

Laura Jagelková

Maiden name: Belicajová

Súkennícka 1, Bratislava, 82109, Slovakia;
cell: +421908881820; laura.belicajova@savba.sk

Education

Jan Stanislav Institute of Slavistics at the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava, Slovakia Sep. 2021 – present
Constantine the Philosopher University, Nitra, Slovakia (additionally)

Visiting scholar at Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH (March 2023 – August 2023)

PhD in Slavonic Studies supervised by Peter Žeňuch

- PhD Thesis: “*Ethnolinguistic research in the Goral dialect environment*”
- Fields of specialization: Slavistics, Ethnolinguistics, Etymology, Religion, Mythology, Literature, Folk
- Teaching: Slovak Language and Culture
- Motivational scholarship awarded by the Slovak Academy of Sciences for above-standard results achieved during doctoral studies

Comenius University, Bratislava, Slovakia

Sep. 2019 – Aug. 2021

Master in Education

- GPA: 4.00/4.00
- Fields of specialization: Slovak Language and Literature, Ethics and Civic Education
- Master’s Thesis: “*Adaptation of Pavol Dobšinský’s Folk Tales by M. Rúfus, P. Glocko, and O. Sliacky*”
- President’s Prize: Award for the best student out of more than 400 enrolled in the Department of Education
- Honors: merit scholarship for best GPA in every year of Master’s program

Comenius University, Bratislava, Slovakia

Sep. 2016 – June 2019

Bachelor in Education

- GPA: 3.86/4.00
- Specialization: Slovak Language and Literature, Ethics and Civic Education
- Bachelor’s Thesis: “*Adaptation of Slovak Folk Tales by M. Ďuričková*”
- Prize of the Department Chair: Award for the best bachelor’s thesis in the Department of Education (given out only in case of an exceptional contribution to the field)
- Honors: merit scholarship for best GPA in every year of Bachelor’s program out of more than 1,500 enrolled students

Professional Experience

Lecturer and Researcher, University of Cologne, Germany

Oct. 2023 – Mar. 2024

- Taught Slovak to Bachelor’s and Master’s degree students at the Slavonic Department
- Research in the field of Ethnolinguistics of Slavic languages

Lecturer, Ministry of Education and Comenius University, Bratislava, Slovakia

Feb. 2021 – Aug. 2023

- Taught Slovak to foreigners preparing to pass a language test, levels A1-C1
- Developed personalized study materials adapted to students’ specific needs

Lecturer, Nova University, Lisbon, Portugal

Feb. 2021 – Jun. 2021

- Chosen by Comenius University for a competitive internship partnership
- Managed the university’s teaching program of Slovak for foreigners for the Spring term
- Established a study plan for the semester
- Led language and cultural activities in collaboration with the Slovak Embassy

Master Lecturer, ESET, Bratislava, Slovakia

Jan. 2020 – Jan. 2021

- Created a novel methodology for teaching the Slovak language to 13 foreign employees of the international IT company based in Slovakia
- Supervised a team of Slovak language teachers at the company

Language School Teacher, Prima, Bratislava, Slovakia

Sep. 2016 – June 2020

- Organized experience-based English and German language study for children aged 3 to 12

Conference Presentations

- 30. Kolokvium mladých jazykovedcov (Bratislava, 2021), Interdisciplinary research of sources on language and spiritual culture (Bratislava, 2022), Slovak studies in contexts: tradition and perspectives (Belgrade, 2023), International Congress of Slavists (Paris, accepted for 2025)

Languages

- Fluent in Slovak, English, Polish, and Czech; intermediate in German; basic in Spanish, Russian, Bulgarian, Serbian, Croatian

Publications:

JAGELKOVÁ, Laura. O smerovaní etnolingvistiky a axiológie: Ján Doruľa a výskum duchovnej kultúry na Slovensku/ *The orientation of ethnolinguistics and axiology: Ján Doruľa and Research on Spiritual Culture in Slovakia*. In: *Slavica Slovaca*, 2023. vol. 58, no. 2, pp. 280-288.

This paper discusses the formation of ethnolinguistic and axiological research, the direction of which was set by Ján Doruľa. By systematically investigating the relationship between language and culture, the Jan Stanislav Institute of Slavic Studies confirms that language is an integral part of everyday culture, and at the same time, it is a tool for learning about individual and collective mentality, because its usage is deeply rooted in the consciousness of a particular community. Using culturally characteristic linguistic expressions, diverse interpretations of the image of the world are created, which are synergistically and syncretically combined in the Slavic and wider European context. The paper highlights important ethnolinguistic research programs that intersect with the domains of folkloric, spiritual, textual, and axiological themes within this Slavic academic institution. At the same time, we point to the value-based ethnolinguistic specificity of the research orientation of Slovak culture in the international context.

BELICAJOVÁ, Laura. Etnolingvistický výskum na slovensko-poľskom pohraničí/ *Ethnolinguistic research on the Slovak-Polish border area*. In: СЛОВАКИСТИКА У КОНТЕКСТУ: ТРАДИЦИЈА И ПЕРСПЕКТИВЕ. Ива Драшкић Вићановић et al (eds.), Belgrade: University of Belgrade - Faculty of Philology, 2023, ISBN 978-86-6153-714-1.

Abstract: This paper demonstrates what an ethnolinguistic approach can reveal about a nation. Employing the lexical comparative method, I provide an answer to the question: Why did the people living on the Slovak-Polish border territory in the area of present-day Slovak Orava perceive themselves as Slovaks? The Polish-Slovak border region Orava is characterized by the Goral dialect, which is genetically based on the Polish language. Due to the political situation, the Orava border between the two countries was often unstable in the last century. Nevertheless, people living in the territory of the Orava region declared their nationality as Slovak in a census over a hundred years ago. Ethnolinguistic research, conducted on folk narratives from this territory, clarifies that different perceptions of the world, from the way Poles perceive it, could have led the inhabitants to consider their nationality as Slovak, despite adverse circumstances. These perceptions, characterized by a specific linguistic image of the world related to Slovak culture, reflect the environment in which Slovaks live: their environment, everyday life, traditions, history, beliefs, symbolism, values, and what is socially expected. The ensemble of unique material and spiritual elements of the Orava society is visible in the Goral dialect. The latter is still spoken by the people in the territory of present-day Slovak Orava. It is identical in certain isoglosses to the Slovak language and different from the Polish language, which may indicate not only linguistic but also cultural differences. These differences likely contributed to the formation of a distinct national identity of Slovaks. The results of this research could contribute to the creation of a Slovak ethnolinguistic dictionary in the future.

BELICAJOVÁ, Laura, O čom rozprávajú slovenské rozprávky (Adaptácie ľudových rozprávok a kultúrnohistorická hodnota v nich)/ *What Do Slovak Folktales Tell Us? (Adaptations of Folk Tales and Their Cultural-Historical Value)*. In: VARIA XXX. Zborník príspevkov z XXX. kolokvia mladých jazykovedcov. (Bratislava 3. – 5. 11. 2021). Eds. Katarína Gajdošová – Natália Kolenčíková. Bratislava: Slovenská jazykovedná spoločnosť pri Jazykovednom ústave Ľ. Štúra SAV, 2022. 57-66 s. ISBN 978-80-971690-8-4.

Abstract: Slovak folktales are more than just a part of cultural heritage. They are a source of information on the linguistic and historical development of the Slovak nation. We can see this when comparing the language used in older collections of folktales with their recent adaptations in modern Slovak. In his original collection of folktales, P. Dobšinský preserved many elements originating from local dialects which were an integral part of traditional storytelling. Today many such words have become archaic. Others changed meaning during the process of the historical development of the Slovak language. Some are completely unknown to modern Slovak. I compare the texts of folktales from *Prostonárodne slovenské povesti* by P. Dobšinský adaptations of these folktales by authors of modern Slovak literature for children and the youth (M. Rúfus, M. Ďuričková, P. Glocko, O. Sliacky). I identify changes on multiple linguistic levels and classify them into phonetic, morphological, syntactic, lexical, and motivational-thematic categories. The main purpose of these modifications is to update the original language to make it more comprehensible to the modern reader. However, some modifications also involve transforming a story for adults into the children's literature or are related to the ideology of the then dominant communist political regime. Based on historical, cultural, linguistic, and literary analysis, I offer a complex evaluation of the observed alterations. The authors of the adaptations sometimes corrode the cultural and historical value of Slovak folktales when trying to make them more palatable to the child reader. Modern Slovak society needs to find strength in its historical roots which is why contemporary authors should incorporate state-of-the-art research findings and pay careful attention to the overall context of the Slovak folktale in their adaptations.

BELICAJOVÁ, Laura. Mytologicko-kresťanská symbolika rastlín počas slávenia sviatkov/ *Mythological-Christian Symbolism of Plants during the Celebration of Holidays*. In: Interdisciplinárny výskum prameňov o jazyku a duchovnej kultúre: Slovensko-slovanské súvislosti. Svetlana Šašerina - Peter Žeňuch - Marina Hríbová (eds.), Bratislava: Slavistický ústav Jána Stanislava SAV, v.v.i., Slovenský komitét slavistov, 2022, s. 59-65. ISBN 978-80-89489-54-1.

Abstract: The basis of Slavic folk culture was formed by established mythological ideas. Various areas of this ethno-cultural space were influenced by the Christian tradition, although it entered the area under investigation as a foreign element in a later period. We perceive that folklore has influenced Christian understanding in a certain area to a certain extent. Slovak folk Catholicism was formed at the intersection of a less rigid, more open Slavic mythology and an organized, codified Catholic system. Christianity shaped the content of calendar elements, but popular culture often reinterpreted this content in accordance with traditional mythological ideas. The holidays celebrated to this day are one of the areas where the mutual influence of the two cultural models through folk Catholicism is most clearly manifested. An important part of the celebration of individual holidays are plants, each of which carries a symbol with a different meaning. This fact is evident from several folk narratives; therefore, the analysis of folklore narratives forms a significant part of our work. Our research, the subject of which are the symbolic elements of the plant kingdom, important for the celebration of holidays, allows us to define the main axiological frameworks that influenced the creation of the culture of the Slovak national community.

BELICAJOVÁ, Laura. Mariánska úcta ako jeden z prejavov kultúry slovenského národa/ *Marian Veneration as one of the Manifestations of the Culture of the Slovak Nation*. In: *Slavica Slovaca*, 2021. vol. 56, no.3, pp. 475-478.

Abstract: Marian veneration, naturally established with the arrival of Christianity, is an important source of knowledge of spiritual but also national and cultural identity. Religion cannot be understood without its historical, national, or cultural context. I analyze information from *Bohorodička v kultúrnych dejinách Slovenska* regarding Marian veneration in Slovakia from a historical, literary, and ethnolinguistic perspective. The enduring Marian veneration in Slovakia results from faith in the Holy Virgin, a traditional symbol of perpetual protection. This can be seen in her visual depictions. Stories about supernatural events related to the life of the Virgin Mary have been preserved in written form and through oral tradition. Together with Marian celebrations, shrines, and pilgrimages, they reinvigorate folk religiosity and the nation's spiritual and cultural values. A typical sign of Marian religiosity and tradition in Slovakia is the motive embodied by "Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows". The "tearful" icon from Klokočov shows that Christian faith and Marian veneration are a deeply rooted and precious heritage of the Slovak nation, both in Slovakia and in the Slovak diaspora abroad.

Submitted Papers:

"Lived Religion in Slavic Countries: Symbolism of the Trees."

Abstract: The long-term interaction between Christianity and the archaic faith of Slavs created a specific type of religion, partly different from both, constantly functioning in the Slavic territory not only among the rural population, which I refer to as lived religion. I decided to focus my attention on a tree in my research because it is one of the important symbolic elements that exist in both Christianity and the archaic Slavic faith. The sources on the Slavic archaic common faith dating from the 9th to the 17th century are not extensive, but nevertheless, they reveal a deep reverence for trees by Slavs from time immemorial. The association of the respect for deities with individual trees is further reflected in folklore from the 18th to the 20th century, often connected with Christianity, where certain trees such as linden, willow, and birch are characterized by the female domain, and trees such as oak and beech figure mainly with the masculine domain. In both folkloric narratives in general and in those with a Christian legendary character, individual trees appear positively or negatively. Often either a connection with negative or positive connotations prevails. On the one hand, based on historical data, Christian Church leaders adopted elements of the previous Slavic common faith to implement Christianity more easily in Slavic countries. On the other hand, it is evident from folk narratives that the Slavs used the symbolism of trees derived from pre-Christian times to fill in the gaps in canonical texts. Preserved elements of the previous common faith of the Slavs are manifested in the present traditions of lived religion and language. The references to pre-Christian Slavic religion are not always clearly legible, either in contemporary Slavic religious traditions or in the language, where these references can be found predominantly in phrases, the etymology of words, names, or toponyms. However, by examining elements reflecting the intermingling of pre-Christian Slavic faith and Christianity in history, folklore, contemporary customs, and language, it is possible to see how lived religion gradually developed in Slavic countries while preserving elements of the archaic Slavic faith.

Scientific-popularization articles:

JAGELKOVÁ (Belicajová), Laura. Slovenská rozprávka rozpráva/ *Slovak folk tales tells*. In: *Quark*, 2023. vol. 28, no. 3, pp. 40.