

The Hungarian Minority in Slovenia and Hungarian as a Minority Language

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Povzetek

Članek obravnava madžarsko manjšino na območju Slovenije in madžarski jezik kot uradni jezik v narodnostno mešanem Prekmurju, ki se nahaja v severovzhodnem delu Slovenije, kjer v več kot 30 naseljih živijo avtohtoni madžarski prebivalci. Na tem območju sta uradna jezika tako slovenščina kot madžarščina. Osredotočamo se na jezikovno politiko madžarske narodne skupnosti in skušamo orisati družbenopravne značilnosti dvojezičnega območja ter na kratko predstaviti zgodovino in okolje madžarske manjšine. Izpostavili bomo tudi kulturološke in informativne dejavnosti madžarske manjšine ter predstavili izbrane madžarske avtorje (Lajos Bence, Albert Halász, Sándor Szúnyogh, Pál Szomi in Judit Zágorec-Csuka) ter obravnavali njihova dela, ki so bila prevedena v slovenščino in izdana v knjižni obliki zbirki z naslovom *Mostovi na meji*. Posebej izpostavljamo prevode madžarskih književnih del, ki so bila predstavljena na mednarodnem literarnem festivalu Vilenica, v izboru pesnikov, prozaistov, dramatikov in esejistov iz Srednje Evrope in Madžarske. V zaključku ocenjujemo pomen sodobnih madžarskih prevodov v slovenski jezik v luči medkulturne komunikacije in večjezičnosti v državah Evropske unije.

Ključne besede: Madžarska manjšina, madžarščina, prevod književnih del, književna povezava med slovenščino in madžarščino.

0 INTRODUCTION

For nearly a thousand years Hungarians have been living in the immediate vicinity of the Slovene nation. Even so, their history is quite inadequately embedded in the minds of Slovenes. Similarly, Hungarians also do not possess great knowledge about the Slovene nation, its history and characteristics (Göncz 2004: 5). In today's world, national borders have begun to lose their political significance. Since both Slovenians and Hungarians live in the European Union, they should possess good knowledge of their neighbours. The Hungarian minority living in Slovenia is very well aware of this, and thus becoming a bridge between the two nations.

Under the Trianon Treaty signed in 1919, villages on the Slovene-Hungarian border were joined to Prekmurje and, consequently, to the Kingdom of SHS, where Hungarians lived in the land known today as the counties of Vas and Zala. Since 1991, approximately 7,000 members of the Hungarian minority live in Slovenia, and similar groups also live in Austria, Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia. The third and fourth generation of the Hungarian minority has been living in Prekmurje since 1919, and most were born in the so-called contact zone on the triple border between Slovenia, Croatia and Austria. The introduction of the Schengen border in 2016 brought along special political rights, which allowed for a socio-economic environment and relationships with the Hungarian minority in the Carpathian Basin, despite strong assimilation and the fact that Prekmurje still remains an underdeveloped area in Slovenia.

1 THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE HUNGARIAN MINORITY

Members of the Hungarian national community live in approximately 30 villages along the Slovene-Hungarian border, where in addition to Slovene the Hungarian language is also considered an official one. The Hungarian minority resides in the municipalities of Hodoš/Hodos, Moravske Toplice, Šalovci, Lendava and Dobrovnik/Dobronak, has indigenous rights and status, and is protected by constitution and sectoral legislation. The rights stipulated in the Constitution can be exercised only in the area of the indigenous Hungarian community. Moreover, the use of national symbols and the right to cooperate with the Slovene nation is also guaranteed.

In order to preserve their identity, the minority may also independently establish organisations, develop economic, scientific, research, cultural and educational activities, as well as activities in the field of public information and publishing.

Members of the national community exercise their rights through their representatives in municipal and city councils, and in the National Assembly.

Hungarians have been living in compact groups in Slovenia for centuries, and do not feel like foreigners or immigrants, but rather like an indigenous people; they are a national community that has become a traditional, long-lasting and classical characteristic of Slovenia. The Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia explicitly emphasises the constitutional rights of the Hungarian nation, regardless of the number of its members (Article 64).

2 CULTURAL ACTIVITIES OF THE HUNGARIAN MINORITY

The Hungarian national community has established nearly 60 amateur societies and groups (folklore, music groups, choirs, recitation and drama groups). Their work and organisational tasks are managed by the Cultural Institute of the Hungarian Nationality (*Magyar Nemzetiségi Művelődési Intézet*) and the *Bánffy Center*. The Cultural Center (*Művelődési Központ*) in Lendava is also an important cultural asset for the Hungarian national community, and this versatile cultural facility is the largest in Prekmurje, with the Republic of Hungary also contributing to its construction. Since 1958 the Hungarian Nationality Information Institute in Lendava has regularly published a weekly newspaper, *Népiújság*, in Hungarian for the Hungarian national community. Radio and television programs are prepared within the framework of the RTV Public Institute of Slovenia, in particular at the Regional RTV Center in Maribor. *MMR Radio* in Lendava provides 18 hours and 15 minutes of daily programs in Hungarian, which are played even during the weekends. The television programmes includes the show *Mostovi/Hidak*, which is broadcast on both the national and regional Maribor TV channels. The show is broadcast four times a week for 30 minutes, with one-time repeat broadcasts during most of the year, and three times a week for 30 minutes with one-time repeat broadcasts during the summer. According to Article 30 of the Radiotelevizija Slovenija Act, the programs of the national communities are co-financed by the state.

3 LITERATURE OF THE HUNGARIAN NATIONALITY IN SLOVENIA

After 1945 and until 1961, there was no Hungarian literature in Prekmurje, and during the period of the Informbiro (1948) and the Iron Curtain the Hungarian minority had no media of its own. However, in the 1960s *Lajos Vlaj* published a

poetry book titled *Versek* (1961). In the 1970s arose the first generation of writers of the Hungarian nationality; Pál Szomi, József Varga, Sándor Szúnyogh and István Palkó published an anthology titled *Tavaszcvárás* (*Expecting Spring*, 1972). During the 1980s, new faces appeared in literature and brought with them new trends. These were the new authors: Lajos Bence, Zoltán Gábor, Leona Sz. Kanyó, Erzsébet Rozsmán, József Szabó, János Toplák Czimmermann, and Zsuzsanna Koncz Bági. In 1991 the Republic of Slovenia was born, which brought some changes to the system (along with a new constitution, democracy, pluralism, etc.). During this time new authors from the Hungarian minority worked together in publishing the *Muratáj* magazine (1988): Gabriella Bence Utroša, László Göncz, János Göntér, Albert Halász, István Hagymás, Rózsa Kercksmár, Mária Szabó, Ferenc Vida, and Judit Zágorec-Csuka. In addition to works of fiction, works of academic literature were also published, mainly in the field of linguistics, history and geography, literary history, ethnography, the aesthetics of film, fine arts, etc.

The literature of the Hungarian minority was mostly unrecognised in the wider circles of Slovene culture, especially with regard to the translation of works into Slovene. This led to the decision of the *Franc-Franc* publishing house in Murska Sobota to present modern Hungarian literature in the Republic of Slovenia by publishing the *Mostovi na meji* book collection, together with opuses of chosen authors. After translating the poetry book *Slepci na zemljevidu* (2003), Judit Zágorec Csuka went on to translate other works of poetry, prose and essays in 2010–2014: *V sebi zate* (2010), Lajos Bence, *Vzklit iz kamna* (2011), Albert Halász, *Vsestvarnost* (2012), Sándor Szúnyogh, *Zvestoba travnih bilk* (2013) and *Jesenska nebina* (2014), Pál Szomi. All the books published between 2010 and 2014 had a single aim: the literary works should enable Slovene readers to further familiarise themselves with deeper thoughts, emotions, feelings toward their fellow citizens of a different ethnicity, and their experiences regarding their own minority positions. The accompanying editorial notes words served to offer Slovene readers more rounded information regarding the literary opuses and members of the Hungarian minority in Slovenia. The aim of the *Mostovi na meji* book collection, as stated by its editor *Franc Just*, was to bring forth and transform the phrase “They live among us” into “They live with us”, and thus emphasise the state of compassion and co-experience.

4 MULTILINGUALISM AND MULTICULTURALISM AMONG MEMBERS OF THE HUNGARIAN NATIONALITY AND THE SLOVENE NATION

Literature has played a unique role in individual historical periods. It is also important to consider through which methods any translated literature established has itself within the borders of other culture and literature. Who are the creators

of this translated literature, what were their purposes and styles? To what extent does the translated literature adapt to the logic of the target language, and how does it adapt to the specifications of the literature in the source language? With the European Union the importance of translation has increased significantly; as of today, the EU boasts more than 23 official languages, and with new members entering the Union this number will only increase. One of the goals of the European Commission is also to develop multilingualism, promote foreign language skills and preserve the cultural identities of nations. In her articles, the literary historian Dr. Jutka Rudaš addresses the fact that changes in the perception of Slovene literature have occurred in the last twenty years, which has led to an increase in the perception of the Hungarian translated literature within Slovene literature and reading culture in general. However, some shortcomings are also to be noted in the field of translation, and on this basis it is evident that much work is yet to be done by translators as well as the cultural policymakers who support the publication of translated works.

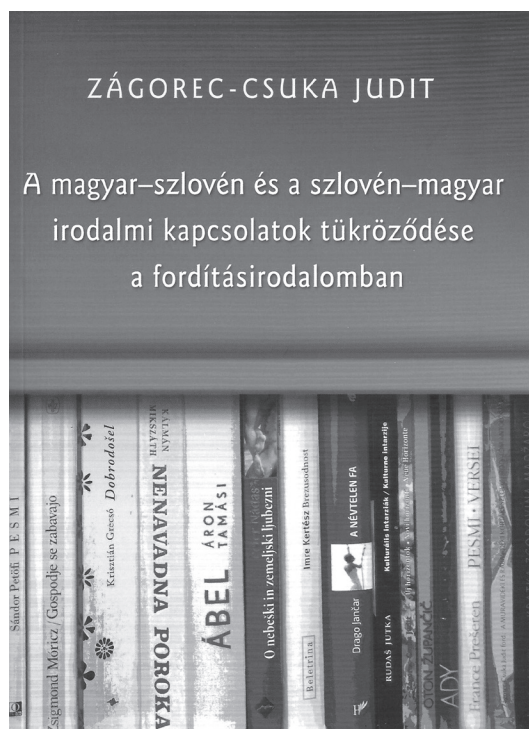


Figure 1. Judit Zágorec-Csuka: *A magyar-szlovén és a szlovén magyar irodalmi kapcsolatok tükröződése a fordításirodalomban.* (Hungarian-Slovene and Slovene-Hungarian Literary Relations within Translated Literature). Pilisvörösvár. Muravidék Baráti Kör Kulturális Egyesület, 2015., 7-246.

5 SLOVENE TRANSLATIONS OF HUNGARIAN LITERATURE AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Vilko Novak and *Štefan* Barbarič were two of the most important translators in the 1950s, after the Second World War. Both were professors of literature who used their Hungarian knowledge to translate Hungarian literature into Slovene. Štefan Barbarič translated the works of the following Hungarian authors: Gyula Illyés, Ferenc Molnár and Zsigmond Móricz. In the 1960s, Barbarič introduced many other Hungarian authors (Áron Tamási, Tibor Déry, Ferenc Sánta, László Németh) by adding excerpts from their literary works to the analyses of their literary opuses. Vilko Novak and Tine Debeljak translated (1940) into Slovene a drama by Imre Madách titled *Tragedija človeka* (*Az ember tragédiája*), for which they received the PEN Club prize. In the 1960s, the authors Drago Grah, Jože Hradil, Jože Fričar and Jože Olaj also endeavoured to translate Hungarian literature into Slovene, which marked them as the translators of the decade. At this time they translated the classics of Hungarian literature, to which they added also many works of the 20th century, namely those of Mór Jókai, Kálmán Mikszáth, Zsigmond Móricz, László Németh, Lajos Zilahy, Ferenc Sánta and György Molodova. At the beginning of the 70s, István Palkó and Orsolya Gállos published several studies through which they informed Slovene readers about Hungarian poetry and literature in general. In addition to the studies, they also published the translated literature of many Hungarian authors, namely the works of Mór Jókai, Endre Koložsvári Grandpierre, György Kardos, János Székely, Sándor Petőfi, Géza Gárdonyi, Ákos Kertész, Menyhért Lakatos, Zsigmond Móricz, Lajos Zilahy and Endre Ady.

Translators of Hungarian fiction grew more creative during the 1970s, after the establishment of the Pomurska založba publishing house, which allowed them to publish translated works of Hungarian literature. During that time new faces emerged in the field of translation; among the first was a professor of Slovene language and literature, *Elizabeta Bernjak*, who translated *Igral je tudi sleparjem* (*A latroknak is játszott*) by Gion Nándor (1980) and *Ararat* (*Ararát*) by Lajos Zilahy (1977). The publication of bilingual poetry collections started a new trend in the 1970s. In 1973, Jože Hradil translated and published a bilingual (Hungarian-Slovene) collection by Sándor Petőfi titled *Apostol* (*Az Apostol*). In 1977, Pomurska založba published another bilingual collection, this time a work of Endre Ady entitled *Kri in zlato* (*Vér és arany*). The selected poems were prepared and translated by Kajetan Kovič and Jože Hradil. In the 1980s, a large number of translators translated the Hungarian literature: Drago Grah, Jože Fričar, Jože Olaj, Štefan Sedonja, Vilko Novak, Kajetan Kovič, Jože Hradil, Orsolya Gállos, Vlado Peteršič and Marjanca Mihelič. Thanks to such translators, readers could enjoy the works of the following authors: Endre Ady, Nándor Gion, Ferenc Mór,

Endre Illés, Miklós Radnóti, Anna Jókai, Mór Jókai, György G. Kardos, Géza Gárdonyi, and György Konrád. In light of Central European culture of that time, many studies about Hungary, and Hungarian culture and literature were published. The following translated Hungarian dramas were also performed on Slovene stages: *Uspavanka* (Altató) by László Fodor (1955); *Tatovi* (Tolvajok, 1970) and *Mačja igra* (Macskajáték (1975, 1980) by István Örkény; *Liliom* (Liliomfi) by Ferenc Mór (1975).

In 1993, Marjanca Mihelič translated *Hrabalova knjiga* (Hrabál könyve) by Péter Esterházy into Slovene; the book was then published by publisher Wieser in Klagenfurt. Even so, Esterházy's novels became popular in Slovene literature only in later periods. Translated by Marjanca Mihelič, the essays of Péter Esterházy and György Konrád were mostly published in *Nova revija* (New Magazine). After 2000, Hungarian literature was translated into Slovene by the following translators: Marjanca Mihelič, Jože Hradil, Gabriella Gaál, Mladen Pavičić, Jožef Smej, Judita Trajber, and Stela Munk. During this period, they translated the works of Péter Esterházy, Péter Zilahy, László Darvasi, Agáta Gordon, György Dragomán, Krisztián Grecsó, Ottó Tolnai, Imre Kertész and other. They also translated the works of various authors, such as Sándor Márai, Artúr Munk, Dezső Kosztolányi, Béla Hamvas, Antal Szerb, Géza Gárdonyi, and Lajos Harsányi. In 1986 the Slovene Writers' Association founded the *International Literary Festival Vilenica*, and since then it has been arranged annually in the second half of September. The highlight of the festival is the awarding of the Vilenica International Literary Prize. The festival takes place on the Karst Plateau inside the Vilenica Cave. The prestigious prize has already been awarded to a number of Hungarian writers and poets.

6 CONCLUSIONS

For nearly a thousand years Hungarians have been living in the immediate vicinity of the Slovene nation. The third and fourth generation of the Hungarian minority has been living in Prekmurje since 1919. There are about 7,000 members of this minority, and most were born in the so-called contact zone of the triple border between Slovenia, Croatia and Austria. Members of the Hungarian national community live in approximately 30 villages along the Slovene-Hungarian border, where in addition to Slovene, Hungarian is also an official language. Hungarians have been living in compact groups in Slovenia for centuries, and do not feel like foreigners or immigrants, but rather like an indigenous people. The literature of Hungarian nationality has been developing since the 1960s, during which time generations of writers of Hungarian nationality in Slovenia were

connected by the *Muratáj* magazine. Representative authors of the Hungarian nationality who have been active since 1960 are the following: *Pál Szomi, József Varga, Sándor Szűnyogh, Lajos Bence, Zoltán Gábor, János Toplák Czimmernann, Zsuzsanna Báti Koncz, Gabriella Bence Utroša, László Göncz, Albert Halász, Judit Zágorec-Csuka, Péter Pál*. The cultural activity of the Hungarian minority is mostly conducted by the Cultural Institute of the Hungarian Nationality and the *Bánffy Center* in Lendava. The media activity of this group takes place within the RTV Public Institute of Slovenia and the Regional RTV Center in Maribor, where Hungarian programs are broadcast (Hungarian radio *MMR* and TV show *Mostovi/Hidak*). Most information about Hungarian literature is provided to readers through works of translation or partial translation. Although the amount has been increasing in the past 20 years, there is still relatively little published criticism and few translations of Hungarian authors. However, the growth in the number of such publications is supported by the presence of Hungarian authors at the *Vilenica International Literary Festival*, arranged annually since 1986. Since its foundation, the *Vilenica Prize* has been awarded by the Slovene Writers' Association to the best authors in Central Europe, whose spiritual value connects the entire European space. Among the winners have been the following authors of Hungarian literature: Péter Esterházy (1988), Péter Nádas (1998) and László Krasznahorkai (2014). The *Crystal Vilenica* was awarded to: Lajos Grendel (1991), Endre Kukorelly (1992), István Vörös (2000) and Pál Závada (2002). Well-known translators of modern Hungarian literature into Slovene include Jože Hradil, Marjanca Mihelič, Gabriella Gaál and Mladen Pavičić. Multilingualism is the basis for the diversity of European culture. In this multilingual cultural space that is also both Slovene and Hungarian, the demand for translation of literary works has increased. This tendency should also be supported by various competitions intended for publishing Slovene and Hungarian literature in both countries. The Hungarian minority is aware that its place is within a dialogue of different cultures in a multilingual European Union, but this dialogue is primarily derived from the Hungarian-Slovene cultural and linguistic dialogue, and also from the coexistence of the Hungarian minority in Slovenia, where the Slovene nation represents the majority.

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