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**THE STUDY OF THE HUNGARIAN LANGUAGE USE
IN SLOVAK SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

The variety of Hungarian spoken in Slovakia is widely used in elevated functions, since it is the language of culture, and several areas of education [Lanstyák 1996; Šenkár 2019; Tóth 2019; Németh 2020; Vančo 2020] despite the fact that the curricula are based on the Hungary Hungarian standard [Kozmács–Vančo 2016]. István Lanstyák conducted a study in 2000 to explore the differences between the use of the Hungarian language in Slovakia and Hungary.

The aim of the present paper is to examine how language use in Slovakia and Hungary has changed over the past two decades: it updates the previous data and investigates to what extent Hungarian language use has changed and what the reasons for these changes are.

Empirical data were collected using a questionnaire. In order to provide data comparable to earlier findings, it was put together based on a previous questionnaire by István Lanstyák and Gizella Szabó Mihály [1997], which they compiled at the end of the 1990's to collect the linguistic data they later analyzed in a monograph entitled *A magyar nyelv Szlovákiában* ('The Hungarian language in Slovakia') [Lanstyák 2000]. This original questionnaire was revised and updated according to the cultural and communicational changes which have taken place since then.

Keywords: bilingualism, Slovakia Hungarians, language use, secondary schools.

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1. The Hungarian language version in Slovakia

The pluricentric nature of the Hungarian language appeared in the scope of the scientific discussion in the first half of the 1990's. Till then (and partially even nowadays) the Hungarian public defined the Hungarian people living in the Carpathian Basin as one entirety, and so the Hungarian language was also seen as unified.

Nowadays, the Hungarian language is used in eight countries for everyday communication, and in some certain cases, as an official language of administration. This is why the Hungarian language is considered to be pluricentric [Vančo et al. 2020]. Those languages are considered to be pluricentric that are used in "higher" functions in multiple countries [Lanstyák 1996, 1]. This is undoubtedly true about the version used in Slovakia, regardless of how different is its "higher" version from the centrally codified standard, respectively to what extent is this Slovakian version standardized and codified. In the scene that is relevant to us, the school, the language of teaching is the "Ferguson variant" of the Hungarian language, the so-called "higher" (local or "higher" Slovakian) variant [Ferguson 1975]. On the other hand, on a day-to-day basis, the Hungarian speakers in Slovakia use the more informal, simple language version that is full of interference phenomena.

2. The sociolinguistic study of the Hungarian language usage

This paper introduces the partial results of the research carried out in order to gather data about the changes in the recent period – to see, how the Hungarian language usage in Slovakia has changed compared to the results of a 25-year-old study [Lanstyák–Szabó Mihály 1997], as well as to inform, whether the language variant of the minority has some morphological¹, lexicological and syntactic differences and characteristics comparable to the language usage of the Hungarian respondents. The research of phonology is not in the scope of the paper [for phonological differences see Lanstyák 2011: 74, Szabó Mihály–Lanstyák 2011: 262–263; György 2017, 60 – 96].

The data for our research are empirically-based too, in form of questionnaires. While assembling the questionnaire, in order for the gathered data to be comparable with the results of the previous study, the research was based on the questionnaire made by István Lanstyák and Gizella Szabó Mihály [1997].

¹ For actual research of interference in morphology from a Slovak – Hungarian aspect see Szabó Mihályová 2010, 287–292; Misadová 2011, 18–100; Tóth 2020.

Similarly to the research from 25 years ago (when the data of about 1000 respondents were analysed), the aim was a full spectrum survey, to question as many students as we can within the given institutions. The findings of our research will be authoritative and credible if all the collected questionnaires (around 800) will be processed.

In this paper, from the 202 processed questionnaires, the answers to some linguistic phenomena are presented (based on 101 questionnaires from Hungary and 101 from Slovakia). The data from Slovakia originate from two places, from Filákovo and Rimavská Sobota, the Hungarian ones from three research areas (Salgótarján, Kecskemét, Pécs).

The questionnaire used during the research was drawn up in both Hungarian (H) and Slovak (Sk) versions. The anonymous questionnaire could be completed during a 45-minute class. The respondents were informed beforehand that the aim of the questionnaire is not to test their language knowledge, but their language usage, so that there are no wrong answers. The questionnaire method is useful, because a comparative research can be carried out this way needs a statistical approach to the data. In addition, this method can be used with exploratory, descriptive and explanatory research goals too [Kontra 2011, 47].

Some linguistic phenomena that were the scope of the research were present in multiple types of tasks, which help us to measure the language awareness of the respondents on the same linguistic phenomenon. The linguistic part of the questionnaire consisted of four types of different tasks.

I. In the multiple-choice questions, the respondent had to choose between two-word forms or syntagmas that were the most appropriate for the given sentence.

II. The other type of questions were those, where respondents had to decide which of the sentences are wrong. Because they could be many reasons to mark a sentence wrong, their task was also to correct them to a form, they think is all right.

III. In the productive tasks, the respondents had to fill in the missing suffixes or word forms in the way, they think is correct.

IV. The vocabulary task asked the respondents, to highlight those words that are familiar to them and which they use. There is also an option to add words that they use, but which are not on the list offered.

The questionnaire explores the so-called language variables [Wardhaugh 1995, 122]. The versions of the variables from the sociolinguistic point of view are rarely equal, in most cases, there is some stylistic change, change in the application or in the prestige of usability, like formal-informal or standard-dialectal (not bound to a location-bound to a location) pairs.

Because the speaker's choice from the variables always depends on some sociological factor or discourse situation, regularity can be observed during the usage and choice of variables, so they can be analysed statistically.

The variables presented in this paper fall within the following areas:

- a) morphology (*nyitja : nyissa*) 'opens' (E-variable),
- b) morphosyntax (*hegedül : hegedűn játszik*)² 'plays the violine', (EK-variable)
- c) morphosyntax / morphology (*megy vkihez* 'to go to someone for some reason' ~ *megy vki után* 'to follow someone'; 2. go to someone for some reason') (AK-variable)
- d) vocabulary (*bérlet : jegy / kártya / preukaz*) ('season ticket' : 'ticket / card / licence'). (K-variable)³

3. Data and analysis

3.1. The results of the examination of the morphological E-variable

The variable is present in a multiple-choice question, in which a morphological phenomenon, the so-called *suk-sük* phenomenon is examined. This linguistic phenomenon happens, when the speaker uses the 3sg and 1–3pl definite conjugation indicative mood forms identically with the forms of imperative mood even with verbs ending with *-t*, in a way that is standard in other cases: *várjuk őket ~ várjuk meg őket!* 'wait for them'. Speakers like this, during the forms of 3sg and 1–3pl use only one rule during conjugation for the realization of *t+j* voices (*-ss- /šš/*) both in the indicative and imperative mood, while the standard speakers use two rules in this case (in indicative mood: *-ty- /t't'*, in imperative mood: *-ss- /šš/* will be the results, the latter for the *-j-* sign of imperative mood that creates the *-tj-* voice contact) [Kiss 1995, 62].

² "The question of functional, respectively semantic identity in this case is really complex: the denotative meaning of the versions that are interchangeable with each other, in some cases are more or less (respectively only in certain contexts or discourse situations) the same." [Szabó Mihály–Lanstyák 2011, 115–116].

³ E = universal Hungarian variable, EK = mainly universal, but at the same time a contact variable too, AK = analog contact variable, K = variable only in contact situation [Lanstyák–Szabó Mihály 2011, 113–123]



- (1) *Az a helyzet, hogy az üzletvezető mindig reggel nyolckor a boltot, és este hatkor zárja.*
 ‘The situation is-that the shopkeeper the shop at eight o’clock every time, and closes it at six.’

1 1: E-variable (*nyitja : nyissa*)

	1997				2017			
	Hungary		Slovakia		Hungary		Slovakia	
	399/405		239/240		101/101		101/101	
<i>nyitja</i> ⁴	99.5	397	96.6	231	99	100	89	90
<i>nyissa</i>	0.5	2	3.4	8	1	1	11	11
	%		%		%		%	

Based on Table 1, we can state that only 1 % of the Hungarian respondents highlighted the non-standard form at the time of this research. On the other hand, 11 % of the respondents from the minority group choose the stigmatized form, ten times more respondents accepted the non-standard form in indicative mood in this task.

The research from 1997 shows that the standard form is used in 99.5 % of the Hungarian cases, and significantly more respondents from the minority group were also using the standard form (96.6 % by contrast to the actual 89 %).

This indicates that in the Hungarian secondary schools the students tend to avoid the use of *suk-sük* forms in formal situations, while in Slovakia this phenomenon is present even in formal situations, even though this form is stigmatized. When compared to the earlier results it can be clearly seen that on the examined sample, this linguistic phenomenon became more common in the past 20 years (this results can change when the processing of all the data will be finished). The reason for this might be that in the Hungarian language in Slovakia the regional version is significantly more present in standard school environments too.

3.2. The results of the examination of the morphosyntax EK-variable

The next variable that was examined and is presented in the following section is a morphosyntax variable (in multiple-choice questions). A characteristic phenomenon of the Hungarian language variant in Slovakia is the so-called “fragmentation tendency” [Szabó Mihály 2015, 78], when the analytical structures are preferred instead of synthetic structures (in the current case a syntagma is parallel with a composed suffix) [for previous studies see: - Fenyvesi 2005; Benő 2008; Huber 2016].

- (2) *Fáj a fejem, mert a szomszéd egész délután hegedült / hegedűn játszott.*

‘My head aches, because our neighbour was playing the violin all afternoon.’

One choice is the synthetic structure, the verb with the *-l* verb suffix (*hegedül* ‘playing the violin’), the other choice is the analytical syntagma with the adverb phrase (*hegedűn játszott* ‘playing the violin’). Both Lanstyák and Szabó Mihály [1997], Lanstyák [2000] refer to the frequent use of the analytical expressions as contact phenomenon, so for the Slovak language, as part of the analytical Indo-European languages, to be responsible for this phenomenon.

2 2: EK-variable (*hegedűn játszott : hegedült*)

	1997				2017			
	Hungary		Slovakia		Hungary		Slovakia	
	79/79		83/83		101/101		101/101	
<i>hegedűn játszott</i>	5.1	4	12	10	15.8	16	21.8	22
<i>hegedült</i>	94.9	75	88	73	84.2	85	78.2	79
	%		%		%		%	

The hypothesis that the speakers from the minority group use the analytical structures more often than the synthetic ones, could not be confirmed based on the examined sample (Table 2).

From the data it can be seen that during this research, both the Hungarian and Slovak respondents used the analytical structures more often than the respondents 25 years ago. In the case of the Hungarian speakers

⁴Since only the phenomenon of *suk-sük* was analyzed, the differences caused by conjugation, verbal prefixes and spelling were joined in the summary, like. *nyit, nyitja, nyitja ki, kinyitja; nyisa, nyissa, ...* ‘opens’.

in Slovakia, the proportion of the analytical structures has nearly doubled in the past years, while in the case of the Hungarian respondents it has tripled. This means that the usage of the synthetic version in both analysed samples has decreased.

3.3. The results of the examination of the morphosyntax / morphology AK-variable (*főnök után / főnökhöz megy* 'to go after the boss / to the boss')

The variable was analysed with multiple-choice questions. In the Hungarian standard, the *valaki után megy* 'to go after somebody' syntagma has one meaning: 'to follow somebody', while in the Hungarian language in Slovakia it has two meanings. Besides the meaning 'to go after somebody', because of contact influence the 'to go to someone because of something / for some goal' meaning was also formed, thanks to the usage of the Slovak phrase of *íšť za niekým* 'to go to someone because of something / for some goal'.

- (3) *Jó napot kívánok. A ... jöttem, panaszt szeretnék tenni. (főnök után / főnökhöz)*
 'Greetings. I came ... / I came to see the ..., I want to file a complaint. (after the boss/to the boss)

3 3: AK-variable (*főnök után : főnökhöz*)

	1997				2017			
	Hungary		Slovakia		Hungary		Slovakia	
	418/420		249/253		101/101		101/101	
<i>főnök után</i>	0.7	3	15.7	39	1	1	27.7	28
<i>főnökhöz</i>	99.3	415	84.3	210	99	100	72.3	73
	%		%		%		%	

The research published in 1997 showed similar findings of the strong differences, the results then were similar to the present ones. At that time, the standard version was dominant too, and a postposition word form appearance was lesser, 15.7 %. In the Hungarian language sample from Slovakia this phenomenon has nearly doubled in contrast with the research from 25 years ago, more than one-quarter of the respondents substituted this form in the sentence. This indicates the rise of the frequency of the usage of the analytical structure. All the respondents' answers should be processed in order to make a valid statement about the acceptance of the syntagma.

3.4. The results of the examination of the vocabulary E-variable

The aim of the research was to analyse, what types of synonyms or alternative meanings of the word *bérlet* (which refers to a prepaid admission or service that is mainly connected with the use of public transportation) are used by the Hungarian respondents, respectively the Hungarian respondents in Slovakia.

- (4) *Aki naponta utazik az iskolába, nem vált mindennap jegyet, hanem (mivel?) utazik.*
 'Who travels every day to school, will not buy tickets every time, instead uses a
 (what?) for travelling.'

4 5: K-variable (*bérlet*)

	2017			
	Hungary		Slovakia	
	100/101		98/101	
<i>Bérlettel</i>	96	97	44.6	45
<i>(buszos / busz)kártyával</i>	-	-	18.8	19
<i>(utazó / diák)igazolvánnyal</i>	-	-	8.9	9
<i>(havi / hónapos) jeggyel</i>	-	-	8	8
<i>preukazzal / preukázkával</i>	-	-	4	4
<i>other⁵</i>	3	3	14	14
	%		%	

⁵ The 'other' category includes those responses that occurred because of misunderstanding the task, like *autóval, biciklivel, vonattal, busszal, ...* 'by car, bicycle, train, bus'



The Hungarian comparator group gave the expected resolution (*bérlet* ‘season ticket’). Some different denomination was caused only by misunderstanding the task (see Footnote 4). The respondents from the minority group gave multiple answers. 44.6 % of the Slovakian respondents choose the word *bérlet*, the others found 13⁶ different forms for the task “prepaid admission or service that is mainly connected with the use of public transportation”. This can be caused because there is no unified denomination for this term in Slovakia, and there are multiple uses for this situation even in the Slovak language. The word *kártya* ‘card’ is probably an indirect borrowing, the translation of the Slovak words *čipová karta* ‘smart card’, *dopravná karta*⁷ ‘travel card’. The word *igazolvány* (*bérlet*) is the loan translation of the Slovak word *preukaz*. The basic meaning of the word is: ‘a paper that contains important data’. As a modifier its meaning is *igazolvány* ‘licence’: *vodičský preukaz* ‘driving licence’, *občiansky preukaz* ‘ID card’, *technický preukaz* ‘vehicle registration’. In transportation the word *preukaz* refers to a licence that can be used to travel by train or bus for a certain amount of time under given conditions. The broader meaning could also include the *havi jegy / hónapos jegy* ‘weekly / monthly ticket’ term too, for which the Slovak equivalent is *mesačný / týždenný lístok* ‘weekly / monthly ticket’. Since both terms are used in the Hungarian standard also, it is hard to determine, whether in this case, we should talk about a Hungarian or a Slovak influence.⁸ Although, since the Hungarian respondents did not choose this word, we can conclude that in the Hungarian language used in Slovakia, the term was established because of Slovak influence. The respondents tried to avoid the use of direct borrowing (*preukaz*). This was present in the sample only in 4 %, even though that based on the everyday observation, the word is commonly and widely used. In my neighbourhood (A.G.) most of the people prefer to use this term. The questionnaire 25 years ago did not deal with the term *bérlet*, so there are no data for the comparison (Table 5).

4. Summary

The paper introduced the differences in the language usage of the Hungarian language in Slovakia compared to the earlier data from Slovakia and to the language usage in Hungary. From the examples provided it is seen that in some cases the standard use of certain language phenomena are significantly present (phenomenon of *suk-sük* in Slovakia /*nyissa*/), while in other cases linguistic changes in both language versions /*hegedűn játszott*/ can be seen. The use of certain syntagmas in the Hungarian language in Slovakia nearly became exclusive even in the standard language usage (postposition structures in Slovakia /*főnök után*/, /*az átment rajtam*/), while for example *átment rajtam* ‘it is over’, lit. ‘went over me’) is gaining acceptance even among the people living in Hungary. It is a phenomenon of the former AK-variable becoming an EK-variable.

Because of these, the results obtained can only be considered as informational, they cannot serve for far-reaching conclusions. By processing and evaluating all the collected data, the future goal is to compare these results with the previous research so a complex picture could be made about the certain specificities of the actual Hungarian language usage in Slovakia.

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⁶ In the table, these 13 versions were gathered in 5 categories.

⁷ Thanks for the modernization of the transportation in Slovakia, instead of season tickets or transfer tickets electronic smart cards can be used.

⁸ On differences of lexical meaning and polysemy in Hungary and Slovakia see also the study of Simon [2010, 705–720].

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ИЗУЧЕНИЕ ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЯ ВЕНГЕРСКОГО ЯЗЫКА В СЛОВАЦКИХ СРЕДНИХ ШКОЛАХ

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Вариант венгерского языка, на котором говорят в Словакии, используется на высоком уровне, так как это язык культуры, религии и некоторых областей образования [Lanstyák, 1996; Šenkár 2019; Tóth 2019; Németh, 2020; Vančo, 2020], несмотря на то, что учебные программы основаны на венгерском стандарте Венгрии [Kozmács–Vančo 2016]. Иштван Ланштъяк в 2000 г. исследовал различия в использовании венгерского языка в Словакии и Венгрии. Цель настоящей статьи – изучить изменения в использовании языка в Словакии и Венгрии за последние два десятилетия. Это вносит коррективы в ранее полученные данные и показывает, в какой степени изменился венгерский язык и какова причина этих изменений. Эмпирические данные были собраны при помощи анкетирования, которое для сравнения с ранее полученными данными, проводилось на основе анкеты, ранее разработанной Иштваном Ланштъяком и Гизеллой Сабомихай [1997] в конце 1990-х гг. для сбора лингвистических данных, позднее проанализированных ими в монографии «Венгерский язык в Словакии» (A magyar nyelv Szlovákiában) [Lanstyák 2000]. Оригинальная анкета была пересмотрена и изменена в соответствии с изменениями, произошедшими с того времени в культуре и сфере коммуникации.

Ключевые слова: двуязычие, словацкие венгры, использование языка, средние школы.

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