

Helén Pál

**Remain of a Dialect in an Urban Cultural Medium
by Means of Folk-tales**

*Role of Some Storytellers of a Hungarian Ethnic Group
Szeklers of Bukovina in Hungary*

Abstract

The aim of the paper is to show the role that storytellers can play in the transmission of traditions, identity and dialect today. The paper focuses on a Hungarian ethnic group: Szeklers of Bukovina settled in Hungary in 1945. The main aim of this paper is to present the function of dialects in tales and tale-telling after the change of traditional peasant way of life and dialects. In Bukovina this ethnic group was isolated from the Hungarian mother-country and the majority of Hungarians, their cultural and language changes did not reach them, therefore the members of this ethnic group could retain their traditional culture and dialect. However, in Hungary they were settled into 38 settlements, thereby their original communities broke up. The dialectal and sociolinguistic data of this paper comes from the storyteller's websites, written and oral personal stories, the text and sound-recording of folk-tales, and also data of formal dialectal researches of this ethnic group is used. This paper presents an analysis of some storytellers who use several dialect elements of this ethnic group, besides the role of dialects in tale-telling is studied too. It is an important aspect of this analyse how some storytellers utilize their dialect in tales and during tale-telling, and why they usually use it. The results of research present that these storytellers can use dialect elements in different ways in their tale-telling. The main conclusion is that use of a dialect can be a part of language education, a dialect is an identity marker, and by the help of it a storyteller can create a pictorial experience during the tale-telling, besides it can be a source of humour too.

Keywords: Szeklers of Bukovina, storytellers, revival and professional storytellers, role of dialects in tale-telling, role of tales in traditions



Introduction

This study examines some storytellers and their tales in connection with the role of dialects in tale-telling at our time, and how it can remain in tales. These storytellers come from a Hungarian ethnic group, Szeklers of *Bukovina* who live in Hungary since 1945. In contrast with the customs of authentic storytellers of previous smaller communities, at our days a storyteller tells a tale in front of other audience, on other scenes and on different occasions. These present-day storytellers are usually fluent in two language varieties of the same language, so these persons speak also the Hungarian standard. Survival of the culture and dialect brought by Szeklers of *Bukovina* into Hungary was hindered by several factors. For example this ethnic group was settled in Hungary in spring of 1945 into *Tolna*, *Baranya* and *Bács-Kiskun* counties, and they got in touch with other ethnic groups there. After the Second World War in Hungary several significant political and social changes happened, and these changes influenced the social positions, way of life, and hereby the language too. After the social changes folklore and dialects got new roles in new and modern circumstances. In Hungary between the 1960s and 1980s the traditional peasant way of life came to an end¹, and parallel to it change of dialects speeded up, besides dialects were often replaced by the standard or a regional variety of the standard. Overshadow of dialects has appeared in several fields of national characteristics, for example with the disappearance of traditional trades also its vocabulary disappears, and the vocabulary of traditional costumes, food or folk customs (for instance wedding celebrations, patronal festivals, all-night vigils, and other festive occasions) can vanish if these occasions change or disappear. In consequence of the expansion of the standard and the above-mentioned changes of life style, local words and dialects are pushed into the background in everyday use. Although the popularity of folk-tales has remained, the judgement of application of dialects in them can be different. According to some storytellers a few members of the audience do not understand the meaning of local words, moreover they should deduce the meaning from the context, therefore, they can understand the plot only with difficulty². However, application of the storyteller's own dialect can be a part of his/her authentic speaking, and the local words of the tales can enlarge vocabulary of the children³.

¹ Romsics 2007: 912.

² Kóka 2002: 10.

³ Dala 2021: 12, 23.

Change of traditional peasant way of life in the middle of the 20th century and the role and language of folk-tales

After 1945 in consequence of the historical and social events of Hungary the traditional peasant way of life was mostly liquidated⁴. Many inhabitants of the country moved to the towns and cities, and the others who remained in the place had no choice but to commute to reach a paying job in a town or city. Therefore some of the dialect speakers left their dialectal surroundings, but through the mass media, school and mobility the standard could influence the language of people who stayed in the place. Several traditions belonged to the traditional peasant way of life. Change of folklore covered for example the change of customs of festivals and celebrations, traditional dress, house, and the traditional folk-tales too. The rural community was the traditional medium of folk-tales, and story-telling was an amusement that made the monotonous work easy for people, mainly in winter when the outdoor works stopped⁵. Occasions of story-telling were the locale of the long works, as spinning room, corn-husking, harvesting, but also the house of all-night vigil, where the authentic storytellers amused the audience, however folk-tales had also a mediator role, and it showed patterns of behaviour, and served as a model for difficult situations too⁶. Nowadays story-telling is not a supplement of workflow but people spend their free time by it. The new scenes of story-telling are stages, schools, nursery schools, performances, competitions, television broadcasts, however, the course of these performances is only limited, and this limitation influences the chosen genre. In a performance the storyteller can rarely tell a long heroic tale or a fairy tale, and on these occasions the short genres with a snap element are more popular⁷. The storytellers and the members of the audience have other way of life than their ancestors, and they have other expectations in connection with a tale. The purpose of story-telling has got new elements, next to the amusement some new aims have come, for example to preserve traditions and identity, to present folk culture, or teaching. This new phenomenon can be noticed from the second part of the 20th century, and according to the researches with the disappearance of those storytellers who acquired their knowledge in a traditional community, also these new elements will dis-

⁴ Romsics 2007: 912.

⁵ Berze Nagy 1992: 256.

⁶ Raffai 2013; Kóka 2010; Kovács 2014: 35.

⁷ Kóka 2010.

appear⁸. The custom of story-telling narrowed from the 1950s onwards, and while formerly the tales were genre of adults, now, according to general opinion, it is mostly the genre of children⁹. However, there are some tales only for adults in these days too, for example István Sebestyén whose ancestors are Szeklers of *Bukovina*, has many risqué tales, and also other storytellers have some tales for adults in their repertory¹⁰.

After the change of traditional peasant way of life also the authentic storytellers disappeared, since they had acquired or inherited their knowledge in their authentic community, and during their life they told their tales only in their smaller fellowship. The new type of storytellers collect the tales from several informants, they record these tales, and they expand their repertoire also from books and old journals. The scene of story-telling is that one where the storyteller is invited¹¹. One of the storytellers of Szeklers of *Bukovina* Éva Fábíán gives a lecture on story-telling in a cultural centre: Hungarian Heritage House in *Budapest*, and in other courses she tells a tale for primary school and higher-class students. In this institution many school groups attend lectures, and the storytellers have to tell a story with other mentality to an organized student group, or to an audience that consists of distinct classes than to a small group¹². The professional or revival storytellers do not necessarily hand the authentic tales down to the younger generation than the authentic storytellers. A storyteller of modern times choses a given tale according to the composition of the audience, or even the members of the audience can ask a certain tale, besides the storytellers have to adjust themselves to the expectations of unknown people¹³. According to the noted folklorist Ágnes Kovács folk-tales are survived and make an impression on the audience in this different social environment also in our days, because they have a great aesthetic quality and range of expression. She thinks that a folk-tale is an art of spoken language and a contact between the storyteller and the listener. Also the speech, mimicry, gesture and relationship between the two persons belong to the storyteller's means of expression¹⁴.

⁸ Raffai 2013: 117.

⁹ Raffai 2013: 116.

¹⁰ Kóka 2010; Dala 2021: 27–28.

¹¹ Kóka 2010.

¹² Dala 2021: 20–28.

¹³ Dala 2021: 32, 49.

¹⁴ Kovács 1980: 739.

Change of dialects

In Hungary speakers of dialects were usually members of the traditional peasantry (although a dialect speaker could live in other social classes too, and they were not necessarily peasants), and the profession of these people was the traditional peasant farming. Use of dialects is connected first of all with the country in these days too¹⁵. However, in the 1960s the traditional peasant farming was crumbled, and this change influenced not only the previous peasant way of life but also the dialects. In our days the number of the most important users of dialects the rural dwellers decreases, and at the same time this reduction means the decrease of dialect speakers too. Referring to the living of peasant families, work and family were not dissevered previously, in the centuries of the traditional peasant farming, and from the point of view of transmission of dialects this change of living is important. Since young people today do not continue farming, although it was typical earlier¹⁶. Dialects are pushed into the background nowadays because of several factors, for example their status is not a favourable one, some significant political, social and economic changes happened, and the number of this speech community decreased. Nowadays the main direction of dialectal change is its approach to the standard. The system, function, and area of use of dialects changes too¹⁷. Dialects are used rarely or less frequently in that circle of people who have a secondary and higher education degree and hold a higher position, they usually use the standard. Children's socialization in standard spreads due to change of traditions of families and small communities, and change of speech connections between parents and children¹⁸. Disappearance of dialects is faster in the bigger settlements than in the smaller ones, than in the less stratified and less mobile ones, and in general population decline is the characteristic of small settlements. Use of dialects decreases at first in the public speaking situations, however, the standard variation of the media enters also into the privacy, therefore the standard can affect this speech too. Change of dialects affects mainly the young age group, because the role of families decreases in language teaching, besides the mass media and the electronic entertainment devices affect mostly their language¹⁹.

¹⁵ Kiss 2017.

¹⁶ Kiss 2017: 212.

¹⁷ Kiss 2001: 248.

¹⁸ Kiss 2001: 248.

¹⁹ Kiss 2001: 247–252.

A dialect as a device for us to identify ourselves with a community, the dialect as an identity marker

The dialect is a means of expression for us to represent our own community, a dialect can be a proper presentation mode of thinking and emotional world of the local population, besides by a dialect we can identify ourselves with our own community, and express our solidarity²⁰. A dialect reflects also the life of a given ethnic group, and in folk-tales references and aspects of it can show this kind of life. Éva Fábrián, István Sebestyén, Rozália Kóka (but also Boldizsár Szócs of *Székegykeve*, Serbia) visualize also their ancestors' homeland in their folk-tales²¹. The storytellers are joined to their community by their humour too. For example in one of his tales István Sebestyén uses the honeyed brandy [*pálinka*] as a magical soldering device that was a widespread and popular drink in the circle of Szeklers of *Bukovina*. Besides he uses also dialect words as a source of humour (for example a dialect word for paper bag [*papírsuska*], or a local address: my aunt Clare [*Kaláriném*]), but also other storytellers (Éva Fábrián and Rozália Kóka) use several dialect words as a source of humour. Moreover, one of the storytellers of Lower-Danube, Serbia Boldizsár Szócs used the genre of village-mocking (these can be shorter or longer texts but even one word) during his tale-telling, and this genre makes fun of the inhabitants of the neighbouring settlements²². Besides, by the dialect these storytellers can join themselves to the community of Szeklers of *Bukovina* otherwise too, since before story-telling, by way of introduction, also Rozália Kóka, István Sebestyén and Éva Fábrián introduce themselves as a member of this community, their tale-telling stems from this group, besides all three of them use the dialect of Szeklers of *Bukovina* during their performance.

The ethnic group of Szeklers of Bukovina

The ancestors of Szeklers of *Bukovina* escaped from *Székegyföld* (Eastern Transylvania) to Moldavia after the hecatomb of *Madéfalva* in 1764. Later they were resettled to *Bukovina* between 1776 and 1786, and here five settlements were established (*Istensegíts*, *Fogadjisten*, *Józseffalva*, *Hadikfalva*, *Andrásfalva*). In 1941 these inhabitants were resettled into the Southern Region, *Bácska*,

²⁰ Kiss 2001: 208.

²¹ Dala 2021: 13; Sebestyén 2008: 6; Kóka 2002: 42, 52, 62, 87.

²² Szócs 2005.

however they had to escape from here in 1944. In 1945 they got the houses of evicted Germans in *Tolna*, *Baranya* and *Bács-Kiskun* counties. Nowadays there are smaller and larger groups of them in Romania, Serbia, Canada, but Szeklers of *Bukovina* live in several countries in the world too. In 1945 about 20 thousands Szeklers of *Bukovina* settled down in Hungary, they moved into 38 settlements. In these settlements also other ethnic groups live, for example some Hungarians of Upper Hungary were settled there, some Germans could stay in the place, besides Hungarians of other regions and Moldavia were settled too²³. Later some of the Szeklers of *Bukovina* moved to larger towns that offered job opportunities for them: *Bonyhád*, *Szekszárd*, *Pécs*, *Pécsvárad*, *Mohács*, and after 1956 *Érd*²⁴, and their moving started into these towns (the corners of the socialist industrialization) shortly after their settlement²⁵. However, an urban life and environment is unfavourable if the members of an ethnic group would like to save their dialect, culture or traditions²⁶. Besides, use of the dialect and traditions of Szeklers of *Bukovina* was difficult because after their settlement they could not reorganize their original villages, and their relatives could not get into the same settlement, although they had requested it before²⁷. In these days some of the 38 settlements face the continuous decline of its population, likewise a lot of Hungarian small settlements²⁸. Decline of population and aging of those people who stays in the place contributes to stop of the local school, because these schools cannot work if there are not enough children in them. If the school stops in a settlement, it can result the disappearance of the local community in the end.

The contemporary storytellers of Szeklers of Bukovina and possibilities of dialects to remain

The three storytellers presented in this paper have ancestors of Szeklers of *Bukovina*, but all three of them bore at that time when *Bukovina* was already left by this ethnic group.

Rozália Kóka was born in 1943 in *Bajmók* (Vojvodina), her father was Szekler and her mother was a Hungarian of *Bácska*. The family fled from *Bácska* in October of 1944, and they were settled into a village *Felsőnána*

²³ Pál 2021: 532.

²⁴ Pál 2021: 532.

²⁵ Foki et al. 2000: 9.

²⁶ Bartha 1999: 144.

²⁷ A. Sajti 1984.

²⁸ Pál 2021.

(*Tolna* county) in the spring of 1945. She completed her secondary schooling at *Szekszárd*, then she completed her college course at a teacher-training college at *Kaposvár*. In 1962 her family, moreover some of her relatives and other Szekler villagers moved to *Érd* (a settlement next to the capital *Budapest*). Between 1964 and 1979 she was a primary school teacher in schools of *Tárnok*, *Érd* and *Diósd*. From 1969 onwards she was active as an ethnographic collector, she organized performances from her ethnographic data, and published some books too. In 1971 she established the folk-song group of Szeklers of *Bukovina* in *Érd* [*Érdi Bukovinai Székely Népdalkör*]. From 1973 onwards she started her performer career. She collects the history and folk art of Szeklers of *Bukovina*, she learns it, and presents to the public. She is active as a storyteller, folklorist, journalist and author too. According to her website she told a tale on several scenes, for example in schools, nursery schools, libraries, community art centres, theatres, but in pubs, barracks and churches too. She got the master of folk art prize [*Népművészet Mestere*].²⁹

István Sebestyén was born in 1955 in *Szekszárd*, he was the tenth child of her parents who came from *Andrásfalva* of *Bukovina*. He has learned the traditions, jokes and folk-songs of Szeklers of *Bukovina* in his family and in his village *Kakasd* in *Tolna* county (Sebestyén 2008). His parents were founding members of the traditional society of the settlement. At first István Sebestyén presented his knowledge in several competitions and won many first prizes there. Nowadays he tells a tale and sings folk songs on his independent performances, and he is a teacher in camps where folk music and tales are taught. He got the master of folk art prize in 2014.

Éva Fábíán was born in *Szekszárd* in 1959, and she was brought up in *Györe* (*Tolna* county). Her mother was born in *Andrásfalva*, and she was 10 years old when Szeklers of *Bukovina* were settled to *Bácska*. Éva Fábíán's father is also a representative of Szeklers of *Bukovina* but he comes from *Csernakeresztúr*, this village is in Romania. (Szeklers of *Bukovina* moved into some settlements of Romania of today at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century.) From 1945 onwards in *Györe* Germans, Szeklers, Hungarians of Upper Hungary and former local Hungarians lived together. Éva Fábíán as a child listened to stories of several cultures in her father's tailoring workshop, and she learned the traditions of Szeklers of *Bukovina* from her relatives. When she was a child she could experience the family cohesion of her ethnic group during weddings, pig slaughters, celebrations, patronal festivals, and in agricultural works as corn and beet hoeing

²⁹ Kóka 2010.

and corn gathering. 1977 she completed her secondary schooling at Szekszárd, then she completed her college course at a teacher-training college at *Budapest*, and she became a nursery-school teacher. Later she took a diploma in tradition-knowledge-teacher too. She got the young master of folk art [*Népművészet Ifjú Mestere*] prize in 1979. At first she was a singer and storyteller of the traditional group of Szeklers of *Bukovina* of *Tolna* county, moreover she was a member of folk bands too. Nowadays she is a teacher of singing in a folk-music school, she is a storyteller in the Hungarian Heritage House in *Budapest*, besides she teaches also story-telling and folk-singing here. She collected folk-music in her family and in the whole Hungarian language area.

Remaining of dialects through the medium of tale-telling of today

These chapters below present the role of dialects in folk-tales, they occur in an urban cultural medium, on some story-telling occasions of modern age, they are narrated to a different ethnic group than the story-teller came from, and what is more, these tales are narrated always to new and new people. All three storytellers introduce themselves in front of the audience as a member of the Szeklers of *Bukovina*, they join to this culture with their performances. Description of the ethnic group, and possibly, the mention of historical antecedents can occur during their performances, although in a different way in each case. For example Rozália Kóka starts her performance with a short historical description, and Éva Fábián mentions her ancestors and their homeland *Bukovina* during child shows too, and István Sebestyén's origin is represented in his introductions and also in his tales. In their folk-tales they use dialect elements, besides also folk traditions occurs, for example some habits, clothes or names of devices. According to her own confession Rozália Kóka uses the dialect in a different way when she tells a tale for children or for adults. In front of children's audience she uses only few dialect words or foreign words because these ones can hinder children in understand the plot. However, she assumes that adults can deduce the meaning of these words from the context. For this reason she tells only simple tales for children's audience, and she intends life stories with more dialect elements for adults³⁰. In a video Éva Fábián starts a tale entitled The lazy young woman [*A rest leány*] with this introduction: "My old men spoke a very interesting old Szekler dialect. I learned Hungarian in this kind of language, and I loved the old

³⁰ Kóka 2002: 10.

men's beautiful melodic speaking, and their strange expressions very much. So I weaves it into my tales."³¹ [*Az én öregjeim egy nagyon érdekes régies székegy tájnyelvet beszéltek. Én ezen tanultam magyarul, és úgy szerettem az öregeknek a szép a dallamos beszédét, furcsa kifejezéseiket. Úgyhogy én belé szoktam szőni a meséimbe.*]

Use of dialects as a part of conscious language education, moreover transmission of linguistic traditions

In Éva Fábíán's tales her dialect serves as a pedagogical purpose too. The Hungarian National curriculum [*Nemzeti alaptanterv*] that is in force, contains also the following aims: schoolchildren should get to know several texts about national traditions and cultural memory, besides they should attain some knowledge about Hungarian dialects too.³² Éva Fábíán's tale-telling in the Hungarian Heritage House can be connected to this pedagogical goal, where she narrates also biblical stories. She tells some tales of a book [*Parasztbiblia*] where some biblical stories of authentic peasant communities are published. (According to the purpose of the National curriculum schoolchildren should get to know some Christian festivals, for example Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, besides they learn about folk customs too.) In Éva Fábíán's tales also riddles, proverbs, folk-songs or chorales in dialects occur³³. Thanks to these storytellers, some children who speak only the standard variation of the language can meet the dialects in a folk-tale. In order to make understand the unknown words Éva Fábíán explains the meaning of them for the children, besides she also gesticulate. During the story-telling tale-tellers would like to create a pictorial experience, therefore they use synonyms, adjectival constructions, similes and tropes of the dialect³⁴. At the beginning of the tale entitled The lazy young woman [*A rest leány*] Éva Fábíán speaks about the authentic clothing of peasants and the method of preparation, and she contrasts the real, old, woven clothing with the modern ones available in a boutique. During Éva Fábíán's talk the host of children can attain knowledge about a spinning wheel, reel, or loom. She explained why peasant women had to weave, spin and sew, and why it was a shame if they were lazy [she used a funny word for it: *büdösdőg* – smelly carcass]³⁵.

³¹ ...oda kújjel Andrásfalán <https://fabianevamesel.hagyomanyokhaza.hu/>

³² *Magyar Közlöny* 2020. 17.

³³ Dala 2021: 47.

³⁴ Dala 2021: 38–44.

³⁵ Németh 2021: 73.

István Sebestyén also speaks about some traditional costumes in his tale entitled 'The deficient young woman [*A csorba leán*]', for example he mentions a special kind of shirt, skirt, bodice and a sky-blue ribbon³⁶.

Humour and dialect

In order to maintain the attention of their audience storytellers often apply also humour, and they use it in performances for children too³⁷. In the tales narrated by the storytellers of Szeklers of *Bukovina* some elements of the characteristic dialect, for example dialect words can serve as a source of humour. Although creation a pictorial experience is part of tale-telling, but according to the Transylvanian linguist János Péntek's research picturesque and metaphors occur more frequently in the Szekler dialects than in other ones. In his opinion in given dialects its speakers have a preference for the logical, descriptive, defining technical terms, but in other dialects speakers give preference to the expressive, pictorial, emotional metaphors³⁸. In the following example Éva Fábián creates a pictorial experience when she exhibits the poor man's move: his ball of knee trembled when he was afraid of a dragon in the tale entitled 'The seven-headed dragon and the poor man [*riszgett a térgyekalácsa*]³⁹.

In Éva Fábián's tales also the amazement and dislocation from the story serve as a source of humour, for example she unexpectedly refers to the present time⁴⁰, and also a simile can be effective: so large tears of her fell as my fist (the storyteller uses a dialect word for fist: *akkora könnyei hullottak, mint a kujakom* [The lazy young woman]). She uses a humorous closing formula in her tales: Do they not believe it? Climb up the I-belive-little-tree, and if they fall down, get on the little tail of I-belive-dog [*S ha akkor sem hiszi? Másszon fel a hiszem facskacskaeskára, s ha lepottyan, üljön fel a hiszemkutyá farkincájára!*]⁴¹

Also István Sebestyén and Rozália Kóka use humour in their folk-tales. We can find humour in the music of the text, when rhyming of some words presents the swinging of a skirt. The given words can represent when a young woman's way of walking is attractive, and the other one is nasty⁴². They use

³⁶ Sebestyén 2008: 10–11.

³⁷ Dala 2021: 36.

³⁸ Péntek 1978: 183.

³⁹ Németh 2021: 72.

⁴⁰ Dala 2021: 42.

⁴¹ ...oda kújjel Andrásfalán <https://fabianevesel.hagyományokhaza.hu/>

⁴² Sebestyén 2008: 11.

also echo words as a source of humour, for example in the tale entitled The three young women when one of these women's laugh is foolish⁴³.

Use of strange dialect words that are unknown in the standard variation of the language can serve as a source of humour. In the tale entitled The three young women [*A három leján*] the short-tongued woman is oakum-tongued [*szösznyelvű*], the short-sighted one is hen-eyed [*tyúkszemű*]⁴⁴, there are some humorous words for the sounds generated by a bag or a dragon (Fábián Éva: The seven-headed dragon and the poor man [*A hétfejű sárkány és a szegény ember*]). In István Sebestyén's tale entitled Golden nest, golden bird [*Aranyfészék, aranymadár*] he applies metaphors for the male and female genitalia, the humour of the tale and the gist of the joke at the end of the tale are connected with these metaphors⁴⁵. In the tale entitled The defective young woman [*A csorba leán*] because of the continuous barking the watch dog wheezed in its half side [*Eddig jól élt a kutya, mert csorba volt a leán, de most annyit kellett ugasson, hogy már a fél oldalára sípolt*]⁴⁶. In the tale entitled The gossip woman [*A pletykás asszon*] we can find the following sentence: Our neighbour, that [*pitán* – a kind of meal] man Ambrose, laid an egg at night [*A szomszédunk, az a pitán ember Ambarus az éjen megtojott*]⁴⁷. (*Pitán* is made of corn flour, and it is flowing and soft before baking⁴⁸).

The following similes are used as a source of humour in the tales: My aunts have really big breasts and a bottom but I was as flat as a board [*malélapító* – a kind of pastry-board] [*A néném jó csicsesek, farosok vótak, de én olyan lapos vótam, mint egy malélapító*]⁴⁹. Ambrose was so handsome young man that young women pissed in a standing position after him⁵⁰. There was a big bright hole in the darkness. The witches went out and came in through this hole as people in a wedding-house [*setétségbe vót egy nagy fényes lik. Azon úgy jártak ki s bé a boszorkák, mind egy lakadalmas háznál*]⁵¹. The young woman runned home so fast that the wind almost tore across her breast [*Úgy futott háza a leán, hogy a szél a mellit szinte kikezdte*]⁵². István Sebestyén's following simile is a modern one: The crows crouched at the top of the walnut tree like

⁴³ Kóka 2002: 93.

⁴⁴ Kóka 2002.

⁴⁵ Sebestyén 2008: 5.

⁴⁶ Sebestyén 2008: 10.

⁴⁷ Kóka 2002: 125.

⁴⁸ Kóka 2002: 152.

⁴⁹ Kóka 2002: 22.

⁵⁰ Kóka 2002: 52.

⁵¹ Kóka 2002: 62.

⁵² Sebestyén 2008: 11.

some disaster intellectuals [*A varjak a divófa tetején gubbasztottak mint valami csapás értelmiségiek*]⁵³.

Personification and humour: In István Sebestyén's tale entitled The defective young woman [*A csorba leány*] the genitals flew up on a branch of the willow and they posed. Then because of pipe smoke the genitals' eyes filled with tears⁵⁴. In this tale the dog's thought is a source of humour: he/she thought the following words when he/she had to bark at the lot of boy-friends in the courtyard: Kill you the spasm [*Hogy a görcs öljön meg tüktököt*]⁵⁵.

One of the motifs of the tale is a modern one, therefore humorous too, because the fairy-tale hero carries the genitals in a paper bag [*papírsuska*] for his daughter⁵⁶.

In the tales some humorous elements are connected with the traditions of Szeklers of *Bukovina*. One of the features of folk-tales are the wonderful devices, for example several magic herbs or decoctions of witches can cure injuries or it can raise a person from the dead⁵⁷. In one of István Sebestyén's tales the genitals are soldered with honeyed homemade brandy [*bazsai mézes pálinka*]. This brandy is a reference to the traditions of Szeklers of *Bukovina* at the same time because it is (was) a popular drink of this ethnic group⁵⁸. In Éva Fábrián's tale entitled The lazy young woman [*A rest leány*] the humour is connected with this woman's laziness.

Summary

In Hungary traditional peasant way of life changed in the middle of the 20th century and also the role and language of folk-tales changed too. The purpose of story-telling has got new elements, next to the amusement some new aims have come, for example to preserve traditions and identity, to present folk culture, or teaching. This new phenomenon can be noticed from the second part of the 20th century, and according to the researches with the disappearance of those storytellers who attained their knowledge in a traditional community, some of these elements will disappear too⁵⁹. In Hungary in our days the number of rural dwellers decreases (they are the most

⁵³ Sebestyén 2008: 8.

⁵⁴ Sebestyén 2008: 9.

⁵⁵ Sebestyén 2008: 10.

⁵⁶ Sebestyén 2008: 9.

⁵⁷ Berze Nagy 1992: 291; Kovács 1980: 573–574.

⁵⁸ Gáspár Simon 1986: 18.

⁵⁹ Raffai 2013: 117.

important users of dialects), and at the same time this reduction means the decrease of dialect speakers too. Szeklers of *Bukovina* live in Hungary since 1945, and in the rising generation their traditions, culture and dialect are pushed into the background. Nowadays professional or revival storytellers can present their ancestors' tales and dialect too. Storytellers of Szeklers of *Bukovina* use their dialect for example as a part of conscious language education, moreover during transmission of linguistic traditions. Dialects can remain through the medium of storytellers of today. Storytellers apply often humour in order to maintain the attention of their audience, but in the tales some humorous elements are connected with the traditions of Szeklers of *Bukovina*. Dialect words can serve as a source of humour too, but they contribute to the pictorial experience of the tales. Creation a pictorial experience is part of tale-telling and for this reason storytellers can use synonyms, adjectival constructions, similes and tropes of the dialect.

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