

Title: Walloon in Belgium: current situation of the language

Author: Anna Brodinová

Department: Institute of Romance studies

Supervisor: PhDr. Jaroslav Štichauer

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Abstract: The objective of this thesis is to describe the current situation of the Walloon language in Belgium. The Walloon is a Romance language, closely related to French. Both languages have existed in close vicinity for centuries and have influenced one another. Mostly since the beginning of the 20th century the Walloon has been oppressed by the more dominant language. That is one of the reasons why it is gradually dying out. The theoretical part of the thesis provides general sociolinguistics definitions. It deals with distinctions of the terms of a dialect and a language, with issues of diglossia, language minorities and revitalisation of a language. It introduces Walloon and its evolution, language characteristics, literature and current activities trying to save it.

The empirical part describes the research work which was accomplished by the means of a questionnaire method. It summarizes methodological proceeding of the preparation and of the distribution of the questionnaire. The questionnaire focuses on the Walloon interlocutors, on the Walloon background, generational transmission, presence of the language in the respondents' everyday life, on their attitude to the language and the mutual interference of Walloon and French.

The findings of the research work confirm these premisses : rather older men living in the countryside speak Walloon the most often. The language is not transmitted from the generation to generation. These facts are common to the majority of regional languages. Meanwhile, regardless of the language competencies but depending on the older age of respondents, the Walloon is partly imprinted on their everyday speak. However, it concerns only the occasional use of originally Walloon words. The respondents consider the language to be an essential part of the Walloon culture. Despite of this, they do not believe in its complete revitalisation. They presume that the language will survive only in a small circle of its heated supporters.