

RITUALISM AND MUSIC AS ELEMENTS IN THE USE OF A MINORITY LANGUAGE

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The article is based on field research in various Slovenian minority communities in Austrian Carinthia during the last decade. Caroling, the celebration of a village's patron's feast, church services, and funerals are all events associated with ritualism. The role that Slovenian, as the language of the minority, plays in these events is the focus of this study. While the ritual framework is only one of the circumstances in the few spaces where Slovenian is the majority language, the situation in a mostly Germanized environment is quite different. This research shows that ritual events are rare occasions when Slovenian is spoken as a minority language in public places.

Keywords: Austrian Carinthia, folk songs, caroling, singing during church services

Prispevek temelji na terenskem raziskovanju v različnih skupnostih slovenske narodne manjšine na avstrijskem Koroškem v zadnjem desetletju. Koledovanje, praznovanje praznika vaškega zavetnika, bogoslužje in pogreb so dogodki, ki jih povezuje obrednost. Raziskovalna vprašanja tega prispevka se osredinjajo na vlogo in delež, ki ga ima ob ritualnih dogodkih slovenščina kot manjšinski jezik. Medtem ko je v tistih redkih prostorih, kjer je slovenščina še večinski jezik, ritualni okvir le ena od priložnosti njenega pojavljanja, pa je povsem drugače v izrazito germaniziranem okolju. Raziskava razkriva, da so v takih okoljih obredni dogodki ena redkih priložnosti, ko se slovenščina kot manjšinski jezik oglasi v javnem prostoru.

Ključne besede: avstrijska Koroška, ljudske pesmi, koledovanje, petje pri bogoslužju

INTRODUCTION

This article focuses on various events in Austrian Carinthia; in this space, the Slovenian language (both in standard and dialect forms) and German coexist as the languages of the autochthonous national minority and the majority, respectively. This is a relatively extensive and populous area; therefore, we need to consider different situations in which the Slovenian language is used in public and private spaces, depending on political circumstances, legislation (i.e., whether it is followed or not), the education system, and the use of the language in church and at social events. Last but not least, the use of a minority language also depends on the personal commitment of individuals and how much this affects their immediate or broader community.

This article is the result of field research conducted between 2012 and 2022 in Austrian Carinthia in places where Slovenian language speakers and the use of Slovenian can still be found. First, between 2012 and 2016, I followed several cases of Epiphany caroling in the Lower Gail Valley, mainly as examples of caroling customs. I became interested in observing music through the perspective of the intertwining of languages only later when in 2018, I became part of the research group of the project called *Song Reflections of Intercultural Coexistence*. Then, I broadened my research into the role and the importance of music in

the use of the Slovenian language as the language of the minority to some other ritualistic and spontaneous occasions in Austrian Carinthia. However, the most intensive work on this topic was done during my one-month study visit in Klagenfurt/Celovec in February and March 2022.

The article does not examine bilingualism in its narrow meaning, i.e., as an intertwining of Slovenian and German within one “music unit” in the context of macaron songs (Klobčar, 2020). Instead, I was interested in bilingualism as a coexistence between two languages which, depending on different circumstances and opportunities and in different situations, are usually in a subordinate-dominant dynamic. Based on the collected data from the field material, I aimed to understand how significant the share of the Slovenian language is in public, religious, and festive life today.

Besides personal attitudes to the choice of language, I was also interested in the opportunities where the Slovenian language and Slovenian alternating with German variously occur in the context of singing. Furthermore, as the Slovenian minority in Austrian Carinthia is relatively large compared with the minority in the Rába Valley (Hungary), its cultural and linguistic expressions are also more diverse (Šivic, 2019b). Therefore, I limited my research to select opportunities that connect music and language, i.e., customs that include singing, church services, funerals, and singing during spontaneous social events.

Observing these occasions, I was aware that many activities had not been examined, despite their significant role in language expression in everyday life and the celebrations of the Slovenian minority. These activities include general education and music training, church and secular choir activities, and the creativity of folk-pop bands.

The abundance and diversity of musical activities connected with language in Austrian Carinthia have their strengths and weaknesses. On the one hand, they can provide numerous opportunities for observation, while on the other, the sheer number of events leaves the researcher, despite careful observation, with much unknown space and many unanswered questions. It is clear to me that, as I recorded my material in the field, I entered only a portion of the musical activities of the Slovenian minority in Austrian Carinthia, which are much more intertwined with the daily life and celebrations of groups and individuals than I was able to capture during my observation opportunities.

The weakness of the methodology plan I chose for my research is that I observed the use of language/languages only from the “Slovenian” perspective. This means I did not observe customs that were once Slovenian and had been Germanized. I also did not speak to the German-speaking population regarding their views of the occurrence of the Slovenian language. Therefore, the opportunities presented in this article are without historical context and result from one period of observation, from which we cannot make any conclusions about the past or future execution of the same recurring event.¹ I am

¹ Dates were added to the names of places from field research when I point out specific opportunities for observation.

aware that these are two important perspectives that should be considered during future research. To understand the changeability of an individual custom, or other events, from a diachronic perspective, it should be observed in the same place several times, which was rendered impossible in this research due to predetermined interests. In addition, having few comparative resources meant it was difficult to identify the past relationships between the languages on these occasions.

SPACES IN WHICH THE SLOVENIAN LANGUAGE IS USED

A minority is, by definition, a part of the predominant majority population. As such, it has a framework that allows it to meet its cultural, social, and other needs by using different establishments such as educational and bureaucratic institutions, the church, and sports and cultural societies. These venues, both organized and spontaneous, accommodate various “non-linguistic” activities that help the minority members to consciously or unconsciously “preserve and develop the minority language, national consciousness, and identity” (Zupančič, 1992). Moreover, in certain areas, these spaces present rare opportunities that allow communication in the minority language and are the critical requirement for its use.

Among the activities I mentioned, vocal music is the factor that increases the functionality potential of language as an “opportunity for the use of language and language skills of language minority members” (Ovsenik, 2010: 52). The standing of the Slovenian language in Austrian Carinthia is a distinctly volatile element, dependent on time and geographic perspectives. In recent history, i.e., after 1918, the formation of the southern state border after the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy was crucial to changes in this status. Until the end of World War I, the key language for communication in public and private lives in the researched area had been Slovenian. However, during the subsequent decades, it became increasingly marginalized due to German nationalism, getting pushed out of public life and, as it became stigmatized, also out of private spaces. Any generalizations are, of course, wrong, as Austrian Carinthia is undoubtedly complex and heterogeneous. Still, we can say that roughly speaking, the majority of the once Slovenian-speaking Carinthia has been Germanised, and there are few places where Slovenian is still the majority language. While in many places Slovenian and German coexist on different levels.

USE OF SLOVENIAN AT CHURCH SERVICES

One part of my field research focused on singing, particularly on the use of Slovenian during church services and funerals in Austrian Carinthia. As these are two opportunities for the intensive use of the language, I did not focus my observations only on singing in the context of language. While observing the relationship between the majority and

minority languages, I also considered prayers as instances of spoken language. I strongly felt that, in the context of my observations, spoken language should be regarded as sound/music speech because it became clear that the semantic level of the Slovenian language is often gone, and what remains is “only” sound. That is, phonetic forms learned by heart.

The observed opportunities revealed that the use of the Slovenian language as the language of the minority in the context of worship is somewhat arbitrary, and therefore, the forms of its use are very different. In the following paragraphs, I will focus on individual cases from my field research, i.e., Sunday church service in the villages of Radsberg/Radiše, Göriach/Gorje na Zilji, Gallizien/Galicija, Zell-Pfarre/Sele, Sankt Leonhard bei Siebenbrünn/Štentlenart pri sedmih studencih, Spittal an der Drau/Špital ob Dravi, and Vorderberg/Blače.² One of the services was held entirely in Slovenian language (Zell-Pfarre/Sele, March 21, 2022), one was entirely in German (Vorderberg/Blače, June 3, 2022), while the other five services were bilingual, as Slovenian and German alternated in spoken and sung parts.

The manner the languages alternate in sung and spoken parts, and the ratio between the languages differ and depend on several factors, e.g., the share of speakers of each language in the community, the availability of a Slovenian-speaking priest (or the affinity of the German-speaking priest to the Slovenian language), and the presence of Slovenian-speaking singers.

Bilingualism's position in singing differs from that in the spoken parts of a service, as singing in both languages would significantly prolong the service. In Radsberg/Radiše, Gallizien/Galicija, Sankt Leonhard bei Siebenbrünn/Štentlenart pri sedmih studencih, and Zell-Pfarre/Sele, I heard only singing in Slovenian. Although in all cases apart from Zell-Pfarre/Sele, the services were bilingual. The choice of songs, and consequently the choice of language, is left to the church choirmaster, although it needs to be said that the expression “choir” is in most cases only partly appropriate, as the group that sings during worship often consists of only around ten singers. Among all the groups I heard during my observations of services, only Göriach/Gorje and Zell-Pfarre/Sele have what might be called a “true” choir.

“Lepa si, lepa si, roža Marija” (How beautiful you are mystical rose), “Oče se poslavlja” (Father's farewell), “Tiho lučka gori” (A quiet light is glowing), “V nebesih sem doma” (Heavens are my home) (Gallizien/Galicija, March 27, 2022),³ “Duša, le pojdi z mano” (Come with me, soul) (Sankt Leonhard bei Siebenbrünn/Štentlenart pri sedmih studencih, March 20, 2022), “O, Marija, moje želje” (Oh Mary, my desires), “O, Marija mati božja” (Oh Mary, mother of god), “Kristus naj te sprejme” (Let Christ accept you)

² Field research was carried out in: Göriach/Gorje na Zilji (September 15, 2019), Radsberg/Radiše (February 27, 2022), Gallizien/Galicija (February 27, 2022), Sankt Leonhard bei Siebenbrünn/Štentlenart pri sedmih studencih (March 20, 2022), Spittal an der Drau/Špital ob Dravi (March 20, 2022), Zell-Pfarre/Sele (March 21, 2022), and Vorderberg/Blače (July 3, 2022).

³ This was an example of a funeral mass where a group from Slovenia was invited to sing.

(Zell-Pfarre/Sele, March 21, 2022) and the hymn “Verni kristjani, pokleknimo zdaj” (Faithfull Christians, let us kneel) (Radsberg/Radiše, February 27, 2022) are some of the songs sung during worship. An interesting example of a bilingual service is from Spittal an der Drau (March 20, 2022), home of a small Slovenian community of first-, second-, and third-generation refugees from the time after World War II. These days, church and family are the only spaces where Slovenian is used; they are remnants of what was once a widespread infrastructure of this Slovenian community. The critical factor in preserving the Slovenian language in church services is the priest, who combines German and Slovenian languages and, in this way, unites the churchgoing community where the older members still speak Slovenian, but the younger generations predominantly speak German. The spoken part of the service equally balanced the two languages, while the songs were all Slovenian but one: “Presvete rane Jezusa” (Most holy wounds of Jesus), “Za veke pregnjani” (Persecuted for ages), “Oh, prizanesi, Oče premili” (Oh, release me most gentle Father), “Hostija ti najsvetlejša” (Holy bread most bright), “Pojdi na Golgoto, verni kristjan” (Go to Golgotha, faithful Christian).

Prayer is the second integral part of the use of language during worship. The Slovenian language as the language of communication in public spaces (often also in education) has been abandoned in Austrian Carinthia or is very rare. Therefore, we can understand prayer as an essential space for expressing the minority language or where the language is coded into a ritual form. Even more, there are places where church and family are practically the only remaining spaces of Slovenian language usage. Most of the church services I observed were bilingual, and this was expressed in various ways. For example, the Rosary before the start of worship can be bilingual, which means that the languages alternate decade-to-decade, with one decade in one language and the next in the other. However, certain parts can be said in both languages as a sort of consecutive “translation”:

The priest: Vater unser im Himmel, geheiligt werde dein Name [...].

Worshippers: Amen. Oče naš, ki si v nebesih [...]. Amen.

(Sankt Leonhard bei Siebenbrünn/Šentlenart pri sedmih studencih, March 20, 2022),

Or the languages alternate inconsistently, whereby the languages change during the prayer itself, or whereby one prayer is in one language and then another is in the other language:

The priest: V imenu Očeta in Sina in svetega Duha.

Worshippers: Amen.

The priest: Der Vater des Erbarmens und Gott allen Trostes sei mit euch.

Worshippers: Und mit deinem Geiste.

(Gallizien/Galicija, February 27, 2022)

The priest: Gospod Jezus Kristus, ki sprejemaš naše rajne v srečo večnega življenja, ne glej na naše grehe, ampak na vero svoje Cerkve, utrdi nas v miru in nas vodi k popolni edinosti, da se izpolni tvoja volja, ki živiš in kraljuješ vekomaj.

Worshippers: Amen.

The priest: Der Friede des Herren sei alle Zeit mit euch.

Worshippers: Und mit deinem Geiste.

The priest: Gospodov mir bodi vedno z vami.

Worshippers: In s tvojim duhom.

(Gallizien/Galicija, February 27, 2022)

Although readings and sermons have been moving away from observing singing and prayers in the Slovenian language, it is still worth observing them in light of the code-switching between German and Slovenian. Usually, one reading is read in one language and the next in another. A sermon may also be in one language, although in this case the second language typically follows the first one, whether as a summary or a kind of translation of the whole.

As well as bilingual church services in the bilingual area can also be entirely in Slovenian language or German, which depends mainly on the population of the village and the availability of a priest. I observed a case of Slovenian worship in the village of Zell-Pfarre/Sele. Because the majority there are Slovenian-speaking, patriotic, and proud of their language, the German language is not heard in the village church (except at funerals). In the 1960s, there was an attempt to introduce worship in German, but the parishioners chose not to attend such services, so only Slovenian worship has continued.⁴

The most common cases of worship in the bilingual area are those conducted solely in German. The reasons for this lie in aggressive Germanization, resulting in reduced numbers of Slovenian language speakers. Today, however, one of the reasons is also a need for more priests who can conduct the mass, if not entirely, then at least partially in Slovenian. Therefore, a critical factor in using Slovenian during church services is the presence of a bilingual priest. Unfortunately, many places – including other areas where there is a Slovenian minority, both in Italy and Hungary – suffer from a lack of Slovenian-speaking priests (for the Rába Valley in Hungary, see Šivic, 2019a: 120–122; Munda, Medvešek, 2017: 712; for the Canal Valley in Italy, see Ravnik, 2022: 75).

The church services I visited were conducted by Slovenian-speaking priests, either from Slovenia (Radsberg/Radiše, Spittal an der Drau/Špital ob Dravi) or from Austrian Carinthia (Sankt Leonhard bei Siebenbrünn/Šentlenart pri sedmih studencih, Zell-Pfarre/Sele). A scarcity of Slovenian-speaking, or Slovenian-German-speaking, priests is a common problem for the Slovenian minority. We can see cases where a foreign language-speaking priest conducts a service, someone for whom German or Slovenian is a second or third language. For example, the funeral mass in Gallizien/Galicija mentioned above was led

⁴ M. O. Interview. Zell-Pharre/Sele, March 21, 2022.

by a priest from Ghana, and the service itself was in German, at times in Slovenian, and even in English (Gallizien/Galicija, February 27, 2022). In Vorderberg/Blače in the Gail Valley, considered the most Germanized “Slovenian valley,” the villagers celebrate a parish fair characterized by several Slovenian elements, which starts with attendance at the Holy Mass in the morning. In 2022, the mass on the day of the parish fair was led by a priest from India speaking German as his second language (Vorderberg/Blače, July 3, 2022).

USE OF SLOVENIAN AT FUNERALS

Here I describe two cases of funeral church service: the first service I observed was in Gallizien/Galicija for a deceased Slovenian speaker from Ebriach/Obirsko. Slovenian and German alternated during the Rosary prayers and service, while singing was in Slovenian only.⁵ The choir concluded the service with two songs, one of which was “Rož, Podjuna, Zila” (Rosen, Jaun, Gail), which is considered a “Slovenian funeral hymn” (Gallizien/Galicija, February 27, 2022). I observed the second funeral mass in Zell-Pfarre/Sele; in “the most Slovenian village” in Austrian Carinthia, worship is conducted exclusively in the Slovenian language. The funeral mass and the church choir’s singing were in Slovenian. Slovenian was also spoken during the funeral itself.

The funeral mass is a space where languages intertwine, and as such, it is an opportunity for a compromise between the coexisting Slovenian- and German-speaking communities. However, the ritual at the grave has a different role. Here, the national and/or language identity of the deceased or their relatives is determined, confirmed, negotiated, and reinforced. The funeral mass in Zell-Pfarre/Sele, for example, is always in Slovenian, while the funeral is an event for language negotiations, and if the deceased was a German speaker, songs at the funeral are in German.⁶

Research of the use of the Slovenian language and the role of priests in the Slovenian community in the Rába Valley by Katalin Munda Hirnök and Mojca Medvešek found that the scope of Slovenian language use depended on “the interest of the priests,” who used Slovenian language “in church services and everyday communication with their parishioners” (Munda Hirnök, Medvešek, 2017: 721). Priests from Austrian Carinthia have a similar role in using Slovenian outside the institutional environment. As the possibilities for social contact are relatively limited, any kind of communication is very important. I was able to witness one such situation in Sankt Leonhard bei Siebenbrunn/Šentlenart pri sedmih studencih where, upon finishing his Sunday services, the priest invited several parishioners for a chat at the parish house, which was an opportunity for communication, and also for

⁵ A singing group from Slovenia sang during the service and the funeral, while the choir from Ebriach/Obirsko sang at the grave.

⁶ M. O. Interview. Zell-Pharre/Sele, March 21, 2022.

the use of the Slovenian language (Sankt Leonhard bei Siebenbrunn/Šentlenart pri sedmih studencih, March 30, 2022).

USE OF SLOVENIAN IN CUSTOMS

The two cases of customs that I describe here were documented in the Lower Gail Valley, where the German language is predominant today due to intense Germanization during the period before World War II. Nevertheless, some remnants of communication in the Slovenian language can still be heard among the older generation and young individuals from Slovenian-speaking families or who have learned and used Slovenian during their studies at the Slovenian grammar school in Klagenfurt/Celovec.⁷ In addition, two ritualistic traditions can be found in this almost exclusively German-speaking environment, two significant identity and social events among the yearly celebrations of the community. These are the parish fair and Epiphany caroling.

PARISH FAIR, QUINTAIN, AND THE FIRST DANCE

Žegen, or the parish fair, is one of the more important celebrations in the villages of the Lower Gail Valley. It celebrates the name day of a parish patron with *štebvanje* (the quintain) and *prvi rej* (the first dance),⁸ which in the 19th century was still known as *visoki rej* (the high dance) (Klobčar, 2022a, 2022b: 532, 540–543).⁹ Ethnological literature generally includes church service, the quintain, and the first dance as the integral elements of the parish fair (Kuret, 1963; Simetinger, in press). The most recognizable musical elements of the parish fair are the ritual song “Bog nam daj en dober čas” (God, give us auspicious time) and the dancing melody of the first dance.¹⁰ When we closely observe all the events, both ritual and informal, it is clear that “specks” of Slovenian punctuate the festivities throughout the day and are almost exclusively linked to singing:¹¹ singing in front of the church following the

⁷ Zvezna gimnazija in zvezna realna gimnazija za Slovence v Celovcu / Bundesgymnasium und Bundesrealgymnasium für Slowenen in Klagenfurt.

⁸ Originally, *prvi rej* was the first dance of the year, which starts with the song “Bog nam dej ten dober čas” (God, give us auspicious time).

⁹ Cf. Simetinger, in press, for more detail on the cultural historical perspectives of the parish fair in the Gail Valley.

¹⁰ Although the choreography of folk dance groups and choir arrangements certainly contributed to their popularity in Slovenia, “tourist tours” coming to see the celebrations were the major factor in an increase in popularity (for a tourist perspective on the parish fair see Simetinger, in press; for folklorization of the first dance and quintain see Simetinger, 2015).

¹¹ Singing during church service qualifies as choir liturgical singing, while the elements of the other parts of the parish fair are considered traditional singing, even if the singers, their skills, and the aesthetics of their singing are the same.

morning service, singing during an informal gathering at an inn or in front of one, singing accompanying the quintain, and singing before the start of the first dance.

The Lower Gail Valley is considered the most Germanized among the “Slovenian” valleys of Austrian Carinthia. The Slovenian language is almost lost in public space, so the rare occasions when it occurs are all the more interesting. Today, the parish fair is one of the most interesting spaces of bilingualism, predominantly with music as its bearer. In some places, we can see the intertwining of languages, i.e., bilingualism, in all parts of the parish fair, while in others the intertwining is limited to individual parts.¹²

Štehvnanje, or quintain, is a horse race where young men compete in knocking a small barrel off a pole. It has several phases, and in the breaks between phases, while the riders return to the starting point and prepare for a new round, singers sing a randomly chosen song. After the race, everyone sets off towards the linden tree in the village center where, before the first dance, the singing group starts singing spontaneously. *Prvi rej* (the first dance) is one of the key symbolic elements of the parish fair and consists of a string of stanzas of the ritual song “Bog nam dej en dober čas” (God, give us auspicious time), and an instrumental melody that accompanies the dance of unwedded couples. The last repetition of the melody of the first dance announces the informal part – a spontaneous dance with polkas and waltzes – which then moves and continues in front of, or inside, the village inn.

Göriach/Gorje, September 15, 2019

Niko Kuret said of the singing in Göriach/Gorje that “in front of the church [...] a youth choir sang with a brass band under a linden tree” (1963: [77]). In 2019, a group of adult men (around 10) sang after the morning service. Their singing alternated with the instrumental music of a band. While the Slovenian language was well represented during the morning worship, the singers sang in German throughout the other parts of the parish fair, apart from three instances. These were the songs “Pri farni cerkvi” (At the little parish church) and “Wie schön ist das ländliche Leben” (How beautiful country life is), the latter of which is in German until the final stanza, which is in Slovenian.

*Wie schön ist das ländliche Leben,
mei Häusle steht auf grüner Flur, juhe.*

*Da fallen mir goldene Träume,
der schönsten Vergangenheit ein, juhe.*

*Ist von schattigen Bäumen umgeben,
da sitz' ich so gerne allein, juhe.*

*Zahija, zahaja, boš peva,
kə boš zibava sinčka mojga, juhe.*

(Göriach/Gorje, September 15, 2019)¹³

¹² The balance between entirely Slovenian situations and bilingual situations is, of course, gone when the parish fair becomes entirely Germanized.

¹³ I would like to thank Daniel Mesnik from Göriach/Gorje na Zilj/ for the transcriptions of the songs “Wie schön ist das ländliche Leben” and “Buog nam dejte dober čas”.

During the breaks between individual phases of the quintain, a singing group only performed songs in the German language.¹⁴ In addition to the songs mentioned above, the ritual song “Bog nam dajte dober čas” is particularly interesting. Its stanzas alternate with instrumental music and an accompanying dance. In 2019, the song was sung in Slovenian, while the second stanza, in German, was inserted (see Klobčar, 2022a: 93)

Buog nam dajte dober čas,
|: *ta prvə rej začeli smo.* :|

Jazbəc kople jamico,
|: *da bo pozimə notr šu.* :|

Segn uns Gott den hohen Tanz
und gib uns alln die rechte Freid.

Rigla regla, rom-pom pom,
v Gərjanah žegən juha bo.

Kduər je z Buəgam, Buəg je z njim,
|: *sam Ježəš je Marijən sin.* :|

Sem je pelu ku altarja,
|: *sem jo vprašu: maš kej dnarja.* :|

Ste kej vidlə jazbəca
|: *na uəni stranə grabənča?* :|

Sem jo pelu kuə oreha,
|: *sem jo baru, al kej neha.* :|
(Göriach/Gorje, September 15, 2019)

Despite the dominance of German both in public life and at the parish fair, the use of Slovenian in ritual contexts reveals a special meaning.¹⁵ For example, according to information provided by my interlocutor, when there are no singers in the community to lead the song “Bog nam dejte ‘n dober čas” in Slovenian, then one is “hired” from some other place (Göriach/Gorje, September 15, 2019).

In 1963, Niko Kuret reported on a ritual in Vorderberg/Blače (1963: 78) that was just as Germanized as the one he had seen in Göriach/Gorje. However, the event from 2022 revealed a different linguistic situation, with the balance between Slovenian and German in Vorderberg/Blače the same as in Göriach/Gorje. Unlike the bilingual church service in Göriach/Gorje, the morning worship in Vorderberg/Blače was entirely in German.¹⁶ On the other hand, as in Göriach/Gorje, the singing started spontaneously after the morning service in Vorderberg/Blače, on the green next to the church. The first song in this part of the parish fair that a male group¹⁷ sang was the ritual song in the Slovenian language, “Sveti Peter, kaj si sturu” (Saint Peter, what did you do?), which is sung only on the day

¹⁴ Mirtina Piko-Rustia defines these songs as “German or Germanized”, i.e., songs translated or adapted from Slovenian (Piko-Rustia, 2019: 96).

¹⁵ According to some information, the Slovenian language was displaced by German in the song »Bog nam dej en dober čas.« However, it returned later in the ritual context (Klobčar, 2022a).

¹⁶ In Vorderberg/Blače, worship is only ever conducted in German. – M. K. (Vorderberg/Blače). Online Interview, December 2022.

¹⁷ Most of the singers belong to the group Gailtaler Wildsänger from Vorderberg/Blače, who are also the Epiphany caroling singers.



Singing under the linden tree, Göriach/Gorje, September 15, 2019 (photo: Iztok Vrečko; GNI ZRC SAZU Archive).

of the parish fair (Kumer, 1986: 479). Afterward, singing alternated with instrumental music. In 2022, both songs from this part of the parish fair were sung in German, while the obligatory ritual song about Saint Peter was sung in Slovenian.

A similar alternation between singing and instrumental music continued in the informal part of the fair at the inn,¹⁸ where the singers sang, and quintain racers danced to the band's music. One of the songs was bilingual, "Komar je z muho plesal" (The mosquito danced with the fly), and two were sung in Slovenian: "Ko mi na Ojster pridamo" (When we come to mountain Ojstra) and "Kadar pridem na puanino" (When I go to the mountain).¹⁹

Similar to Göriach/Gorje, the quintain in Vorderberg/Blače is punctuated by singing. During the breaks between phases, the singers sing while the band plays as the horses run. Out of six songs, five were in German, and one, "Im Garten blühen drei Rosen, tri bele rožice" (The roses are blooming in the garden, three white flowers), was bilingual. The structure of the custom requires that the last song of the formal part of the fair, i.e., *prvi rej* or "the first dance," is "Buæg nan daj ən dobær čes." However, unlike in Göriach/Gorje, the version in Vorderberg/Blače was sung entirely in Slovenian:

¹⁸ This is the part of the day when most people go home for a festive lunch.

¹⁹ In this article, I do not focus on instrumental music. However, instrumental music is an important carrier of language and intercultural intertwining. For example, the music of Slovenian folk-pop bands is regularly part of the repertoire of the ensembles playing on quintains, and the musicians as well as their audience know and sing certain verses in Slovenian.

Buəg nan daj ən dobər čes,
 |: *ta prvi rej začeli smo.* :|

Niəse me daua pušəlča kej,
 |: *pa niesən te pelou v prve rej.* :

Tuər je z Buəgən, Buəg je ž njim,
 |: *sam Ježəž je Marijen sin.* :|

Niəste vidlə jazbəca
 |: *na uəne stranə grabəncə.* :|

Niəs me daua pušəlča nəč,
 |: *pa niəsən te pelou v prve rej.* :|

Kople, kople jamico,
 |: *da bo pozime notər šu.* :|
 (Vorderberg/Blače, July 3, 2022)

The last repetition of the dancing melody of the first dance announces the social part of the event, characterized by dancing.

The local singing group Gailtaler Wildsänger is the singer at the quintain and the first dance (as well as at the Epiphany caroling and other spontaneous and ritual activities; Maurer-Lausegger, 2022: 121–124). They are joined by their fellow villagers and also singers from some of the neighboring villages. “Neighbours from Feistriz [an der Gail] or Achomitz or Sankt Stefan..., so it is a fairly open thing. The villagers always start singing, and the others join in.”²⁰ My interest in the songs sung on the occasions I observed focused on the dynamics of the intertwining between Slovenian and German and the share between the two languages. According to one singer from the Gailtaler Wildsänger, the songs are not chosen based on their language. Instead, the choice is spontaneous and depends on the current mood.²¹

In 1963, Niko Kuret pointed out that on the occasion of the parish fair, German-language songs overlaid the “old Slovenian” songs (Kuret, 1963: 130). Today, the situation is even more in favor of German songs than in the past. According to my interlocutor, German-language songs predominate at the parish fair, even if the singers from Vorderberg/Blače know more songs in Slovenian than German. It is difficult to determine whether the choice of language depends on spontaneity or if it is a conscious decision. Still, it is inevitable that the singers “also consider the audience being addressed on the contextual and symbolic levels” (Kovačič, 2022: 132). Considering that in different situations we can still recognize minor variations in the share between the languages, we can conclude that the repertoire also depends on the audience and the purpose of the singing (on the selection of songs, see Ravnik, 2022).

The celebration in the Lower Gail Valley known as *žegen* (Ger. Kirchtag, Eng. parish fair) or *štehvjanje* (Ger. Kufenstechen, Eng. quintain) is one of the most visible bearers of national and regional identity. This was acknowledged with the entry of the custom into the Austrian inventory of intangible heritage, explaining that this is “a characteristic of

²⁰ M. K. (Vorderberg/Blače). Online Interview, December, 2022.

²¹ M. K. (Vorderberg/Blače). Online Interview, December, 2022.

local and regional identity.”²² The bilingual entry *Untergailtaler Kirchtagsbräuche und Untergailtaler Tracht / Ziljski žegen in ziljska noša* (Lower Gail Valley Parish Fair and Lower Gail Valley Costume) reveals the coexistence of both languages within the custom, and “should also reinforce the local identity of the bilingual Lower Gail” (Piko-Rustia, 2019: 98; cf. footnote 23). The original national (Slovenian) character of the custom was, after decades of oppression of the “Slovenian song tradition and Slovenian language,” replaced by the regional Gail Valley identity; bilingualism has become one of the key elements of the custom.²³ However, the accompanying description of the custom shows that the celebration in general and the corresponding costume are at the center of attention, while neither musical nor dance content are considered, especially not the song content based on language as the key bearer of national identity.

The fact that the description omits a ritual song like “Bog nam daj en dober čas” – which has a significant symbolic meaning and which alternates with dance as an obligatory element – could be understood as an attempt to avoid mentioning either the existence of the Slovenian language (the Slovenian minority) or the coexistence of German with Slovenian. The entry merely touches upon music, but only on instrumental music, and it does not refer to the first dance. Instead, it notes the informal dance that develops immediately after the first dance: “The first dance follows the quintain. It is danced slowly and quickly to various tunes.”²⁴

Ritual singing after worship, during the quintain, and specifically the ritual song “Bog nam dej en dober čas,” are not mentioned in the first, shorter description. The more detailed description of the custom gives a bit more attention to singing but not to ritual singing:

*Music is played, and church songs are sung next to the church, in the village, or at the market, as well as on the way back when they stop at individual inns.*²⁵

However, according to the data from the field, these songs are not liturgical. They are spontaneously chosen and contextually very varied songs. Interestingly, the description of

²² S. n., 2018. *Bewerbungsformular_Untergailtaler_Kirchtagsbruchtum.pdf*; *Tracht* https://www.unesco.at/fileadmin/Redaktion/Kultur/IKE/IKE-DB/files/Bewerbungsformular_Untergailtaler_Kirchtagsbrauchtum.pdf (July 5, 2022).

²³ Ludwig Karničar, 2017. *Empfehlungsschreiben für die UNECSO-Kommission: Aufnahme des Untergailtaler Kirchtagsbrauchtums in das nationale Verzeichnis des immateriellen Kulturerbes in Österreich*. https://www.unesco.at/fileadmin/Redaktion/Kultur/IKE/IKE-DB/files/Expertise_Karnicar_Untergailtaler_Kirchtagsbrauchtum_.PDF.

²⁴ S. n., 2018. *Untergailtaler Kirchtagsbräuche und untergailtaler Tracht / Ziljski žegen in ziljska noša*. <https://www.unesco.at/kultur/immaterielles-kulturerbe/oesterreichisches-verzeichnis/detail/article/untergailtaler-kirchtagsbraeuche-und-untergailtaler-tracht-ziljski-zegen-in-ziljska-nosa> (July 5, 2022).

²⁵ S. n., 2018. *Untergailtaler Kirchtagsbräuche und untergailtaler Tracht / Ziljski žegen in ziljska noša*. <https://www.unesco.at/kultur/immaterielles-kulturerbe/oesterreichisches-verzeichnis/detail/article/untergailtaler-kirchtagsbraeuche-und-untergailtaler-tracht-ziljski-zegen-in-ziljska-nosa> (July 5, 2022).

the first dance does not mention the ritual song “Bog nam dej en dober čas,” neither the Slovenian version nor the German one. The entry ends by noting that: “the parish fair continues with music, dancing, and partying on the village square or at the inn.”²⁶

Observing the quintain, we can note the disappearance of the Slovenian language, or at least its reduction to one or a few songs, resulting from decades of Germanization and the appropriation of the space of ritual events. Today, we are at a certain point in the process of changing and Germanizing customs. As such, it is clear that the parish fair tradition, with the quintain and the first dance, surpassed the limits of Slovenian-speaking space long ago and has become generally accepted as a transnational and translingual regional tradition from the Gail Valley” (Klobčar, 2022a: 109f.).

Niko Kuret noted in 1963 that “Germanization of the parish fair rituals” was “the most devastating” reason for the disappearance of the quintain (1963: 78). In the past the Slovenian people from the Gail Valley performed their rituals in Slovenian, and so “could still express their linguistic and cultural emancipation. However, the switch of their ritual song to the German language, which took place a century later, represented the loss of their power” (Klobčar, 2022: 114). In this article, I cannot assess the extent of the use of Slovenian during the Gail Valley parish fair, with the quintain and the first dance, as the number of observed events it is based on is (too) small. Furthermore, I intentionally avoid using the expression “preservation” of Slovenian because I do not want to define the Slovenian language’s stage of use (disappearance, revival, preservation).

The choice of language for singing at all stages of the parish fair depends on the singers. If there is an initiative to sing in Slovenian among the singers themselves, then Slovenian songs can be heard among the German ones. Otherwise, the singing is almost entirely in German. For example, a video recording of the quintain in Hohenthurn from 2017 shows a Slovenian-speaking singer Franz Kuglitsch at an inn before the start of the parish fair, teaching younger men “ein altes windisches Lied” (an old Slovenian song) and the ritual song “Bog nam dej ten dober čas.” The accompanying text explains that most young men do not speak “Windisch” (Slovenian) anymore, so Kuglitsch is explaining or translating the verses to them one by one.²⁷ The presence of Slovenian largely depends on those carrying it, i.e., singers. It is clear from the cases presented here that the singers are not limited to their hometowns or villages; they can sing elsewhere too. This was also the case in Hohenthurn in 2015 when the ritual song “Bog nam dej ten dober čas” was sung in Slovenian by a group that included singers from Vorderberg/Blače.²⁸ Therefore, I can assess

²⁶ S. n., 2018. *Untergailtaler Kirchtagbräuache und untergailtaler Tracht / Ziljski žegen in ziljska noša*. <https://www.unesco.at/kultur/immaterielles-kulturerbe/oesterreichisches-verzeichnis/detail/article/untergailtaler-kirchtagsbraeuache-und-untergailtaler-tracht-ziljski-zegen-in-ziljska-nosa> (July 5, 2022).

²⁷ Josef Schwellensattl. 2017. *Unter unserem Himmel: Gailtaler Kufenstechen*. <https://www.br.de/mediathek/video/unter-unserem-himmel-gailtaler-kufenstechen-av:59a866c1e082320012d7b041> (July 5, 2022).

²⁸ Rolf Kreutz, *Hohenthurn Kirchtag 2015 – Kufenstechen & Lindentanz (Kärnten/Österreich)*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ebNgzDIM_RY (July 7, 2022).

that bilingualism is arbitrary, volatile, and dependent on the social connections between individuals and the (lack of) self-sufficiency of the community required to meet the needs of singing during the ritual (Ravnik, 2022).

EPIPHANY CAROLING

Today, there are still several holidays when people go caroling in Austrian Carinthia, e.g., Epiphany, Candlemas, Saint George's Day, and Saint Florian's Day (Milisavljevič, 1999). There is also verified information on contemporary caroling customs that include Slovenian ritual songs or texts, e.g., Childermass, Epiphany, Candlemas, Saint Florian's Day, and Saint George's Day. After World War II, the circumstances of caroling customs in Austria were very different from those in Slovenia (at that time Yugoslavia), where many customs were abruptly cut off, and only since the 1980s have been revived or appeared in new forms (Klobčar, 2014; Šivic, 2014: 45–46). Despite the intensive Germanization of the Gailtal in the post-war period and the use of German as the predominant language in the public and private spheres, the Epiphany caroling, the so-called *kaleda*, which takes place on the eve of January 6, is an example of a celebration that reveals the use of Slovenian.²⁹

The custom has a general structure that each caroling group adapts to its variation (Maurer-Lausegger, 2022: 81–94). The bearer of the custom is a singing group consisting of adult men,³⁰ three of whom represent the Three Wise Men, while another, sometimes called *šmarjeta*, is the star bearer. They enter one of the bigger rooms in the house (the kitchen, living room, or hall) while the group of singers either remains outside or follows them inside. As they sing, the Three Wise Men perform a dance with swords.³¹ After the dance/song the Three Wise Men and the bearer of the star take their leave, and the man responsible for collecting gifts steps towards the family, conveys his good wishes, and receives a gift. Then the group moves to another house.

Epiphany caroling in Vorderberg/Blače starts with a greeting of the house in the Slovenian language: "Kralø so tuka!" (The Three Wise Men are here!). This is followed by the carol "Sem smo prišli kralji trije" (Here we come, the Three Wise Men) (Gašperšič et al., 2014: 408–409) while the Three Wise Men perform their sword dance in the house. In the end, when the Three Wise Men and the star bearer leave the house, one of the singers

²⁹ Field research was conducted in: Radsberg/Radiše, January 4, 2012; Vorderberg/Blače, January 5, 2012; Nötsch im Gailtal/Čajna, January 5, 2012; Görttschach/Goriče, January 5, 2014; Tratten/Trate, January 5, 2014; Saak/Čače, January 5, 2015.

³⁰ Usually there are between 10 and 15 singers, while in the Rosen Valley the Three Wise Men sang by themselves (Radsberg/Radiše, January 4, 2012).

³¹ This is a set of prescribed steps and arm movements. The dancers (two against one) exchange positions in the room: arm/sword movements create "different shapes of stars" (Simetinger, in press) and in specific places of the song/dance the star bearer spins the star. For more detail on the history of the sword dance and cultural historical aspects of the dance in the Gail Valley see Kuret, 1986; Kumer, 1981: 52–53; Simetinger, in press.

enters, greets the family in the German language as the everyday language of communication, receives the gift, and leaves (Vorderberg/Blače, January 5, 2012). In Sankt Georg/Šentjurij, the wishes follow the carol “No pjesem žalimo vsem skup zapet” (We’d like to sing a song for you all). Finally, one of the singers says, “Buag mu daj ən dober večar!” (God give us a good evening) while another adds, “Pa prosən za k letə!”³² (Sankt Georg/Šentjurij, January 5, 2014). Among the five observed Epiphany caroling events, these are the only cases where Slovenian greetings or good wishes can be heard within the German-speaking environment. A similar course of this custom with the inclusion of a carol in the Slovenian language also takes place in other villages: “Mi žalimo vsem skupej jeno pesem zapet” from Goritschach/Goriče (January 5, 2015), “Noj piəsəm žalimo in vsem skupaj zapet” from Nötsch im Gailtal/Čajna (January 5, 2012), “Na pisem žalimo vse skupej zapet” from Tratten/Trate (January 5, 2014), and “Noj piəsəm žalimo in vsi skupaj zapet” from Saak/Čače (January 5, 2015).³³

An interesting case of Epiphany caroling comes from Radsberg/Radiše. The village lies in the Rosen Valley, but the custom was brought there from Sankt Paul in the Lower Gail Valley “in the period between the two World Wars by Ludvik Jank, a priest” (Simetinger, in press). Therefore, I see it as a part of the Gail Valley tradition. The basic structure of the custom is similar to those I have already mentioned here, except the Three Wise Men are also singers, i.e., the bearers of the tradition. Including the star bearer, there are only four in the group. The song they sing is “No pesem želimo vsem skupaj zapet.”

The Epiphany caroling described here takes place in the same space as the aforementioned parish fair, which means that the bearers of this tradition who have some knowledge of Slovenian are rare and active speakers are even rarer. Therefore, one of the more interesting elements of the Epiphany carols is the “simplification of words” or their alteration. Unfortunately, the lack of historical sources, specifically sound recordings, means that it is impossible to determine how the texts of the Epiphany carols have been transformed by Germanization, by the ever more limited use of Slovenian, and consequently, the phonetic learning of words. As a result, we can find different “non-standard” words in songs, such as:

... so **Ježa** [Jezusa] *jəskali* ... (Sankt Georg, January 5, 2014)

... so **Ježu** [Jezusu] *jəskali, čer u jasvoh loži* ... (Nötsch im Gailtal/Čajna, January 5, 2012)

... *oj ‘na miro, kadidvo* [kadilo] ... (Tratten/Trate, 1980; Gašperšič et al., 2014: 304)

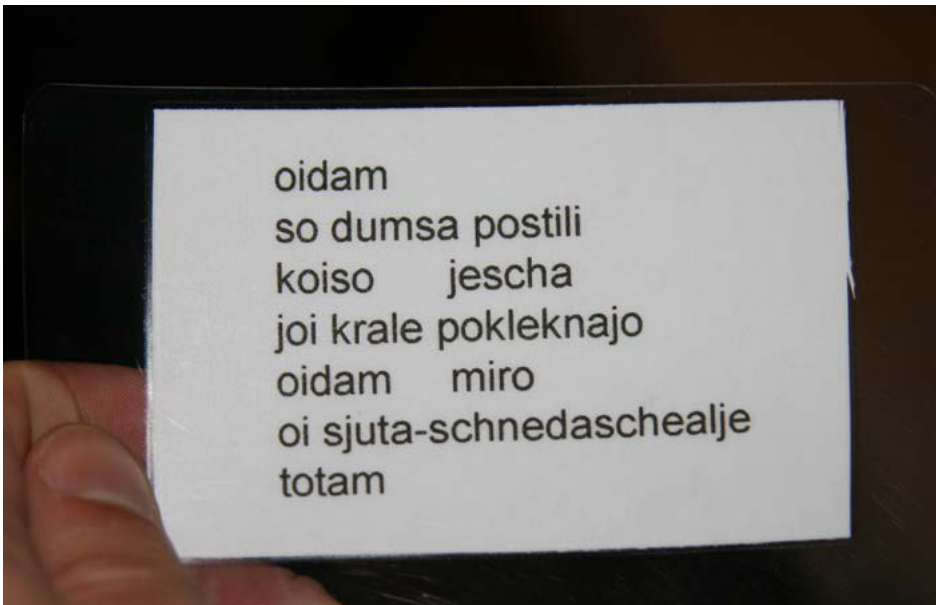
“Due to [...] weak Slovenian language skills,” the transmission of ritual content has been limited (Mauerer-Lausegger, 2022: 141). The exact relationship between the literary, dialect and non-standard (or “broken”) words is difficult to determine. The fact is that

³² I would like to thank Marijan Kropiunik from Vorderberg/Blače for help with the transcription of the greeting.

³³ All titels are a variation of the song We wish to sing a song for you all.



Epiphany carolers and the sword dance. Radsberg/Radiše, January 5, 2012 (photo: Urša Šivic; GNI ZRC SAZU Archive).



An example of a phonetically transcribed Epiphany carol. Tratten/Trate, January 5, 2014 (photo: Urša Šivic; GNI ZRC SAZU Archive).

long-term divergence from Slovenian as an understandable language brings about changes, as Lajko Milisavljevič pointed out during his field research with his annotation to the ritual Epiphany carol from Göriach/Gorje: “Most of the children cannot speak Slovenia; therefore the pronunciation is inconsistent!” (Gašperšič et al., 2014: 105).

The “broken” words are but one piece of evidence that the singers do not learn the songs in a meaningful context. They do not understand the meaning of individual words, so this is a phonetically learned language that shifts from the field of semantics into sound language. Considering the dominance of German in the Gail Valley and the fact that the Slovenian language does not appear during caroling as a language of communication, we can deduce that the song in ritual context carries a special meaning and is therefore preserved in its original language.

SINGING AT SOCIAL EVENTS

Changes in society and social life were drastic, especially in the decades after World War II. This is supported by our interviewees, who say that spontaneous singing at social events is rare nowadays. Still, I observed several such situations during my field research in Austrian Carinthia.

One such occasion was the celebration of a name day with the singers of the vocal group Oktet Suha from the Jaun Valley. Singing is usually a spontaneous accompaniment at the social events of this type of group. However, during the observed situation in Schwabegg (Žvabek) in the Jaun Valley, songs were all in Slovenian, as these individuals come from a patriotic, Slovenian-speaking community. The ritual song that was sung for the celebrant was a toast, “Zapojmo krepko pesem si” (Let’s sing a powerful song), and there were two other toasts: “Kolklor kapljic, tolklo let” and “Na zdravje vam, na zdravje nam” (As many drops, as many years; Cheers to you, cheers to us). Other songs sung during the event were “Pozimi, poleti sem hodil k dekleti” (In winter, in summer I went to my girl), “Jaz sem pa snoč v nem kraji bil” (Last night, I was in one village), “Pa smo fantje vasval” (We boys went courting), “Oj, mi smo pa tu doma” (Oh, this is our home) and “Dekle na vrtu zelenem sedi” (A girl is sitting in a green garden) (Schwabegg, March 18, 2022).

Oktet Suha rarely sings in German, only at official events when the audience is mixed from a language perspective, and they, therefore, want to establish a sort of intercultural dialogue (Schwabegg, March 18, 2022). An example of a similar approach or adjustment to “the Other” could also be one occasion at an inn in Klagenfurt/Celovec, where the singers of the mixed choir Jakob Petelin Gallus and those of Oktet Suha socialized after practice and sang the Slovenian toast “Kolklor kapljic, tolko let” to the German-speaking public, followed by the German song “Ein Prosit, ein Prosit” (Klagenfurt, March 3, 2022).

The singers of the Gailtaler Wildsänger from Vorderberg/Blače (formed in 2014) are among the primary bearers of two customs mentioned in this article, i.e., singing



Gailtaler Wildsänger from Vorderberg/Blače during the singing at an inn. Vorderberg/Blače, July 3, 2022 (photo: Urša Šivic; GNI ZRC SAZU Archive).

accompanying the quintain and the first dance and Epiphany caroling in Vorderberg/Blače. In addition to these and numerous other singing activities, they are also the initiators of spontaneous singing performed at the inns of different villages in the Gail Valley and elsewhere, usually once a month. For example, I observed their singing in 2020 at an inn in partially still Slovenian-speaking Ugovizza on the Italian side of the border.

Although the dominant language element of Oktet Suha is Slovenian, the status of Slovenian and the balance between the languages are entirely different in Vorderberg/Blače in the Gail Valley. This different balance is revealed on a micro level by the members of the Gailtaler Wildsänger. The group consists of eight singers, one of whom speaks Slovenian (standard and dialect), one of whom learned Slovenian as an adult because it is the language of his parents, some of whom speak and understand only a little Slovenian (dialect),³⁴ and two singers who neither speak nor understand the language. That means that apart from the two, the singers sing in Slovenian “by ear.” “They learn Slovenian songs by ear,” and as they have been singing the same songs for years, they learn the pronunciation and “they know what they are singing.” They may not know the meaning of individual words, but they understand the meaning of the song as a whole.³⁵

³⁴ This is a generation whose grandparents still spoke Slovenian or the Carinthian dialect, while they themselves stopped using Slovenian in communication with their children due to stigmatization of the Slovenian language use.

³⁵ M. K. (Vorderberg/Blače). Online Interview, December, 2022.

As the present article examines singing (music) as the bearer of the observed languages, let me conclude by saying something about singing style. The singers in the presented events are often members of (secular or church) choirs or vocal groups. So the high level of singing quality affects the events where they sing spontaneously in more or less arbitrary singing groups, e.g., during the parish fair and Epiphany caroling. The groups mostly sing in four voices, with rich harmony and clear intonation, and have high-quality vocal technique. However, when the caroling groups do not consist of skilled singers, the singing intonation is less assured, and we can often hear two-part singing. Besides these elements, the aesthetic of the singing is significant, often transferred from the environment of vocal groups, which means the interpretations include distinct agogic and dynamic changes.

CONCLUSION

This article presents the observed coexistence of German and Slovenian languages in the bilingual spaces of Austrian Carinthia. I was particularly interested in the use of Slovenian on certain spontaneous and ritual occasions such as church services, funerals, patron saint day, and Epiphany caroling. The cases presented reveal the coexistence of the two languages in a national and linguistically mixed environment.

The research brought to light two perspectives: the use of Slovenian in a predominantly German-speaking environment and the use of Slovenian in a predominantly Slovenian-speaking environment. The latter show less transnational friction (Zerzer, 2000: 319), and there Slovenian is more or less the language of daily communication. Ritual occasions play an important role in the individual's and the community's life in this setting. However, they do not have a unique linguistic role as in the German-speaking environment. Funerals have proven to be an important space for negotiation. While the funeral mass is an attempt to find a balance between the number of speakers of a particular language and the power of that language, it is the language at the graveside, especially the sung language, that defines the national identity of the deceased or their loved ones. Therefore, the choice of "a" language at this site is not only a decision based on the possibility of communication but may reflect a "broader social and cultural context" (Pisk, Šrimec Vendramin, 2021: 24).

The possibilities to introduce and realize the Slovenian language are entirely different in the German-speaking environment. There are not enough institutions to enable the use of the minority language; therefore, the infrastructure for the sociocultural use of the language is too weak. Consequently, over time, the language "ceases to live in intimate, private circumstances" (Stabej, 1999: 21). In the Lower Gail Valley, where German is predominant in public and private life, rituals have a special significance. The singing of the ritual song "Bog nam dej en dober čas" on the patron saint's day (the parish fair), the singing of Epiphany carols in Slovenian, and, last but not least, the bilingual church

service show that the Slovenian language has been preserved as a sung and spoken relic of the ritual events, while the bearers of the custom communicate in German.

In the Slovenian-speaking communities, ritualism is but one of the areas in which the Slovenian language is used and preserved. However, this is different for the German-speaking environment. Except in rare cases, Slovenian is a phonetically learned language (i.e., learned as sound) that conveys its meaning only partially. In such settings, the ritual context is one of the rare occasions when individuals use Slovenian and present the language to the community. These are occasions that, on some level, transcend language, identity, and nationality (and the political obstacles associated with them) and create at least a momentary awareness of the other in shared space. Due to the markedly heterogeneous use of the Slovenian language in Austrian Carinthia, singing and speaking in Slovenian can be an everyday practice in one setting, while in another it can be only a brief moment of awareness of the coexistence of cultural-linguistic, historical, geographical, economic, social, and political identities (Ovsenik, 2010: 33).

This article routinely mentions communities as bearers of ritual and social activities, whether a church choir or singing group, a churchgoing community, a group of carolers, quintainers, or a minority community. An often overlooked factor, however, is the role of the individual in social activities that are understood to be collective. Nevertheless, more than the motivating initiative of one or more individuals is needed. For example, in the bilingual Rába Valley in Hungary, a Hungarian-speaking priest and an organist are the main initiators for using the Slovenian language in singing and prayer (Šivic, 2019a: 128–129). Certain individuals in Austrian Carinthia play a similar role in initiating the use of Slovenian at ritual or spontaneous events (e.g., singers, priests, and researchers). One such person is the Slovenian-speaking singer of the group Gailtaler Wildsänger from Vorderberg/Blače. He has started learning songs in Slovenian and performing them at spontaneous social events. On the other hand, there is a case from Zell-Pfarre/Sele, the most “Slovenian” village in Austrian Carinthia, where persons active in cultural and other activities in the village preserve the Slovenian language (Zell-Pfarre/Sele, March 21, 2022).

Last but not least, it is important to ask what opportunities the observed situations offer for the minority language. Are these opportunities to express oneself in a minority language? Are these opportunities for the preservation of the minority language? Is it a semantic understanding of the language or a chance to use the phonetically learned language in the form of individual words, phrases, verses, or prayers? All these questions can be answered affirmatively to a certain extent since the language situation in Austrian Carinthia is very varied. We should also point out the significant fact that Slovenian, as a phonetically learned language, is used both in sung and spoken form. In the German-speaking environment, the pronunciation or singing of Slovenian words is not only a presentation of sound experiences and an annual renewal of ritual events but also an opportunity to establish an intercultural dialog since in many situations most of the people present “use” Slovenian only when they sing, and when people visited by carol singers can hear it. Thus, one of

the levels of bilingualism is also an opportunity to enter into an event when a German-speaking person or community becomes aware of the bilingualism of their environment. In this way, language remains the defining or distinguishing element and becomes an element of recognition of the other.

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OBREDNOST IN GLASBA KOT ELEMENTA RABE MANJŠINSKEGA JEZIKA

Prispevek se osredinja na sobivanje nemščine in slovenščine na dvojezičnem območju avstrijske Koroške, kjer je nemščina jezik večine in slovenščina jezik avtohtone narodne manjšine. Med terenskim delom (potekalo je med letoma 2012 in 2022) me je zanimala raba slovenščine in njeno razmerje z nemščino v današnjem javnem, verskem in prazničnem življenju v povezavi z glasbo, natančneje pri bogoslužju, pogrebihi, šegah in spontanih družabnih dogodkih.

Del raziskovanja sem namenila slovenščini kot pétemu jeziku in jeziku liturgije v bogoslužju in na pogrebihi. V opazovanem jezikovnem kontekstu se mi je zdelo še posebej pomembno upoštevati govorjeni jezik kot zvočno govorico, saj se je pogosto pokazalo, da je slovenščina izgubila semantično raven in ostala le v fonetično naučeni obliki kot zvočni jezik. Ob opazovanih priložnosti se je pokazalo, da je raba slovenščine precej poljubna: lahko je uporabljena zgolj slovenščina, lahko pa se izmenjuje z nemščino. Delež jezikov in načini izmenjevanja so odvisni od razmerja med govorniki posamičnega jezika v skupnosti, razpoložljivosti slovensko govorečega duhovnika oz. naklonjenosti nemško govorečega duhovnika slovenščini in od navzočnosti slovensko govorečih pevcev. Če je pogrebna maša prostor dvojezičnega prepleta in priložnost za dogovor med sobivajočima slovensko in nemško govorečo skupnostjo, pa je sam pogreb prostor ugotavljanja, potrjevanja, poganjanja in utrjevanja narodnostne in/ali jezikovne identitete pokojnika oz. njegovih svojcev.

Eden obrednih dogodkov, ki je osrednje prizorišče rabe slovenščine, je praznik farnega zavetnika, žegen, s števanjem in prvim rejem. Čeprav je spodnja Ziljska dolina močno germanizirana, pa se v praznični dan vrinejo določene obredne vsebine v slovenščini, ki

pa so skoraj izključno povezane s petjem, naj bo to spontano petje ali petje obredne pesmi »Bog nam daj en dober čas« pod lipo v slovenščini. Čeprav so v preteklosti omenjene šege sodile na slovensko govorno območje, pa so danes promovirane kot regionalna identiteta spodnje Ziljske doline, dvojezičnost pa kot eden njenih elementov.

Drug pomemben obredni dogodek za rabo slovenščine so trikraljevska koledovanja. V spodnji Ziljski dolini sta trikraljevska kolednica in ponekod tudi voščilo v slovenščini relikta v sicer vsakdanji komunikaciji v nemščini. Posledica takšne rabe slovenščine je popačenje in spreminjanje besed, saj so slovenske besede naučene fonetično in jezik tako iz polja semantike prehaja v zvočni jezik.

Spremembe v družbenem in posledično družabnem življenju so bile posebej v desetletjih po 2. svetovni vojni drastične, zato je tudi spontano petje na družabnih dogodkih danes razmeroma redko. Slovenščina se v izmenjavi z nemščino oglasi v stiku z nemško govorečim občinstvom, in sicer kot zavestno ohranjanje pesmi v slovenščini ali pa za navezavo medkulturnega dialoga.

V pretežno slovenskem govornem okolju imajo ritualne priložnosti pomembno vlogo v življenju posameznikov in skupnosti, v nemškem pa so načini uveljavljanja slovenščine drugačni. Ker ni dovolj ustanov, ki bi omogočale rabo manjšinskega jezika, je raba slovenščine okrnjena na redke priložnosti v družinskem okolju in ob nekaterih ritualnih dogodkih. Prav tu vokalna glasba krepi potencial funkcionalnosti jezika; ritualni kontekst je ena od redkih priložnosti, ko posamezniki uporabijo slovenščino in ko jo njihovi sokrajani slišijo. Gre za priložnosti, ki na neki ravni presegajo jezikovne, identitetne, nacionalne in s tem povezane tudi politične ovire in ustvarjajo vsaj trenutno zavedanje o drugem v skupnem prostoru.

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