



Language Biographies and Identity Issues on the Example of the Croatian Minority in the Austrian Province of Burgenland

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In the course of the 16th century a large number of Croats from Croatia and the area of present-day Northern Bosnia immigrated to Austria, Slovakia and northern parts of Hungary. Their direct descendants still inhabit these areas. This paper will concentrate on the Croatian minority living in Burgenland in Austria.

Despite more than five-hundred-year-long efforts to preserve the language, culture and tradition of their “old homeland”, permanent contacts with Austrians and various social and political circumstances left a trace on their language as well as on their way of life. Burgenland Croats speak an older version of modern-day Croatian and have retained Čakavian dialect. Nevertheless was the Austrian influence significant, and their language now abounds with German, e.g. Austrian loan words. We will deal with language and identity issues concentrating on interviews and language biographies, the corpus of which was gathered in the field research. When choosing informants, we took into consideration the following parameters: gender, age and level of education. We also wanted to examine how the individuals articulate their reflections on the language attitudes, their experience and identity. Our analysis examines primarily individual case studies, which may enable us to identify common features of the language biographies that might point to the collective consciousness of the examined community.

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