

The Influence of Surrounding Languages on the Written Form of the Dialect of Dobšiná in the Works of Samuel Pellionis

The proposed research topic for the poster session concerns the influence of surrounding languages on the written form of the German enclave dialect of Dobšiná (named *Topschrisch/Buleenerisch*) in the work of the dialect poet Samuel Pellionis (1870 – 1953). Dobšiná is a small mining town on the border of the Spiš (Zips) region in eastern Slovakia, which used to have a significant German population before the expulsion of Germans from Czechoslovakia due to the Beneš decrees after the Second World War. Today, only a handful of speakers of the dialect of Dobšiná remain in the world. In the first half of the 20th century German speaking communities in the Spiš region did not exist in isolation from surrounding languages; villages and towns had a mixed population (German, Slovak, Hungarian, Jewish, Roma) and access to media in several languages. Current research on language enclaves takes this into account and focuses on language convergence as well as the sociolinguistic aspects of dialects, such as the language attitudes of the speakers. One of the last dialect poets of the Spiš region was Samuel Pellionis, who, rather untypically, was an academically uneducated shoemaker. This had an interesting effect on the written form of the dialect in his work, as he did not accept the spelling system proposed for the dialect by an editor, Rudolf Spangel, relying instead on an intuitive spelling. This was mostly influenced by German spelling, as it is typical for dialects, which are foremost an oral form of language, to start interacting strongly with the standard version once they take written form. The spelling of the dialect in the work of Samuel Pellionis also contains elements of Hungarian spelling, sometimes in his manuscripts, but mainly in his published works up to 1918, where the spelling was often changed to reflect Hungarian rules, for example the letter “s” being changed to “sz”. The reason for these changes lies in the strict Hungarianization policies before the First World War. In the posthumously (1993) published poetry collection *Topscher Gakrokel* the spelling was often changed in favour of consistency, which was often missing in the original work. The proposed poster therefore aims to explore the inconsistencies in the poet’s manuscripts and trace them to the surrounding languages – Hungarian, Slovak, (possibly) Romani, standard German and the system proposed by Rudolf Spangel. Any lexicological and grammatical influences will also be considered, as they can help explain the spelling in the written form of the dialect. In this way the poster should contribute to the research of enclave dialects and language convergence as well as provide a look into how primarily oral forms of language can appear in written form.

Keywords: dialect, Dobšiná, language enclave, Samuel Pellionis, spelling, German, Hungarian, Slovak

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