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Language of Rusyns in Slovakia: Controversies, Vagaries, and Rivalry of Codification Discourses

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Slovakia is a rather young country in Central Europe that was established on 1st January 1993 after the peaceful division of Czechoslovakia. The development of national and language structure of the population in Slovakia is closely related to the changing geopolitical, social, and cultural context. One consequence of this complicated history is a relatively high degree of language diversification. The territory of current Slovakia was a part of the Hungarian Kingdom up to 1918. After World War I, Slovakia became part of Czechoslovakia. During the World War II period (1939–1945), the southern part of Slovak territory was occupied by Hungary, and the rest of the area was established as the Slovak state under the influence of Nazi Germany. After the World War II, Slovakia was part of Czechoslovakia once again up to 1992. This period was mostly connected with totalitarian communist regime (1948–1989). Sociopolitical and economic changes that began in 1989 created a new situation for national and language minority development. The restoration of political freedom and plurality led to emancipation of minority languages and cultures. Slovakia has several minority languages. According to the population census in 2011, Slovak language as a mother tongue was declared by 78.6% of Slovak citizens. The most important minority languages declared as a mother tongue are Hungarian (9.4%), Romany (2.3%), Rusyn/Ruthenian (1%), Czech (0.65%), Ukrainian (0.1%), and German (0.1%). There are also groups with Polish, Croatian, Bulgarian, and other mother tongues in Slovakia. Our chapter deals with the Ruthenian/Rusyn language, which codification was very long and complicated process.

Statistical Data About Rusyns and Their Interpretation

The number of Rusyns living in the territory of Slovakia has been tracked since 1880 (Table 1 and Fig. 1) when language affiliation was included for the first time in the statistical census. This particular census is very important because it helped contradict the myth based on identification of the national and religious affiliations. Until then the idea that appurtenance to the Greek Catholic Church (also referred as the Rus´ faith) automatically meant the Rusyn ethnicity prevailed. Some overestimated numbers of Rusyns made before 1880 (e.g., Magocsi 2016) stemmed in this belief. Results of the 1880 census confirmed that the great part of Rusyn Greek Catholics (97%) adhered to the Greek Catholic Church. On the other side though, only half of the Greek Catholics living in the territory of the Prešov Eparchy affiliated with the Rusyn mother tongue (Šoltés 2004). When interpreting the data about the language and ethnic structure of population in Slovakia, it is necessary to bear in mind methodological differences between individual censuses, above all the methodology adopted in the statistical survey and the definition of nationality. Censuses carried out in the Kingdom of Hungary in 1880–1910 recorded the mother tongue of the population as the determining attribute of ethnic identity. However, since 1900 mother tongue was often confused with preferred language. This difference might have led to the statistical Hungarization (magyarization) (Benža et al. 2015; Tišliar 2007). In 1919, an additional population census was carried out, and the interviewed persons freely declared their own ethnic (tribal) identity. Rusyn was one of the options; mother tongue was not among them (Benža et al. 2015; Tišliar 2007). In 1921 ethnic (tribal) identity was directly verified as the main trait associated with the mother tongue. The Ruthenian (Carpatho-Russian) ethnicity was in the common

Table 1 Number and proportion of population claiming Rusyn and Ukrainian ethnicity and mother tongue living in the territory of Slovakia in 1880–2011. (Sources: Benža et al. 2015; Tišliar 2007; Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic)

	Rusyn mother tongue		Rusyn ethnicity		Ukrainian mother tongue		Ukrainian ethnicity	
Census year	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1880	78,941	3.21	–	–	–	–	–	–
1890	84,787	3.28	–	–	–	–	–	–
1900	84,906	3.04	–	–	–	–	–	–
1910	97,014	3.31	–	–	–	–	–	–
1919	–	–	81,332	2.78	–	–	–	–
1921	–	–	88,983	2.97	–	–	–	–
1930	–	–	95,359	2.87	–	–	–	–
1950	–	–	–	–	–	–	48,231	1.40
1961	–	–	–	–	–	–	35,435	0.85
1970	–	–	–	–	–	–	38,959	0.86
1980	–	–	–	–	–	–	36,849	0.74
1991	49,099	0.93	17,197	0.33	9,480	0.18	13,281	0.25
2001	54,907	1.02	24,201	0.45	7,879	0.15	10,814	0.20
2011	55,469	1.03	33,482	0.62	5,689	0.11	7,430	0.14

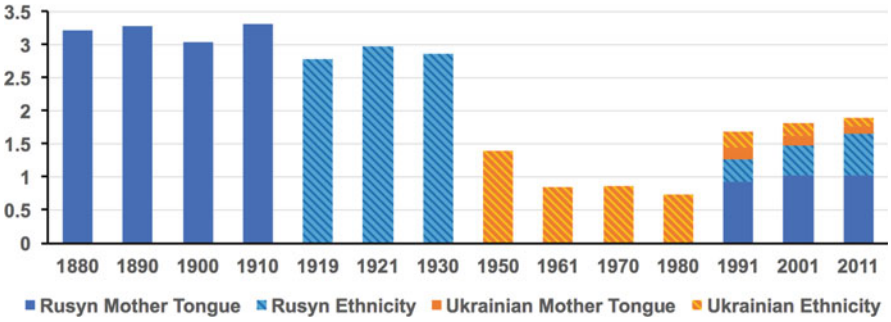

Fig. 1 Percent of population claiming Rusyn and Ukrainian ethnicity and mother tongue living in the territory of Slovakia in 1880–2011. (Sources of data: Benža et al. 2015; Tišliar 2007; Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (Elaborated by Kvetoslava Matlovičová))

group along with the Russian and Little Russian (Ukrainian) ethnicities. In 1930 the ethnic identity was verified by the mother tongue. The 1950–2011 censuses included an option for the population to adhere to ethnicity "inwardly felt" as the right one. But the Rusyn ethnicity was not tracked from 1950 to 1980. In 1950 and 1961, the Ukrainian and Russian ethnicities were in a common category, while in 1970 they were separated. In the 1991–2011 censuses, Ukrainian and Rusyn ethnicities appeared, and mother tongue was also tracked. The 2011 census sheets asked for the most common language used in a household (Benža et al. 2015; Matlovič 2005).

The number of Rusyns in the territory of Slovakia slowly increased by the end of the nineteenth century. The negative aspect was the economically motivated migration to the United States at the turn of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when about 150,000 Rusyns left (Botík 2007). The number of Rusyns in the current territory of Slovakia peaked in the first decade of the twentieth century amounting to 3.3% of total population. Of the Rusyn population living in the Kingdom of Hungary in 1910, 21.6% lived in the territory of Slovakia. Following the geopolitical changes that took place after World War I and the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic, the confused self-identification of Rusyns led to a temporary decline in 1919, but then the number of Rusyns returned in 1921 and 1930. The overall numbers of Rusyn, Russian, and Ukrainian ethnicities which increased during the interwar period were also due to immigration of Russians and Ukrainians. But the end of the World War II brought about serious changes. The share of Rusyns and their percentage sharply decreased as the result of migration processes. On the one hand, it was the resettlement in the Czech boundary areas after the displacement of Germans; about 20,000 Rusyns took part in this resettlement. On the other hand, some groups emigrated in search of work to the Czech industrial regions (Konečný 2015). The exchange of population (with an option to choose citizenship) between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union was another ongoing process. From 1945 to 1947, 12,401 inhabitants (optants) of Slovakia moved out the Western Ukrainian Oblasts of Volyn, Rivno, and Zakarpattia (Transcarpathian oblast) (Beňušková 2006). Additional factors also intervened such as the communist regime enforced ukrainization, the eradication of the Greek Catholic Church, and the forced conversion to the Orthodox Church in the 1950s meant to follow the Soviet pattern. Some Rusyns turned down the Ukraine option and preferred to remain in Slovakia or to join the Roman Catholic Church (Konečný 2015). Between 1964 and 1968, the number of Rusyns increased with the first wave of re-optants (70% of optants) coming from the Soviet Ukraine. The second wave of re-optants (1,806 persons) arrived to Slovakia in the 1990s (Beňušková 2006).

The Present Status of the Rusyn Settlement in Slovakia

The 2011 census data reported 33,482 Rusyns or 0.62% of Slovakia's population. And 55,489 persons, that is, 1.03%, cited Rusyn as their mother tongue. A gradual drop in number and proportion of Ukrainian ethnicity members occurred from 1991 to 2011 in Slovakia and also those declaring Ukrainian as a mother tongue. These results confirm the gradual assertion in search of identity (or branding) of the Rusyn ethnic population in Slovakia (Matlovič and Matlovičová 2012).

In terms of spatial distribution, the Rusyn population is concentrated in Northeast Slovakia (Fig. 2). The population reporting the largest percentage of Rusyn mother tongue (5.9% of total population) is the region of Prešov. This region has 86.7% of all Rusyns in Slovakia. The region of Košice where Rusyns amount to 0.67% of population and 9.53% of all Rusyns in Slovakia ranks second. It is followed by the region of Bratislava with 0.1% of Rusyns and 1.86% of all Slovak Rusyns. Only

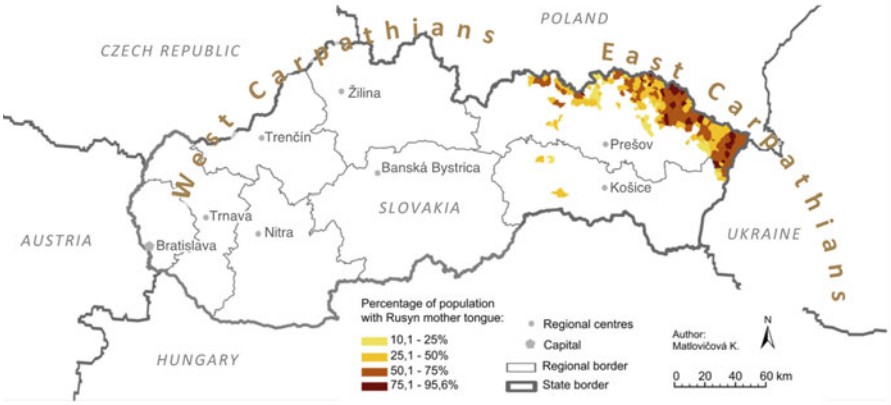

Fig. 2 Municipalities in Slovakia where Rusyns exceeded 10% of the population in 2011 (Elaborated by Kvetoslava Matlovičová)

1.91% of Rusyns live elsewhere in the country. At the district level, Rusyns prevail only in the Medzilaborce district where they represent 57.72% of the population. They also live in these districts: Snina (24.56%), Svidník (24.34%), Stropkov (14.06%), Stará Ľubovňa (12.25%), Humenné (7.11%), and Bardejov (6.96%); 79.43% of all Rusyns in Slovakia are concentrated in these districts.

As far as individual municipalities are concerned, in 2011 there were 216 municipalities where the proportion of Rusyn population exceeded 10%. They are mostly small villages. Of the 216 municipalities, 178 reported that the Rusyn population was less than 500; 108 municipalities had fewer than 200, and in 59 there were less than 100 inhabitants. More than 50% of the share of Rusyns were found in 110 municipalities, and more than 75% Rusyns lived in 26 municipalities. The largest shares of inhabitants with the Rusyn mother tongue were in the following municipalities: Ruský Potok in district Snina (95.52%), Ruská Volová in district Snina (93.69%), Obručné in district Stará Ľubovňa (92.68%), and Michajlov in district Snina (90%). A very large majority of these are very small communes with under 200 people. The proportion of Rusyns reached more than 10% only in three Slovak towns: Medzilaborce (51.18%), Svidník (29.8%), and Snina (14.36%). In absolute numbers of Rusyns living in villages and towns in 2011, they were Svidník (3,493), Medzilaborce (3,485), Humenné (3,293), Snina (2,976), Košice (2,609), Prešov (1,758), Bardejov (1,680), Stakčín (995), Stará Ľubovňa (937), and Kamienka (901, and Bratislava (865).

Discourses on Codification of the Rusyn Language

Rusyns, in spite of major efforts of several generations of intellectuals and enthusiasts, did not succeed in codifying their language at the time of a national revival in the nineteenth century. Geopolitical circumstances were also not favorable for the solution of the issue during the great part of the twentieth century. This situation was also complicated by interpreting Rusyn identity (Plišková 2012). Konečný (2000) rightfully concluded that this was the result of several synergistic factors. One was the aforementioned frontier nature of geographic position of the Rusyns settlement regions, both in the figurative and literal sense of the word and its prevailing rural character. If the concept of Jacobs (1970) about the key role of cities in civilization's progress of mankind is applied, the absence of any distinctive urban center was a major handicap for Rusyns. Both larger urban centers of the Rusyn, that is, Prešov (now in Slovakia) and Uzhhorod (now in Ukraine), were outside the compact settlement region of Rusyns; the function of administrative centers was assumed by the Greek Catholic Church (Danilák 2006; Magocsi 1994).

Confusion and contentious issues were also manifested in the field of identification and self-identification of Rusyns. Their interpretation requires a consistent application of the contextual approach. With the changing geographical and historical context in the region, the significance of some ethnic identities differed. Rusyns themselves use for their identification derived from the noun *Rus*. It creates a confusing situation because it is not possible to relate it to the geographical notion *Russia* and *Russian* as occasionally happens. The notion *Rus* and its derivatives have been used for reference purposes for eastern slaves or their territories since the Middle Ages. The ethnonym Rusyn was also used for inhabitants of Galicia and Bukovina (as parts of Austro-Hungarian Empire) or even in a more general sense to Belarusians and Ukrainians. This issue is further complicated by the fact that ethnonyms "Rusyn," "Rusnák," "Rusňák," or historical "Karpatorus," "Karpatorusín," "Uhrorus," "Malorus," and "Ruthén" did not refer only to the ethnic or national identity but to one's confession, that is, an identification with the eastern branch of Christianity (Greek Catholic or Orthodox Churches) or an affiliation to a peculiar regional community (Gajdoš 2004; Magocsi 2016). An ethnographic classification of population in the Rusyn area of settlement is an additional aspect. Terms like Lemkos, Boykos, Hutsuls, Verkhovyntsi, and Dolynians are used, although Lemko is used not only in terms of ethnography but in Polish where it has been used since the beginning of the twentieth century for Rusyns living in Southeastern Poland, west of the San River (Magocsi 1999, 2016). The latest sociological research in Slovakia showed that the ethnonym "Rusín" prevails there. "Rusnák" is less used. Ukrainian inhabitants preferred the term "Rusín-Ukrajinec" or "Rusín/Ukrajinec," that is, artificial constructs aimed at a compromise (Gajdoš et al. 2001; Baumgartner and Gajdoš 2002; Konečný 2015).

Authors involved with various aspects of the codifying and emancipating processes of Rusyns were many (e.g., Danilák 2006; Haraksim 1997; Jabur 2000; Konečný 2000, 2015; Koporová 2016; Magocsi 1996, 2006, 2016; Plišková 2004, 2007, 2012, 2015; Sopoliga 2011; and Vaňko 2000). There is no consensus on the

origin of the Rusyn language. But the fact that the oldest documents written in the Rusyn language are from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries may serve as a starting point (Dudášová-Krišššáková 2015). In the eighteenth century, the first attempts to process and interpret the history of Rusyns in the Kingdom of Hungary appeared. The study of Slovak author A. F. Kollár *O pôvode, rozvoji a živote Rusínov Uhorska*/About Origins, Development, and Life of Rusyns in the Kingdom of Hungary in 1749 (Konečný 2015) serves as one example. According to authors involved with the history of Rusyn language codification, four discourses exist: Church Slavonic discourse, Russian discourse, Ukrainian discourse, and a Rusyn discourse.

Church Slavonic Discourse

This is oldest of the four discourses. It dominated from the last quarter of the eighteenth century to the first half of the nineteenth century. Its key actors were the Greek Catholic clergy whose influence increased after the Mukachevo Eparchy was declined under the jurisdiction of the Eger diocese in 1771. The determining factor in its growth was the development of schooling which was facilitated by the Theresian and Josephian school reforms. The clergy followed the deep-rooted tradition of using Church Slavonic as the liturgical language. As the oldest grammar of the language used by Rusyns in the territory of Slovakia from 1770, it was authored by a Basilian monk A. Kocák. It was based on the Carpathian version (edition) of the Church Slavonic language (Magocsi 1996).

Development of Slavonic languages followed the line from the primeval Indo-European, over primeval Slavonic, to Old Slavonic. The primeval Slavonic language unity terminated due to the divergent development in the second half of the first millennium A.D. It was when the Old Slavonic detached from the primeval Slavic language. Its base was in the language of Bulgarian-Macedonian Slavs living northeast of Thessaloniki. It was merit of the Thessaloniki brothers Constantine and Methodius and their mission that in 863, the Old Slavonic language and the first Slavic script arrived to Great Moravia, that is, the territory of Slovakia (Dudášová-Krišššáková 2015). The Church Slavonic language developed in the Middle Ages (tenth to twelfth centuries) precisely from the Old Slavonic. It thrived especially in areas where the eastern rite (Slav-Byzantine), that is, Orthodox and later Greek Catholic Churches were pursued. Its character varied because it developed individually in several dispersed areas and reflected the local influences of live dialects. It is how several varieties (so-called editions) of Church Slavonic developed in the twelfth century. The Carpathian edition of the Church Slavonic developed in the seventeenth century (Dudášová-Krišššáková 2015). M. Štec (2005) asserts that it is only a Carpathian subedition of the Ukrainian edition of the Church Slavonic. Church Slavonic fulfilled the function of both the standard and liturgical languages from the twelfth century until the period of national awakening in the whole area of Eastern Slavs.

The cultural and emancipation objectives though were not the only motive. From an instrumentalist point of view, in the background of this Church Slavonic

Fig. 3 The statue of A. Dukhnovych in Prešov, Slovakia (foto by René Matlovič)

discourse, there also were political interests, above all the massive nature of the movement. Rus´ faith, as the Greek Catholic confession was referred to in the contemporary context, was concerned with integrating believers regardless of their ethnic origins (Konečný 2000).

Church Slavonic reached its limits given its archaic nature. It was only used in the church environment in creating a spiritual literature and use in liturgy. It was not a live or currently used language at the time. It became a barrier to the success of the Church Slavonic codification discourse (Plišková 2007). Some Rusyn intellectuals tried to solve the problem by supplementing the Church Slavonic by Russian with vernacular elements. But this hybrid alternative lacked any fixed grammatical system for the competing discourses. In this hybrid language, for example, the term of *"jazyčie-jazychye"* is used which has a pejorative connotation (Plišková 2007). This solution was also promoted by a prominent Rusyn writer and priest, A. Dukhnovych (Duchnovič) (Fig. 3), who's changing attitudes, however, introduced confusion into the codification discourses. Dukhnovych firstly discerned the lowly form of language, the dialects, from the high form of the Church Slavonic enriched by the elements of Rusyn dialects and the Russian language. In the 1850s, he gave preference to the Russian discourse and treated

the Rusyn dialect with great contempt. He strictly negated the Ukrainian discourse (Plišková 2015). In spite of his disparate attitude, Dukhnovych is highly respected as a prominent personality of the Rusyn movement). It might have been one of the reasons that the Rusyn codification process itself was concluded with a great delay compared to other languages. When the attitude of the codification process actors reflected the changing social context, the social-constructivist nature of codification became fully evident. The Church Slavonic discourse lost its position in the 1850s. Eventually it would be pushed out of the scene by the other three rival codification discourses.

Russian Discourse

The Russian discourse emerged in the 1850s and maintained its influence until the 1950s. It was associated with the promotion of standard Russian as the base for the codification of the Rusyn language. The main actors were members of secular Rusyn intelligentsia. As the rural Rusyn area did not offer them the appropriate conditions for personal progress, they left mainly for Russia for study and work. Some maintained contacts with compatriots in the spirit of Slavonic solidarity as they were fascinated by the grandeur and power of the Russian nation and the Russian state and relied on the idea that it could provide protection to all Slavs. They referred to their compatriots as *Karpatorosses* and supported the representatives of the Russian discourse at home. One of impulses for the Russian discourse was the presence of Russian troops invited by the Austrian Emperor which helped to suppress the 1849 revolution in the Kingdom of Hungary. The main actor of these efforts was A. Dobriansky, who as a civil commissar provided contact with the Russian Army and the Vienna emperor court (Konečný 2015). Among the original supporters of the Church Slavonic discourse was A. Dukhnovych; he also joined the Russian discourse (Plišková 2007). The dominance of the Russian discourse lasted until the Austrian-Hungarian compromise of 1867. Later, the Hungarian government, which suspected imperial interests of Russians to promote the Russian language and the Orthodox Church, tried to weaken its influence and started to lend support to the Rusyn discourse and its activists who found support with the Kingdom of Hungary. A great part of the Greek Catholic clergy adopted the line of the Hungarian government, and gradually it assimilated into the Hungarian culture (Konečný 2015; Plišková 2007). The influence of Russian as a literary language of the Rusyn intelligentsia was perpetuated in schools, although only as a voluntary subject. However, the majority of the Rusyn periodicals appeared in Russian. But in everyday life, it was not the genuine Russian but rather the Carpathian version of the Russian language with vernacular and Church Slavonic elements, so-called *jazyčie* (Konečný 2000).

Russian discourse also outlived the disintegration of Austria-Hungary in 1918. Rusyns in Czechoslovakia were administratively separated. The western part lived in Slovakia in a position as an ethnic minority. The eastern part lived in the Sub-Carpathian Rus (as a part of Czechoslovakia) where, apart from Czech language,

they were allowed to use the local language as a second official language (Plišková 2007). The rivalry between the competing discourses (Ukrainian and Rusyn) was manifested more openly in that time. The Russian discourse was strengthened by the immigration of the Whites in the Russian civil war in 1917–1923. Along with a part of re-emigrants from the United States, they bolstered the Orthodox movement with its base in the monastery of Jovo Počajovský in Ladomírová, which led to uncertainty among Greek Catholics. Generally, however, the Russian discourse still maintained its influence within the environment of the Orthodox Church and among an older generation of intelligentsia and farmers (Konečný 2015).

After the World War II, the Russian discourse still resounded in older generation of intelligentsia. But the geopolitical circumstance contributed to its suppressing in favor of the Ukrainian discourse. After 1989 it was shortly revived in the Rusyn Carpatho-Russian Society. Later Russian discourse faded out, because most of its followers were at an advanced age.

The relationships of the Russian discourse with the other competing discourses were qualitatively different as the result of the above arguments. It kept the relative respect to the Church Slavonic discourse which was criticized for its archaic nature and practical uselessness. The relationship to the Rusyn discourse was superior in terms of dignity and cultural superiority in the Russian nation and language compared to the low prestige of the Rusyn dialects. The Russian discourse was also characterized as being in a superior position to the Ukrainian discourse as the Ukrainian language was considered part of common-Russian area along with the Russian and Belarusian languages. It also led to some misunderstanding between Ukrainian for Rusyns living south and west of the Carpathians (Plišková 2015).

Ukrainian Discourse

The Ukrainian discourse started to formulate itself in the last third of the nineteenth century, outside the territory of Slovakia in regions north of the Carpathians, that is, in Eastern Galicia and Bukovina (nowadays Ukraine). The center was the city of Lviv. It had a distinct counter-Polish and counter-Russian orientation. It included the Rusyn dialects as part of the Ukrainian language, which was considered an appropriate base for the codification of literary Rusyn. The Ukrainian discourse reached the territory of Slovakia only at the beginning of the twentieth century. Some of the members of the Rusyn discourse, also referred to as the patriots (Konečný 2015; Plišková 2007; Haraksim 2004), joined this effort. The Ukrainian discourse was strengthened by the in-migration of Galician Ukrainians after the defeat of its shortly existing independent status: the West Ukrainian Folk Republic in 1918–1919 and the Ukrainian Folk Republic in 1917–1920. It stimulated the idea that Rusyn national existence might be solved within a great Ukraine, an idea accepted by part of the Rusyn intelligentsia (Konečný and Gajdoš 1998).

The Ukrainian discourse obtained support of the Czechoslovak government in Prague whose motive was to weaken the pro-Hungarian orientation of a part of the Rusyn intelligentsia and Greek Catholic clergy. Expert support for the Ukrainian

discourse was provided by the Prague philologist, I. Pankevych, originally from Galicia. He proposed the Verkhovyna Rusyn dialects that were closer to the Galician Ukrainian language as a basis for the standard language (Plišková 2015). The Ukrainian discourse was preferred by the government also in relation to the Russian discourse that seemed to evoke potential imperial ambitions of a united Russia and later Soviet Union. In spite of this support, the Ukrainian discourse in the territory of Slovakia in the interwar period did not reach any distinct success. It was represented by some activists in branches of the *Prosvita* organization (Konečný 2000; Plišková 2007). But the development in Slovakia was influenced by a fierce competition of the codification discourses in the region of Subcarpathian Rus which was also part of Czechoslovakia. The Ukrainian discourse was soon gaining strength especially in 1930 when A. Voloshyn announced the introduction of the Ukrainian orthography (Konečný 2015; Plišková 2015). During the existence of the Slovak State (1939–1945), the Rusyn emancipation endeavors were suppressed. However, the Slovak government supported assimilation and the slovakization of Rusyns. But the Ukrainian discourse was surviving as it leaned on support of the Ukrainian organization of Ukrainian nationalists in the German Reich (Konečný 2015; Plišková 2015).

After World War II the position of the Ukrainian discourse was distinctly strengthened and eventually achieved a monopolist nature. It was the result of two key factors. The first was the solution to the question of future of the Subcarpathian Rus which became part of the Soviet Ukraine in 1945 (Šmigeľ 2006). The second factor was the installation of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia in 1948 and its transformation into a satellite of the Soviet Union. It meant the adoption of the Soviet policy regarding the identity of Rusyns which in its frame were considered Ukrainians. The Greek Catholic Church as the base to the Rusyn discourse was abolished in 1950. The regime preferred the Orthodox Church. After 1951 the ukrainization of the Rusyn media, cultural institutions and education has occured. Paradoxes were not rare as when part of the Ukrainian discourse activists (including I. Pankevych) were impeached because of bourgeois nationalism (Šmigeľ 2006). Ukrainian discourse maintained this monopoly until the social and political changes in 1989.

The liberal environment that emerged after the fall of the communist regime in 1989 made it possible to renew the competition between the three codification discourses: the Ukrainian, Rusyn, and Russian. As was mentioned above, the Russian discourse was fading out, so the two last decades are only characterized by the rivalry between the Ukrainian and Rusyn discourses. The Ukrainian discourse is supported by the organization *Zväz Rusínov-Ukrajincov Slovenska*/Union of Rusyns-Ukrainians of Slovakia (Gajdoš 2004). After the Velvet Revolution in November 1989, some personalities formerly marginalized by the communist regime (e.g. J. Bača, M. Mušinka) became the principal actors of the Ukrainian discourse. They univocally rebuffed the revival of the Rusyn discourse (e.g., Bača et al. 1992) by labeling it antiscientific and historically not justified. They linguistically classify the Rusyn dialects into the North Carpathian dialect group of the West Ukrainian dialect (Čižmárová 2013). They interpreted the term Rusyn as a synonym

of Ukrainian and refused the codification of the Rusyn language. In some linguistic acts also primordialist arguments referring to the common origins of the Ukrainians and Rusyn surfaced (Mušinka 1997). However, also there were examples where the Rusyn and Ukrainian discourses coincided such as when they disagreed about moving the national and ethnic broadcasting of the Slovak Radio from Prešov to Košice in 2003. Also there was concern about the permanent critique of slovakization of believers who were pursued by the management of the Greek Catholic and Orthodox Churches (Gajdoš and Konečný 2005); this was another part of their common agenda. But the numbers in the census (see Table 1) clearly show the weakening trend of effects and significance of the Ukrainian discourse. The question regarding its potential was bolstered by an economically motivated immigration from Ukraine (Šoltés 2005).

Rusyn Discourse

The Rusyn discourse is characterized by the idea that Rusyns are independent nation different both from Russians and Ukrainians. Its origins date to the end of the 1840s. It was likely the activities and the language act of the Slovak nationalist, Ľ. Štúr of 1846, who recommended that Rusyn use their own language (Plišková 2015). This might have been the source of inspiration. A. Duchnovych published the first elementary textbook based on the Rusyn lexis in 1848. Although he wrote the majority of his books in the Rusyn dialect, he finally adhered to the Russian discourse (Plišková 2007, 2015). The Rusyn discourse was revived only in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It was prized by a generation of Rusynophiles, so-called patriots. They emphasized that standard Russian is not an adequate base because simple people and even leaders of the Russian discourse could not master it. In using the Rusyn discourse, they found support from the Hungarian government. In 1883, the Csopei's Hungarian-Rusyn dictionary with the grammar inspired by the Rusyn dialects of Dolynians was published. By the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, the polemics between the representatives of all three discourses fully broke out on pages of the contemporary press (Plišková 2007). Rusyn discourse was comparatively weak, as part of the Rusyn intelligentsia was magyarized for pragmatic reasons and another part saw their salvation from the magyarization in support of the Russian discourse.

After the foundation of Czechoslovakia in 1918, Rusyns, as an ethnic minority, achieved their right to use mother tongue in public administration (in communes where there was at least 20% of the Rusyns lived). The principal institutional actor of the Rusyn discourse was the Greek Catholic Bishopric of Prešov followed by the Russian National Party and later also the Russian National Committee. Gradually the network of schools with tuition teaching the Rusyn language expanded. Regarding the absence of its codified form, *jazyčije,* that is, its hybrid form was used. Tuition was often influenced by the language skills of teachers. The initiative of the Greek Catholic Bishop P. P. Gojdič (Goidych) who promoted the standardization of the Rusyn (also referred to as the Carpathian-Russian) tuition language was not easily accomplished

(Plišková 2007, 2015). By the time the Slovak State in 1939 emerged, the Rusyn discourse had fallen in disfavor with the Slovak authorities as it was suspected of being disloyal to the new state. The main protector of interests of the Rusyn discourse was again the Greek Catholic Church headed by Bishop Gojdič (Plišková 2007).

After the World War II the restoration of Czechoslovakia and installation of the communist regime in 1948 entered an extra unfavorable period for the Rusyn discourse. It was violently suppressed as the governmental authorities who preferred the Ukrainian discourse. A great part of the Rusyns though were ostracized and found themselves associated with Slovak identity (Plišková 2007). The atmosphere shortly eased in 1967–1970 when *Zväz Rusínov-Ukrajincov Slovenska*/Union of Rusyns-Ukrainians in Slovakia obtained some space for the Rusyn discourse on pages of the Ukrainian periodical "Nove žytťa." After this short period, the adverse situation returned and lasted until 1989 (Plišková 2007). A group of Greek Catholic priests led by F. Krajňák, which started to prepare an edition of ecclesiastical books in Rusyn vernacular at the beginning of the 1980s, was an exception (Plišková 2012, 2015).

A new situation came after social and political changes and fall of the communist regime in 1989. The Rusyn discourse was practically immediately revived when at the beginning of 1990 supporters raised the request of the codification of the Rusyn language on the basis of the "Labyrščyna" dialect. Regarding the fact that the Unions of Rusyns-Ukrainians of Czechoslovakia was controlled by the Ukrainian discourse, representatives of the Rusyn discourse founded an organization of their own: Rusyn Renascence. Periodicals in the Rusyn language "Rusyn" and "Narodny Novynky" appeared. The division between the Ukrainian and Rusyn discourses was definitely confirmed by May 1990 (Gajdoš 2004). Its contention of the controversy culminated when the Ukrainian National Theatre in Prešov was renamed the Theatre of Alexander Dukhnovych; additional arguments emerged concerning the control of the Museum of Ukrainian Culture in Svidník and in the division of the ethnic radio broadcast in Ukrainian and Rusyn.

The Rusyn discourse was definitely headed to the codification of the Rusyn language. In 1992, an International Congress was held in Bardejov spa. It started a consistent work on the codification of the language and adopted several fundamental principles. Codification was meant to be based on a live vernacular of Rusyns; each region was supposed, following the model of the Romansh in Switzerland, to create a proper variety of standard language on the basis of the most widely spread dialect in a given area while the graphic system of the Rusyn language would be the Russian alphabet. Subsequently, it was presumed that interregional Rusyn language, so-called *koine,* will be created. Work on preparation of such variety was based on two most widely used dialects, those of the West Zemplín and the East Zemplín, started in Slovakia (Jabur 2000; Plišková 2007).

Codification efforts of Rusyns in Slovakia peaked on 27 January 1995 as a result of the ceremonious act of codification in Bratislava. In this way the emancipation process of Rusyns entered another phase when it is necessary to implement the language in individual spheres of daily life. The still unachieved aim was the codification of interregional Rusyn language, that is, koine (Konečný 2015). The present level of use of the Rusyn language has been assessed in detail by A. Plišková

(2012). No changes have been observed in recent years. The only elementary school applying the Rusyn language in its tuition is the village of Čabiny which in 2008–2016 served an example. It had to close because of a lack of students. Since 2013, there has been a bilingual Slovak-Rusyn elementary school in village of Kalná Roztoka. Positive also are the activities of the Institute of the Rusyn Language and Culture at the University of Prešov founded in 2008. Apart from university studies, the Center also conducts research and organizes the Summer School of Rusyn Language for interested people from all over the world. The use of Rusyn language in public administration is limited. In 64 communes with more than 20% proportion of Rusyns (2011 census), Rusyn is used in official contacts. Visible proof is provided by the signage indicating entry and exit of these municipalities and on the signs on public administration buildings (Správa... 2016) in these communes. These efforts are a relatively promising situation for the use of the Rusyn in literature, media, and theater. The main institution focusing on this effort is the Theatre of Alexander Duchnovych in Prešov, which apart of Rusyn has performed one play a year in Ukrainian since 2009. Rusyn language is used in three public periodicals (*Rusyn, Narodnŷ novynkŷ, InfoRusyn)*, in two church periodicals (*Blahovistnyk, Artos),* in radio and television in Slovakia, and in several Internet portals (www.rusyn.sk, http://www.rusyn-rusnak.szm.com, www.holosy.sk, etc.) and social networks. Table 1 shows the increasing trend in adherence of the inhabitants to the Rusyn ethnicity and the Rusyn mother tongue.

Conclusion

The extremely complicated codification process of the Rusyn language in the territory of Slovakia depended on several factors which are discussed. The point was made at the outset about the frontier geographical location of the Rusyns, the lack of cultural and economic progress, an absence of urban centers, confused and unclear attitudes of the key actors associated with Rusyn identity, and the interference of external geopolitical and power ambitions. The codification process shows clear features of social construction of national identity where the language engages in four discourses: Church Slavonic, Russian, Ukrainian, and Rusyn. The process of social construction is concerned with individual actors of these discourses who adapted to the current context and who changed their positions. The instrumental character of the process is also obvious, when there was an effort in a rational choice which would bring power or material benefits. Language acts were also sometimes tinged by primordia list or emotional arguments. Finally, after more than 200 years, the codification process was concluded in 1995. The Rusyn discourse, which was used first of all the sociolinguistic and linguo-cultural arguments within the frame of social construction of the Rusyn identity, finally won. It emerged successfully in a direct confrontation with the Ukrainian discourse where it looked to for support in independent linguistics. In terms of a dichotomy related to power ideologies, that of authenticity established itself and the ideology of anonymity, represented by Russian or Ukrainian discourses, failed. From the psycholinguistic point of view, Rusyn

dialects triumphed in spite of being continuously questioned for a lack of dignity and respect and also promoting ongoing cultural diversity in Europe.

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