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Hungarian Sociolinguistics in the Carpathian Basin, 1985–2022[1]

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> "Hungary, as described in the chapters by Csaba Pléh and Miklós Kontra, was a pioneer in the introduction of western-style sociolinguistics into Eastern Europe."
>
> Peter Trudgill (2000)

ABSTRACT

Until about 1985, apart from traditional dialectological research, the study of Hungarian in Hungary focused mostly on the Codified Standard Hungarian variety, whose speakers are powerful in social but not in numerical terms. Sociolinguistic research since 1985 has now resulted in a program which embraces not only the 10 million (largely monolingual) Hungarians in Hungary proper, but also the 3 million bi- or multilingual minority Hungarians in the seven neighboring countries (kin-states). This program was initiated by researchers of the Department of Sociolinguistics in the Linguistics Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. This paper offers linguists who do not read Hungarian an overview of this research carried out between 1985 and 2022.

Keywords: Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin, variationist sociolinguistics, language contact, language rights, language shift, urban dialectology

1. Introduction

Until about 1985, apart from traditional dialectological research, the study of Hungarian in Hungary focused mostly on the Codified Standard Hungarian variety, whose speakers are powerful in social, but not in numerical terms. Sociolinguistic research since 1985 has now

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resulted in a program which embraces not only the 10 million (largely monolingual) Hungarians in Hungary proper, but also the 3 million bi- or multilingual minority Hungarians in the seven neighboring countries. This program was initiated by researchers of the Department of Sociolinguistics in the Linguistics Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. This Department had its ups and downs in the Linguistics Institute during its quarter of a century of existence: it was generously supported by the director of the Institute between 1985 and 1992, its work was tolerated by his successor (1992 through 2001), and the Department was disbanded in 2010 by its then director.[2] Nevertheless, Hungarian sociolinguistics in the Carpathian Basin is alive and kicking in 2022.

My aim is to provide linguists who do not read Hungarian with an overview of our research between 1985 and 2022. The references are somewhat biased toward publications in English. In this text, minority Hungarian placenames follow majority-language placenames after a slash, e.g., *Dlhá nad Váhom/Vághosszúfalu* (a village in southern Slovakia). Earlier reviews of Hungarian sociolinguistics in international handbooks are available in Kontra (1997, 2006b), and Kontra, Nekvapil & Kiełkiewicz-Janowiak (2010), as well as Kontra, Sloboda, Nekvapil & Kiełkiewicz-Janowiak (forthcoming in 2023).

2. Sociolinguistics in Hungary

Research into sociolinguistic variation in Hungary began in 1985 when a research group was established in the Linguistics Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences with the aim of "studying the living language". At that time the study of Hungarian was limited to the description and analysis of Codified Standard Hungarian, i.e., the high-prestige, "correct" Hungarian variety, which was used by a relatively small number of speakers in Hungary who followed the prescriptive rules. Except for dialect dictionaries, all the dictionaries, grammars and usage books described linguistic forms used by an unknown number of monolingual native speakers of the language.

As late as 1998, structural descriptions of Hungarian e.g., É. Kiss, Kiefer & Siptár (1998) and Kenesei, Vago & Fenyvesi (1998) used the terms *szabad váltakozás* and *free variation* respectively several times, paying little or no attention to the social and stylistic variation in Hungarian increasingly available in published research. To illustrate the discrepancies between a structural grammar and actual language use in Hungary in the 1990s, I quote what Kiefer (1998: 2015–216) says about the 1SG conditional suffix of verbs in the indefinite conjugation:

2 Borrowing Lakoff's (1974/1982) phrases, the first director was a Humanist linguist, but his two successors were Nuts-and-Bolts linguists.

> "The first-person inflection is *-ék*. This suffix does not in fact alternate, and 'violates' the rule of vowel harmony, which would require e.g., *vár-nák* [for the back-vowel verb *vár* 'wait'], but that form would be the same as the 3PL conditional form of the definite conjugation. Since the two forms are different in person (1SG and 3PL), such homonyms are, if possible, avoided by the language."[3]

Two years before Kiefer (1998), Lanstyák & Szabómihály (1996) demonstrated in a written questionnaire study (n=735) that 14% of high schoolers in Hungary used the nonstandard form *tud-nák* 'I would be able to' as opposed to 25% of Hungarian high schoolers with Hungarian as the medium of teaching in Slovakia, and 65% of Hungarians with Slovak as the medium of teaching.

Using data from the Hungarian National Sociolinguistic Survey conducted in 1988, Kontra (1994 and 2003a, 126–130) demonstrated that 45% of a representative sample of adult Hungarians in Hungary (n=832) judged the highly stigmatized nonstandard form *kap-nák* 'I would get' to be grammatically correct. Social stratification by occupation had a significant ($p < .01$) effect on the judgments, as did educational achievement, age, and other factors. It was also shown that the nonstandard judgments were undergoing standardization in Budapest, but not in the rest of the country. Oral sentence-completion data in the same study showed that 15% of the representative sample used nonstandard forms like *tud-nák* 'I would be able to' and *in-nák* 'I would drink'. Social stratification by education, residence, gender, occupation, and race (Gypsies vs. others) all had a significant effect on the spoken forms used. Ongoing standardization was revealed in the speech of women ($p < .01$), though not of men.

3. Hungarian sociolinguistics in the adjacent countries

Hungarian sociolinguistic research in the countries adjacent to Hungary began a few years after 1985, largely aided by a series of *élőnyelvi konferenciák* 'conferences on the living Hungarian language' hosted by the Linguistics Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest or a partner institution in a neighboring country, e.g., in Novi Sad (then Yugoslavia), Cluj-Napoca (Rumania), Nitra (Slovakia), Uzhhorod (Ukraine), amongst others. The first of these conferences

3 My translation of: "Az első személy személyragja *-ék*. Az első személy nem váltakozik, sőt tulajdonképpen 'szabálytalan', a szabályos alak *vár-nák* lenne, ami viszont egybeesne a feltételes mód, tárgyas ragozás többes szám harmadik személyű alakjával. Itt nem áll fenn személybeli egyezés (egyes szám első személy – többes szám harmadik személy), az ilyen homonimát a nyelv, ha teheti, elkerüli."

was held in Budapest in 1988, with its proceedings published in 1990.[4] Harlig (1992, 175) concluded his review of this book as follows:

> "The regional studies [in the book] suggest that Hungarian dialectology is only slowly shifting to a more modern, Western framework, and has not yet accepted the goals that framework suggests. The stratification studies, however, show a healthy and promising future for structural sociolinguistics in Hungary."

4. The history of the first two phases

The history of the first two phases of Hungarian sociolinguistics is described by Pléh (1995b) and Kontra (1995a) in a book which provided the first comprehensive presentation of sociolinguistic research in several East European countries (Harlig & Pléh eds. 1995). It is interesting that Pléh (1995b) describes the simultaneous development in the early 1970s of generative linguistics and western-style sociolinguistics in Hungary in terms of a romantic enthusiasm for everything modern. Kontra (1995a) outlines the professionalization of Hungarian sociolinguistics between 1985 and 1994, with the launch of two quantitative projects (the Hungarian National Sociolinguistic Survey and the Budapest Sociolinguistic Interview). In 1994, the study of bilingualism in Hungary and the neighboring countries (where millions of L1 speakers of Hungarian live[5]) was mostly uncharted territory. Serious sociolinguistic research on the Hungarians in Slovakia, Ukraine, Rumania, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, and Austria[6] began in 1995 (see Kontra 1998b, 2005).

5. Language policy and rights

Twenty-four years ago, Sherwood (1998, 42–43) stated that "The story of those Hungarian speakers left in the successor states remains to be written, but it is certain to be a mainly unhappy tale, if seen in terms of human (and especially linguistic) rights of the Hungarian minorities." By today, the stories have been written and, as Sherwood surmised, they are indeed rather unhappy tales.

4 To date, 21 such conferences have been held. We have been privileged to have as plenary speakers, among others, Peter Trudgill (in 1995 and 2018), Petteri Laihonen (in 2010), Susan Gal (in 2014), and Dennis Preston (in 2016).

5 Today Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin live in one cultural nation and eight political nations.

6 Except for Gal (1979), an American linguist who described the Hungarian > German language shift in Burgenland, Austria.

Analyses of language policy loom large in Hungarian sociolinguistics. However, language minorities and minority language issues were neglected in the Carpathian Basin before the collapse of Communism in 1989. As Harlig (1995, 15) correctly wrote: "the socialist governments were sitting on a powder keg with the minorities issue, and it has exploded today."

The explosion in Slovakia was caused by the very repressive Slovak State Language Law (1995), which was analyzed by Kontra (1995/1996, 1998a), Driessen (1999), and Simon & Kontra (2000). Davies & Dubinsky (2018, 221–234) provide a good analysis in English of the Hungarian–Slovak conflict, beginning with the hegemony of Hungarian until World War I, then (Czecho)Slovak hegemony following World War I, including discussion of the 1995 State Language Law and the 2009 Slovak Language Law. For an example of administrative gerrymandering in a compact Hungarian territory in order to reduce language rights in Slovakia, see Kontra (2011b, 51–52). Orosz (ed., 2012) is a rich quadrilingual (Hungarian, English, French, and Slovak) history of language rights in Slovakia between 1918 and 2012.

Csergo (2007) is a comparative work on language and social conflict in Slovakia and Rumania. Benő & Péntek (2016) deals with language policy and mainstream language ideologies in Rumania. Kontra (1999) is a documentation and analysis of folk linguistic rights in Rumania in the 1990s. For a brief review in English of Sándor N. Szilágyi's (1994/2003) highly original theoretical and practical propositions (based on *universal language rights* rather than minority rights) to solve the language rights problems of all the linguistic minorities in Rumania, see Kontra, Nekvapil & Kiełkiewicz-Janowiak (2010, 362–363).

Language policy and rights in what is today Transcarpathia (Ukraine) are discussed in a host of publications in Hungarian, English, Ukrainian and Russian, e.g., Csernicskó (2013), Csernicskó & Fedinec (2016), Csernicskó & Tóth (2019), Fiala-Butora (2020), Skutnabb-Kangas (2019), Гиреш-Ласлов et al. (2021), Товт & Черничко (2018). The linguistic human rights plight of Hungarians in Ukraine prior to Russia's attack on Ukraine in February 2022 is analyzed in Csernicskó & Kontra (forthcoming in 2023).

Historian Ágoston Berecz's (2013) book is a sociolinguistically well-informed treatise on how Hungarian was taught to ethnic Rumanian and German children in the eastern tracts of the Kingdom of Hungary between 1870 and World War I. It is a rare example demonstrating how educational policies can succeed or fail in assimilating linguistic minorities.

An extremely useful sociolinguistic analysis by Katona (2016) deals with Hungarians' attitudes to the use of their L1 in Rumania and their knowledge of their language rights after 1995. The data gathered by the author from 180 respondents show clearly the heterogeneity of Rumania-Hungarians, with significant differences between local-majority Hungarians, local-minority Hungarians, and those situated

between these two groups. Translanguaging as an educational strategy of local-majority Hungarians learning the state language in Rumania is analyzed by Rácz (2022).

Tolcsvai (2021) describes how significant parts of the Hungarian language community were annexed to the newly formed non-Hungarian states after World War I, and makes the claim that these communities became 'indigenous' as described in international regulations and resolutions, while staying on their homeland.

Hungarian intralingual linguicism is also a form of language rights violations. The first serious study of the social stratification of Hungarian in Hungary (see Kontra, Nekvapil & Kiełkiewicz-Janowiak 2010, 360–361, Cseresnyési 2005, and Kontra 2006a) revealed that Hungarian language cultivators and schoolteachers promulgate a set of rules adhered to by only 8 per cent of the country's adult population, even when they are on their best linguistic behavior, as indeed they are when answering questions on linguistic correctness posed by a social scientist. Oral sentence completion data reveal that Hungarian language cultivators and schoolteachers strive to change the speechways of two-thirds of the country's population. Kontra (2018) believes that this serious linguistic discrimination in education could at least be reduced by changing pre-service teacher education, promulgating additive, rather than subtractive, language pedagogy. However, as Kiss (2003: 150) has shown, subtractive language pedagogy in Hungarian public education, which badly stigmatizes dialect forms, is almost universal. In this context, noteworthy is Szabó's (2018) comparative analysis of Hungarian and Finnish ideologies that pertain to linguistic diversity and multilingualism from a linguistic landscape approach to education, and Fehér's (2020) useful investigation into the developing linguistic prestige of the standard vs. local dialect varieties in Hungarian bidialectal kindergarteners.

Before the collapse of Communism in 1990, as regards the Gypsies, Hungarian linguists were divided or rather, diametrically opposed, between the attitudes represented by Vekerdi (1988) and Réger (1988). The former scholar, whose philological studies of Gypsy language and culture are highly regarded, expressed very linguicist views, which were vehemently opposed by Réger (1988, see also 1995). Szalai (1999) is a good analysis of the problems from a linguistic-human-rights-in-education point of view. Kontra, Phillipson, Skutnabb-Kangas & Várady (1999, 13–14) show how denial of the right to mother-tongue-medium education leads to lifelong unemployment for many Gypsies in Hungary. Kontra (e.g., 2019) has for decades been calling attention to the linguistic genocide of those Roma whose mother tongue is not Hungarian but Romani or Boyash (over 50,000 people according to census data). The mother tongues of these people are made invisible by the Hungarian Census, which appears to have been the deliberate policy of Hungarian governments for over two decades. However, recently we have been witnessing a truly revolutionary event in the history of Gypsy education in

Hungary, a sociolinguistically and pedagogically sound way of combating anti-Gypsy linguicism in Tiszavasvári, Hungary (see Heltai 2020, 2021, and Heltai & Tarsoly eds. 2023).

Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing people in Hungary were deprived of their right to use Hungarian Sign Language (see Muzsnai 1999) until 2009, when a new law changed the status of HSL from barely tolerated to promoted. HSL–Hungarian bilingualism is now encouraged in education, teacher education, and research, which also includes, among other things, HSL lexicography (see Bartha & Holecz 2017).

Finally, Adamik's 2006 volume on language policy in the Roman Empire should be mentioned, which is reviewed in English by Cser (2008).

6. Language shift and revitalization

As a result of border changes after World War I, millions of L1 speakers of Hungarian found themselves citizens of a neighboring country where they became national minorities overnight. The effects of the changes are shown in Table 1 (Kontra 2011a, 662).

	Slovakia		Ukraine		Rumania		Serbia	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1921	650,597	21.68	111,052	18.1	1,423,459	9.96	371,006	24.2
2001	520,528	9.67	166,700	13.4	1,431,807	6.60	290.207	14.3

Table 1: The effects of post-World War I international border changes on indigenous Hungarians in four neighboring countries, total numbers (N) and Hungarians as a percentage of the total population of Slovakia, Transcarpathia (Ukraine), Rumania, and Vojvodina (Serbia).

The demographic changes in all seven neighboring countries in the 21st century are shown in Table 2.

Carpathian Basin	Population in 2001	Hungarians by nationality	Population in 2011	Hungarians by nationality
Hungary	10 198 315	9 416 045 (92.3%)	9 937 628	8 314 029 (83.7%)
Transylvania, Rumania	7 221 733	1 415 718 (19.6%)	6 789 250	1 216 666 (17.9%)
Slovakia	5 379 455	520 528 (9.7%)	5 397 036	458 467 (8.5%)
Vojvodina, Serbia	2 031 992	290 207 (14.3%)	1 931 809	251 136 (13%)
Transcarpathia, Ukraine	1 254 614	151 516 (12.1%)	1 249 000	141 000 (11.3%)
Prekmurje, Slovenia	120 875	5 445 (4.5%)	118 988	4 000 (3.4%)
Burgenland, Austria	277 569	6 641 (2.4%)	286 215	10 000 (3.5%)

Carpathian Basin	Population in 2001	Hungarians by nationality	Population in 2011	Hungarians by nationality
Osijek-Baranja County, Croatia	330 506	9 784 (2.9%)	305 032	8 249 (2.7%)
Total in Carpathian Basin	26 815 059	11 815 884 (44.1%)	26 014 958	10 403 547 (40%)

Table 2: Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin around 2001 and 2011 (based on Tóth 2018: 94)

The local changes in ethnicity vary greatly; for instance, in Nitra/Nyitra, Slovakia the percentage of Hungarians vs. (Czecho)Slovaks and others was 48 in 1900, but only 2 in 2011 (Kontra 2020, 33). By contrast, elsewhere, especially in some villages in Szekler Land, Rumania, the ethnic composition of Hungarians vs. others remained unchanged for a century.

The causes of the loss of L1 speakers of Hungarian are many, ranging from a change of the symbolic value of languages (Gal 1979) through population resettlement to forced assimilation. One excellent description of unenforced assimilation in Dlhá nad Váhom/Vághosszúfalu, a village in southern Slovakia, is provided by Tóth (2003); on the other hand, what is probably the worst example of linguistic genocide in education in today's Europe is described in Csernicskó & Kontra (forthcoming in 2023). The right to study in one's mother tongue was provided by all the states that possessed the territory of modern Transcarpathia (Ukraine) between 1867 and 2017. However, since 2017, because of new laws, mother-tongue-medium education for national minorities is restricted to kindergarten and primary school (6- to 10-year-olds).

There is a growing number of fieldwork-based studies of the Csángós, a Hungarian ethnic group in Moldavia, Rumania, beyond the Carpathian Mountains (see Laihonen et al. 2020, Sándor 2005, Tánczos & Peti (eds.) 2012). Bodó & Fazakas (2018) is an extremely insightful analysis of authenticity (or authentic language) in a Csángó revitalization program directed from Hungary. Fazakas (2013) discusses the possibilities of the revitalization of Hungarian in Transylvania.

Bartha & Borbély (2006) conducted truly pioneering research on six linguistic minorities in Hungary: Boyash, German, Romani, Rumanian, Serbian, and Slovak. Also in Hungary, Borbély (see, e.g., 1995/1996) has been conducting a real-time study of Rumanian > Hungarian language shift over several decades. Borbély (2014) is a monumental Hungarian monograph on variation and change in bilingual communities in Hungary, which provides a Sustainable Bilingualism Model (SBM) based on longitudinal and comparative analyses carried out in Hungary's six national minorities. Also relevant are this author's papers on language shift and the SBM (2015, 2016). Finally, language shift, in this case to Russian, among the Mansi (whose Uralic language is related to Hungarian) is studied by Sipőcz & Bíró (2009).

7. Language contact inside and outside Hungary

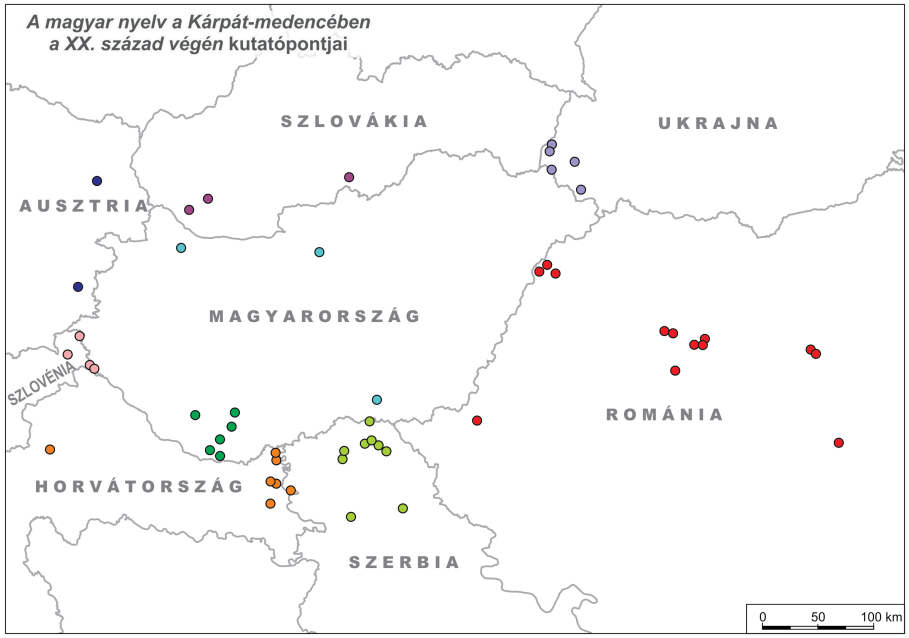
Bartha (ed., 2016), a Hungarian-language yearbook on general linguistics, contains 18 substantial papers on contact linguistics by linguists in Hungary, Rumania, Finland, Ukraine, and Australia. The topics range from the Csángós through Hungarian Sign Language users to the role of codeswitching in a Hungarian novel, and beyond.

Langman (1995/1996) is an analysis of the types of codeswitching used by Chinese immigrants to Hungary in interviews conducted in 1994. Németh (2010) studied the patterns and evaluation of German–Hungarian codeswitching among dialect speakers of German shifting to Hungarian. Gal (1995) looked at linguistic ideologies in the German–Hungarian town Bóly in Transdanubia, Hungary. Janurik (2017) provided a structural analysis of intrasentential codeswitching between the Uralic language Erzya and Russian.

Researchers in Hungary and the adjacent countries began an ambitious project to study the Sociolinguistics of Hungarian Outside Hungary (SHOH for short) in 1995, see Kontra (2005). The project used Goebl et al. (1997) as guidelines for producing historical sociolinguistic portraits of the Hungarian minorities from 1920 through the mid-1990s, or, in two cases, through the second decade of the 21st century[7] (see Map 1). Project members set out to systematically gather data in a replicable fashion, which would allow them to answer questions such as the following:

a. In what domains are Hungarian and the majority languages used?
b. What is the de jure and de facto situation of Hungarian in the neighboring countries?
c. What are the attitudes to Hungarian used in Hungary, to Hungarian used in the neighboring countries, and to the majority languages therein?
d. What roles do Hungarian and the majority languages play in education and in government?
e. Are the contact varieties diverging from the Hungarian of Hungary?
f. How could L1 teaching of Hungarian for minority Hungarians be improved?
g. In order to help minority Hungarians to maintain their mother tongue, what should (and what should not) be done with regard to language policy, linguistic ideology etc.?
h. What is the social and geographic distribution of important linguistic variables, i.e., what makes the contact varieties of Hungarian similar to, and different from Hungarian in Hungary?

7 Owing to the Yugoslav war, the study in Croatia could not be carried out until 2013–2014, and the volume for Rumania appeared as late as 2020 (and also discussed the results of a project conducted in 2009).



Map 1: Research sites of the Sociolinguistics of Hungarian Outside Hungary project in eight countries

Before this project, most of these questions were not even asked by Hungarian linguists, let alone answered. Fifty-nine linguistic tasks were used in the 1996 survey with 846 respondents[8] in Slovakia, Ukraine, Rumania, Serbia, Slovenia, Austria, and Hungary (see note 7). The respondents were stratified for age, education, local majority vs. local minority, and, in Rumania, proximity to the Hungarian border. The results of the project have been published in the Hungarian books by Csernicskó (1998), Göncz (1999), Lanstyák (2000), Szépfalusi et al. (2012), Fancsaly et al. (2016), and Péntek & Benő (2020). In English, the best descriptions are to be found in Lanstyák & Szabómihály (2005), Csernicskó (2005), Benő & Szilágyi (2005), Göncz & Vörös (2005), and Bodó (2005). Also based on the SHOH project are papers by Beregszászi (1995/1996), Csernicskó & Fenyvesi (2000), and Kontra (1999, 2001, 2003b). Two of the six volumes are reviewed in English by Fazakas (2014), and Biró & Laihonen (2021). In the book edited by Fenyvesi (2005), Thomason (2005) and De Groot (2005) summarize the typological and theoretical aspects of contact-induced change in Hungarian.

Not related to the SHOH project is Sherwood (1996), a socio-historical study of attitudes to Hungarian, Laihonen (2009), a study of language ideologies in the Rumanian Banat, Fenyvesi (2012), who studied minority Hungarian schoolchildren's attitudes to languages, and Kiss (2011), who documented language policy and ideology in Szekler Land (Rumania). Finally, Kalocsai (2013) is a topical treatise on English used as a lingua franca by Erasmus students studying in Szeged, Hungary.

8 Together with the Croatia study we had a total of 1059 respondents.

For more recent studies of Hungarian in Transylvania (Rumania) see Némethy (ed., 2015), Benő (2020), and Németh (2021); on Hungarian in Austria and Slovenia see parts of Laakso, Sarhimaa, Åkermark & Toivanen (2016); on Hungarian in Slovakia see several studies in issue 1 of *Hungarian Studies* Volume 34 (2020), and Gergelyová & Vančo (2021); and on variation in the Hungarian used in Transcarpathia, Ukraine see Csernicskó & Fenyvesi (2012).

Finally, two groundbreaking studies by Sándor (1998, 2021) have shown how several problems in Turkic–Hungarian language contact research could be profitably tackled if Hungarian Turkologists were to use the theory and methods of historical sociolinguistics.

8. Pluricentricity

In the 1990s, a fierce debate among Hungarian linguists centered on whether or not Hungarian is a pluricentric language à la Clyne (ed. 1992).[9] Huber (2020) is a good analysis and summary of the issues and research through 2019. Vančo et al. (eds. 2020) includes several studies in English on Hungarian as a pluricentric language in the Carpathian Basin. Csernicskó, Márku & Máté (2022) is a concise report on the online dictionary of pluricentric Hungarian. Sebők (2021) provides an overview of language planning and management issues of Slovakia Hungarians. In the same field, also important are Lanstyák & Szabómihály (2009), and Lanstyák (2018, 2021). Beregszászi (2012) and Kádár (2020) are excellent guides to teaching Hungarian as a pluricentric language in schools in Ukraine and Rumania respectively.

9. The Hungarian National Sociolinguistic Survey (HNSS)

Data for the HNSS was gathered in the spring of 1988, at the eleventh hour of the socialist regime in Hungary. The HNSS was based on a pen-and-paper questionnaire administered to a random sample (n=832) of adult Hungarians in Hungary, stratified for age, sex, education, and type of settlement. The first publications in English appeared in Kontra & Pléh (eds.): *Hungarian Sociolinguistics* (IJSL #111) by Kontra (1995b, 10–11), Kassai (1995), Pléh (1995a), Terestyéni (1995), and Angelusz & Tardos (1995). The final book in Hungarian (Kontra ed. 2003) is reviewed in English by Cseresnyési (2005).

9 István Lanstyák (1995) is duly credited with first describing Hungarian as a pluricentric language in print. However, referring to an unpublished report written in 1981 by Peter Sherwood, then Chief Examiner for Hungarian A and O levels in the UK, Tarsoly (2015, 225) states that "it was perhaps in this report that the idea of Hungarian as a potentially pluricentric language (to use the modern terminology) was first suggested."

10. The Budapest Sociolinguistic Interview project (BSI)

A preliminary volume to the BSI project (Kontra, ed. 1988) contains a prosodic transcript of a 20-minute closed-circuit cable TV program by László Varga (1988/2021), and seven papers based on the same prosodic transcript. For English reviews see Gal (1991) and Nádasdy (1995).

Heavily indebted to Labov (1984), the BSI project began in 1987, when we conducted 50 interviews with a quota sample of 10 teachers, 10 university students, 10 salesclerks, 10 blue collar workers and 10 vocational students. In 1988–89, we conducted 200 interviews with a random stratified sample of the residents of Budapest (total population 2 million). A part of the methodology used is available in English in Kontra & Váradi (1997) and Váradi (1998a, 1998b). English-language publications about the BSI are thin on the ground: in an interim report, Váradi (1995/1996) demonstrated the stylistic stratification of the (bVn) variable in Hungarian speech, Szeredi (2012/2021) carried out a Varbrul analysis of the ongoing loss of agreement between Hungarian relative pronouns and their antecedents, and Kontra & Vargha (2014) looked at the linguistic homogenization of dialect speakers with the phonemes /ɛ/ and /e/ who moved to Budapest, where only /ɛ/ is used.

In 2010, Kontra & Borbély published the test data of the Budapest Sociolinguistic Interview project. A decade later, Kontra & Borbély (eds., 2021) published a comprehensive volume of BSI studies. Of the 19 papers all but one (Szeredi 2012/2021) are in Hungarian. In addition to the papers on methodology (e.g., transcription and coding), there are papers on phonetics/phonology, morphology, syntax, vocabulary, style, and discourse. A DVD in the book contains two anonymized interviews, and Varga's (1987/2021) transcription system of intonation in normal Hungarian conversations, applied to a 20-minute closed-circuit cable television program. As lack of space prevents me from discussing the major results of BSI, I will mention only that we have learned that in normal Hungarian speech, on two occasions out of three the final *-n* is deleted in the tokens of the variable (bVn) 'in'.[10] Deletion is socially stratified, but the phonological conditioning is yet to be teased out. Before us, no Hungarian linguists, whether prescriptive or descriptive, had the slightest inkling about the extent of this deletion. English reviews of Kontra & Borbély (eds., 2021) are available in Huber (2022) and Andor (2022).

11. Urban dialectology

In addition to the Budapest Sociolinguistic Interview project, a similar project was conducted in 2012–2016 in the city of Szeged with 165 respondents (370 hours of recordings), see Németh, Kontra & Sinkovics

10 The inessive case-ending (bVn) (meaning 'in' [position]) has two variants: standard [bVn] and nonstandard [bV]. However, the illative case-ending (bV) (meaning 'in(to)' [direction]) also has two variants: standard [bV] and hypercorrect [bVn].

(2015). A third important project is based on The Budapest University Dormitory Corpus (http://bekk.elte.hu/index.php/in-english/), see Bodó, Szabó & Turai (2019) and Bodó, Turai & Szabó (2022) for insightful analyses of men's talk in Hungarian university dormitories. Issues of moving a participatory research project online due to the coronavirus pandemic in Rumania are discussed by Fazakas & Barabás (2020), while Bodó et al (2022) is a review article on participation in sociolinguistic research.

12. Rural cross-border dialectology

P. Lakatos, Károlyi & Iglai (2012) conducted a cross-border sociodialectological study with 537 respondents in 8 locations in Hungary, 6 in Transcarpathia (Ukraine), and 4 in north-western Rumania. All the research sites are within the same north-eastern dialect of Hungarian. The data are stratified by age and educational achievement. 141 maps on the accompanying CD provide a wealth of information on variation and change.

13. English–Hungarian contacts

In the last three decades or so, we have witnessed a growing number of publications on the contact of Hungarian and English in the USA and in Australia. Kontra (1993) is a paper on a near-merger in South Bend, IN, Kovács (2001) studies Hungarian–English and Finnish–English codeswitching and language shift in Australia, and Bartha (1995/1996) describes the final stage of Hungarians' language shift in Detroit, MI. Vázsonyi & Kontra (1995) is a rich storehouse of language contact and loanword phenomena collected from Hungarians in the 1960s in the Calumet Region south of Chicago. One peculiarity of this dictionary is that it is based on tape-recorded conversations: the examples are not invented sentences but instances of actual spoken language use. For English reviews see Moravcsik (1996) and Pugh (1996). Kovács (2005) is a comprehensive treatment of Hungarian language contact in Australia. Fenyvesi (2005), partly based on her own research, is a substantial review of Hungarian language contact research in four regions of the United States: South Bend, IN, the Delray neighborhood in Detroit, MI, McKeesport, PA, and Toledo, OH. Kovács (2018) is an optimality-theoretical analysis of Hungarian–English codeswitching in North Carolina, USA. Finally, mention must be made of Elemér Bakó's American Hungarian speech archive created in the 1960s and digitized by the University of Debrecen, Hungary in the early 2000s. The recordings are downloadable in mp3 format from: https://mnytud.arts.unideb.hu/bako/index.php

Far away from North America, English–Hungarian language contact is investigated by Keresztes (2013) as shown in contact-induced changes evident in Hungarian cardiology discharge reports. Kontra (2016) demonstrated that in Hungary, passivity, and incompetence in dealing with language policy, can be successfully sold as an apparent 'fightback' against the spread of English. Such a language policy helps the insidious expansion of English due to market forces and does so in a way that does not directly criticize the forces behind its spread.

14. Historical sociolinguistic studies

Historical sociolinguistic studies have had a slow start in Hungary. An early attempt was Kiss (1990), in which the author studied the changes between 1889 and 1989 in Mihályi, a village in Transdanubia. Németh (2008) is a study of variation and change in the Hungarian used in the city of Szeged in the 18th century. Dömötör, Gugán & Varga (eds., 2021) is a recent collection of papers on variation and change in 16th to 18th century Hungarian.

15. Computerized Hungarian dialect atlases

Computerized dialect atlases (see e.g., Vargha 2017, 2018, and Presinszky 2020) embrace ever larger areas of Hungarian-populated regions in the Carpathian Basin.

16. Romani

In research on Romani, Szalai (2014) analyzed ideologies of social differentiation in Transylvanian Gabor Roma communities, while Kádár & Szalai (2020) provided a case study of ritual cursing as a form of teasing in Romani.

17. Slang

Most Hungarian research on slang has been published in Hungarian, with the exception of Fenyvesi (2001), which appeared in Russian, Szabó (2004) in French, and Kis (2006) in English. Kis & Gégény (2015) is a unique dictionary of slang used in Hungarian prisons: as an inmate, Gégény gathered slang expressions for more than a decade, while university linguist Kis distance-directed his fieldwork, effectively reducing the observer's paradox, and finally edited a dictionary of 7890 entries.

18. Gender

Gal (1978) is a pioneering study of why Hungarian peasant men cannot get wives in Oberwart, Burgenland, Austria. Huszár (1994) is an interesting early study of gender differences in Hungarian based on vocational and therapeutic interviews. Her (2009) book is the first serious Hungarian introduction to gender linguistics. How current monolingual Hungarian dictionaries represent women and men is meticulously analyzed by Szöllősy (2015), reviewed in English by Sherwood (2016).

19. Linguistic landscapes

Laihonen (2016) analyzes private linguistic landscapes in Hungarian villages in South-west Slovakia. Csernicskó & Beregszászi (2018) explore which languages were represented on the banknotes used in the five different states that Transcarpathia (now Ukraine) belonged to in the 20th century. Borbély (ed. 2020) is a massive panorama of linguistic landscapes of national minorities in Hungary, and Borbély (forthcoming) demonstrates how positive linguistics can be applied to the study of multimodal linguistic landscapes of the nationalities in Hungary.

20. A Hungarian Guinness World Record in pragmatics

In the Fall of 2016 linguistics professor Sándor N. Szilágyi (2016) analyzed the results of a referendum organized by the Hungarian government and came to the conclusion that the government and over 3 million Hungarians in Hungary set a Guinness World Record – in pragmatics. In the referendum, citizens were expected to answer the following question (my translation):

"Do you want the European Union to be able to oblige Hungary to accept the immigration of non-Hungarian citizens without the consent of the Hungarian Parliament?"[11]

At that time, over 8.2 million citizens had the right to participate in the referendum, but only 3.5 million actually participated. 98.34% of the 3.2 million valid votes were *no*'s. Szilágyi explained that the result was no surprise, since behind such an ironic question there is unmistakably another one: "You really are a fool, right?" What makes this Hungarian referendum a good candidate for a Guinness World Record in pragmatics is not its result, but its magnitude. It was a giga experiment in pragmatics, with 3.2 million subjects, and it cost Hungarian taxpayers 13 billion Hungarian forints (about US$ 45 million). Never in the history of humankind, according to Szilágyi, has so much money

11 In Hungarian: „Akarja-e, hogy az Európai Unió az Országgyűlés hozzájárulása nélkül is előírhassa nem magyar állampolgárok Magyarországra történő kötelező betelepítését?"

been spent on an experiment whose results amounted to what had already been known. Unhappily for the masterminds behind the census, the referendum turned out to be invalid, due to the low number of votes cast.

21. Important Hungarian handbooks and bibliographies

Important handbooks on general linguistics *and* sociolinguistics include Bartha (1999), Cseresnyési (2004), Sándor (2014), and Sándor's (2016) textbook for university students. The best bibliographies of Hungarian sociolinguistics are included in the print volumes of the yearbook *Sociolinguistica* (from 1985 to 2018). These bibliographies are not "country-specific" (as mentioned by Darquennes 2020, 268) but cover the literature of Hungarian sociolinguistics in the eight countries of the Carpathian Basin where Hungarians live.

22. Conclusion in two sentences

More than four decades ago Chambers & Trudgill (1980, 55) stated that "Linguists and dialectologists remained, as they still remain to a considerable extent, ignorant about the way in which most people in England (and elsewhere) speak, and have therefore been missing out on a great deal of linguistic data." In the decades after 1985, Hungarian sociolinguists shifted the object of linguistic research from the speech of those who speak Codified Standard Hungarian in Hungary to the speech of all the 10 million residents of Hungary, and the speech of 3 million bi- or multilingual Hungarians in the adjacent countries.

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