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## The Language of Carpathian Rus': Genetic Aspects

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The language territory comprising Carpatho-Rusyn dialects has for some time been characterized by discontinuity. On the one hand, there is Carpathian Rus', which includes areas on both sides of the Carpathian Mountains originally settled by Rusyns, as well as contiguous territories settled at a somewhat later time. On the other hand, there are islets in what is today northern Hungary and the so-called Lower Lands (the Bachka, Srem, and Slavonia) in Yugoslavia and Croatia, both settled by Rusyns beginning in the eighteenth century, as well as dispersed immigrant communities in the United States and Canada settled by Rusyns in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As for Carpathian Rus', it never formed a single political-administrative or state entity. This situation, in turn, brought about a lack of clearly expressed ethno-linguistic features, resulting from the peripheral position of the territory within the Ukrainian sphere and from contacts with West Slavic (specifically Slovak and Polish) and non-Slavic (Hungarian and Romanian) linguistic regions. Internal migration, the scattered nature of Rusyn settlements along contact zones with West Slavic and non-Slavic peoples, and the specific nature of the region's physical geography, i.e., a largely mountainous area, contributed to a high degree of dialectal differentiation within what is, on the whole, a single linguistic area.

The above phenomena have had a significant effect on the extent to which Carpathian Rus' has been studied linguistically. Descriptive studies of local dialects and attempts to classify them genetically and to define their place in the system of other related linguistic varieties began to appear sporadically in the nineteenth century and then more or less systematically in the twentieth century. The distinctiveness of the Rusyn language was already evident in the Church Slavonic grammars compiled by local authors Arsenii Kotsak (1770s) and Mykhailo Luchkai. The first attempts to distinguish the specific features of Rusyn dialects spoken along the southern slopes of the Carpathians were

made by Ivan Fogorashii (1833) and Iakiv Holovats'kyi (1848) and developed further by Kostiantyn Mykhal'chuk (the compiler of the first map of southern Carpathian Ukrainian dialects), who listed over fifteen distinct features. Omel'ian Ohonovs'kyi (1880) confirmed Mykhal'chuk's view that the southern Carpathian dialects belonged to western Rus', i.e., western Ukrainian dialects, while Anton Semenovich (1882), aside from providing a more detailed description of the southern Carpathian dialects, pointed out their similarity to dialects spoken on the northern slopes of the Carpathians. Ievmenii Sabov divided Carpatho-Rusyn dialects into six groups in his anthology of literature. The ethnographer Volodymyr Hnatiuk also discussed the dialects spoken in this region.

It was only at the end of the nineteenth century, however, that the widely recognized methods of linguistic geography – with its ability to draw distinctions between the center and periphery of one or another group of dialects and to draw boundaries between those groups – began to be applied to Carpatho-Rusyn dialects. Significant in this regard were the works of Olaf Broch and Ivan Verkhrats'kyi. Then, during the first half of the twentieth century, Subcarpathian Rus' became the object of more systematic linguistic research, as well as the source of heated debate about the relationship of Carpathian dialects to other East Slavic dialects. Vsevolod Hantsov (1923) classified the Subcarpathian dialects together with those of Galicia, Bukovina, and a few other neighboring regions, as part of the southwestern Ukrainian dialects, a view that was later accepted by Ivan Zilyns'kyi (1933). By contrast, the Moscow Dialectological Commission (1915) favored the view that the Carpathian dialects formed a distinct group. One member, Nikolai Durnovo, supported the commission's view, although at the same time he emphasized the close relationship of Carpathian dialects to western Ukrainian dialects.

Georgii Gerovskii elaborated even further the view that Subcarpathian dialects formed a distinct group. In his detailed classification of Carpathian dialects (“Jazyk Podkarpatské Rusi”), Gerovskii tried to remove them from the Ukrainian linguistic sphere and relate them closely to Russian (“Great Russian”) dialects, based on the fact that Carpatho-Rusyn dialects retain the very archaic vowel **ѣ**. According to Gerovskii, there are eight basic Rusyn dialects south of

the Carpathians. He also spoke of a few transitional dialects and a group of dialects not native to the region. Gerovskii subdivided all these dialects into three categories:

(1) the oldest Rusyn dialects are the Southern Maramorosh, Northern Maramorosh, Uzh, Bereg and Eastern Zemplyn dialects;

(2) also of oldest origin are the Western Zemplyn, Sharysh and Spish dialects, distinguished from category one because of the extensive influence of northern Carpathian (Lemko) dialects, Polish, and Slovak; and

(3) dialects of recent origin—the Verkhovyna and Bychkiv dialects—described as being of “foreign (Galician) origin.”

In a subsequent study from 1948 Gerovskii added to the first category the Dovhe dialect and to the second category the Makovytsia dialect; he also spoke of Boiko, Lemko, and the mixed dialects (of the so-called *zamishantsi*) as belonging to the category of northern Carpathian dialects. While taking linguistic data into consideration, Gerovskii's categorization in large part reflected the old Hungarian administrative division into counties, with the result that the Lemko dialects of Slovakia and Poland, which in essence form a single linguistic system, are not treated together.

The classification scheme adopted by Ivan Pan'kevych in his major monograph, *Ukraïns'ki hovory Pidkarpats'koï Rusi i sumezhnykh oblastei*, is based exclusively on linguistic data. He divides Rusyn dialects south of the Carpathians into three groups:

(1) Lemko (from the Tatra mountain range to the Laborec River);

(2) Boiko (from the Laborec to Teresva rivers); and

(3) Hutsul (from the Teresva River to the east).

Between each of these three basic divisions are transitional zones.

In the second half of the twentieth century this classification scheme was significantly altered in the scholarly literature. Most linguists now speak of three, but somewhat different, basic dialectal groups in the Rusyn area: Central Transcarpathian, Lemko, and Boiko. The Boiko division consists of the dialects of only a very small portion

of territory along the ridge of the Carpathians (the so-called Verkhovyna in the north-central part of Subcarpathian Rus'). The largest part of Subcarpathian Rus'/Transcarpathia is classified as a distinct group of dialects, which we will subsequently refer to as Central Carpathian. The Hutsul dialects farther east, which came into being on the southern slopes of the Carpathians only in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, are now excluded from the Carpathian dialects by most scholars, who classify them with the Hutsul-Pokuttia group based on the northern slopes of the mountains. The Central Carpathian dialects stretch from the Teresva River in the east to the Uzh River in the west, beyond which there is a transitional Central Carpathian-Lemko dialect zone as far as the Laborec River. Vasyľ Latta sees this zone as slightly larger, including the eastern Zemplín region together with the entire area of southern Uzh. West of the Laborec River are found the Lemko dialects.

The appearance of linguistic atlases covering the Carpathian region has allowed for more detailed characterization and classification into ten dialectal sub-groupings. In his atlases, Iosyp Dzendzelivs'kyi, relying primarily on lexical material, defines four dialect groups in the Transcarpathian oblast/Subcarpathian Rus'.

(1) The Maramorosh dialects, found between the Rika and Shopurka rivers, are different from other dialects in Transcarpathia in that they retain the highest number of traditional features of proto-Slavic, Old Russian, and Old Ukrainian origin and that they have the smallest percentage of innovations (from the fourteenth century and later) of a general Ukrainian and East Slavic character. The Maramorosh group also has a number of Carpathian and South Slavic isoglosses dating from various periods.

(2) The Borzhava dialects, found between the Rika and Latorytsia rivers, have a large proportion of features resulting from external influences. These have come particularly from north of the Carpathians, possibly from Podolia and Volhynia at the end of the fourteenth century, as well as from the South Slavic linguistic sphere, related to the presence of Serb settlers in Subcarpathian Rus' during the fifteenth century.

(3) The Verkhovyna dialects, encompassing the southeastern

Velykyi Bereznyi, the Volovets', and the southwestern Mizhhiria districts, are related both to neighboring Boiko dialects on the northern slopes of the Carpathians and to Lemko dialects to the west (which most likely spread here in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries). With regard to vocabulary, the Verkhovyna dialects hold a transitional position between the Boiko and Central Transcarpathian (i.e., Maramorosh, Borzhava, and Uzh) dialects.

(4) The Uzh dialects, found between the Latorytsia and Uzh rivers, reveal Lemko and Boiko dialectal strata from the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century, as well as Slovak, Polish, and other elements (in part via Lemko dialects). The present form of these dialects dates from approximately the eighteenth century.

The data in the linguistic atlases of Zuzana Hanudel' suggest the presence of six more Rusyn dialectal groups in eastern Slovakia:

(5) the Snina dialects, found east of the Cirocha River, which also include the Uzh sub-group;

(6) the Laborets' dialects, considered transitional from an eastern to a western type;

(7) the Makovytsia dialects, encompassing a triangle formed roughly by the villages of Prikrá, Vislava, Šarišský Štiavnik, Rovné, and Kurimka, subdivided in turn into the Svidník, southern Makovytsia, and western Makovytsia sub-groups;

(8) the Sharysh dialects, spoken in the upper valleys of the Topľa and Torysa rivers, divided into southern and western groups;

(9) the southern Spish dialects of the upper Poprad River valley and region north of Stará L'ubovňa; and

(10) the southern Spish dialects spoken in a few islets (Závadka, Poráč, Vysné and Nižné Slovinky, Helemanovce, Uhorna), as well as in isolated villages in former Gemer and Abov counties.

Looking at the entire Carpatho-Rusyn linguistic area, the Central Carpathian dialects form a series of strip-like zones which begin in the southeast with the Maramoros, followed by the Borzhava, Verkhovyna, Uzh, and Snina dialectal zones. The Central Carpathian dialects are

separated from Lemko dialects farther west (the Makovytsia, Sharysh, northern Spish, and southern Spish groups) by the transitional dialect zone between the Uzh and Laborec rivers. The Lemko dialectal sphere continues over the crests to the northern slopes of the Carpathians in Poland, stretching along the latter's border with Slovakia from the Solinka River in the east to the upper Dunajec in the west. However, in conjunction with the deportation of the Lemko-Rusyn population from the northern slopes of the Carpathians after World War II, the traditional ethnolinguistic structure of this region has been profoundly altered. Taken together, these dialects, which were traditionally spoken in what is today Ukraine (the Transcarpathian oblast), Slovakia (the Prešov Region), and Poland (the Lemko Region), may be described by the term Carpatho-Rusyn. They are characterized by a large number of archaisms whose preservation has been assisted by the geographically peripheral nature of Carpathian Rus'. At the same time, Carpatho-Rusyn dialects also show innovations that are the result of long-term contacts with neighboring languages.

Among the phonetic features of the Carpatho-Rusyn dialects are the following.

1. Word-stress varies from free in the east to fixed penultimate stress in the west (under the influence of the East Slovak dialect and Polish).

2. The old opposition between the vowels **И** (y) and **Ы** (ÿ) is preserved.

3. The historic vowels **о**, **е** generally give **у** (u), 'у' (u) as in **кун**, **н'ус** (kun, n'us), although in some places they give **И** (y) as in **к'ин**, **н'ис** (k'yn, n'ys), or in northern Spiš dialects even **Ы** (ÿ) as in **КЫН** (kÿn).

4. The sequences **гы**, **кы**, **хы** (hÿ, kÿ, khÿ) are possible, except for some Šariš and Uzh dialects, where we find **гі**, **кі**, **хі** (hi, ki, khi).

5. Intervocalic **-й-** (-y-) is preserved in the first person singular and third person plural of the present-tense forms, e.g. **майу**, **майут** (maiu, maiut), although in some places **-й-** (-y-) is replaced by **-ÿ-**, **маÿу** (maÿu).

6. Intervocalic **л** (l) is vocalized, e.g. **моўоко** (moÿoko), but not consistently.

7. In new closed syllables, where **о** normally becomes **И**, the preceding consonant often remains hard: **дім**, **братів** (dim, brativ).

The morphological features typical of Carpatho-Rusyn dialects are the following.

1. The ending **-ове** (-ove) occurs in the nominative plural of nouns, e.g., **панове** (panove); in rare cases, the older endings **-і** and **-е** are used.

2. In certain regions the genitive plural of nouns has the ending **-ох** (-okh), e.g., **женох** (zhenokh).

3. There is a shift from east to west in the first person singular of the present tense from **(-й)у** to **-м**, e.g., from **знайу** (znaïu) to **знам** (znam).

4. The reflexive particle **ся**, **са** (sia, sa) is not closely tied to the verb and generally functions independently.

5. The forms of the past tense vary from **я спав** (ia spav) in the east to **я спав** (ia spav) and **спав ем** (spav iem) in the west, as do the forms of the conditional (subjunctive): from **я би спав** (ia by spav) to **спав би ем** (spav by iem) and **спав бы-м** (spav bÿ-m).

6. The future tense changes from **буду ходити** (budu khodyty) in the east to **буду ходив/ходил** (budu khodyv/khodyl) in the west.

A significant number of the characteristics enumerated above came into being under the influence of Slovak (in particular East Slovak) and Polish dialects. Such influences, coupled with only weak contacts with other Ukrainian dialects, are the factors which have contributed most to the formation of a specific Carpatho-Rusyn linguistic areal. Nevertheless, Carpatho-Rusyn dialects continue to share a significant number of characteristics with the Ukrainian language. One may note this in regard to several similar phonetic shifts:

1. **ѣ** (ě) to **И**, **і** (as in **хліб**/khlīb, with the exception of southern Spiš);

2. the predominance of **ѡ** to **И/і** (as in **двір**/dvir, **приніс**/prynis);

3. *tort, tolt* give *torot, tolot* (with instances of non-*polnoglasie* forms due to the influence of Slovak dialects);

4. *kv, gv* give **цв** (tsv), **зв** (zv);

5. *tj, dj* give **ч** (ch) or **ж/дж** (zh/dzh); and *dl, tl* give **л** (l), except for some places where the original clusters were preserved under the influence of Slovak.

There are also many similar features in morphology.

With regard to vocabulary, Carpatho-Rusyn dialects have preserved their common Slavic and East Slavic (in particular Ukrainian) inheritance. As a result, however, of their location in a linguistic contact zone, they have acquired a large number of lexical elements from Slovak and Polish as well as from Hungarian, Romanian, and German, which has given Carpatho-Rusyn its very distinct character.

In areas of resettled or migrant Rusyn population, the language retains specific characteristics from the Carpathian linguistic area. Since, however, the inhabitants in these areas live in entirely different ethnolinguistic environments, they have developed their own autonomous language systems. This is characteristic of the Rusyn dialects in present-day northern Hungary, which are dispersed, only rarely bordering on East Slovak dialects and continually under a strong influence from Hungarian.

The language of Rusyns who began migrating during the first half of the eighteenth century to the Bachka region (and from there to neighboring Srem and Slavonia) retains the Zemlpyn-Sharysh and Spish characteristics of the western or Lemko Rusyn dialect group. Among the phonetic features of the Bachka or Vojvodinian-Srem Rusyn dialects are the following:

1. fixed penultimate stress;

2. *ě* (ѣ) gives **е, е** and **'и/і** or **и/і**, e.g., **бешѣда** (besheda), **бидни** (bidni);

3. *ě* gives **йе-**, e.g., **єшень** (ieshen'); *dj* gives **дз**, e.g., **цудзи** (tsudzi);

4. *d', t'* give **дз, ц**, e.g., **дзѣци** (dzetsi), **цѣмни** (tsemni);

5. *z', s'* give **ж** (zh), **ш** (sh), e.g., **жем** (zhem), **шѣно** (sheno); the clusters *dl, tl* are preserved, e.g., **сadlo** (sadlo); *tort, tolt* give *trat, tlat*, e.g., **крава** (krava), **глад** (hlad);

6. the clusters *kv, gv* are preserved except for spirantization in the latter, e.g., **квитсе** (kvitse), **гвизда** (hvizda).

Morphological features include the following:

1. soft-stem neuter nouns have the ending **-о** in the nominative singular, e.g., **моріо** (morio);

2. the genitive and dative plural of nouns ends in **-ох** (-okh), e.g., **псох** (psokh);

3. the first person singular and plural of the present tense end in **-м** and **-ме**, respectively, e.g., **знам** (znam), **знаме** (zname);

4. the reflexive particle **ше** (she) has no fixed position relative to its verb;

5. the past tense has two forms: **я знал** (ia znal) or **знал сом** (znal som).

In effect, Vojvodinian-Srem Rusyn has alternating East Slavic (Carpatho-Rusyn) and West Slavic (East Slovak, i.e., Zemplín, Šariš) characteristics, although the latter are dominant. This is explained as the result of language change or of long-term mutual linguistic interference. Consequently, Vojvodinian-Srem Rusyn can be considered a clear case of a dual reflexive language (Bidwell, Birnbaum, Lunt, and Dulichenko).

The Carpatho-Rusyn language in the United States and Canada, where it has been used at various times by a territorially dispersed population, is characterized by dialectal diversity. That diversity is a reflection of the divergent regions in Carpathian Rus' from which the ancestors of the present generations emigrated. Geographically isolated as it is, and functioning in an English-language environment, Rusyn immigrant speech has become steadily Americanized and in most places has tended to disappear over time, except where renewed by new immigrants.

How should the speech of the inhabitants of Carpathian Rus' be

classified, as a dialect or a language? In order to answer that question it is necessary to consider its origins. As noted above, some scholars have pointed out that in terms of its basic characteristics, Carpatho-Rusyn is genetically linked to Ukrainian linguistic roots; in other words, it belongs to the Ukrainian dialect system, specifically to that language's southwestern dialect group which includes the Boiko, Volhynian-Podolian, and Dniester-Prut dialect zones.

At the same time, Carpatho-Rusyn dialects – divided as they have been by various political and administrative borders, occupying a geographically peripheral area, and to a significant degree being isolated (by geography) from other Ukrainian dialects – have preserved a large number of archaic features and have acquired many new ones through the influence of neighboring languages and dialects. Consequently, the autochthonous Carpatho-Rusyn-inhabited region forms a dialectal zone in which East Slavic (i.e., southwestern or western Ukrainian) features gradually lose their distinctiveness the farther west one proceeds. Moreover, several of these features, as a result of an unfinished process of linguistic change, are replaced with West Slavic (specifically East Slovak and Polish) features. The presence of East and West Slavic variants of one and the same feature suggests that in Carpatho-Rusyn there is a tendency toward a genetic and typological bi-reflexiveness. This is what gives the Carpatho-Rusyn language its clear distinctiveness within the circle of Ukrainian dialects and it is because of this distinction between Carpatho-Rusyn dialects and the Ukrainian literary language that some scholars and writers, both in the past and present, have attempted and continue to attempt to create a Carpatho-Rusyn literary language.

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