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## SLOVAK DIALECT CLASSIFICATIONS<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

This paper presents a historical overview of the classification of Slovak dialects. In individual chapters it describes classification by Alois Vojtěch Šembera (1864), Václav Vážný (1934), Jozef Štolc and coworkers (1968a, 1968b), and Rudolf Krajčovič (1988). All classifications are to some extent similar in defining dialect divisions, in the methods of traditional dialectology, and the features-based and isoglottic framework. The differences are in the theoretical argumentation of the classification. Sometimes they are based on a comparative approach considering relations with other Slavic languages, the standard variety or some prestigious dialect. In other cases, the main criterion is an etymological (or genetic) aspect. A common element in all classifications is the reflection of the historical division of the territory into administrative districts – counties within the Old Hungary, which undoubtedly contributed to the dialect diversity of Slovak. Their boundaries largely coincide with defined dialect boundaries. The situation in Slovakia is a typical example of a dialect continuum, so any areal classification is to a large extent a generalizing construct.

**Keywords:** dialect classification, isoglottic dialectology, comparative aspect, genetic aspect, Slovak

**Name:** slovenčina ['slɔvɛntʃina]

**Language-code:** ISO 639-1 sk, ISO 639-2 slo (B) slk (T)

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## CLASSIFICACIONS DIALECTALS DE L'ESLOVAC

## Resum

Aquest article ofereix una visió històrica de la classificació dels dialectes eslovacs. En apartats individuals descriu la classificació d'Alois Vojtěch Šembera (1864), Václav Vážný (1934), Jozef Štolc i col·laboradors (1968a, 1968b) i Rudolf Krajčovič (1988). Totes les classificacions són fins a cert punt similars a l'hora de definir les divisions dialectals, en els mètodes de la dialectologia tradicional, en els trets i en el marc isoglòtic. Les diferències es troben en l'argumentació teòrica de la classificació. De vegades es basen en un enfocament comparatiu tot considerant les relacions amb altres llengües eslaves, la varietat estàndard o algun dialecte de prestigi. En altres casos, el criteri principal és un aspecte etimològic (o genètic). Un element comú en totes les classificacions és el reflex de la divisió històrica del territori en districtes administratius, comtats dins de l'Antiga Hongria, que sens dubte van contribuir a la diversitat dialectal de l'eslovac. Els seus límits coincideixen en gran mesura amb els límits dialectals definits. La situació a Eslovàquia és un exemple típic d'un continuïum dialectal, de manera que qualsevol classificació d'àrea és en gran mesura un constructe generalitzador.

**Paraules clau:** classificació dialectal, dialectologia isoglòtica, aspecte comparatiu, aspecte genètic, eslovac

## KLASIFIKÁCIA SLOVENSKÝCH DIALEKTOV

## Abstrakt

Príspevok predstavuje historický prehľad klasifikácie slovenských nářečí. V samostatných kapitolách približuje klasifikáciu Aloisa Vojtěcha Šemberu (1864), Václava Vážného (1934), Jozefa Štolca a kol. (1968a, 1968b) a Rudolfa Krajčoviča (1988). Všetky klasifikácie sú si do istej miery podobné vo vymedzovaní nářečového členenia, v metodách tradičnej dialektológie a v kritériách založených na jazykových javoch a identifikovaných izoglosách. Rozdiely sú v teoretickej argumentácii tohto členenia. Niekedy sú založené na komparatívnom prístupe zohľadňujúcom iné slovanské jazyky, spisovnú varietu alebo niektorý prestížny dialekt. V iných prípadoch je hlavným kritériom etymologický (alebo genetický) aspekt. Spoločným prvkom všetkých klasifikácií je reflexia historického členenia územia na administratívne celky – župy v starom Uhorsku, ktoré nepochybne prispelo k nářečovej rozmanitosti slovenčiny. Ich hranice sa do značnej miery zhodujú s definovanými nářečovými hranicami. Situácia Slovenska je typickým príkladom nářečového kontinua, preto je každé nářečové areálové členenie do značnej miery zovšeobecňujúcim konštruktom.

**Kľúčové slová:** nářečová klasifikácia, izoglosná dialektológia, komparatívny aspekt, genetický aspekt, slovenčina

## 1. Introduction

The Slovak language is spoken in the Slovak Republic, a country situated in central Europe, bordering the Czech Republic in the west, Poland in the north, Ukraine



in the east, and the Hungarian and Austrian Republics in the south (Map 1). The territory of the Slovak language (and its regional dialects) does not fully correspond with the political borders – they cross through a dialect continuum along the Slovak-Polish political border, where the transitional Goral dialects are spoken, as well as the Moravian and West Slovak transitional dialect area along the Czech and Slovak border. Moreover, due to historical or contemporary migrations, varieties of Slovak are preserved and still used (with the status of minority or ethnic language) in language enclaves in Hungary, Serbia, Romania, Poland, the Czech Republic, Austria, and Ukraine. Slovak language communities live in nearly fifty countries including the USA, Great Britain, Canada, Germany, Argentina, Australia, Ireland, France, and others.

In the territory of the Slovak Republic, there are also other languages spoken by ethnic minorities and groups: Hungarian in southern Slovakia, and Ukrainian and Rusyn in eastern Slovakia. Besides the Hungarian, Rusyn and Ukrainian minorities, the population of Slovakia includes also Roma, German, Czech, Croatian, Bulgarian, Serbian, and Jewish minorities, but they do not live in linguistically compact areas (Ondrejovič 2008, Bartalská 2001).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. also Úrad pre Slovákov žijúcich v zahraničí [Office for Slovaks living abroad] <https://www.uszz.sk/sk/pocty-a-odhady>.



Map 1. Political borders of Slovakia and the neighbouring countries in Central Europe. Original source <https://www.istockphoto.com/vector/slovakia-political-map-gm491360696-75709201>

The dialect differentiation of the Slovak language has its origin in the old language changes at the end of the Proto-Slavonic period (5<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> centuries) when from the relatively common language proto-base, the genetic bases of later South, East, and West Slavonic language groups developed. The Slovak belongs to the West Slavonic group, but in its genetic base, there are several South Slavonic results, which are present in (or in part of) the Central Slovak dialect area, some of them having been spread westward and eastward.<sup>3</sup> Therefore dialects and dialectal groups are influenced to a varying degree by elements originating from the South Slavonic base.

The presence of the South Slavonic results (“reflexes”) of historical language changes in the genetic basis of the Slovak language is usually explained by different directions of immigration of the Slavs into the Carpathian basin in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries and by the settlement of the central part of the Danube basin by the South Slavonic ethnic groups. (Krajčovič 1988: 14ff; 1974) This development was also

<sup>3</sup> The question of the presence of South Slavonic elements in the historical basis of Slovak was the subject of many historical linguistic works – cf. Krajčovič (1974, 1988) with an overview of other literature.

affected by other language contacts and political factors. This historical fact is also a base for the generally accepted division of the Slovak dialect area into three main macro-areas: West, Central, and East.

Motivations for further differentiation of the Slovak dialect area (based on an amount of different phonological, morphonological, morphological, and lexical items) relate to the administrative division into the counties ("stolice") in the Old Hungarian kingdom, to which the area of today's Slovakia belonged. The division of the area into relatively closed administrative parts (at least for people of lower classes) had consequences for a different course, results, and diffusion of language changes. The historical administrative division is reflected in today's borders and names of Slovak regions, as well as in the names of many dialect areas. At the same time, due to the situation in the Old Hungarian Kingdom, no larger Slovak cultural and political centre emerged, which would lead to language integration and the emergence of a nationwide standard variety or koine.

All these intra-linguistic and extra-linguistic factors resulted in remarkable dialect fragmentation of the Slovak language territory<sup>4</sup> where it is not possible to strictly define any dialect area according to specific linguistic phenomena or isoglosses (Múcsková 2009). The dialect diversity is more a typical example of a dialect continuum, which is the result of:

- 1) geographically divergent propagation of results of phonological changes,
- 2) analogical levelling of genetically and typologically different grammatical forms,
- 3) migration and dynamics of the lexicon, which is affected by extra-linguistic political and cultural circumstances (system of aristocratic possession, administration, political events, changing political borders, migrations, linguistic contacts, etc.).

The rich differentiation of the Slovak dialects was preserved until the half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and even later. The reasons for this long-lasting persistence of dialect

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<sup>4</sup> This rich differentiation of the Slovak linguistic territory was also recognized and known in the past and several scholars of Slovak origin mentioned it in their works already in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (e.g., Vavrinec Benedikt z Nedožier, Daniel Sinapius Horčíčka, Matej Bel, Ladislav Bartolomeides, Pavol Jozef Šafárik, Jur Ribay, Ján Kollár, and others – for more detail cf. Štolc 1972: 282-283).

diversity can be seen again in non-linguistic factors, particularly in the long-time agrarian character of the country, the lack of a representative cultural, political, and economic urban centre, the late standardization and the lack of political recognition of national and language independence, or at least ambiguous opinions and doubts about this issue in the past. Slovak and its dialects were – within the classification of Slavic languages – treated as dialects of the Czech (or even the Czechoslovak) language (for more details cf. Krajčovič 1974: 16-18, Novák 1935).<sup>5</sup> These often politically motivated views were reflected also in the first classifications of Slovak dialects. The perception of Slovak as an independent language was established after World War II, and without any doubt even in the later dialect differentiation of the Slovak language, as well as in the classifications of Slavic languages (e.g., in the *Slavic Linguistic Atlas* project).

In the contemporary Slovak language stratification, the traditional dialects exist in close contact with the codified standard language, which has its historical base in the north Central dialects, but in its later and contemporary development it is affected by the western regional base because the capital of Slovakia – Bratislava<sup>6</sup> – is situated in the southwest part of Slovakia. In the current linguistic situation, they undergo quite significant structural changes, lexical archaization, and language convergence. In everyday communication, they appear in a highly modified form that reflects interferences motivated by competing equivalents of the standard language. The prestige and democratization of the standard language gradually reduce the functioning of regional dialects, and their use becomes socially and communicatively limited. Obviously, in everyday communication, they are used mainly by older generations, middle and lower classes, and in informal situations.

As already mentioned, the extraordinary dialectal differentiation of Slovak drew the attention of scholars and linguists already in the past, and some of them tried to classify Slovak dialects, although these attempts cannot be considered scientific and complex (cf. Štolc 1972: 282-283).

For example, a statement by Matej Bel (1684-1749) about the preserved pure

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<sup>5</sup> Alternatively, the dialects of western Slovakia were attributed to Czech origin, and the dialects of eastern Slovakia were attributed to Polish origin.

<sup>6</sup> Bratislava is the capital since 1919.

character of the Central Slovak, which is the most distant from Czech, Polish, Ukrainian-Russian, and Hungarian, published in the *Preface to Institutiones linguae Germanicae* [The Basics of the German Language] (1718), is often recalled even today. In his work *Notitiae Hungariae novae historico-geographica* [Historical and Geographical Description of the New Hungary] from the years 1735-1742, he evaluated dialects of particular counties according to their proximity to the cultural language, so-called Biblical Czech, which was used as the written language of the Slovaks at that time. Therefore, he considered the dialects of Skalica and Trenčín, or the border region of the Trenčín county, as the purest ones, the inhabitants of Orava as close to Poles, and the dialects of the eastern counties as similar to the “Moscow”, Russian language. He specifically mentioned two different local dialects in the southern part of today’s Central Slovakia (according to Urbancová & Tibenský 1984: 15). Similarly, Juraj Ribay (1754-1812), the author of the unpublished lexicographical work *Idioticon Slovacicum* (Dictionary of Slovak) noted down the dialect origin for some words and classified them according to names of counties. From this it follows that he perceived dialect classification through the division of the territory into administrative units. In correspondence with Josef Dobrovský in 1786, he writes: “The [dialect] diversity is so great that it would be necessary to travel all the time or have collectors everywhere to catch (collect) everything” (according to Dudok 2017: 42-43).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the interest in dialects, as well as folk culture and folk literature, stemmed from ideas of national awakening. Pavol Jozef Šafárik (Paul Joseph Schaffarik: 1795-1861) in his book *Geschichte der Slawischen Sprache und Literatur nach allen Mundarten* [History of the Slavic Language and Literature in all dialects] (1826; in the Slovak translation by Beták & Betáková 1963: 362-365) named three main dialect varieties: 1. proper Slovak (which he specified with counties of the Central Slovak area), 2) Moravian-Slovak variety (with counties from the western part of the territory), which he compares to Moravian dialect and standard Czech at that time, and 3) Polish-Slovak variety (in Orava in the north-western part of the Central area, and in counties in the Eats Slovak language area), which he compares to Polish. In addition, he mentioned sub-dialects (“podrečia”): 4) German-Slovak (in the mining

towns), 5) Hungarian-Slovak (in the southern parts of the area and the so-called *Dolná zem* [Lower Land]),<sup>7</sup> 6) Rusyn-Slovak (in the east) and 7) Serbian-Slovak (in Bácska<sup>8</sup>). He also pointed out the possibility of more detailed classification, which, however, would lead to the fact that we would thus obtain “as many dialects as there are settlements separated by mountains, valleys, and rivers” (1963: 364). Similar statement can be found in the article of Ján Kollár (1793-1852) *O českoslowenskej jednotě w řeči a w literatuře* [About Czechoslovak Unity in speech and literature] republished in 1846<sup>9</sup>: “In Hungary among Slovaks, there are almost as many different dialects as there are counties and Slovak regions, but they could rather be called dialect shades or varieties than true dialects, because all can talk to each other with understanding, as if these dialects were at home everywhere...” (1846: 101). Subsequently, he specified 7 dialects of Slovaks in Hungary, but not all given varieties are the folk regional dialects: 1) Slovak-Czech as the language of literature and Protestants, 2) proper Slovak used in the central and north-western counties, 3) Polish-Slovak dialect in the northern parts, 4) Russian- or Ruthenian-Slovak used in the eastern counties, 5) Serbian-Slovak in Bácska and other villages on today’s territory of Serbia, 6) German-Slovak used in mining towns and 7) Hungarian-Slovak used in the neighbourhood with the Hungarian ethnic. Like Šafárik, also Kollár reminds that besides these main dialects there are a lot of other differences and types of dialects (1846: 101-105). The interesting fact is that he considers the rich dialect fragmentation of the Slavic nation to be one of the biggest obstacles to the development of education (1846: 101). Michal Miloslav Hodža (1811-1870) in his work *Epigenes slovenicus* (1847: 17-19) defines proper Slovak (or new Slovak – neoslovenicam) as the language used by the majority of Slovaks, and along with this, he mentions three more dialects: Polish-Slovak (in the east of the country), Czech-Slovak (in the west), and Ruthenian-Slovak (in the Gemer county), which are further specified again with classification according to the names of the counties. All these references to the historical dialect diversity in today’s territory of Slovakia stemmed only from casual observation and are not based on any special research.

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<sup>7</sup> Linguistic enclaves in Hungary.

<sup>8</sup> Bácska is an area within the Pannonian Plain around the border of today’s Hungary and Serbia.

<sup>9</sup> First published in 1823.

The first classification of Slovak dialects based on a partial knowledge of the linguistic material according to characteristic structural features – partially based on previous works – was presented by Alois Vojtěch Šembera (1807-1882) in his work *Základové dialektologie československé* [Basics in Czechoslovak dialectology] in 1864, which is described in the 1<sup>st</sup> classification in this chapter.

The turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was a period of the first attempts at dialectological research with scientific methodology. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Franz Pastrnek (1853-1940) published the first phonological description of the Slovak language and its varieties, which was based on previously published works and folklore collections (folk songs and fairy tales) *Beiträge zur Lautlehre der slovakischen Sprache in Ungarn* [Contributions to the phonetics of the Slovak language in Hungary] (1888). Since 1892, he organized questionnaire-based field research using the correspondence method and reported on partial results in reports in the journal *Slovenské pohľady* (1893-1897). But he did not present any areal dialectal classification. Another extensive field research of Slovak dialects was carried out from 1892 by Samo Czambel (1856-1909), whose aim was to describe in detail all dialects in the compendium *Slovenská reč a jej miesto v rodine slovanských jazykov* [Slovak language and its place in the family of Slavic languages]. Due to his untimely death, only a volume dedicated to East Slovak dialects was published (1906). Since this is not a nationwide classification, we do not present it in a separate chapter in this work. In this period also some individual local dialectal descriptions appeared.

During the interwar period, dialect research was concentrated in the national cultural institution Matica slovenská.<sup>10</sup> New research organized by the correspondence method was led by Václav Vážný (1892-1966). The results of this collective research as well as of his own field research he published in a comprehensive chapter *Nářečí slovenská* [Slovak dialects] in 1934 where he presented also a detailed classification, which is the subject of the 2<sup>nd</sup> classification in this chapter.

After World War II, research on dialects begins to be carried out

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<sup>10</sup> Matica Slovenská was a national, cultural, and scientific institution founded in 1863 and revived in 1919 focusing on organizing scientific and cultural life and research in Slovakia, as well as among Slovaks living abroad.

comprehensively and with the support of linguistic scientific institution (Institute of the Slovak Language, later the Ľudovít Štúr Institute of Linguistics of the Slovak Academy of Sciences). Its dialectological department prepared and implemented questionnaire research led by Jozef Štolc (1908-1981) for the *Atlas slovenského jazyka* [Atlas of the Slovak language] (see the 3<sup>rd</sup> classification in this chapter) and for the *Slovník slovenských nárečí* [Dictionary of Slovak Dialects].<sup>11</sup> Many local dialect monographs and dictionaries were prepared, and from the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a sociolinguistic approach was introduced to dialectological research. The modified model of the classification of Slovak dialects was presented in the dialectological textbook by Rudolf Krajčovič (1927-2014) described in the last – 4<sup>th</sup> classification).<sup>12</sup>

## 2. Dialect classifications

### 2.1 Alois Vojtěch Šembera (1864)

Šembera (1807–1882) was a Czech linguist and literary historian, professor at the University of Olomouc (a city in the part of Bohemia called Moravia) and in Vienna (Austria). He devoted himself to history, literary history, law, demography, and linguistics.

Despite the fact that in older periods several scholars indicated a division of the Slovak language territory into areas (usually based on geographical and administrative borders) and associated with them the differentiation of the language base, the first work that divides this territory in more detail and with a focus on dialect variability was the work of Alois Vojtěch Šembera *Základy dialektologie československé* [Basics of Czechoslovak dialectology] published in Vienna in 1864.

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<sup>11</sup> The works on this project started immediately after the four volumes of Atlas were published in the 1980s; nowadays three volumes of the dictionary (out of planned six) have been published (1994, 2006, 2021).

<sup>12</sup> More about the development of Slovak dialectology as a scientific discipline see in Habovštiak (1953), Štolc (1960), Štolc (1968b: 17-19), Palkovič (1981: 10-17), Krajčovič (1988: 187-189) and others.



The work is based on the concept of one Czechoslovak language, which from a dialect point of view is divided into three dialects – Czech, Moravian, and Slovak. These are further divided into subdialects (“podřečí”) and subsubdialects (“různořečí”). The findings concerning the Slovak dialect area were the basis for the later dialectological works of Samo Czambel and Václav Vážný and were gradually re-evaluated by more accurate dialectological research as well as more accurate linguistic descriptions.

#### 2.1.1 Framework: Isoglottic dialectology

The Šembera’s classification could not be based on extensive and systematic dialectological research. At that time, there were only a few local and partial dialect descriptions or mentions he could utilize. In addition, he relied on his own field research and observations, as well as texts or sets of words collected by his collaborators. Thus, the research did not cover evenly the whole territory and the author himself spoke about the need for future comprehensive research (1864: VIII-IX).

The comparative approach is used in denoting the difference between the Slovak (and other mentioned) dialects and the standardized written Czech of that time. In the description of selected structural features, he uses the phrase “instead of”, which is followed by the Czech counterpart. Further, it is demonstrated by Slovak example words with the Czech equivalents in parentheses, e. g.: *r* instead of *ř*: *reč* (řeč), Engl. speech, *prítel*, *prjatel* (přítel), Engl. friend (p. 62).

Within the Slovak dialect group, he further distinguishes subdialects and subsubdialects. Each subgroup is given a brief description, which includes 1) geographical delimitation (using names of rivers, valleys, villages, or administrative districts – counties “stolice”), 2) phonetic and grammatical characteristics, and 3) “special words”.

He usually proceeds in the same way – phonetic or morphological characteristic features of the (sub)subdialects are confronted with equivalents from the standard Czech language or sometimes with equivalents from other Slovak subdialects (most often the Central Slovak which may be motivated by the Hodža’s classification, in

which Central Slovak is called “New Slovak” and is considered the most proper). E.g., in characteristics of subsubdialect “pohronské” (of area Pohronie) (pp. 74-75):

– *e* after *h, ch, k* instead of *y*: *ruke* (ruce), Engl. hand (Npl), *nohe* (nohy), Engl. leg (Npl), *slivke* (slivky), Engl. plum (Npl), *muche* (muchy), Engl. fly (Npl).

– *ý* instead of *é* in case forms of adjectives: *dobrýho* (dobrého), Engl. good (Gsg), *dobrýmu* (dobrému), Engl. good (Dsg), *v dobrým* (v dobrém), Engl. in good (Lsg). The same is heard in Gemer.

– *i* instead of *e* in the genitive of feminine: *z Bystrici* (z Bystřice), Engl. from Bystrica (Gsg), *z Viédni* (z Vídně), Engl. from Vienna (Gsg). The same is heard in Gemer.

– *t* instead of *ť* in infinitive around Lubětov: *písat* (*psáti*, with a palatalised pronunciation of *t*), Engl. to write, *vynášat* (*vynáseti*, with a palatalised pronunciation of *t*), Engl. to bring out, etc.

The sets of characteristic phenomena in the (sub)subdialect descriptions do not contain the same structural phenomena, which we could therefore consider as a criterion of classification, resp. determination of the dialect boundaries. Rather, it is a random selection of such phenomena that were documented at the time.

Similarly, the characteristic of every (sub)subdialect also includes a list of “distinctive” lexemes, but their selection is also rather random. Moreover, lexemes do not always cover the whole described territory or, conversely, often they are not specific just for this subdialect area.

### 2.1.2 Classification of dialects and subdialects

As mentioned, Šembera’s classification is based on the idea of one Czechoslovak language, which includes three dialects – Czech, Moravian, and Slovak. They are further divided into several sub-dialects and subsubdialects: three in Bohemia, eight in Moravia, and eleven in Slovakia – according to differences he found in sounds, grammatical forms, and words. At the same time, he argues that more detailed

research would reveal more differences and peculiarities – especially in Slovakia (which may indicate that he realised the rich differentiation of Slovak dialects, as well as the necessity of further investigation).

The territory of Slovak dialects, which includes the south-eastern part of Moravia and north-western Old Hungary, he divided into three subdialects (“podrečia”) – West, Central, and East – and eleven subsubdialects (“rúžnořeči”):

The West subdialect is divided into 5 subsubdialects:

- Moravian Slovak dialect (Moravskoslovenské),
- Biela Hora dialect (Bělohorské),
- Trnava dialect (Trnavské),
- Lower Trenčín dialect (Dolnotrenčanské or Trenčansko-Nitranské),
- Upper Trenčín dialect (Hornotrenčanské or Žilinské).

The Central subdialect includes:

- Upper Váh dialect (Hornovážské or Oravsko-Turčansko-Liptovské),
- Dialect of the Hron valley (Pohronské or Zvolensko-Tekovské),
- Hont dialect (Hontčanské),
- Novohrad (Novohradské),
- Gemer dialect (Gemerské).

Inside the East dialect he – according to existing data – didn’t find differences that would allow further division.

This division corresponds to Hodža’s classification (cf. Introduction) and also reflects the administrative division of the territory into counties.

He mentions also German, Hungarian, and Ruthenian enclaves or towns and northern areas of the Polish language (today classified as Goral dialects) inside the Slovak area, as well as some Slovak enclaves in other parts of Old Hungary.

A curious part of his book is the fable (About the sun and trees) and folk song (Farewell), which are in all Slavic languages and all Czechoslovak dialects defined by him. He also included a few other dialect texts in a separate section, but probably only from regions of which he had textual material.

## 2.2 Václav Vážný (1934)

Václav Vážný (1892-1966) was a Czech linguist and professor at Comenius University in Bratislava and later Charles University in Prague. He devoted himself to historical linguistics, comparative linguistics of Slavic languages, and research of Slovak dialects. In the history of Slovak linguistics, he is known as the creator of the codification of the Slovak language influenced by the ideology of “Czechoslovakism”. Together with his collaborators in the Linguistic Department of Matica slovenská and in the Linguistic Department of the Šafárik’s Learned Society, as well as with his students he carried out extensive dialect field research in Slovakia in the years 1921-1931. First in the form of small questionnaires gathered by correspondence<sup>13</sup> and later by questionnaire research conducted in person through trained investigators. He also utilised the works of other authors to describe local dialect phenomena.

He was the first in Slovak linguistics who used the methods of linguistic geography and cartographically processed the geographical distribution of phonetic and morphological (less syntactic and lexical) phenomena. His summary work – a comprehensive chapter *Nářečí slovenská* (Slovak dialects) written in Czech – is a part of *Československá vlastivěda*.<sup>14</sup> *Volume 3. – Language* published in 1934. This period was influenced by the ideology of Czechoslovakism and the concept of a common Czechoslovak language. In accordance with it, Slovak was perceived as one of the two variants of the Czechoslovak language. Therefore, the Slovak dialects are presented here as the dialects of the Czechoslovak language. The group of Slovak dialects according to Vážný, includes the group of Moravian dialects (on the territory of Moravia near the border with nowadays Slovakia) and proper Slovak dialects.

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<sup>13</sup> The questionnaire had 268 questions involving approximately 1600 words. He obtained material from approximately 1000 localities.

<sup>14</sup> May be translated as “Czechoslovak studies” – it was an edition of 13 volumes devoted to various scientific disciplines, which arose in the inter-war period.

### 2.2.1 Framework: Isoglottic dialectology

Vážný followed the model of Šembera, but in defining the basic dialect differences he focused on the results of older phonological and grammatical changes, i.e., reflexes of old Proto-Slavic items (he calls them “Proto-Czech”); to a lesser extent, he also noticed syntactic and lexical peculiarities.

Within the Slovak language territory, i.e. territory except for the Moravian area, he characterized the delimited dialect areas by a complex of these old differentiating results. He presented similarities and differences between regions or localities, often in comparison with the situation in Moravian Slovak and sometimes also in Czech dialects or in the standard (Czech) language.

He points out the phenomena that connect Moravian Slovakia, western and eastern Slovak dialects, and the Czech and Moravian dialects and that distinguish all these areas from Central Slovak. By means of eleven phonetic and morphological features, which according to him, prove the special position of Central Slovak among other regions, he approved the basic division of the Slovak dialect area into three basic dialects. Here are presented only selected examples (p. 228-229) to demonstrate his method:

1) phonetic phenomenon with a delimitative function is presented as follows:

Initial groups *roC-*,<sup>15</sup> *loC-* from ProtoSlavic *orC-*, *olC-*, like in Moravian-Slovak *rostu*, West Slovak *rostem* and east Slovak *rošňem*, against Middle Slovak *raC-*, *laC-* – *rastíem*, Engl. ‘I grow’;

2) morphological noun phenomenon with a delimitative function is presented as follows:

Ending *-é* in Nom. Pl. in type *ludé*, *sinové* or *ľudze*, *sinove* against Middle Slovak forms with *-ia* *ľudia*, *sinovia*, Engl. ‘people’, ‘sons’;

3) morphological verb phenomenon with a delimitative function is presented as follows:

3rd Pers. Pl. of *be* – *sú* or *su* – against Middle Slovak *sa*, Engl. ‘(they) are’.

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<sup>15</sup> C stands for any consonant.

### 2.2.2 Classification of dialects and subdialects

The primary division of the Slovak language area is the trichotomic classification into Western, Central, and Eastern dialect areas, by which Vážný follows up on the older works of Hodža and Šembera. Within each area, he gives a set of phonetic and morphological phenomena that characterize and at the same time further internally divide the area.

The more detailed classifications – within the three main areas – are to a great extent unbalanced and the thoroughness of the further division is undoubtedly conditioned by the different amounts of research material obtained from a particular area. In some cases, also other partial dialect descriptions were used.

That is why we find here areas with several stages of the division, e.g. area of the West Slovakia, in Central Slovakia the area of Orava and Gemer (where the author did his own field research) – in these classifications, he uses terminology: dialect (nářečí) – subdialect (podřečí). And vice versa, there are areas with only very generalized characteristics without any further classification – e. g. in the Eastern part of Slovakia.

For illustration, the Central Slovak dialect area is divided into seven regions and among them, for example, the Orava dialect region in north-western part of the Central Slovakia is further divided as follows (p. 283-284):

Central Slovak dialects (Nářečí středoslovenská)

I. Slovak dialects in Orava (Slovenská nářečí v Oravě)

a) Lower Orava dialect (Nářečí dolnooravské)

b) Middle Orava dialects (Nářečí stredooravská)

- subdialect of Tvrdošín (podřečí tvrdošínské)

- subdialect of Biela Orava and Hruštín (podřečí bielo-oravsko-hruštínské)

c) Slovak dialects of Upper Orava (Slovenská nářečí horní Oravy)

- subdialect of Trstená or Oravice (podřečí trstenské alebo oravické)

- subdialect of Námestovo (podřečí náměstovské)<sup>16</sup>

On the other hand, the division of dialects of the whole area of Eastern Slovakia is unbalanced – it is more detailed only in the case of Spiš region and other parts remain without any further division (p. 305-306):

Eastern Slovak dialects (Nářečí východoslovenská)

I. Spiš dialects

A. 7 villages – transitional dialect of Spiš-Liptov or of Lučivná – within them there is also a special dialect of two villages – Lower and Upper Šuňava

B. eastern Slovak dialects of Spiš (Východoslovenská nářečí spišská)

a) south-western part – Hnilec<sup>17</sup> dialect group (skupina hnilecká)

b) the rest of Spiš

After this quite detailed division, the other parts of the Eastern region stayed undivided. He characterizes them as linguistically uniform.

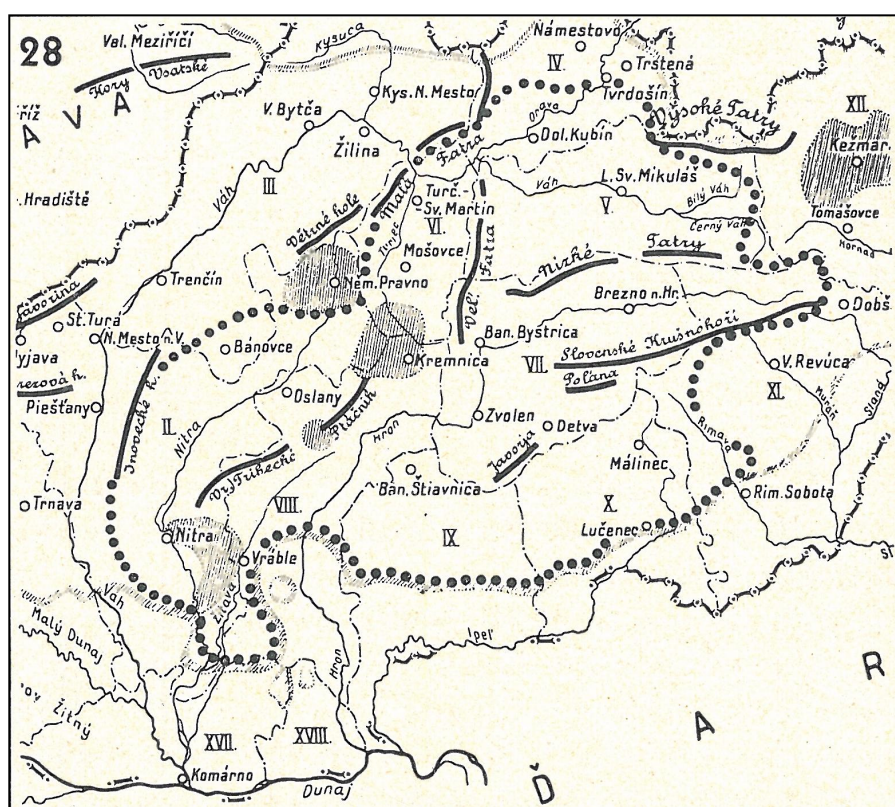
As stated by Jóna (1953), the article of Vážný sometimes “expands on a monographic study about some dialects (e.g., about Orava dialects), or about some phonetic, morphological, and other phenomena”. However, as a whole, the description of all areas and all observed phenomena is not balanced.

Although he was the first in Slovak linguistics who used the methods of linguistic geography, he did not actually create the boundaries of dialect regions, but he drew isoglosses, the boundaries of specific phenomena, i.e., variation as a result of historical language changes on separate maps (for an example, see Map 2).

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<sup>16</sup> Tvrdošín, Hruštín, Trstená and Námestovo are names of small towns in the region, Biela Orava is a name of river.

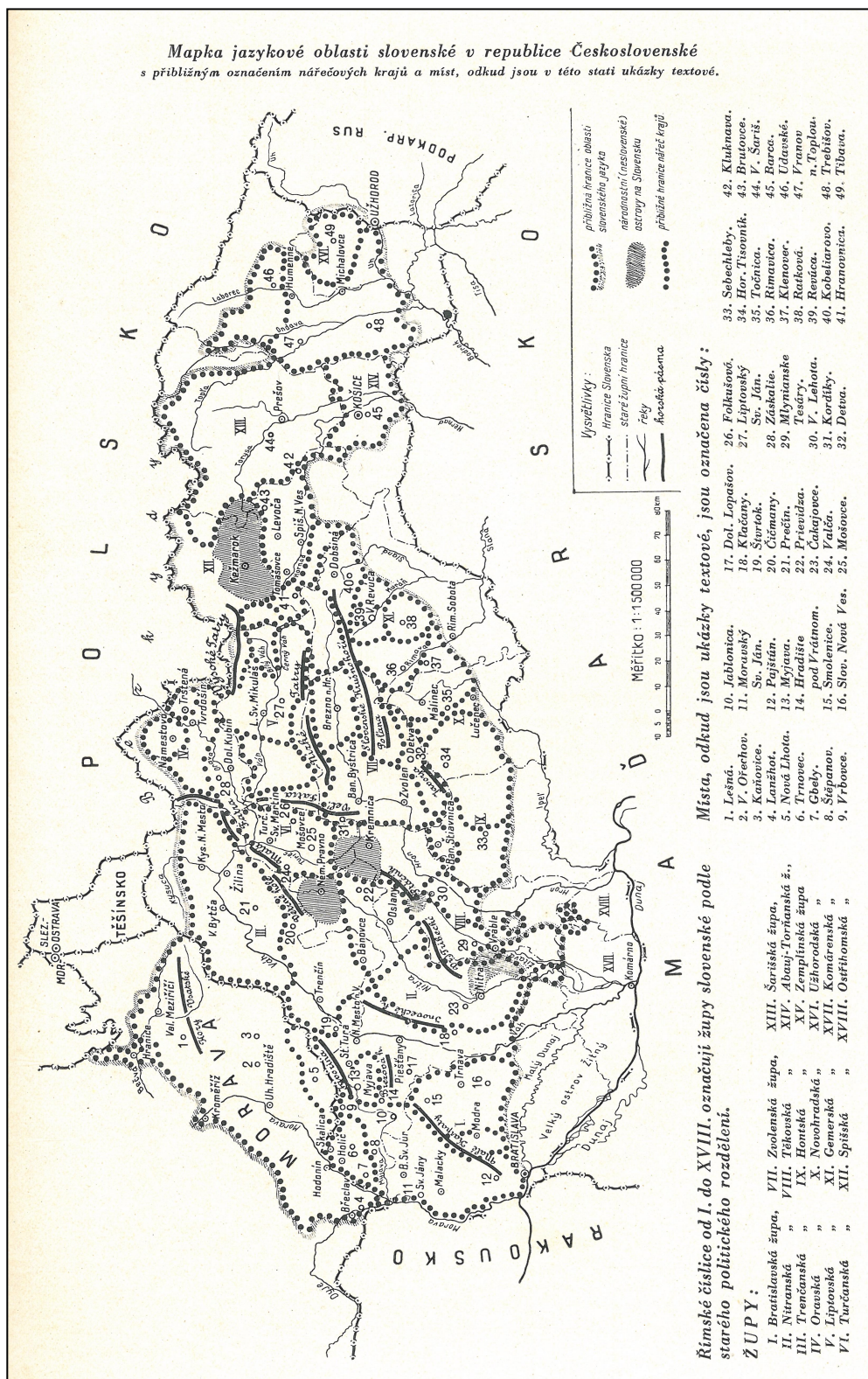
<sup>17</sup> Hnilec is a name of river.



Map 2. Example of a map with Slovak dialect isoglosses: 28. 3<sup>rd</sup> Pers. Pl. of “be” *sa* (*sú*) (Original source Vážný 1934: 272)

Based on these maps (altogether there are 55 of them), he created a complex picture of the linguistic territory of Slovakia given in a *Map of the Slovak linguistic area in the Czechoslovak Republic with an approximate designation of the dialect regions and places from which the text examples are given in this article* (Map 3).





Map 3. Map of the Slovak linguistic area in the Czechoslovak Republic with an approximate designation of the dialect regions and places from which the text examples are given in this article (Original source Vážný 1934: 272)

Although the map is rather intricate, its legend suggests that:

1) into the Slovak language territory, the author also included the area of Moravia but excluded ethnically mixed areas (Slovak-Hungarian in the south, Slovak-Ruthenian in the northeast, and Slovak-Polish in the north);

2) in the dialect differentiation, he still considers the administrative boundaries of the historical Hungarian counties, within which he characterizes their dialect; he also names dialects according to the name of these counties. In the legend of the map, there is a complete list of these counties (marked with Roman numerals), not a list of dialect areas;

3) he considers geographical objects (rivers and mountains) to be an important factor in linguistic diversity, which is indicated on the map. Mountains usually follow the region borders and rivers – as the centres of valleys – flow through them;

4) he is aware of the relativity of defined dialect units – see the expression “approximate designation of the dialect regions” in the title of the map.

Nevertheless, his – although unbalanced but at that time the most detailed – dialect description of the regions of Slovakia can undoubtedly be considered a new dialect classification and as Palkovič (1981: 13) stated: “Vážný’s division of the Slovak dialects is – with minor corrections and amendments – valid until today”, which means until the time when he published his work.

### 2.3 Jozef Štolc et al. (1968a, 1968b)

One of Vážný’s collaborators in collecting dialect material, Jozef Štolc (1908-1981), later headed a new and very wide dialect research for the four-volume *Atlas slovenského jazyka* [Atlas of the Slovak Language] and was the main author of the first two Atlas volumes.

Dialect research after the Second World War was carried out at the Institute of Linguistics of the Slovak Academy of Sciences.<sup>18</sup> Štolc together with Eugen Pauliny prepared in 1947 a *Dotazník pre výskum slovenských nárečí* [Questionnaire for the

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<sup>18</sup> In 1952 – 1967 Institute of the Slovak Language; since 1967 Ľudovít Štúr Institute of Linguistics.

Research of Slovak Dialects] for the Atlas focused on phonetic and morphological phenomena. The questionnaire contained questions for 1960 words, 590 word-forms, and 75 word-formation phenomena, i.e. a total of 2355 words and forms, on which approximately 750 linguistic phenomena were examined. The research took place in the years 1947 – 1951 in all Slovak villages or smaller towns (together 2559 municipalities) in Slovakia and was done by 150 explorers. The result was 2683 completed questionnaires (cf. Štolc et al. 1968b: 20-21, 25). For the first and second Atlas volumes, 328 representative municipalities were selected. Afterward, in 1964, a new *Dotazník pre výskum slovenských nárečí II* [Questionnaire for the Research of Slovak Dialects II] (1964) was prepared by F. Buffa and A. Habovštiak, which focused on word-formation (592 questions) and lexical (1259 questions) phenomena. The field research was done only in the selected 328 localities.

Individual volumes of the Atlas were focused on 1. vocalism and consonantism (1968), 2. inflection (morphology; 1981), 3. word-formation (1978), and 4. lexicon (1984). Each volume has a separate book of commentaries, in which the authors, in addition to a description of the map, provide additional information on the etymology of the observed phenomenon, the situation in other Slavic languages, special or unique cases, and other published works and sources.

The 1<sup>st</sup> volume also brings a map of differentiation of the Slovak dialects (Map 4; Štolc et al. 1968a: 4), which is still considered the most representative and respected in dialectological research.

### 2.3.1 Framework: Isoglottic dialectology

In the introduction to the book of commentaries of the 1<sup>st</sup> volume of the Atlas, in connection with the dialect classification, it is stated: “The map of dialect division is based on the classification according to characteristic features.” (Štolc et al. 1968b: 35). However, Štolc did not state anywhere which differential results of language changes are the “authoritative” characteristic features. The methodological conception of the work, as well as the course of works on individual volumes, were the subject of

several articles (Štolc 1946-1948, 1957, 1960, 1961, 1972, Štolc et al. 1968b, and others), but even here the procedures according to which the authors defined the boundaries of dialect units are not described or explained in detail.

We can only assume that these were the differential phonological and morphological results of the genetically oldest language changes, resp. changes realized in all Slovak dialects (but in a different way), or phenomena that are considered in the Central Slovak dialect area to be elements of South Slavic origin (so-called *juhoslavizmy* “south-slavisms”). Such phenomena include, for example, the results after metathesis of liquids *orC*, *olC*, reflexes for Proto-Slavic jers and nasal vowel *ę*, vocalization of syllabic *r* and *l*, diphthongization *é* > *ie*, *ó* > *uo* and later monophthongization (narrowing) of *ie* > *í*, *uo* > *ú*, depalatalization *ť*, *d'*, *ň*, *ť* > *t*, *d*, *n*, *l*, or asibilization *ť*, *d'* > *c*, *ž* etc. (cf. also Štolc 1961: 162)

In the chapter *Územie* [Territory], he recalls the traditional trichotomic division into basic groups – Central, West, and East – based on “some” characteristic features, but these are again not precisely specified. At the same time, Štolc emphasizes that the geographical distribution of individual words bearing these features often does not overlap with the lines that are traditionally considered to be the boundaries between these macro-dialect groups. (Štolc et al. 1968b: 22-24) The demarcation of smaller regions within the three groups is very similar to the boundaries of historical counties (Štolc et al. 1968b: 22), i.e. administrative Old-Hungarian units called “*stolice*” or “*župy*”. The explanation can be found in another Štolc’s work (1994: 19): “The economics, material and social culture in the counties gradually acquired a special character. Parallel to that, the dialect types, which still live in the territory of former counties, emerged.” The names of these administrative units are still alive, Slovaks use them to denote their native region, and “dialect groups and individual dialects are also named after these historical counties” (1994: 19). In this aspect, the Slovak dialect diversity and its classification acquire a character of the ethnological classification framework.

Some of these regional units are further subdivided internally, and here the criterium returns to the linguistic features-based approach and uses structural language features, which, however, are again not clearly or just selectively specified.

At the same time, Štolc suggests that there are internally diverged areas, in which the dialects of neighbouring villages differ from each other by a complex of phonetic and grammatical characters; for this reason, the name of the dialect regions has the word dialect in the plural form. He also specifies several groups of villages with special dialectal characteristics, which in the past formed special economic, administrative, or legal units (Štolc et al. 1968b: 22).

In several works, Štolc seeks to interpret the defined boundaries of the dialects only as generalized and simplified. Knowing well the real rich structural differentiation of Slovak dialect continuum, he speaks of a “mosaic picture” of one language unit (Štolc et al. 1968b: 22), which is created by numerous differences inside the dialects, variability in transitional areas and different fan-scattered isoglosses of the same phenomenon in different lexical units. Therefore, he often pointed out the importance of synthetic maps (maps processing several words containing the same phonetic or grammatical phenomenon by the isogloss method), which according to him prove that individual phenomena in different lexical units do not have a uniform distribution and show a scattering of isoglosses as well as variability, especially in neighbouring or transient areas. Therefore, not all borders marked on the map can be considered real borders (Štolc 1972: 289). He considers the Atlas to be a basic dialectological work, but at the same time, he says that the Atlas creates a framework that will need to be filled with additional material, especially through monographic descriptions of territorial units and individual phenomena. In one of his papers, he presents the intention to do a synthetic Slovak dialectology, in which “the picture of the territorial differentiation of dialect groups and smaller units will be specified” (Štolc 1972: 288). From this, it can be assumed that he considered it necessary to elaborate the map of the Slovak dialects presented in the Atlas even in more detail.

In the presented perspectives of a deeper and more detailed elaboration of the dialect classification, we find another ethnological element. Štolc proposes that the dialect atlas be supplemented by another series of maps – archaeological, toponymic, historical, ecclesiastical, maps of crafts or maps showing migration and colonization

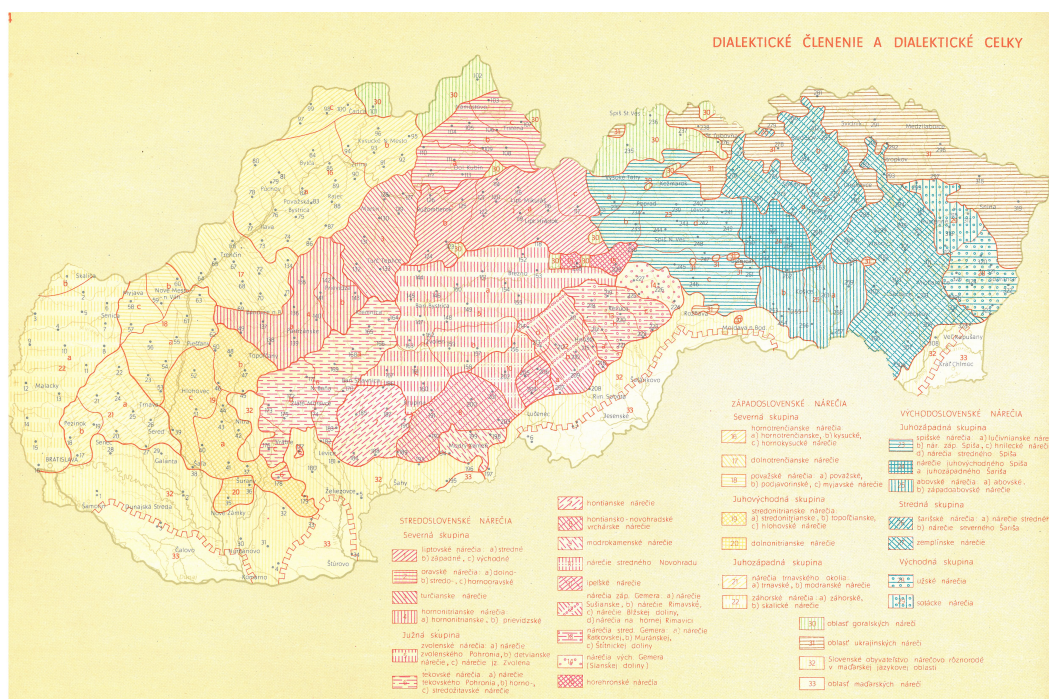
flows, etc. – which would explain the boundaries of dialect units through non-linguistic factors (Štolc 1961: 172).

In the reports on the preparation of the Atlas, which was to be coordinated together with the preparation of the Atlas of Czech Dialects, we found a remark about another – quite curious – type of possible “classification” and division of the base map, based on Geographic Grid and the system of meridians and parallels (Štolc 1961: 174). But this idea was not realized in either of the two atlases.

### 2.3.2 Classification of dialects and subdialects

It is natural that due to a large amount of basic research and the data obtained, as well as the professional management of research and geographical processing done by dialectologists, this work has gained great authority, which it still has today. Therefore, the classification presented in the dialect map is still the most used in other dialectological works and it is also the basis of the nationwide *Slovník slovenských nářečí* [Dictionary of Slovak Dialects] (see 1. Introduction).





Map 4. Map of Dialectological differentiation and dialectal units. Original source Štolc et al. (1968a: 4)

In the map, the three basic dialect macro-areas (i.e. West, Central, and East), probably defined on the basis of the different results of the oldest language changes, are marked in colour. At the next level of division motivated by the historical boundaries of the Old Hungarian counties, the dialect regions are marked by lines and internal hatching, and they are numbered. The names of regions usually copy the names of the counties. Regions, which have internal dialect differentiation are further subdivided and marked with letters a, b, c, ... added to the region number. To name these units, either the geographical location (upper, central, lower, west, east, etc.) or the name of a representative municipality or the name of a valley usually named after a river, is used (Table 1).

Classification based on the old language changes	Classification based on selected language features	Classification based on historical Old Hungarian counties	Features-based classification according to selected minor language features	
Central Slovak dialects (red)	Northern group	1 Liptov dialects	a) Central b) West c) East dialects	
		2 Orava dialects	a) Lower; b) Middle; c) Upper Orava dialects	
		3 Turiec dialect		
	Southern group	4 Upper Nitra dialects	a) Upper Nitra; b) Prievidza	
		5 Zvolen dialects	a) Dialects of Zvolen Pohronie b) Detva dialect c) dialect of south-western Zvolen region	
		6 Tekov dialects	a) Dialect of Tekov Pohronie b) Upper Žitava dialect c) Middle Žitava dialect	
		7 Hont dialect	--	
		8 Hont-Novohrad mountain dialect	--	
		9 Modrý Kameň dialect	--	
		10 Middle Novohrad dialect	--	
		11 Ipeľ dialect	--	
		12 West Gemer dialects	a) Sušany dialect b) Rimava dialect c) Blh valley dialect d) Dialect of upper Rimavica	
		13 Middle Gemer dialects	a) Dialect of Ratková valley b) Dialect of Muráň valley c) Dialect of Štítnik valley	
		14 East Gemer dialects (of Slaná valley)	--	
		15 Horehronie dialects	--	
West Slovak dialects (yellow)	Northern group	16 Upper Trenčín dialects	a) Upper Trenčín dialect b) Kysuce dialect c) Upper Kysuce dialect	
		17 Lower Trenčín dialect		
	South eastern group	18 Považie dialects	a) Považie b) Podjavorina c) Myjava dialects	
		19 Middle Nitra dialects	a) Middle Nitra b) Topoľčany c) Hlohovec dialects	
	South western group	20 Lower Nitra dialect	--	
		21 Dialects of Trnava surroundings	a) Trnava dialect b) Modra dialect	
		22 Záhorie dialects	a) Záhorie dialect b) Skalica dialect	
East Slovak dialects (blue)	South western group	23 Spiš dialects	a) Lučivná dialect b) Dialect of west Spiš c) Hnilec dialect d) Dialect of central Spiš	
		24 Dialect of southeastern Spiš and southwestern Šariš	--	
	Central group	25 Abov dialects	a) Abov dialect b) West Abov dialect	
		26 Šariš dialects	a) Dialect of central Šariš b) Dialect of northern Šariš	
	Eastern group	27 Zemplín dialect		
		28 Uh dialects		
		29 Soták dialects		
	Transitional dialect areas		30 Area of Goral dialects (green)	
			31 Area of Rusyn and Ukrainian dialects (brown)	
32 Slovak population with various dialects in the Hungarian language area (light yellow)				
33 Area of Hungarian dialects (white)				

Table 1. Classification of Slovak dialect regions, the colours in brackets correspond to the colours used in Map 4.



#### 2.4 Rudolf Krajčovič (1988)

The last classification does not differ significantly from the previous one. Its author – Rudolf Krajčovič (1927-2014) was primarily a historical linguist and devoted himself to the genesis of the oldest history of Slovak and Slavic languages.

He approached the interpretation of the development of language and language changes from the structuralist point of view and thus he followed up on the tradition of structuralism in Slovak linguistics, which he applied to diachronic linguistics. In addition to the appellative lexicon, also toponyms and their historical linguistic reconstruction represented an important base of data for him. His most significant synthetic works are *Slovenčina a slovanské jazyky. Praslovanská genéza slovenčiny I* [Slovak and Slavic languages. Proto-Slavic genesis of Slovak I] (1974), workbook *Vývin slovenského jazyka a dialektológia* [Development of the Slovak language and dialectology] (1988) and work published in English *A Historical Phonology of the Slovak Language* (1975).

In the workbook *Vývin slovenského jazyka a dialektológia* [Development of the Slovak language and dialectology], especially in the part devoted to Slovak dialects, he followed up on dialect classification from the *Atlas slovenského jazyka* [Atlas of the Slovak language – see chapter 4] and partially modified it. As a historical linguist, he emphasized to more extent the diachronic point of view in the description of dialect differences (in contrast to Štolc's predominantly synchronic approach). Borders of the dialect regions he interpreted on the basis of the selected phenomena, mostly the results of the late Proto-Slavic and old Slovak changes. At the same time, he emphasized that internal differentiation is a result of gradual differential and simultaneous integration changes in certain areas. In addition to linguistic factors, he reflected also extra-linguistic factors of dialect fragmentation (e.g., the situation in the Old Hungarian kingdom and administrative (county) division, migration of the native ethnic group and the colonization, the geographical relief of the country, or the urban development (Krajčovič 1988: 195-196).

### 2.4.1 Framework: Isoglottic dialectology

Krajčovič characterised dialect region as a space defined by a set of boundary isoglosses, while these isoglosses should originate from different (at least two) language levels. It follows that “the dialect area is a territory bounded by isoglosses, within which more general and specific dialect phenomena form a relatively complex and structured system” (1988: 199). When determining the areas, he applied a “complex criterion”, which means that he was based on the current state of dialects and at the same time considered their genesis and development. Therefore, his goal was to provide a “synchronic-diachronic” characteristic of Slovak dialects.

In the entire classification and description of the dialect units, a structuralist approach is clearly visible, resulting in the effort for a systematic image of individual dialect structures. This results in a certain generalization, schematization, and abstraction from individual dialect peculiarities with different isogloss zones and overlapping, resp. from variable realizations of one change in different lexical units. It should also be taken into account that in his case it is a university textbook, which by its nature requires a simplified presentation of the issue.

Particular areal and regional dialects he describes in more detail on the basis of specific and selected phonetic, phonological, and morphological phenomena that distinguish this area from neighbouring ones. The characteristic begins with residual phenomena, i.e. selected differential results of Proto-Slavic changes (e.g. metathesis of liquids in the first syllable with a circumflex accent, denasalization of the front nasal *ę* in long position or contraction of the ending I. Sg. Fem. *-ou* and others).

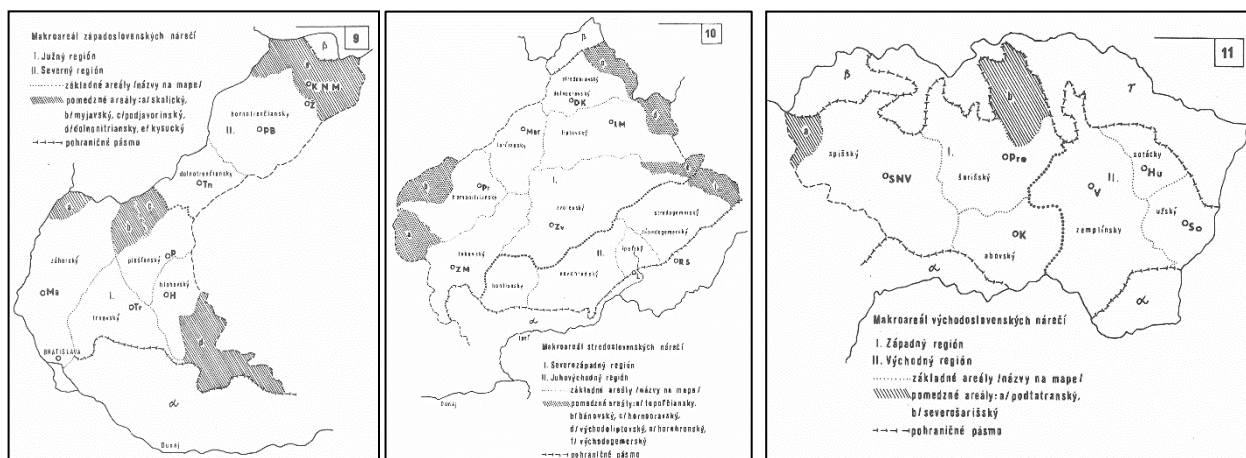
Then it continues with a description of the phonetic and phonological system as a result of later sound changes and finally with morphological characteristics. The descriptions of the phonetic and morphological system create (the appearance of) a structurally regular unit. Krajčovič also explains individual changes in dialects as consequences of intra-linguistic tension and/or the tendency to form a balanced system of structural items and relationships.

#### 2.4.2 Classification of dialects and subdialects

In his classification, Krajčovič uses hierarchically defined terminology. First, the territory of Slovak dialects is divided into three macro-areas (“makroareál” - Map 5), which are defined mainly on the basis of residual isoglosses, while younger changes are only partially reflected. Macro-areas are further divided into regional areas or regions (“regionálne areály/regióny”), basic areas (“základné areály”), border areas (“pomedzné areály”), zones (rajóny) and enclaves (enklávy).

He considers basic areas to be the most important because they represent the most significant unity of general and specific phenomena in the state of dialects. Places where isogloss zones overlap, different results extend from neighbouring areas, or where there is higher variability in the results of language changes, he defines as border areas. It can also be a territory marked by migration, where the distinction is based on the coexistence of adstrate and substrate phenomena. In the case of a more significant internal differentiation of the basic area, it is further divided into zones. If there is a territory with significant differences inside the basic area, it is referred to as an enclave. Paradoxically – with the presented more precise and hierarchical terminological system, he actually defines much fewer areas and regions, zones and enclaves are marked only sporadically.

In spite of the fact, that borders of basic regions again – to some extent – remind the Hungarian administrative counties, Krajčovič tries to avoid naming dialect areas after these historical names and prefers the names of the most important urban locations in the area (Table 2).



5. Maps of three macro-areas of the Slovak dialect territory. Original source Krajčovič (1988: 315-317)

Macroareas	Regions	Basic areas	Transitional areas / zones
West Slovak dialects	South	Záhorie	Skalica rajón
		Trnava	Myjava
		Piešťany	Podjavorina
		Hlohovec	Lower Nitra
	Northern	Lower Trenčín	Lower Kysuce
Central Slovak dialects	North-western	Upper Trenčín	upper Kysuce
		Lower Orava	
		Middle Orava	upper Orava
		Turiec	
		Liptov	East Liptov
	South-eastern	Zvolen	Bánovce
		Upper Nitra	Topoľčany
		Tekov	
		Hont	Horehronie
		Novohrad	
East Slovak dialects	western	Ipeľ	
		West Gemer	
		Middle Gemer	East Gemer
	Eastern	Spiš	Podtatranské
		Šariš	Northern Šariš
		Abov	
		Zemplín	
		Uh	
		Soták	

Table 2. Classification of Slovak dialect regions according to the map legend

### 3. Discussion

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the first reflections on Slovak dialect diversity can be found in very modest remarks or mentions, which were not based on deliberate and targeted scientific dialectological research. They were rather associated with the process of emergence of national awareness and identity, and with the growth of attention paid to the language together with the history and culture of the Slovak ethnic group that lived in the northern part of the Hungarian Kingdom. From that time to the present day, Slovak dialectological research has undergone significant development and progress. Paradoxically, very little has changed in the perception of horizontal dialect division and in approaches to their areal classification.

None of the above-mentioned classifications can – in our opinion – be clearly defined in terms of the framework. All of them involve – at various levels of dialect classification – several motivations, sources, and approaches. At the same time, in all works – from pre-scientific mentions of dialect diversity to systematic dialectological research – the authors cope in different ways with the fact that the Slovak dialect situation has the character of a dialect continuum. It means that each isogloss, dialect border, or area divided into dialect regions is to some extent a scientific construct, which is generalized, and abstracts from individual cases of linguistic phenomena distribution and their variable lexical and territorial occurrence.

From the earliest mentions, i.e. already in works before the emergence of scientific dialectology, the dialectal differentiation of the Slovak language territory is perceived trichotomically. The trichotomous perception was at first based on the perception of the linguistic closeness or similarity to the surrounding languages – Czech and Polish, which were more advanced at the time and had their standard varieties. According to this perception, the western Slovak dialects were related to Czech, and the eastern ones as related to Polish (and partially also to East Slavic languages). From this point of view, the dialects of the central part of the language area were assumed the most preserved or “proper”. With the development of scientific dialectology, historical linguistics, and the historical-comparative method (but

also the development of history and archaeology), connected with extensive field research, the trichotomous division gained scientific argumentation and explanation. In this part of the basic dialect classification, in its beginnings, we can therefore speak of a comparative approach, which was later supported with a historical-linguistic and genetic approach. But, except for small shifts in some borders, nothing has changed in the overall trichotomous division of Slovak dialects.

In the more detailed division of the three basic dialect areas into particular regions, the reflection of the Old Hungarian administrative division of the territory into counties is carried across all classifications. This is clearly seen in the names of dialect units identical to the names of counties (sometimes the names of counties and dialect units are identical to the name of the city that is the center of the given area).

The identification of dialect units with the historical counties is known from the oldest philological and historical works, cf. Bell, Šafárik, Hodža, Czambel, and others (mentioned in the introductory section), but also from works of other scholars of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries who – when speaking about the variable base of Slovak automatically assigned dialects to historical administrative regions. The perception of historical regions and their dialectal differences is still present even in the perception of the Slovak population. Therefore, the ethnological framework of the classification is applied to a large extent at this level of dialect classification, although authors in their dialectological works try to base this division on selected linguistic phenomena. Of course, the borders of dialect units in individual classifications (e.g. from Vážný to Krajčovič) sometimes differ more or less from the historical borders of the counties.

In further stages of internal division into even smaller dialectal units, the authors again return to linguistic criteria and define these units on the basis of a features-based approach.

Progress of works focused on dialectal diversity also reflects the development of linguistics in Slovakia, which – although it has roots in the works of important scholars of the 17<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> centuries – began to develop as a complex and scientific discipline with its own methodology very late (compared to the surrounding European countries), only at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Its beginnings were still influenced by the Neogrammarian approach emphasizing the historical aspect and the historical-comparative method. The positivist approach had a dominant position in the works of traditional dialectology, the emphasis on empiricism led to organized field research, the creation of extensive data collections, the building of dialectal archives and card files, as well as the detailed description of dialects in particular regions or even villages. For a long time, it asserted the principles of traditional dialectology in dialect research and concentrated on the ideal dialect speaker (elderly, nonmobile, and rural, the original resident of the village). Consideration of extra-linguistic factors in the development of dialect diversity was reflected mainly in the exclusion of cities and regions with foreign language contacts from the dialectological research.

The penetration of the structuralist approach into dialectology was motivated by the fact that this approach had already prevailed in synchronous research of the standard language, in which the functional approach of the Prague school was mainly applied. In historical linguistics and dialectology, the structural approach influenced the understanding of the dialectal differentiation of the national language. Each individual dialect was perceived as an internally structured system, and the differential elements of dialects were interpreted as the result of internal development and intra-linguistic relations. On the other hand, this approach to some extent considered also extralinguistic factors of dialect diversity.

This tendency was further developed and still is developed today in a widely applied sociolinguistic approach to the study of dialect variability as well as to the research of the process and spread of language changes. At the same time, the first research in the field of perceptual dialectology appeared (namely in newer and individual works), which, however, does not yet cover the entire Slovak linguistic territory.

In contrast, a generative or quantitative dialectometric approach has not yet been applied in Slovak dialectology.

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