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“Prefixes and Ideologies – Linguistic and Political Interpretations of the Historical Character of Slovak”

In the historico-linguistic interpretation of the origin and development of Slovak, we have encountered discussions since the beginning. Whether about its heterogeneous or homogeneous Proto-Slavic base, its genetic links with old Czech, Polish and other Slavic languages, its historical autonomy or originating in the old Czech (in the concept of a common Proto-Czechoslovak language) or even about its central position among other Slavic languages. Over the years, there have been also discussions about the nature of the dialectal basis of standard Slovak and its reformed historical varieties, about its natural or planned development towards a single monolingual national language or, on the other hand, about its divergent development towards a language with elements of pluricentrism (not only in the Slovak enclaves abroad, but also in the home context).

Although linguistic interpretations are supported by linguistic material - examples that support a particular interpretation - they always arise in the context of the time and its political atmosphere. This, in turn, influences both the argumentation and the choice of appropriate linguistic examples, just as it influences attitudes and emotions towards language and national identity.

The presentation is not meant to prove the correctness or incorrectness of these individual interpretations and arguments (moreover, in some cases this is possible only to a certain extent). Its aim is to show the extent to which they are conditioned by the cultural, social and political context of the time, and also to point to the potential of this knowledge in reflecting contemporary trends in language policy and planning.