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The Language of Authenticity in Hungarian–Hungarian Encounters

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Abstract. The study of authenticity in sociolinguistics has questioned the notion of the authentic speaker or previous interpretations of place, and it rather focuses on how the social functioning of authenticity is "mediated by and expressed through language" (Lacoste et al. 2014: 4) in different socio-cultural contexts. In linguistic ethnography, the researcher's positionality also becomes subject to analysis, especially when this has a direct influence on the data obtained. Through the excerpts from interviews conducted at a festival, I aim to discuss the sociolinguistic features of authenticity in the context of the Hungarian–Hungarian encounters. Moreover, the cultural values attributed to the different ways of speaking the Hungarian language are also articulated in these interviews.

Keywords: authenticity, linguistic, ethnography, socio-cultural values, Transylvania, Hungarian–Hungarian encounters

1. Introduction

The relevance of authenticity for sociolinguistics has been gaining ground mostly in the last two decades (Bucholtz 2003; Coupland 2003, 2010; Blommaert–Varis 2011; Lacoste et al. 2014) through exploring the social functioning of authenticity and its relation to language. While in dialectological research the image of the authentic speaker has always been central, the new mobilities paradigm (Britain 2016) challenges this sedentarist perspective that was based on the ideology of "linguistic isolationism" (Bucholtz 2003: 404). This ideology saw access to the most genuine form of a language through the most authentic speaker, who "belongs to a well-defined, static, and relatively homogenous social grouping that is closed to the outside" (ibid). Britain's mobilities paradigm aims to question the sedentarist and bounded notion of place seen as "the locus of identity" (Cresswell 2011: 551). In this sense, authenticity is closely linked to locality, yet when

discussed in the context of language revitalization, authenticity is interpreted on the axis of past and present (or a desired future) "along values such as naturalness, originality, purity and genuineness" (Bodó–Fazakas 2018: 2). This understanding becomes relevant to this paper when a cultural and natural setting is strongly associated with a set of values linked to the past.

Transylvania has long been seen as a place of national authenticity from the perspective of Hungary, and according to one of the dominant discourses in this regard, Transylvania is essentially "more Hungarian" than any region of Hungary, as the ancient and authentic Hungarian culture is preserved there (Feischmidt 2005). In this sense, Transylvania is also often linked to a less modern and idealized rural setting populated by a society that prioritizes community and closeness to nature, following an orientalist approach that ultimately results in an image of inferiority (Feischmidt 2005: 7). These discourses envision Transylvania, more precisely Szeklerland,[1] as ethnically and linguistically homogenous. When it comes to the Hungarian language spoken in Transylvania, based on the results of the Sociolinguistics of Hungarian Outside Hungary project from the mid-1990s, led by Miklós Kontra, the majority of Hungarians living in Transylvania (75.9%) consider the Hungarian spoken there "the most beautiful". Hungarian respondents from Hungary were more divided in this question, as only 18.6% of them thinks that Transylvania is the place of the most beautifully spoken Hungarian (Péntek–Benő 2020: 408). This phenomenon can be further observed in the attitudes of later generations of Hungarians living in Transylvania, as they conceptualize their mother tongue and the dialect spoken by them along "their linguistic and cultural loyalties" (Fazakas 2014: 353).

The data presented in this paper result from a linguistic ethnographic research conducted at a festival organized in Transylvania, Romania, with the intent of bringing together Hungarians from Hungary and Hungarians living as an ethnic minority in Romania. When I asked the festival participants about how they recognize where other participants are from, the unanimous answer was "based on their speech", and thus, instead of *what* was said, *how* it was said became a marker of social identity (Woolard 2016: 22). When discussing the differences between the Hungarian spoken in Hungary and in Transylvania, discourses around authenticity and values were prevalent, while the cultural changes reflected in language were associated with cultural loss (Bucholtz 2003: 400).

1 A historic and ethnographic area composed of the Hungarian-majority counties of Romania (Harghita, Covasna, and parts of Mureş County).

2. The context

The Bálványos Free Summer University and Student Camp (colloquially known and hereinafter referred to as Tusványos) is an annually organized 5-day-long event in Transylvania, Romania. The first edition of the summer university was held in 1990 with the intent of bringing together in the context of an intellectual workshop Hungarians from Hungary, Hungarians from Romania, and Romanians to start a dialogue that was much needed after the fall of the communist regime. During the more than past three decades, the festival constantly grew larger in the programmes covered, becoming aimed at a wider public. However, the participation of Romanians became insignificant, as there are no events for a Romanian audience with the majority of programmes being in Hungarian – with the exception of a few English-speaking invited lecturers. The festival includes lectures and round-table discussions with well-known politicians, public figures, and specialists mostly from Hungary and Transylvania. It also offers various activities for children and families, cultural events, and concerts at the end of each day. According to their official website, the festival attracts 30,000 visitors every year.

Choosing Transylvania as the location of the event is, on the one hand, probably a conscious decision of the organizers due to the significant Hungarian minority living in Romania. On the other hand, as discussed in the Introduction, Transylvania has a special significance in the construction of discourses around national authenticity. This is also emphasized by the prominent public figures of the festival in the documentary created for the 30th edition. László Tőkés, a Hungarian politician from Romania, states in the documentary that the location itself represents an "ancestral site" determining "a fundamental way of thinking". In this sense, the space becomes "naturalized" as the site of "ancestral, original, and untouched nature" (Feischmidt 2014: 22), while an intellectual and habitual feature is also attached to it by implying the existence of a "fundamental", i.e. an original and authentic way of thinking. Another key figure, a former member of the organizing team of the festival and a returning guest as a culture commissioner of the Hungarian government, Szilárd Demeter, thinks of Tusványos as the "forum for nation unification", where, through a "national narrative", the different Hungarians can tell each other who they are. The national narrative is also strengthened by the yearly mottos of the festival: *What belongs together, comes together* (2011), *Tusványos is the centre of the world* (2012), *Our time* (2013), *From stories to history* (2014), *A place to stand* (2017), *Some things are eternal* (2022), to cite but a few.

3. Methodology and data

This paper relies on data collected on the 31st edition of Tusványos held between 19 and 23 July 2022. During the fieldwork, I conducted 26 semi-structured interviews with a total number of 51 participants, where we mostly discussed their connection to the festival and the linguistic encounters that take place there. As the festival is aimed at a wide audience, I tried to engage with people of all age groups and of different sociolinguistic backgrounds. Although I assured all participants of their anonymity, and the interviews were only recorded with the written consent of those involved, due to the nature of the field, I found it important to outline a few additional ethical guidelines. One of these was that I did not approach participants who were surrounded by children, as I did not intend to collect data from minors, and their exclusion from the recorded material would have proven difficult. Another consideration was not to conduct interviews with people who were showing signs of being under the influence, as the validity of their consent could be questioned.

In order to gain a more complex understanding of the festival, I also applied the method of participant observation by taking part in different activities, attending lectures and roundtable discussions, and carrying out unrecorded conversations with different actors of the festival. Moreover, ethnographic shadowing was also among the methods; in this case, I "explored" the camp together with "veteran" participants, more precisely, two older ladies from Hungary, who attended the festival for the 13th time. As it was my first time at the event, I asked them to be my tour guides.

In presenting the data in the analytical section, I differentiate between festival participants as Hungarians from Hungary and Hungarians from Transylvania, although this categorization may not be applied to the entirety of the data. One of the reasons is that the festival welcomes all Hungarians living in the Carpathian Basin, while there are lecturers with a non-Hungarian background or even Romanian participants visiting the festival. By choosing Transylvania as a place of belonging instead of naming the country of provenience as Romania when talking about Hungarians from Transylvania, I intend to showcase the dominant discourses regarding the self-identification of the Hungarian minority living in Romania.

A critical reflection on the researcher's own subjectivity (Bucholtz et al. 2023) has become imperative in doing linguistic ethnography, where facing up to the partiality of the researchers' interpretations is expected (Rampton et al. 2015: 16), as "there is no 'view from nowhere', no gaze that is not positioned" (Irvine–Gal 2000: 36). I was born and raised in the bilingual Transylvanian town of Târgu-Mureş, where I attended school and two BA programmes in Hungarian, as my first language is also Hungarian. While most of my socialization happened in Hungarian, since the ethnic composition of the town is somewhat balanced (54.83% Romanians, 41.81%

Hungarians),[2] I have been in close contact with the Romanian language and culture from an early age. Although my hometown is often considered to be the capital of Szeklerland, I do not identify as a Szekler, and none of the Szekler dialects are part of my language repertoire. Moreover, I do not nurture bitter feelings for being part of an ethnic minority. At the time of the fieldwork, I was a PhD student of the Doctoral School of Linguistics at Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) in Hungary.

Introducing oneself at a festival, however, has its own challenges. Firstly, the nature of the field made it sometimes impossible to provide people with enough information about myself, as they would not follow a three-sentence monologue about myself, my studies, and the aim of my research because there were other people, music, and events taking place around us. Secondly, not everything that I prepared to say was enough as a point of reference for some. I was asked what ELTE stands for, whether they needed a pen for the "questionnaire", or warned that I would get a poor grade if I talked to them because they did not know much, and oftentimes I had to remind the interviewees that the recording is not for the TV or radio but for a "university project". Bearing all these in mind, after some time, I decided not to tell them everything I previously intended to. As a result, I did not always specify that I am a student at a university in Hungary while also being from Romania. In the following, I will discuss how my own positionality perceived based on the way I speak shaped my access to discourses around authenticity.

4. Analysis

I chose to discuss the following excerpts as a starting point of my analysis because they illustrate some unforeseen challenges I had to face. Becoming a festival participant myself, *how* I talked also differentiated me from those coming from Transylvania, as they assumed that I was from Hungary. I argue that this restricted to a certain extent or at least influenced my access to information: when I asked participants from Transylvania to describe how Hungarians from Hungary speak, they were often hesitant to disclose their thoughts while sharing hidden smiles with each other and taking a long time to formulate their arguments. This was probably due to the fact that they did not want to directly criticize how Hungarians from Hungary speak.

Excerpt 1 is from an interview conducted with a local performer of the festival. As he has been a key figure of Tusványos night-time parties for decades, I thought he could provide me with an insight to how festival participants coming from Hungary or Transylvania party, yet he immediately identified speech as the distinctive feature.

2 According to the 2021 census: https://www.recensamantromania.ro/rezultate-rpl-2021/rezultate-definitive/ (last accessed on: 17 August 2023).

Excerpt 1
BB: s meg lehet mondani, hogy ki magyarországi, ha nem mutatkozik be, hogy Magyarországról jött?
P38: hát, beszéd alapján
BB: mhm, hogy beszélnek a magyarországiak?
P38: többek között akárcsak te

BB: and is it possible to tell if someone is from Hungary if they don't introduce themselves as someone coming from Hungary?
R38: well, based on their speech
BB: mhm, how do those from Hungary speak?
R38: for instance, just like you

When asked to describe the way Hungarians from Hungary speak, his response was that they speak just like I did. After this, I told him that he was wrong because I am from Târgu-Mureş. In a face-saving attempt, he contradicted what he said a moment before and told me that he knew that I was from Mureş County because I was speaking that way. As I did not intend to challenge his position in this conversation, I did not confront him but carried on with the conversation. This example showcases how someone, who in other parts of the interview gave detailed opinions, chose to only characterize the speech of Hungarians from Hungary by identifying it with mine. Assuming that the person who is addressing him is personally involved in the question, he did not elaborate on his answer. This presupposition regarding my identity limited my access to an elaborated discussion of how the Hungarian spoken in Hungary is perceived by Hungarians in Transylvania.

During the fieldwork, there were interviews I subsequently decided not to use, as the participants were seemingly feeling uncomfortable with their voices being recorded, although they did not ask me to delete them. At the time of conducting the interview, which includes the following excerpt, I thought that I would not make use of this piece of data either, as the female member of the elderly couple I was talking with was resistant to sharing too much information and was constantly scolding his husband because, in her opinion, he was touching upon sensitive topics (e.g. the rights of the Hungarian minority in Romania). When the husband was telling me about the different ways of speaking Hungarian in the very different villages of Transylvania, and he also named some of them, his wife (P32) once again advised him not to mention Barót, a small Transylvanian town, as I would not be familiar with it anyway.

Excerpt 2
P32: Barótot úgysem tudja a hölgy, hogy mi az, s mi az
BB: dehogynem, hát én Marosvásárhelyen nőttem fel

P32: igen?
BB: igen, igen, úgyhogy nagyon ismerem itt a környéket
P32: na (nevet)

P32: the lady doesn't know Barót, what it is
BB: I do know, I grew up in Târgu-Mureş
P32: really?
BB: yes, yes, so I am pretty familiar with the region
P32: well (laughs)

To her surprise, I responded that I know about the town, as I grew up in Târgu-Mureş. From this moment, her attitude towards the whole discussion shifted, as she became more open. After I switched off the recorder, we kept on talking for several minutes, and she shared with me that there was a girl in their village who asked them to complete a questionnaire for a university project. When I told her that I also work at a Hungarian university from Transylvania, she showed even more confidence and assured me of her appreciation of those who "stay at home" and do important work "here" (i.e. Transylvania). In this case, despite of initially assuming that I am from Hungary based on my speech, revealing that I am also from Transylvania resulted in trust and a more open conversation, and thus had a positive impact on my access to the field.

These two excerpts do not represent isolated cases in which festival participants from Romania assumed that I am from Hungary, as I had several similar interactions with local economic actors, organizers, and other interviewees. In turn, in the encounters with Hungarians from Hungary, although it never emerged as a topic of discussion, it was implied by the interviewees that I was from Hungary. This became obvious in instances when, for example, streets of Budapest were mentioned as points of reference, or when they talked about Hungary as our shared country of origin. Thus, I argue that the way I was perceived by others based on how I spoke shaped my access to the discourses around authenticity, as the participants from Transylvania assumed that I could be offended if they shared what they actually thought about how Hungarian is spoken in Hungary. On the other hand, I believe that this is also the reason why I got more direct answers from festival attendees coming from Hungary.

4.1. Sociolinguistic features of authenticity

As the way people speak can be an indicator of where they come from, there were other hints that helped me navigate the situations when I was trying to make contact with people from diverse backgrounds. Seeing two young women who were consuming beverages that are only available in Hungary was one such clue.

When I started talking to them, they shared with me that, on the one hand, they came to the festival because of how affordable Tusványos was and because of the political programmes they could attend and that, on the other hand, they also appreciated the people and culture of Transylvania.

Excerpt 3
BB: s miben más a beszéd?
P16: hát, ez a jellegzetes gyönyörű tájszólás, azért vannak külön/
P17: hangsúlyok, szóhasználat
P16: a hangsúly, igen, azért szóhasználatban is (...) szeretjük, szeretjük hallgatni

BB: and how is the speech different?
P16: well, there is this characteristic beautiful dialect, they have different
P17: intonations, vocabulary
P16: the intonation, yes, and vocabulary, too (...) we like, we like listening to it

P16 and P17 were among the many people who immediately identified differences in intonation and vocabulary when it came to how they recognize the particularities of the Hungarian spoken in Transylvania – by saying that they "like listening to it" instead of engaging with it, while a certain distance is also implied, where those from Hungary manifest what Britain (2017), in an academic context, calls dialectological gaze as they assume an outsider position and the role of the "listening subject" (Inoue 2003). A little later in the conversation, they also said that this is the only place where they can eat *pityókás házi kenyér*, that is, 'artisan potato bread', yet they used the non-standard Hungarian word for 'potato' *pityóka*, characteristic of certain dialects in Transylvania (Murádin 1975). Thus, bread and the local dialect become cultural goods that can be consumed by those who come here.

A similar distancing attitude could be observed during the ethnographic shadowing. As mentioned before, I asked two "veteran" participants from Hungary to guide me through the locations of the festival. We passed two young men who were jokingly greeting each other with "Dicsértessék", that is, the Hungarian short form of the Catholic salutation "Praised be Jesus Christ". One of the participants from Hungary exclaimed "jaj, de aranyos, ahogy egymásnak köszönnek" ('oh, it is so cute how they greet each other'). By pointing this out, it becomes obvious that this form of greeting is unusual for these participants from Hungary and find it characteristic of the region without considering that there might be something else, i.e. irony involved. This is also supported by them later explaining that they love Transylvania because everyone is kind and people greet each other regardless

of having a pre-existing relationship. By calling them "cute", once again an outsider's gaze can be observed. The use of the "Dicsértessék" form of greeting among younger generations, however, can probably be attributed to a Hungarian meme. Tibi atya [Father Tibi] is portrayed as a priest living in a rural setting, who shares his life lessons that are very often centred around drinking; every time he raises his glass, he says "Dicsértessék". Glózer argues that using this "traditional greeting form" allows Tibi atya fans to express their loyalty and commitment to the community around it (2017: 47). Thus, this difference becomes rather age-related.

The event that attracts the most visitors takes place on the final day of the festival when the Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán participates in a roundtable discussion on the main stage. Many attend this event wearing clothes or accessories with national or political symbols and messages. A young man listened to this roundtable discussion wearing the Kingdom of Hungary's flag that includes the coats of arms of the territories which were once part of the Kingdom of Hungary; this coat of arms has not been officially used after World War I. A few hours later, I had the chance to talk with him. I found out that he is a returning festival participant from Hungary, who comes to Tusványos because of "Transylvania and its magic" and to feel "the national togetherness". He is looking forward to making connections not only with other festival participants but also with the locals, from whom he can learn a lot.

Excerpt 4

P34: mit tudunk az egyes székely emberektől, a helyiektől megtanulni, a bölcs mondásokat, az ízes beszédet, azt a más, kicsit másabb gondolatvilágot, ami nálunk, csúnyán mondom, anyaországban, otthon, hogy azt a más szemléletmódot, a sokszor egyszerűbb, de százezerszer, milliószor bölcsebb és észszerűbb gondolatmenetet használja az ember.

P34: what we can learn from the Szekler people, the locals, [are] the words of wisdom, the savoury speech, that different, a little different way of thinking [than] the one that we have, if I put it ugly, in the motherland, at home, a different vision, which is sometimes more simple but one hundred thousand, a million times wiser and more rational way of thinking, the one used here.

In Excerpt 4, the speech of the locals is differentiated from the young man's own way of speaking as being "savoury"; the Hungarian word *ízes* also allows for a strong sensory and gastronomic association (cf. the example of the *pityókás házi kenyér*). This particular adjective is often used to describe the way Hungarian is spoken in Transylvania throughout the data both by Hungarians from Hungary and by Hungarians from Transylvania. This argument is also in line with the changing

role dialects have, as they are no longer seen as the mere geographical indicators of one's mother-tongue origin but also ascribe the particular cultural values to those speaking them (Silverstein 2014: 183). In this case, this different way of speaking implies a whole set of values that make the Hungarians living in Transylvania, referred to as Szeklers by the festival participant, unique. Simplicity, wisdom, and rational thinking are among the virtues associated with the authentic world, a genuine way of living, which should be learned by those who do not live in the region. Moreover, it is implied that Hungarians from Hungary with a different vision do not possess these values strongly linked to authenticity.

The following excerpt is from a conversation with two female participants in their thirties, who were chatting under a tree while their husbands were listening to the roundtable discussion with the Hungarian Prime Minister. When I asked them about where they came from, it turned out that they were from my hometown, so I tried to use that as a common point. Yet, when we discussed the differences in the way Hungarians from Hungary and those from Transylvania speak, I realized that I approached them with an address form that, according to them, is characteristic of Hungarians from Hungary, as I myself used the informal second person.

Excerpt 6
P31: igen, ami így fura náluk, hogy ők minden- mindenkit tegeznek
BB: aha
P31: igen, például, csak egy példa, Balatonon a fiatalok, tehát most egy idős vagy egy-egy fiatalabb koro-, tehát úgy köszönnek, hogy helló, nem magáz vagy nem, tehát mindenkit tegeznek, igen
BB: és itt meg nem
P31: itt meg nem, itt meg nem. hát itt ma is, mikor a karkötőt váltottuk ki, tehát egy fiatal csaj, tehát nálam fiatalabb volt és jó napot, úgy köszönt (…)
BB: mhm, nem érdekelte, hogy fesztiválon van
P31: nem, abszolút nem
P30: talán több a tisztelet
P31: jó napot, jó napot, igen, de mondjuk, egy magyarországi ő egyből helló, miben segíthetek? mit szeretnél? tehát én ezt- ezt figyeltem meg
BB: mhm
P30: valóban ez egy nagy különbség
P31: igen, igen
BB: hogy akkor több a tisztelet itt, azt mondtad? itt Erdélyben?
P31: szerintem igen
P30: igen, mert először meghagyják ezt a tiszteletet, hogy úgymond kiegyezzünk, hogy tegeződjünk, légy szíves

P31: yes, and what is odd about them, that they use the informal second person
BB: mhm
P31: yes, for example, just one example, at [Lake] Balaton, the youngsters, so now an older or a younger age-, so they greet you with hello, no formal greeting or no, so everyone uses the informal, yes
BB: and here this is not the case
P31: here it is not, here it is not. well, here also today, when we were getting our bracelet, so a young girl, so she was younger than me, and good morning, that is what she said
(…)
BB: mhm, she did not care about being at a festival
P31: no, absolutely not
P30: there might be more respect
P31: good morning, good morning, but let's say someone from Hungary immediately goes hello, how can I help? what do you want? this is what I have observed
BB: mhm
P30: this is indeed a big difference
P31: yes, yes
BB: so there is more respect here, you said? here in Transylvania?
P31: I do think so
P30: yes, because they keep this respect, that we like to agree that from now on we are on a first-name basis, please

As seen in this excerpt, differences in intonation or vocabulary were not the only linguistic features identified, but socio-pragmatic aspects also came to the fore, as language reveals aspects of the speaker's culture (Lee 2020). The two women mentioned two instances of people meeting for the first time and greeting each other. The first example was an encounter at Lake Balaton in Hungary, where regardless of the age of the interlocutors, everyone uses the informal second person. The counterexample was the interaction they had had that morning when at the festival entrance they were addressed formally despite of the informal setting. Thus, showing respect to a person unknown to us through language is considered to be a cultural value, as the contrary is seen to be "odd" and even rude. This can once again be connected to wider discourses about the right way of conduct associated with a probably more conservative culture, where differences in age demand respect, and going on a first-name basis with someone is a rite of passage in the relationship, resulting from mutual agreement.

When I sat around a table with a group of childhood friends from several Transylvanian towns, who now come back to the festival to keep their friendship

alive, we discussed the different ways Hungarians speak. Instead of sharing his own thoughts, one of the participants chose to quote his co-worker who is originally from Hungary, but currently they work at the same office in Transylvania.

> **Excerpt 5**
> *P13: azt mondta, hogy figyelj, azt mondta, én most hiába, hogy onnan való vagyok, én azt mondom, hogy ahogy ti beszéltek, ti a törzsgyökeres magyar nyelvet beszélitek, a miénk Magyarországon, mivel nyugatabbra vagyunk, és oda húzódunk mind, a nyugati példákat vesszük, a miénk az már olyan fé- fészliftes, azt mondja (nevet), tehát már nem az a törzsgyökeres*
>
> P13: he said, look, he said, it doesn't matter that I come from there, I am telling you that the way you speak [in Transylvania], you speak the deep-rooted Hungarian language, ours in Hungary, since it is closer to the West, and we adjust to that, and we take Western examples, ours is already fa- face-lifted, he says (laughs), so it is no longer the deep-rooted one

By choosing to use the words of someone from Hungary, P13 decided to distance himself from the responsibility of judging one's language while sharing strong criticism at the same time. The Hungarian spoken in Transylvania is seen as the "deep-rooted" version of the language, while the one spoken in Hungary is "face-lifted". This argument evokes an East–West divide, in which the East preserves the authentic, while Western examples deflect one from being original, presuming that face-lifting is the contrary of this. This discourse was also reflected in the *Tusványos 30* documentary, when László Tőkés said that the way of thinking set out by the festival is necessary, as Europe and its nationalities are "struggling with an identity crisis". In this sense, Tusványos and its "ancestral site" are the opposite of what a sense of Europeanness would imply. Wodak argues that political unions (e.g. the European Union) promising a sort of unity threaten national uniqueness and thus lead to the rise of nationalist movements, in which identities are defined on the basis of nationality, religion, and ethnicity (2015: 109).

5. Conclusions

The sociolinguistic study of authenticity in a context that primarily communicates national unity, while also pointing out that the participants of the dialogue are Hungarians who live in different places, reveals discourses of linguistic and cultural differences. In addressing the ways in which festival participants evaluated the speech of others, I found myself in the position of being evaluated

as well, which, I argue, has shaped my access to discourses on authenticity. For instance, when it was presumed that I was a Hungarian from Hungary, one of the festival participants decided not to detail the way Hungarian is used in Hungary. On another occasion, the realization that I eventually also came from Transylvania helped in building more trust.

In the interviews conducted with Hungarians from Hungary, it seems that there is an outsider's gaze in relation to both the Hungarian language used in Transylvania and to the lifestyle imagined to be characteristic of the region. According to them, a set of moral values is also reflected in how the "simple" Szekler people live their lives, alluding to the orientalist discourse mentioned in the literature (Feischmidt 2005). One of the linguistic features identified by the festivalgoers that differentiates Hungarians from Hungary and those from Transylvania is that the latter use the *vous* form with strangers as a sign of respect, which is associated with a more conservative and less globalized attitude. The discourses around authenticity also highlighted that the geographical positioning of Transylvania and Hungary reproduce an East–West divide in terms of the socio-cultural values that become articulated through how the Hungarian language is spoken.

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