



NEW DIRECTIONS IN SLAVIC STUDIES

LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, AND
POLITICAL DISCOURSE

Tatjana Portnova,
Inés de los Ángeles González-Hidalgo,
María del Pilar Peña-Molina
(eds.)



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T. Portnova, I. A. González-Hidalgo, M. P. Peña-Molina (eds.).

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SHAPING MINDS: PROPAGANDA STRATEGIES IN DIALECT LEAFLETS FROM EASTERN SLOVAKIA AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY¹

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1. INTRODUCTION

It has been acknowledged that ideologies are largely acquired, expressed and reproduced through written and spoken discourse, within which propaganda may often play a critical role; therefore, a discourse analysis of the communicative interaction becomes particularly relevant (van Dijk, 2006: 115, 121, 124). At the same time, as Fairclough (1989: 85) observes, ideology is «most effective when its workings are least visible». This effect is achieved when ideological elements are not articulated explicitly in discourse but rather embedded as «background assumptions which on the one hand lead the text producer to ‘textualize’ the world in a particular way, and on the other hand lead the interpreter to interpret the text in a particular way» (Fairclough, 1989: 85).

Against this theoretical backdrop, the present study examines propaganda-based manipulation techniques employed in support of Slovjakism, as manifested in a leaflet distributed in the period immediately following the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic on 28 October 1918. Before proceeding to the textual analysis itself, the historical context in which the leaflet circulated will be briefly outlined. The study will then identify and discuss the specific propaganda techniques employed, along with their potential influence on recipients.

1.1 POLITICAL SITUATION AT THE TIME

Between late 1918 and mid-1919, the population of Eastern Slovakia experienced five constitutional changes, each grounded in a different ideological framework. Following the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic on 28 October 1918, the inhabitants of Eastern Slovakia remained uncertain about the durability of this new state entity and the possibility of further political upheavals. This uncertainty was compounded by the fact that several officials from the former Hungarian administration retained their posts (Ďurišin, 2012: 69-71).

Although the Slovak National Council formally declared allegiance to the newly created Czechoslovak Republic, the principal executive bodies – such as the army, gendarmerie, civil administration, and telecommunications – remained under the control of the Budapest government, which sought to maintain Slovakia within the Hungarian sphere of influence. The situation was particularly complex in Eastern Slovakia, where anti-nationalist forces aimed to detach the region from the rest of Slovakia. The objectives of the Slovak national movement, which sought to consolidate the position of Slovakia within the Czechoslovak Republic, came into direct conflict with the Hungarian government’s efforts to preserve the territorial integrity of historical Hungary (Tajták, 1992: 4-6).

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The population of Eastern Slovakia, aware of the frequently changing situation, was reluctant to engage in any way whatsoever (Ďurišin, 2012: 71). From a psychological perspective, such an attitude is unsurprising. Sudden social changes and negative historical events with serious consequences cause uncertainty and fear in people (Šrol, 2019: 28). Contemporary propaganda also played an important role as the long-term exposure to propaganda significantly weakens the population's ability to distinguish between hostile and non-hostile influence, reducing their capacity to resist manipulation (Táborský, 2020: 89). As Ďurišin (2012) puts it, the propaganda contributed to the creation of an unstructured mass of people that could easily become the target of manipulation by any political force. Leaflets from that period in Eastern Slovakia reveal clear patterns of information manipulation adapted to the prevailing political context. Some appealed to the Hungarian patriotic feelings of Slovaks, others portrayed Czechs in a negative light, and many openly opposed the new constitutional order (Ďurišin, 2012: 71).

With the support of Budapest, the ideology of so-called *Slovjakism* was formed. Its proponents claimed that Eastern Slovaks differ both linguistically and culturally from the Western Slovaks (Ďurišin, 2012: 70) and therefore constitute a distinct ethnic group 'with their own history, language, culture, and consciousness' (Tajták, 2001: 323). The alleged distinctiveness of Eastern Slovaks was justified by referring to them as *Sloviaci/Slojaci* (Tajták, 2001: 324). One of the most prominent advocates of *Slovjakism*, Viktor Dvortsák, described the Šariš Slovaks as members of a separate nation of *Slojaks*. Dvortsák believed that the Šariš Slovaks speak the so-called Eastern Slovak language, which is completely different from Western Slovak, at least as much as Polish is different from Great Russian (Dvortsák, 1916, cited in Švorc, 2012: 14).

Therefore, under the pretext of drawing closer to the people through their mother tongue, i.e. local Šariš dialects, Viktor Dvortsák's movement sought to undermine the national efforts of the Slovaks (Kačmaríková, 2018: 187). The Šariš dialects spoken in the region were used as a marker of identity and, for propaganda purposes, believed to resonate more effectively with the local population than standard Slovak. Consequently, leaflets written in the Šariš dialect became one of the most effective propaganda tools. The dialect as a distinctive feature of the population in Eastern Slovakia was at the beginning of the 20th century significantly 'politicised and ideologically abused' (Tajták, 2001: 319).

The Budapest government also took other measures to isolate eastern Slovakia from the national movement (Tajták, 1992: 7; Tajták, 2001: 322). It ordered that textbooks for elementary schools in Eastern Slovakia be published in the 'Eastern Slovak dialect' (Tajták 2001: 321). Through such teaching materials, Hungarian circles sought to suppress the standard Slovak language, which they claimed was incomprehensible to Eastern Slovaks, from schools and public life and replace it with the Šariš dialects. The next step was to replace the dialects with Hungarian, whose comprehensibility to the Eastern Slovak population was, paradoxically, not questioned (Tajták, 2001: 323).

In line with Hungarian nationalism, V. Dvortsák declared that the Šariš Slovaks did not have their own national life and proudly identified themselves as Hungarians. He claimed that their culture is supposedly Hungarian, they enjoy learning Hungarian, speak with a Hungarian accent, and also write and read in Hungarian (Dvortsák, 1916). However, the reality differed from Dvortsák's biased writings, and statistical data did not confirm his sentiment (Švorc, 2012: 14). At that time, 70% of the population of Šariš region was of Slovak or Ruthenian nationality, to which they clung persistently (Švorc, 2012: 25).

After the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918, Hungarian interests in Eastern Slovakia were strongly supported by the Eastern Slovak Council (originally the so-called *Východoslovenská rada*), which was to operate in the area of present-day Eastern Slovakia and sought to keep it within Hungary.

Among those who helped establish the Eastern Slovak Council was the aforementioned Viktor Dvortsák. The Eastern Slovak Council declared itself the representative of the Eastern Slovaks and promoted the ideology of *Slovjakism*. It referred to the 'self-proclaimed leaders from Martin' as those 'who have already sold us to the Czechs' [*chtore nas už obecali čechom*] and called out: '*Slovjaci! Nehceme bic uhrami, ale nehceme bic ani čechami!*' ['Slovjaks! We don't want to be Hungarians, but we don't want to be Czechs either!'] (Švorc, 2012: 34).

These efforts by the Budapest government, in cooperation with the Eastern Slovak Council, were intended to disrupt the linguistic and literary unity of the Slovaks (Tajták, 2001: 322). Information about the activities of the Slovak National Council in Bratislava did not reach Eastern Slovakia, which Hungarian propaganda exploited (Tajták, 1992: 10). However, it should also be noted that despite significant pressure from the Budapest government, its efforts in Eastern Slovakia were not always successful. Its inhabitants wrote letters to the Slovak National Council complaining about the Magyarization tendencies and expressing their loyalty to the new Czechoslovak state (Tajták, 1992: 11).

The following analysis aims to identify and demonstrate the mechanisms and linguistic means used by contemporary propaganda to influence the population of Eastern Slovakia against the Czechoslovak Republic, as well as in favour of the Hungarian government's intentions.

1.2. PROPAGANDA MECHANISM

Propaganda aims to create a distorted version of reality that serves desired political or other purposes. It appeals to emotions, prejudices or fears of the audience (Šrol, 2019: 41-42), utilising the fact that not only the information itself but also the context, the «backdrop» against which the information is presented, matters. Context can stimulate people's imagination to such an extent that they arrive at completely different, even nonsensical conclusions. The setting of this 'backdrop' and context for presenting information is called *framing* (Táborský, 2020: 40).

Framing influences how recipients of information perceive the world around them and can even lead to a change in their opinions. Emotionally charged vocabulary or vocabulary that evokes various images is used for this purpose. In an effort to connect a piece of information with a certain emotion or image, the addresser usually chooses words that evoke this emotion or image (Táborský, 2020: 47-57). So if the addresser wants to present something in a negative light, they use vocabulary that refers to socially unacceptable phenomena (ibid.). In doing so, they work not only with the denotative meaning of lexemes, but also with their connotative meaning, i.e., their emotional charge and the positive or negative emotions they evoke. This is the effect of cognitive framing, whereby our assessment of phenomena and decision-making is influenced by verbal or other contexts (Plháková, 2004: 285).

Framing is also related to the impression management technique, in which we select and disclose only information that is appropriate for achieving our communication goal (Táborský, 2020: 52). This technique is based on the assumption that it is not only what is said that is important, but also what is left unsaid. It does not mean lying, but only not telling the whole truth. Using impression management technique, the speaker attaches only those properties to the object in question that are suitable for the intended goal. This technique is used not only in propaganda, but also in everyday life and can be effectively combined with linguistic manipulation (Táborský, 2020: 55).

Linguistic manipulation means targeted usage of words and rhetoric in order to exercise power, to control others, to harm somebody, or to strengthen one's position in a group among others (Beck 2007:

120). To reach its objectives, linguistic manipulation utilises various linguistic means, including passive and impersonal constructions or ambiguous and vague expressions (Beck 2007: 124-125).

Framing is also complementary to the association technique, as framing invites associations. While framing chooses how to present an issue – what angle and what aspects are emphasised or hidden, association technique links the subject to emotionally charged ideas, symbols, or stereotypes. The latter relies on the fact that imagery evokes associations and leads to deeper processing of the content. It is also used to put the audience of the message into a certain mood, which increases the likelihood of successfully influencing the addressees (Beck, 2007: 30).

Another manipulation technique evident here is othering. Othering occurs when certain individuals or groups are defined and labelled as not fitting into the norms of a social group. It shapes how members of the in-group perceive and treat those in the out-group. Othering typically involves assigning negative characteristics to the out-group to accentuate their difference from the perceived normative social group (Cherry, 2025).

Employing such manipulation techniques, propaganda can convey countless pieces of well-prepared and deliberately filtered information, based on which people form rules for their future judgments (Táborský, 2020: 61). Moreover, if propaganda conveys negative information and bad experiences, these are imprinted more strongly in people's memory and form stronger rules than positive experiences. Consequently, if the public is constantly fed information intended to harm, for example, a religious or ethnic group, the aim is usually to create a narrative that members of these groups are always bad or that the establishment is bad (*ibid.*). As demonstrated in the following analysis, in the leaflets examined, the negative attitude is directed against the Western Slovaks and the newly established Slovak unity within the Czechoslovak Republic.

The primary aim of propaganda is therefore to introduce as much information as possible, whether favourable or unfavourable, into public discourse. Based on this information, when individuals encounter a phenomenon or event related to the targeted group, they do not form a new impression. Instead, they adopt the impression transmitted to them through the experience of other people whose opinion they have adopted (Táborský, 2020: 64). This process results in analogical reasoning. In addition, confirmation bias reinforces the effect, as people prefer statements and evidence that affirm their pre-existing beliefs (Plháková, 2004: 275). From this perspective, propaganda is particularly insidious: it supplies pre-selected information, based on which the recipient forms judgments through analogy. Confirmation bias subsequently ensures that these judgments are accepted uncritically and become resistant to revision.

Although the present study examines only a single leaflet in the Šariš dialect from this period, archival evidence suggests that many more were in circulation (*cf.*, e.g. Chmelárová, 1969). Such a broad dissemination indirectly confirms the underlying trend that enables propaganda to succeed, namely, the interplay of analogical reasoning and confirmation bias.

2. CASE STUDY – LEAFLET ANNOUNCING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF *VÍCHODNOSLOVENSKÁ RADA* (EASTERN SLOVAK

To illustrate the application of manipulative propaganda techniques in Eastern Slovakia, this study examines a leaflet dated November 4, 1918. The leaflet marks the beginning of the period under investigation and announces the establishment of the Eastern Slovak Council (in original dialectal form *Vichodnoslovenska Rada*). It exemplifies both the thematic focus of contemporary propaganda in the region and the techniques employed to influence and manipulate public opinion.

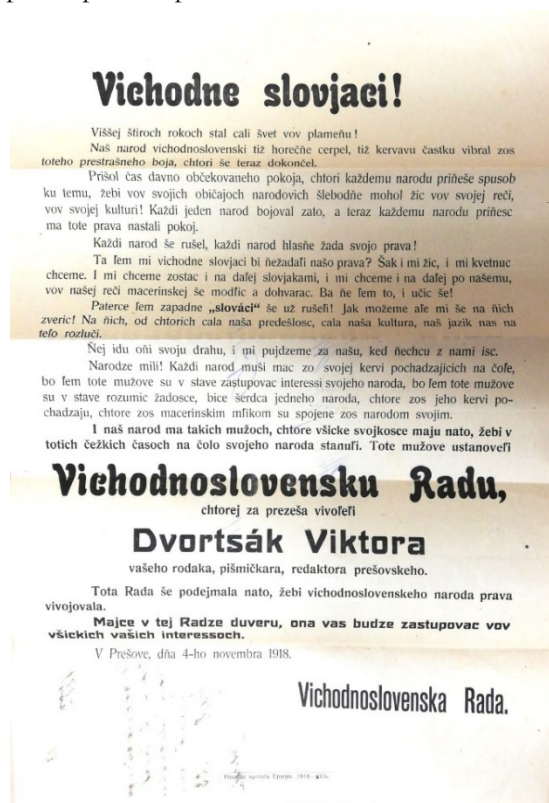


Figure 2. Leaflet announcing the establishment of *Vichodnoslovenska Rada*

In the original Šariš dialect, the leaflet reads as follows:

Vichodne slovjací!

‘Viškej štiroch rokoch stal cali švet vov plameňu! Naš narod vichodnoslovenski tiž horečne cerpel, tiž kervavu časiku vibrat zos totego prestrašneho boja, chtori še teraz dokončel. Prišol čas davno občekovaného pokoja, chtori každemu narodu priňese spůsob ku temu, žebi vov svojich običajoch narodovích šľebodně mohol žic vov svojej reči, vov svojej kulturi! Každi jeden narod bojoval zato, a teraz každemu narodu přiňesc ma tote prava nastali pokoj. Každi narod še rušel, každi narod hlasně žada svojo prava!

Ta ľem mi vichodne slovjací bi nežadaľi našo prava? Šak i mi žic, i mi kvetnuc chceme. I mi chceme zostac i na daľej slovjakami, i mi chceme i na daľej po našemu, vov našej reči macerinskej še modľic a dohvarac. Ba ně ľem to, i učic še!

Paterce ľem zapadne ‚slováci‘ še už rušeli! Jak možeme aľe mi še na nich zveric! Na nich, od chtorich cala naša predešlasc, cala naša kultura, naš jazik nas na tel’o rozluči. Něj idu oňi svoju drahu, i mi pujdzeme za našu, ked něchcu z nami isc.

Narodze mili! Každi narod muši mac zo svojej kervi pochadzajicich na čol’e, bo ľem tote mužove su v stave zastupovac interesi svojego naroda, bo ľem tote mužove su v stave rozumic žadosce, bice šerdca jedneho naroda, chtore zos jeho kervi pochadzaju, chtore zos macerinskim mľikom su spojene zos narodom svojim.

² Source: The Archive of The Regional Museum in Prešov, the leaflet ‘*Vichodne slovjací*’, cf. also Švorc (2012: 33).

I naš narod ma takich mužoch, chtore všicke svojkosce maju nato, žebi v totich čežkich časoch na čolo svojeho naroda stanúťi. Tote mužove ustanoveľi Vichodnoslovensku Radu, chtorej za prezeša vivoľeľi Dvortsák Viktora vašeho rodaka, pišmičkara, redaktora prešovskeho. Tota Rada še podejmala nato, žebi vichodnoslovenskeho naroda prava vivojovala. Majce v tej Radze duveru, ona vas budze zastupovac vov všickich vašich interessoch. V Prešove, dňa 4-ho novembra 1918. Vichodnoslovenska Rada.»

The Eastern Slovak Council, whose establishment is announced in the leaflet, was intended to represent the interests of Eastern Slovakia (Švorc, 2012: 33). The leaflet addresses them as *Vichodne slovjaci* ['Eastern Slovaks'] and refers to them as a separate nation, using expressions such as *narod vichodnoslovenski* ['Eastern Slovak nation']; *narodže mili* ['dear nation']; *naš narod* ['our nation']; *vichodnoslovenskeho naroda prava* ['Eastern Slovak nation's rights'].

The preference of the terms *Vichodne slovjaci* ['Eastern Slovaks'] and *slovjaci* ['Slovaks'] in the leaflet reflects the efforts of the *Vichodnoslovenska Rada* to distinguish Eastern Slovaks from their western counterparts. These efforts were motivated by the gradual integration of Slovakia into the Czechoslovak Republic, which was advancing toward Eastern Slovakia from the west (Švorc, 2012: 34). In opposition to the *Vichodne slovjaci*, the leaflet mentions *zapadne 'slováci'* ['Western Slovaks'], who, according to the text, *še už rušeli* ['have already moved, i.e. started fighting for their rights']. The original quotation marks around *'slováci'* emphasize that the term, derived from standard Slovak, does not resonate with the self-identification of the Eastern Slovaks.

2.1 MANIPULATION TECHNIQUES IN THE LEAFLET

Within the framework of the association technique, the first paragraph of the leaflet employs lexemes with negative connotations: *stal cali švet vov plameňu* ['the whole world stood in flames'], *tiž borečne cerpel* ['it also suffered bitterly'], *kervavu častku vibrat zos toteho prestrašneho boja* ['it took the bloody portion from that dreadful fight'], which describe the previous state of affairs.

By contrast, the second paragraph juxtaposes this past condition with the current, improved state, reinforced by lexemes with positive connotations: *davno občekovaneho pokoja* ['long-awaited peace'], *šleboďne* ['freely'], *nastali pokoj* ['stable peace']. This new post-war order has prompted all nations to demand their rights: *Každí narod še rušel, každí narod hlasne žada svojo prava!* ['Every nation has moved; every nation is loudly demanding its rights!'].

Because figurative expressions evoke associations, the association technique facilitates deeper processing of content, thereby increasing the likelihood of successfully influencing the audience (Beck, 2007). It can also create uncertainty about their opinions, which in turn may affect the audience's attitudes and perspectives. In this leaflet, the association technique is particularly evident in phrases marked by heightened expressiveness. These expressions recall the suffering of Eastern Slovaks during the recent war: *Naš narod vichodnoslovenski tiž borečne cerpel, tiž kervavu častku vibrat zos toteho prestrašneho boja* ['Our Eastern Slovak nation also suffered bitterly, also took the bloody portion from that dreadful fight']. Later, through the use of association technique and emotionally charged language (highlighted in boldface), the leaflet emphasises the exceptional nature of the members of the Eastern Slovak Council: *ľem tote mužove su v stave rozumic žadosce, bice šerdca jedneho naroda* ['those men only are in a position to understand the desires, the heartbeat of a nation']; *chtore zos jeho kervi pochadžaju, chtore zos macerinskim mľikom su spojene zos narodom svojim* ['that come from its blood, that are connected by breast milk with their nation'].

The reasoning behind this demand is elaborated in the subsequent passage: *Šak i mi žić, i mi kvet-nuc chceme. I mi chceme žostac i na dalje slovjakami, i mi chceme i na dalje po našem, vov našej reči macerinskej še modlíc a dohvarac. Ba že ľem to, i učić še!* ['We, too, want to live, we, too, want to flourish. We want to remain Slovjaks, we want to continue praying and speaking in our language. And not only that; we also want to learn in it!']. Here, the association technique is again evident. It appears in figurative expressions, such as *kvetnuc* ['flourish'], and phrases with positive connotations: *vov našej reči macerinskej še modlíc a dohvarac* ['to pray and to speak in our mother tongue']; *i učić še!* ['[we also want] to learn in it']. Such expressions appeal to fundamental values, including the right to education and to worship in one's native language. The passage culminates in the emphatic statement: *Ba že ľem to, i učić še!* ['And not only that, we also want to study in it!'], which creates a persuasive build-up. The repetition of the clause *I mi chceme* ['We, too, want to...'], as a rhetorical structure expressing the ideology in discourse (van Dijk, 2006: 125), produces amplification; the parallel structures create rhythm, and the repeated pronoun *we* underscores a sense of collective identity.

The construction *od čtorich cala naša predešlo, cala naša kultura, naš jazik nas na teľo rozluči* [‘from whom all our history, all our culture, our language set us apart’] also represents a manipulation technique of othering. The formulation suggests distance and disconnection, while the repetition [‘all our history, all our culture, our language’] creates emotional intensity. By portraying such fundamental aspects (history, culture, language) as irreconcilably different, the text suggests the existence of an unbridgeable gap between US and THEM. In this framing, THEY appear alien to the core identity and therefore incompatible with US.

Linguistic manipulation and impression management techniques are further combined in the following sentence: *‘Něj idu oňi svoju drabu, i mi pujdzeme za našu, ked ňebcu z nami isc.’* [‘Let them go their way, and we will go ours, if they do not want to go with us.']. This formulation appears tolerant but functions to legitimise exclusion. It masks division as mutual choice, or something THEY have chosen. Instead of overt rejection, dissociation is presented as peaceable and polite. The impression management technique thus

depicts US (Eastern Slovaks) as fair and mature, while THEM (Western Slovaks) are portrayed as unwilling or separatist. This contrast results in positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation, with the ultimate goal to convince the audience that Eastern Slovakia must follow its own state-building path. Such formulations accord with the technique of presenting the ingroup positively as tolerant while attributing negative properties to the outgroup (van Dijk, 1995: 145). As van Dijk further argues, these discursive strategies allow «for the expression of prejudice in a normative situation in which the expression of prejudices is officially prohibited» (van Dijk, 1995: 145).

The final adverbial clause '*ked nechcu z nami ísť*' ['if they do not want to go with us.'] implies that Western Slovaks have chosen separation of their own will, thereby placing blame and responsibility on them. Western Slovaks are portrayed as deliberately distancing themselves from Eastern Slovaks; they are the problem, and they do not seek unity. An accusation such as this is among the speech acts employed in the expression of the ideology in discourse (van Dijk, 2006: 126).

By contrast, WE, Eastern Slovaks, are rational, patient, and willing to take the high road. The wording suggests rejection and unwillingness on the part of the out-group, without providing any evidence for this. Such a construction legitimizes division while making it appear non-confrontational. The intended effect is that the addressees accept the ideology of Slovakism as logical and natural.

The linguistic manipulation technique recurs throughout the text with multiple objectives. One of them is to create a particular emotional disposition in the audience, making them more susceptible to persuasion (Beck 2007: 120). When the nation is addressed as *Narodze mili* ['Dear nation!'], the attribute *mili* ['dear'] conveys intimacy and suggests a positive relationship between the author of the leaflet and its recipients.

Linguistic manipulation is also employed for the following depiction of the representatives, i.e. Eastern Slovak Council members:

Každí narod muší mať zo svojej krvi pochádzajúcich na čofe, bo ľem tote mužove sú v stave zastupovať interesi svojého naroda, bo ľem tote mužove sú v stave rozumieť žadosce, bice šerdca jedného naroda, chťore zo svojej krvi pochádzajú, chťore zo macerínskím mľíkom sú spojené zo narodom svojím.
 ['Every nation has men of its own blood, because those men only are in a position to represent the interests of their nation, those men only are in a position to understand the desires, the heartbeat of one nation, that come from its blood that are connected to their nation by breast milk'].

The distinctive status of Eastern Slovak Council members is underscored through formulations that appeal directly to emotion. Expressions such as «*the heartbeat of one nation*» and «*breast milk*» evoke associations with intimacy, love, and maternal care. They highlight the alleged uniqueness of the Council members ['only they have the calling to lead the Eastern Slovak nation'], bypassing rational analysis in favour of an emotional bond and reinforcing in-group identity. Namely, the association technique and impression management technique are combined in the following formulations:

- '*sú v stave rozumieť [...] bice šerdca jedného naroda*' ['[those men only] are in a position to understand [...] the heartbeat of one nation'];
- '*zo svojej krvi pochádzajú*' ['they come from its [= nation's] blood'];
- '*zo macerínskím mľíkom spojené zo narodom svojím*' ['that are connected to their nation by breast milk.'].

The recurring motif of origin, represented by the phrase *len tote mužove* ['those men only'], functions as rhetorical amplification, underscoring the exclusivity of legitimate representatives. This strategy implies that only men descended from the nation are truly capable of fulfilling leadership roles. Furthermore, rhetorical amplification stresses exclusivity, implying that no one else could fulfil this role. In the case of Eastern Slovakia, this role is explicitly attributed to the founders of the Eastern Slovak Council: '*I naš narod ma takých mužoch, chtore všetky svojkosce maju nato, žebi v totich čežkých časoch na čolo svojeho naroda stanúť. Tote mužove ustanoveli Vichodnoslovensku Radu.*' ['Our nation also has such men who possess all the necessary competencies to stand at the forefront of their nation in these difficult times. Those men established the Eastern Slovak Council.']

Such formulations carry a manipulative aspect because they present a socially constructed identity (nationhood) as if it were of biological or natural origin (blood, milk). This strategy provides a justification for restricting representation on the basis of ancestry or ethnicity and exaggerates the presumed connection between 'own' representatives and collective success.

The passage culminates in a direct appeal to the audience: '*Majce v tej Radze duveru, ona vas bude zastupovac vov všetkých vašich interessoch.*' ['Trust the Council, it will represent you in all your interests.']. This final sentence subtly manipulates the audience, aiming to secure compliance with the Council's endeavours and to strengthen its legitimacy. Through a combination of coercion and public consent – roughly two ways of exercising and maintaining power (Fairclough, 1989: 33) – the Council's representatives strive for control and authority.

3. CONCLUSION

As demonstrated in the analysed leaflet, the ideology of Slovjakism, which ultimately led to the establishment of the *Vichodnoslovenska Rada* (Eastern Slovak Council), employed a range of manipulation techniques to influence the local population of Eastern Slovakia. They included linguistic manipulation, association technique, and the impression management technique. Together, these communication strategies contributed to the intended framing of Western Slovaks and supported the Council's efforts to reverse the incorporation of Eastern Slovakia into the Czechoslovak republic.

To achieve this, the case study leaflet used impression management techniques to portray Eastern Slovaks as a distinct nation, different from their western counterparts. Linguistic manipulation and association techniques were used to construct the characteristics of both groups. Emotionally charged vocabulary with positive connotations was applied in the portrayal of Eastern Slovak Council members, aiming to secure their acceptance among the population. By contrast, Western Slovaks were depicted as inherently different and unwilling to share the state-building path with the Eastern Slovjaks.

To conclude, the text of the examined leaflet demonstrates that dialect functioned not merely as a linguistic code but also as a vehicle that enabled propaganda to successfully penetrate the population of Eastern Slovakia, shaping their perceptions and subsequently influencing their behaviour in the desired direction.

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