemenčič, 2006).

⁹ Some socio-political agents warn that this leads to apathy in the social-political life, as contentment with certain improvements in the minority rights assurance may mean giving up all other minority rights provided in the Austrian State Treaty. They also believe that people are afraid to "prod" the Austrian nationalistic political currents, which, if they gain political strength, could take away the achieved rights. Such fears are rightfully based on the experience with the Governor of Carinthia, Jörg Haider (Peball, Schönberger, 2021: 71).

Austrian economic, cultural, political, and daily life. Therefore, for many the ‘notion of the national’ is not implicit but transferred. Vavti’s research, based on the latest theories of identification, also points to a distinct ambivalence, duality, and multi-layered, cosmopolitan, and symbolic nature of identifications among youth in Austrian Carinthia. Similarly, the choice of language in popular music, or music listened to or performed by the youth, cannot be conceived exclusively through the lens of ethnic identifications, which can further be seen from the results of this research.

Participating in specific cultural practices within the societies of the Slovenian minority is often a reflection of the need to be part of the cultural and social life that is most accessible in space and time¹⁰. Still, various affiliation systems (including ethnic identification) or common worldviews can consequently develop within these communities, such as in chess clubs, choirs, or student clubs. Research also shows that social continuity is an essential element of affiliation processes:

In Slovenian minority areas in Austria and Italy, where the national communities are relatively well organized compared to the situation in Croatia and Hungary, we have heard many interviewees’ statements that confirm the paramount importance played by history awareness, i.e., social continuity, in the self-perception and identity of young members of the Slovenian minority. (Obid, 2018: 41)

Another element influencing ethnic or affiliation notions is the feeling of the endangerment of the minority community. So its members express feelings of personal responsibility for the community’s continuous existence (Obid, 2018: 41).

Student clubs are one of the affiliation spaces where the Slovenian youth in Austrian Carinthia likes to gather, socialize, listen to music or use the Slovenian language in everyday communication. The clubs provide space for the young to foster a shared worldview through common (cultural, political, social) practices. The following quote by a student from Alpe Adria University shows the connection between her affiliation with the Club of Slovenian Students in Carinthia and language socialization:

I think the club offers a vibrant cultural scene [...], we organize concerts, lectures, readings, and we can really socialize there with our friends, with our neighbors. That’s something nice, isn’t it? When you know that you’re in Klagenfurt, so to speak, and

¹⁰ The Slovenian community, in villages especially, provides a lot of possibilities for the social and cultural participation of young people. Several people I spoke to casually mentioned that they feel the German-speaking community did not foster as many cultural practices as the Slovenian-speaking community. The research in Austria showed increased activity among Slovenian youth in Austria in societies, institutions and other organizations (83.3%) compared to the general youth population in Austria (52%). The minority youth most often joins Slovenian societies’ structures, where they are most active in cultural organizations (53.3%) (Piko-Rustia, 2018: 104–105).

you can go to the club, and you're kind of back home again. [...] In the club, that's one place besides your studies where you can talk in dialect, and in literary Slovene, whatever; that's one place where you can also speak Slovene. (Schnuppervorlesung Slowenisch, April 20, 2021, 14:09)¹¹

The singer of the group Roy de Roy resonates with the importance of the Club of Slovenian Students in Vienna similarly:

When we moved to Vienna, we yearned for the Slovenian language. Apart from our trumpet player, all other members of the brass band went to the same school, the Slovenian Grammar School in Klagenfurt [...]. There's something really excellent in the Carinthian Slovenian community in Vienna so that we don't lose sight of each other, especially thanks to the Slovenian Students' Club. There's this infrastructure where we can often meet. The idea of community is also important within the group. And, of course, if we're all from a minority community, there's also a great deal of trust deriving from the rich common experience in Carinthia. (Grilc, March 10, 2022)

POPULAR MUSIC AND LANGUAGE SPACES

As a genre, popular music (from the perspective of the authors, listeners, and venues) is a global phenomenon that provides space for fluid social identifications including affiliation identifications and common worldviews.¹² For example, in the 1970s and 1980s, global youth movements found a means of expressing their revolt against conservative values and socio-political perspectives in the rock genre. In Austrian Carinthia, Slovenian youth found not only a means but also a shelter for voicing their opposition to then-traditional music forms of affiliation expression.¹³ In music, these expressions usually exist as folk, folk-pop, or choir music. Rock music and the context it appears in (concerts, festivals, clubs, music workshops) conformed to their values, way of life, and thinking, and it also extended to their social and entertainment spheres as well as language socialization and affiliation.

In the last decade, bilingualism has become more valued in Austrian Carinthia. In the public discourse, however, it is presented in the spirit of cross-cultural dialogue. Interviewees

¹¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5hJvG5CmgN8>.

¹² Martina Piko-Rustia mentions choir music activities, brass bands, tambura bands, and rock and jazz music as better-developed fields of Slovenian minority music participation.

¹³ The statements are in the past tense, since in recent years, activities in the field of rock and other similar popular music genres have been in decline. On the one hand, the Covid-19 epidemic substantially affected music production; on the other, interviewees mention they have noticed a decline in interest in listeners due to changing music tastes. People prefer to socialize, have fun, dance and listen to electronic music produced by DJs.

often point out the economic interests of those who enter bilingual programs from the German-speaking community. This interest is reflected in the higher numbers of children attending Slovenian language classes in bilingual schools or within some of the cultural activities such as bilingual choirs. Still, overcoming decades of language and cultural barriers is difficult. Some people I spoke to believe that achieving the purposes of integrating both language communities into bilingual music spaces has not always been successful. To explain, let me present a case as told by a member of the Bališ music group, a band that has been a role model for many younger music groups in Austrian Carinthia. Members of Bališ have always made an effort to include young musicians in the field of popular music, regardless of their language affiliation. They invited them to appear as support acts at their concerts or encouraged their rock music creativity by organizing workshops (*mladirod-rock*). Bališ advocated for the cooperation of both language communities; still, the workshops would “*be inadvertently led more in Slovenian language*” since German-speaking youth would rarely join in – a reflection of the long-term ghettoization of the minority community. Consequently, opening the space of bilingualism is made somewhat difficult: “*If something ‘hints’ even a little of Slovenian language, then it’s pretty automatic ... [the German speakers’] attitude is more or less reserved*” (Štern, March 22, 2022).

Therefore, some of these music spaces remain predominantly closed spaces of the Slovenian-speaking minority community, which rarely provide the opportunity for interaction with the German-speaking one. Among them are festivals (*Angolainiciativ, No Border Festival, Zadnji poljub poletja, Dvorana Rock’s, Rožn’rock, Kontaktna leča* and nowadays obsolete *Rock the Meadows*), music workshops (*Voxacademy, Mladi rod rock*), venues (*Dvorana Rock’s* in Šmihel, *Stereo* club in Klagenfurt, *K&K center* in Šentjanž and societies’ venues), student clubs (clubs of Slovenian students in Carinthia in Klagenfurt, Graz and Vienna, and the Carinthian association of high school students in Klagenfurt).

In addition to providing social and language spaces for the Slovenian-speaking community, these places are the prerequisite for popular music creativity in the region, forming new music groups and creating new music. At the same time, this is where interaction with the listeners happens since speaking to and making (young) audience excited is the primary motive for youth music creation. For instance, almost all the musicians I talked to had started their musical creativity in popular music at the Slovenian Grammar School (beginning in the 1980s).¹⁴ The grammar school, and the Slovenian residence hall, provided them with a safe affiliation environment, linguistic support with Slovenian language expression, and the infrastructure for their development into musicians and their survival (practice rooms, equipment, concerts). Since 1981, a vital concert space has been the bilingual festival *Kontaktna leča/Kontaktlinse* (eng. Contact Lens), organized by the students of the Slovenian Grammar School. The festival has showcased local music groups alongside successful performers from the music scene in Slovenia.

¹⁴ Its official name today is *Zvezna gimnazija in zvezna realna gimnazija za Slovence v Celovcu*.

MUSIC CHOICES IN POPULAR MUSIC

Analyses of popular music songs usually focus on lyrics and their meaning as it affects society. Very few scientific sources deal with linguistic expression, and even fewer focus on the choice of language songs are sung in or listened to. That is, a song does not merely communicate the meaning of the lyrics nor provide only information on the language of the lyrics; it expresses the cultural significance of the language in which it is sung. The article's following segment presents the empirical part of the research, representing the basis for my examination of the contextual level of the lyrics whenever this was considered necessary.

Between 2019 and 2022, I conducted interviews with musicians in the field of contemporary popular music who are also members of the Slovenian minority in Austrian Carinthia.¹⁵ I analyzed the selected music, videos, lyrics, language choices, specifics, and the occurrence of music and musicians in the media. My search for musicians was not limited to specific popular music genres (the groups' genres, including pop, rock, ska, and punk) as I chose the performers and music for the analysis on the snowball principle and according to their availability. The main criteria for my choice were that the musicians are members of the Slovenian minority from Austrian Carinthia and use several languages or dialects, choosing among standard German, English, Slovenian, and Slovenian dialects.¹⁶ Methodologically, the selection of individual musicians and music groups singing in different languages and dialects took place online via online postings (YouTube, Facebook, or topical websites of festivals and workshops and others). This proved to be quite successful since, in the later interviews, musicians frequently referred to the same musicians or music groups for my research. I interviewed six musicians active in ten music groups (some musicians are members of more music groups).¹⁷ In addition, I examined their online interviews, online videos of songs, and online presentations of the performative music spaces (e.g., announcements of and reports from concerts, workshops, and festivals). Given this article's limitations, I shall focus on selected cases, highlighting them in the context of language choices and providing reasons for the individual choices.

¹⁵ The groups' interviewees deemed recognizable in the 1980s and 1990s are *Drava, Jagadani, Šok, Do It, Energija, 4J, Four Problems*; while in the new millennium these are *Bališ, Roy de Roy, Out of Plumb, Store Murke, Rock@home*, singer-songwriter Pepej Krop, less often *Chaos Alarm, Refuse the Mammon, Sinn* and others. Jazz musicians are Tonči Feinig, Štefan Tahler, and Gabriel Lipuš. The regularly updated site <https://mladirod-rock.jimdofree.com/> provides information on the current projects of Carinthian musicians active in different music groups (cf. Piko-Rustia, 2018: 133).

¹⁶ It should be noted that there are many musicians who are active in different music groups, they cooperate with Austrian, or other minority musicians, and they express themselves in German or in English. However, as the article deals with the minority context, I was interested in the relationship to Slovenian language expression, choosing those groups that at any time expressed themselves (also) in Slovenian.

¹⁷ Marko Štern from Bališ, Fabian Smolnik from Store Murke, Chaos Alarm and Sinn, Andrej Ogris from Out of Plumb and Super Action Heroes, and Niko Grilc from Roy de Roy and Nikolaj Efendi (active in Vienna). I had short conversations also with Gabriel Lipuš who was in the group Jagadani during his high school years, and with Marko Podrečnik who also played in the high school group Do It.

SLOVENIAN DIALECT

The interviewed musicians rarely choose to sing in the Slovenian dialect. Such rare usage of dialect in popular music is undoubtedly the result of an economic dilemma, as a dialect will speak only to a small circle of listeners. Another reason to avoid dialects is the stigma of the broader society (to a more significant extent in the past than today) since they were considered a reflection of the rural, less developed society. The Slovenian dialect in Austrian Carinthia was also stigmatized due to ethnic divisions: by the German-speaking community as a minority language and by the Slovenian-speaking community because of the inclusion of German words. Nevertheless, the attitude of society to dialects is changing. Martina Piko-Rustia, who summarized the findings from the discussion on the Slovenian language in families and public spaces in Tinje in 2014, says that

dialects suffered for a long time due to negative attitudes; they were considered backward, less developed, and associated with social aspects. Today, however, dialects continue to be an essential element of local identity, and young people resort to their usage also in communication in the new media (Facebook, messaging...). (Piko-Rustia, 2016: 147)

The Store Murke group gives an example of politically-based language choice as they, during their early days, decided to sing one song in dialect due to their disagreement and revolt against the Governor of Austrian Carinthia, at the time Jörg Haider (Smolnik, September 23, 2020). Among all the music groups in the research, it is the group Bališ that essentially chooses to sing in dialect and is also widely recognized for it. Their songs in dialect and the usage of dialect words earned the group the special status of a “dialect band” both in the media (in Austria and Slovenia) and among listeners.

According to their lyricist and drummer Marko Štern, Bališ first decided to sing in dialect since they wanted to place themselves in the *Austropop* genre, i.e., Austrian popular music sung in dialect. However, as Marko wrote lyrics in the Obirsko (Ger. Erbach) dialect – the dialect of his childhood (shared by two other band members who are his brothers), while the group’s vocalist is from Pliberk (Ger. Bleiberg), the area of the Podjuna (Ger. Jauntal) dialect, the singer stated that there were words



List of songs from the *Novnos* album by Bališ.

he did not understand. For this reason, they decided to continue using standard Slovenian, often sprinkled with dialect words. Still, according to their lyricist, the group is increasingly returning to the Obirsko dialect, which the singer has become familiar with by now.

The group stated several reasons for their decision to sing in dialect. Besides trying to enter a genre space recognizable in Austria for using dialect lyrics (*Austropop*), they believed it was necessary to preserve old dialect expressions. At the same time, they wanted to use dialect to strengthen its status in the framework of the Austrian space of languages. Marko Štern explained: *“The Slovenian dialect is also the language of Austria, a recognized language, so we resonate with this.”* He further stated the choice by pointing out the phonetic aspect of the Slovenian dialect, considered by him more appropriate for the more lyrical, narrative songs than other language choices: *“Our Slovenian dialect, our people’s dialect is very gentle, in narrative and diction as well, I think... easy on the ears”* (Štern, March 22, 2022).

STANDARD SLOVENIAN

Musicians choose to include songs in standard Slovenian in their repertoire for different reasons and to different extents. Some sing most of their repertoire in standard Slovenian, while others only decide on one song while singing the rest in English or German. The group Store Murke, for example, initially sang in Slovenian. Later they hoped to enter the national and international market by changing the language to German and English (Smolnik, September 23, 2020). The group Out of Plumb, also formed during the band’s years at the Slovenian Grammar School in Klagenfurt and included two German-speaking members, decided to sing in the English language primarily because they were motivated by the economic reasons. The only song they sing in Slovenian is “Vprašanja” (Eng. Questions), a deliberate decision. Their singer Andrej Ogris had a girlfriend from Slovenia and eventually decided to study and settle in Ljubljana. The area of group’s audience consequently expanded to the Slovenian side of the border; they often appeared at concerts and festivals in Slovenia. The song “Vprašanja” (Questions) deals with the serious issue of race in today’s world and also parallels their minority position in Austrian society. Andrej Ogris explains:

Our song Vprašanja wades a bit into this political topic. I wonder why am I always excluded; is it hair color, a different voice, or skin color? Here we tackled this topic a bit – of racial othering, and so we intentionally sang in Slovenian, as the minority. Asking: “Why are we so different from you?” (Ogris, September 22, 2020)

Bališ, who chose standard Slovenian for many of their songs, explain their choice on an emotional level:

We believed everyone should express themselves “the way their beak speaks,” where emotions are deeply rooted. For us, [emotions] are at home in our mother tongue. We are Carinthian Slovenians, and that’s how we express ourselves. (Rockgruppe Bališ, June 6, 2013)

They are aware that such a decision requires perseverance and stubbornness, stating in a media interview:

Of course, getting a bit stuck is one part of it. We’ve heard it many times: well, the kind of music you’re making, you can’t [...] try to be smart, put it in English. But that’s not it... For us, it’s clear that the only way is the way we are doing it. And we like it. (Klobčar, 2019)

The group Roy de Roy links singing in Slovenian with their minority position. The singer Niko Grilc, who also writes the lyrics, told me about a traumatic childhood event he experienced because of his minority status and use of the Slovenian language in public. He lyrically avoids using German, the language of his day-to-day life, for personal and ideological reasons:

I think I’ll have to age a bit more to write in German. Sure it’s the language I use every day, but... I think it’s a Carinthian Slovenian trauma of sorts, being unable to write in German. I just can’t, I have a kind of reflex against composing in German. (Grilc, March 10, 2022)

The group resides in Vienna, so their position differs from that of music groups operating predominantly in the area of Austrian Carinthia; they are definitely in the status of regional and ethnic diaspora. This aspect, however, has been changing throughout the years along with the attitudes towards the Slovenian language and minority issues:

When I came to Vienna, I still had a lot of very strong negative feelings about Carinthia; we felt more like a diaspora band connected to Carinthia; now, I’m more into safeguarding the language. I’m not so interested in Carinthia as a topic anymore because I’ve been away for 13 years. (Grilc, March 10, 2022)

Niko Grilc emphasizes that music is at the forefront of their work, their lyric’s message. He believes singing in the Slovenian language is not a barrier when addressing the audience. Still, they sometimes place special attention on the chorus to make it understandable or so simple that those who do not speak Slovenian can sing along, too. The media and themselves define them as a socio-critical and political music group, reflected in the lyrics. At concerts, the band explains the lyrics to the German or English-speaking

audience between the songs. They “translate” the minority position into the position of racial inequity as – together with other music groups, the Club of Slovenian Students in Vienna, and other organizations – Roy de Roy is active in the context of the anti-fascist movement in Vienna and elsewhere.

The group singer also describes his attitude toward the Slovenian language in his other music work, where he presents himself as Nikolaj Efendi. In the last few years, he has been moving away from writing in English towards writing in Slovenian since, working in an exclusively German-speaking environment, he feels the need to preserve the language for himself and future generations:

Now, for example, my new album will be entirely in Slovenian again [...] not as a political reaction, but more because I want to write an album for my son and also for my nephew. So that I leave something behind so that we all learn about a new topic. Also, I want to develop a specific vocabulary that isn't just political but also gentle and personal; that's why I now decided to write it all in Slovenian, even though it's not practical from the economic point of view. (Grilc, March 10, 2022)

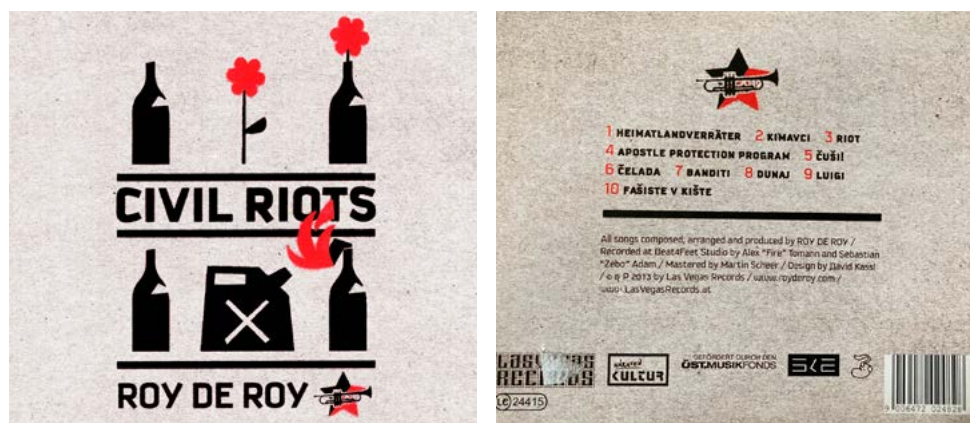
SINGING IN ENGLISH AND GERMAN LANGUAGES

Roy de Roy rarely chooses the English language to express themselves in music; they mostly sing in Slovenian. They selected English for their song “Riot,” as they wanted wider audiences to understand the contents. The song was created to react to the socio-political problem many Viennese protested against, namely the Hofburg Palace dance organized annually by far-right political organizations. The singer explains how interesting it was to see the change, mainly in the attitude of the German-speaking audience members, when they grasped the meaning of the song:

Actually, I just wanted to see the reaction, what happens to the audience when they get it. That was also our most successful song in concerts and on iTunes, but this is not the true language; for me, Roy de Roy exists only in Slovenian. (Grilc, March 10, 2022)

Bališ, the group that most often sings in the Slovenian dialect, chooses the German language more carefully and only in some instances when German seems to be more appropriate than the Slovenian dialect on the level of expression and sound of language:

German feels closer to me for certain aggressive, hard narratives. Our Slovenian dialect, it's very gentle in phonetics and diction, [...], I'd say, soft. It's easier to express yourself in those hard [songs] in German because the language itself is like that, more robust. (Štern, March 22, 2022)



Cover and track list from the *Civil Riots* album by Roy de Roy.

On the other hand, the lyricist decided on the German language in the song “So einfach,” which was written in Mostar and reflected the bloody history of the last war in the Balkans; the choice of language was used to create emotional distance from the context of the song:

We felt that German is a bit farther away; it gives you a more distanced view of the emotional events in Mostar. You can develop a distance by taking a language that is not your first, your closest language. (Štern, March 22, 2022)

Singer Niko Grilc echoed this sentiment in his role as Nikolaj Efendi, stating the emotional distance as the reason for the frequent use of English: “*When not writing about politics, I wanted to translate my feelings into a different language so I could examine them with a particular detachment*” (Grilc, March 10, 2022).

MIXING THE LANGUAGES

Code-switching¹⁸ within one song was not noticed among the researched cases, except in the song “05” by Bališ. The song mixes standard Slovenian language, German, Slovenian dialect, and English language while it strings together several affective words or phrases. The song’s message can be interpreted when one is aware of the words’ historical, social, and political meanings or the variety of personal experiences lived by the band members. Here are some examples of the words or phrases from the song demonstrating the stated: 05 is the song title and the number signaling the Austrian anti-fascist fight; *knežji kamen*

¹⁸ In music, the term “code-switching” is used differently than in linguistic theory, namely to denote processes of exchanging music expressions, styles, and genres (Isbell, Stanley, 2018: 147).

(Eng. The Prince's Stone) is the symbol of Slovenian nationality; Val 202 is the name of the Radio Slovenija radio station, which grappled with the dilemma whether to place Bališ as a domestic or foreign music group; *tragic comedy* reflects the band's ambivalent position in society.¹⁹ Marko Štern explained that this song aimed to portray the "*confusion* [...], *of language and of emotions*" of someone who belongs neither to Slovenia nor Austria. It expresses a typical situation often felt by diaspora people, i.e., the feeling of being "*in the middle of nowhere*" (Štern, March 22, 2022).

Mixing languages frequently occurs within the entire repertoire and in the accompanying texts on CDs or during concerts. Music groups Out of Plumb and Super Action Heroes mostly sing in English, while the accompanying text is in Slovenian or German. Similarly, Store Murke, who began in Slovenian and later switched to German and subsequently English language, in bilingual environments communicated with the audience in Slovenian or bilingually, i.e., in Slovenian and German, while in the German-speaking or international settings, explained their lyrics in German or English languages.

CONCLUSION

The choice of language in popular music is a thoroughly thought-out act; there is little spontaneity about it. A musician or music group thinks about the language while writing the lyrics, most often influenced by the awareness of other processes such as music production, promotion of the song or album, and perhaps music video production. Although this research does not deal with the audiences' perception of music, the article still includes it in part. When musicians decide on the language usage in songs, they also consider the audience being addressed on the contextual and symbolic levels. The cases presented show that the choice of a particular language depends on different decisions, which in the minority context may often differ from those generally made by lyricists.

Due to historical, local, global, marketing, and consumer conditions, the choice of language in the popular music of non-Anglo-Saxon countries often means the choice between English or their mother tongue. "The prestige attached to English around the world and its role as an international language make it a natural choice for many pop music artists in non-English speaking countries" (Cutler, 2000: 118). English language expression should not be considered equal to the expression in other languages. English is historically and geographically a dominant language in the language expression of popular music. Musicians often decide to use English because they conform to the logic of the market-driven industry, i.e., supply and demand, which (predominantly in the areas where a small number of speakers speak the native language) encourages expression in the English language. Even in the minority context, i.e., among the groups treated in this research, it can be observed

¹⁹ The song and the lyrics are accessible at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m5FIERa_1D4.

that the economic or popularity logic is often decisive for the use of English. The musicians want to reach a broad audience and communicate their musical expression in the language understood most widely by the widest audience (Store Murke, Out of Plumb).

On the other hand, in the last decades, changes have been noticeable in the sphere of language equality in popular music in the general European space, as the cultural hierarchies, which once prioritized the English language, diminished and as collectivized music taste and elitism in music genre spaces waned (Hoeven, Janssen, Driessen, 2016: 44; cf. Luthar, Kurdija, 2011). The individuality of music tastes became a more important cultural and social value, encouraging music production once considered particular. Here I am pointing out the very much-needed support of the music industry. Prior, it used to avoid issuing albums in native tongues and would finally support such music production only when independent music labels appeared on the market. The choice of the language musicians express themselves in is therefore linked to cultural capital and the local context in which music is created and consumed (Hoeven, Janssen, Driessen, 2016: 50), and is also the subject of preference of the music market in the local, regional, national and global contexts.

In Austria and other German-speaking countries, musicians who choose to sing in German can reach a relatively large music market, especially if compared to the Slovenian one. Some Slovenian musicians in Austrian Carinthia (e.g., Store Murke, Chaos Alarm) decided to sing in German since they were motivated by market popularity reasons for one, but also because some new music groups included German-speaking musicians, or they preferred German phonetic expression. Marko Štern (Bališ) feels that the German language stands in contrast to the softness of the Slovenian language and dialect. He believes it is robust in sonic character and, therefore, appropriate for expressing certain content. Using a language that is not someone's mother tongue (German or English) also helps musicians create distance from their emotions (Roy de Roy, Bališ, Nikolaj Efendi).

Songs in the Slovenian dialect can be understood as an expression of a specific kind of perseverance since this is the less effective choice from the economic point of view. Bališ's insistence on singing in dialect for years gained them the "label" of a dialect band, with which comes a specific status among music consumers. It is important to note that (as their lyricist says) they were able to make this decision because their livelihoods do not depend on the economic side of music production – none of the members rely exclusively on their music earnings. Dialect allows them to express their minority identification and be active in the subculture that fosters idiom in music. In the beginning, they identified with the *Austropop* music genre, known for the usage of dialect in popular music.²⁰ They also cooperate with other societies that encourage dialect usage, joining initiatives that advance dialect expression in the broad Austrian space. For example, the drummer was also a member of the Austrian group de Keffim, which sang in the German dialect. Bališ also

²⁰ For more information on the *Austropop* music genre, see Larkey, 1992: 151–185.

purposefully distanced themselves from Slovenian minority cultural circles to commemorate their tenth anniversary and chose the more German-speaking town Sankt Veit/Šentvid as the venue, where they joined forces with two Austrian clubs from the town, Burgkultur and Hamweh. The latter also supports dialect expression in music. Support for music expressed in national languages or dialects can also be a symbol of revolt against the globalization and internationalization of the music market (Fox, Miller-Irdiss, 2008: 551). For example, Bališ felt that the English language was too “*mainstream*” (Štern, March 22, 2022).

The language sensibility of musicians gains other meanings in the minority context; it can mean symbolic opposition to cultural-political and language dominance of the majority nation or symbolic strengthening, public expression, or promotion of ethnic and language belonging. The musicians must make a conscious decision to express themselves in their mother tongue or dialect, the support of their community/listeners/audience being key to that decision. On the one hand, the personal level or an individual’s “biographical experiences” (Hoeven, Janssen, Driessen, 2016: 52), e.g., primary socialization in the Slovenian language, are essential for the choice of language, while sensing, feeling the space and the community that determines affiliation or identity is also important. The latter is connected to secondary socialization, which includes the impact of education, the media, and the individual’s peers on their formation of taste and preferences for music and language. The spaces of secondary language socialization are of particular importance for the members of minority communities. This is where they can use their mother tongue without suffering social exclusion or mockery, which often happens outside these “safe spaces.”

Musicians in Austrian Carinthia who perform in their mother tongue or dialect localize or glocalize²¹ popular music genres (Hoeven, Janssen, Driessen, 2016: 53). Their music, which represents a globalized music genre, tightly connects with space through their mother tongue and dialect. Some musicians included in this research do not live in Austrian Carinthia, and it is the use of the Slovenian language or specifically the dialect which places them geographically in Austrian Carinthia and conceptually among the Austrian minority. Still, music sung in the mother tongue and dialect represents considerably more than a connection of geographical space with the global music genre. When connected to space, it can stir shared memories; it brings up the history, values, and collective experiences of space and time, i.e., collective identity.

The research shows that several factors affect the choice of Slovenian language or Slovenian dialect in the popular music of Slovenian musicians in Austrian Carinthia. These factors reflect ethnic identification needs as well as opposition to, in the official minority discourse often emphasized (cultural, language, political and social) subordination to the majority population; or reflect the wish to be integrated into the regional subcultural music spaces.

²¹ Louis Peter Grijp believes that “we can interpret dialect music as a special form of glocalisation—an attempt to preserve the local culture, in this case, the local or regional language, by combining it with global music styles” (Grijp, 2007: 241).

Observing multilingualism or the choice of language in popular music groups in the minority context is a multi-layered process that highlights the need to understand the position of the researched phenomena within space, history, politics, power distribution, collective conscience, socialization levels, and personal experience.

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ZAKAJ, ZAKOJ, WARUM ALI WHY? VEČJEZIČNOST V POPULARNI GLASBI NA AVSTRIJSKEM KOROŠKEM

Sodobna slovenska popularna glasbena ustvarjalnost na avstrijskem Koroškem je povezana z aktualno mladinsko družbeno, kulturno in jezikovno udeležbo in s položajem slovenske manjšine v tem prostoru. Dejavnost mladih v popularnoglasbenih procesih in prostorih je za slovensko manjšino v nekaterih primerih identifikacijsko in jezikovno zatočišče. Popularna glasbena produkcija torej odseva interese ali potrebe skupin, za katere glasbeniki ustvarjajo, in tudi dojemanje lastnega položaja v obmejnem prostoru.

V prispevku so obravnavani tisti glasbeniki, ki se v popularni glasbi na avstrijskem Koroškem izražajo v različnih jezikih – v nemščini, slovenskih koroških narečjih, v knjižni ali pogovorni (standardni) slovenščini in angleščini. Raziskovalna pozornost je namenjena vprašanju, kdaj, na kakšen način in zakaj so se odločili za rabo določenega jezika ali narečja v besedilih. Tako je po eni strani tematizirana jezikovna izbira v popularni glasbi, ki je izrazito globalni fenomen; zaradi tega je raba določenega jezika najpogosteje povezana z ekonomskimi interesi. Po drugi strani pa raziskovanje popularne glasbe v manjšinskem kontekstu, ob upoštevanju zgodovinskih, družbenih in političnih okoliščin, ki (so)določajo položaj manjšine v tej pokrajini, podaja lokalizirane odgovore o izbiri jezika. V manjšinskih kontekstih lahko izbira manjšinskega jezika simbolno nasprotuje kulturno-politični in jezikovni prevladi večinskega naroda ter utrjuje, javno izraža ali promovira etnično in jezikovno pripadnost. Za izražanje v maternem jeziku ali narečju se izvajalci odločijo zavestno, pri tem pa je zelo pomembna podpora skupnosti/poslušalcev/lobčinstva, ki jim je ta glasba namenjena in naj bi jo naklonjeno sprejemali.

Tudi med obravnavanimi skupinami se je pokazalo, da izbiro angleškega ali nemškega jezika pogosto spremlja ekonomska logika (Store Murke, Out of Plumb, Chaos Alarm). Medtem ko je razlog za jezikovno (ne)izbiro nemškega jezika lahko ideološki (Nikolaj Efendi), nekateri nemščino izberejo za določne pesmi zaradi zvočne narave (npr. občutenje nemškega jezika kot robustnega in primerne za izražanje določenih vsebin). Izražanje v nematernem jeziku (nemškem ali angleškem) glasbenikom omogoči tudi distanciranje od lastnih čustev (Roy de Roy, Bališ, Nikolaj Efendi).

Izražanje v slovenskem narečju lahko razumemo kot izraz posebne vztrajnosti, saj je z vidika (kulturne) ekonomije to slabša izbira, specifična narečja namreč razume še manjši krog ljudi. Skupina Bališ je edina, ki poje v slovenskem narečju: z narečjem izraža manjšinsko pripadnost in hkrati pripadnost avstrijskemu glasbenemu žanru austropop. Poznana je prav po rabi narečja v popularni glasbi, s čimer simbolno izraža nasprotovanje globalizaciji in internacionalizaciji glasbenega tržišča.

Na izbiro slovenskega jezika ali slovenskega narečja v popularni glasbi glasbenikov na avstrijskem Koroškem vpliva niz dejavnikov. Ti odsevajo tako etnično-identifikacijske potrebe kot tudi nasprotovanje v uradnem manjšinskem diskurzu pogosto poudarjenim (kulturnim, jezikovnim, političnim, družbenim) podreditvam večinski populaciji ali pa izražajo željo po vključenosti v regionalne subkulturne glasbene prostore. Opazovanje večjezičnosti ali izbire

jezika v popularnoglasbenih zasedbah v manjšinskih kontekstih je torej večplastno in zahteva razumevanje vpetosti obravnavanih pojavov v prostor, zgodovino, politike, razmerja moči, kolektivno zavest, ravni socializacije in osebne izkušnje.

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