

Eötvös Loránd University
Faculty of Humanities

Ph.D. Thesis
Summary

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Researchwork Made on the Hungarian
Dialects in Transcarpathia

Hungarian Linguistics Ph.D.
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1) In 2003, I entered the program of linguistic doctors at Eötvös Loránd University. The institute identifies itself with the research work made on Hungarian dialects in the neighbour countries, and advocates those who works with dialects in their motherland.

My resurche work involves the changes in the Hungarian language culture in our region. The dialects contain huge linguistic, cultural and historical value. The dialects do not remain the same, therefore their investigation is current. It is expecially true for those language variants which are used in small settlements in diaspora, where the number of speakers is reducing.

The aim of my work is to study the paculiarities of changes in dialects. It contains the work made during the years, spent at Ph.D. course. Researches were made on the alteration of Hungarian dialects in Transcarpathia (Ukraine), on the paculiarities of language islands and also on the history of dialectological researches.

2) The dissertation contains six different parts. In the first one I deal with the antecedent and aim of the work, with the definiton of dialects, nevertheless I deal with the major types of Hungarian dialects in Transcarpathia.

The second part deals with the changes in these dialects. I review the causes of the alternation, the types of change-researches, I survey the results of Hunagarian resurchers and I also mention some foreign researchworks. Then I present the history and methods of my research work, with the introduction of the settlements with a list of informants. It is followed by the researches on phonetics, morphology and vocabulary of these places made by The Atlas of Hungarian Dialects.

In the third part I deal with the Hungarian language island (German „sprachinsel”) in Transcarpathia. I compare the differences between the dialects of the denominations in

Visk (Vishkovo), and I try to find out the ancestry of the reformed denomination. In Aknaszlatina I analyse the changes in the length of vowels and consonants.

Then I examine the latest researches made in the field of dialectology in Transcarpathia. In the fifth part I conclude information found in literature used. In the last part I give information about the work made for The Atlas of Hungarian Dialects.

Hereinafter I summarise the results of my research-work.

I.

1) The Hungarian scientific literature defines the dialect as a variant of a language used in a definite territory. He speaks in dialect, who uses the regional colouring of the language, and used only in a definite territory of the speech area (Benkő 1957: 7). Dialects are the primary forms of a spoken language. In the comparison each of the other variants is historically secondary, accordingly extracted from the dialect (Kiss ed. 2001: 35). The dialects contain numerous archaic language peculiarities. With this object Miklós Révai named the dialect as „vivum linguae archivum”, i.e. the living archives of the language.

The history of the languages and dialects is determined by the fortune of their users. The Hungarian dialects are slightly connected with villages and towns, therefore all the changes, that are in connection with the smaller settlements, have an effect on dialects.

Dialects are identified with countrymen's society, because it has kept it. Before the appearance of the literary dialect not only the countrymen used the dialects but scripturists too. In 1485 Galeotto Marcio noticed that there was no difference between the language of patricians and countrymen. From the 16th century there were spectacular changes in the Hungarian written language, increased the

number of literary people, who stand off the dialects. Since that time, the users of the dialects are defined as 'high and dry'.

Reduction in the frequency of dialects usage was observed in the beginning of the 19th century. The number of resources is increasing. According to the dialectologists' opinion these changes can cause the disappearance of the dialects. Later on the researches showed, that the dialects did not vanish so quickly as it was forecasted (Kiss 1991: 380).

The changes in countrymen's language correlates with the changes in lifestyle and farming nowadays. Modernization, that took place in the settlements too, caused the disappearance of some forms of folk culture. The alteration of the country-society, the growing number of educated people and commuters is conspicuous. The mass media also has a great influence on it (the press, the radio, later the TV and in our days the internet).

2) Alternation is one of the elementary properties of living languages and dialects. The alternation is the difference between the previous and the following stage of a language. Accordingly we can study alternation with the help of comparison (Kiss 2003: 23).

The changes (i.e. alteration) can be observed only in a smaller segment of a language. There are no obstacles in the communication, because the spreading and reducing variant of the language is used in a certain period of time together.

Within the researchwork we study the changes from the archaic variant to the recently used language variant (vulgar tongue, vernacular), as well as the contact between different dialects. Therefore we need the archaic resources. The old language atlases give a splendid opportunity to study the alteration. Using the old questionnaires we can conclude the alteration of words (i.e. the frequency of their usage).

The alteration can be studied with the help of comparison. We compare the material collected in different periods of time, and we also compare with the whole language synchroni. Consequently, there are two types of synchronic studies: real-time studies (already occurred changes), and apparent-time studies (Kiss ed. 2001: 244).

3) The comparison of datas recorded in different time gives a splendid opportunity to observe the life of dialects. The Atlas of Hungarian Language contains enormous information in phonetics, morphology and vocabulary. As its data collecting area is spread to the whole hungarian language area, it can be used for alteration studies. „Our science has never had such a valuable resource of collected and catalogued data!” – wrote Loránd Benkő and Lajos Lőrincze (1959: 276). Therefore I have chosen the data collecting area provided by the atlas: Homok, Csongor, Vári and Salánk. The atlas contains data from 1962, collected by illustrious Hungarian dialectologists Lajos Lőrincze and Samu Imre. The primary aim was to record the archaic variant of the dialects.

The material was gathered between 2004 and 2008. As well as I used the material provided by The New Atlas of Hungarian Language. There were compared three hundred questions all together. The material collected in different time gives numerous information about a dialect. The atlas gives information about the archaic language of four transcapathian settlements in the last century. It follows up its regional peculiarities and alteration till our days.

4) Alteration in the phonetic system is not observable in the researhc area. The proportion of long and short vowels is the same (7:7) in the vernacular usage and the dialects of Homok and Csongor. Short are *a, e, i, o, ö, u, ü*. Long are *á, é, í, ó, ő, ú, ű*. In Vári the proportion is 7:8. the additional sound is ⁱé (é2). In Salánk it is 8:7, with an additional *ë*. The number

of consonants in the dialectal usage corresponds with vernacular one: 25 consonants are used.

The changes are considerable in the frequency of phonemes and also in the morphology of the words and in the vocabulary. The number of archaisms is more significant than in 1962. It is astonishing, that dialectal phonemes are not dying out. There are only some examples, where this reduction can be observed. For example, except of *í* they use *é* (*gyék* ~ *gyèk* ~ *gyèⁱk* ~ *gyék*, *vonét*), and also on the place of *ű* they use *ő* (*fő^msü*, *gyürösúj*, *gyüsző*, *sürő^ü*).

Some of the data, demonstrated in The Atlas of Hungarian Language, are archaic already. For example, *esmerő^üs* 'acquaintance', *ívegje*, *íévegje* 'his glass', *kúmíves* 'mason', *szírő* 'barn-floor' etc. The words like *ákác* 'acacia', a *fürhang* 'curtain', in Homok *kertyök* 'we ask' and *szivök* 'their hearts', in Salánk *madár* 'bird', or in Csongor *gagó^ü* 'stork' are not frequently used, and prevalent within the elderly people.

Nevertheless the majority of the data fixed in the atlas is already archaic, the position of dialectal *i*, *í*, *íé* and *ë* is very strong in our days. A great number of these examples is used, although the vernacular variant also can be observed. It confirms that the dialectical variant does not disappear some along generations. In the life of a person the primarily learned language variant, as the language itself, is determinative.

In the dialectal vocabulary we can observe great changes in the word-usage connected with farming. Only the elderly people know and use these words. They were in connection with the contrymen's lifestyle and work, and with the changes disappeared the tool and its name. There are significant differences in the vocabulary of the generations. The elder age-group knows the old instruments and how to use them, because they took part in the working process. The middle-aged reminiscence them from their childhood, and the youth have only heard about them.

The majority of the neologisms used by the dialectical speakers are from the recently used language variant. One of my informants said the phrase „*Úri neve kukorica*” („Its genteel name is corn”). He wanted to say that he knows the standard variant too.

Nowadays dialects are used in the dialogues with friends and close acquaintance. Strangers use the standard variant. While I gathered the information, my informants have frequently said, that they speak in dialect with each other, and use the „genteel” language variant with strangers.

The recently used language variant (vernacular) and the ambient language have a great influence upon the dialect, while the vernacular is influenced by universal languages. We also have to take into consideration the contact between the dialects. For example, in Csongor except of *megyek Ferencék, Sándorék* they borrowed from the neighboring dialect *megyek Ferencéknél, Sándoréknál* 'I go to the Ferences, the Sándors'. Some dialectical peculiarities are spreading in our days, but it is not representative.

The spread of those words which are used in a definite region differs from the dialectical ones. Intellectuals and the urban population also can be characterised by the use of the regional words. For example the atlas do not contains the word *innák* 'innék' (I would drink), but it is widely spread today.

There are some wordforms in which we can observe the influence of the recently used language variant with dialectical feature. A good example for it can be *róllok* ~ *rólluk* wordforms (dialectical *rullok* – standard *róluk*).

The dialects have lost their diversity, but they are alive and adopted to the changing conditions. The question is, whether they can exist in the future. Variability is the essential attribute of a language. There would be differences in the language use of different regions, but we cannot predict their size and the role of the dialects.

II.

The Atlas of Hungarian Dialects do not contains information about the dialects of Máramaros region (Ukraine). The policy of the 1950-60s did not allow for Hungarian linguists the researche work in this area. In Romania the data collection had been cancelled, too. In Transcarpathia they could work only for a short period of time. In absence of data, I thought, it would be interesting to make researches in Máramaros region.

1) There are differences between the dialects of the denominations in some settlements of the Hungarian language area. I considered this phenomenon in Visk. Distinctions are mainly in the phonetic system. For example, the use of open *a*, *e* vowels and the closed *í* vowel is paculiar fo those belonging to the Reformed denomination. The development of this phenomenon is concerned with the history of the settlement, and its existence can be explained by the isolation of the denominations. The differences are intensified by their descent. The Reformed people are Transylvanian by origin, but the Roman Catholics are derived from Swabians (ethnic Germen). Furthermore, the ethnic Germen, already assimilated, settled down in the newly developed streets of the settlement, therefore they were isolated from the Reformed people.

The dialect reformed people is closely related with some dialects of Transylvania. I used The Atlas of Hungarian Dialects in Romania and the classification made by László Murádin to find out the ancestry of reformed people in Visk. My aim was to define their exact ancestry using geolinguistical methods.

In Visk the dialectal *a* can be observed in unstressed position (but there are one or two exceptions): *koram*, *malam*, *ostàr*, *piras*, *sujak*, *vàras* (root), *bolondas*, *fonatt*, *kopatt*,

magyarak, rokonak, csiszal, kapcsal, àlszak, futak, csillag-villag (affix). It can be noticed rarely in stressed syllables: *harag* 'clench', *magyaru* 'nut'

On the place of standard *ö* there is an *e* within the frontier where *a* is used in Mezőség. In Visk, it appears in unstressed position, commonly after *ö, ő* or *ü*: *gömbejű, kő^üccsen, köszerekű* (in root-morpheme), *büdes, bünes, früstökel, göges, hüves, kötettik, külenbsíg, öntez, szöres, tő^ütett* (in suffixes). Dialect, related with the type used in Visk, can be found from the left bank of River Maros to North-East till Aranyos-Szamos (Mezőpanit, Szabéd, Aranyosegerbegy, Magyarszovát, Feketelak, Mezőkeszű, Mezőveresegyháza, Zselyk, Tacs, Szásznyíres). On East, the frontier of this variant went through the River Nagy-Szamos, can be found in Magyarneমেগye and Domokos (Murádin 1986: 127).

Another characteristic feature of the dialect spoken in Visk is the use of dialectical *i*: *ides, íg, il, kímíny, nímet, rígen, szíp, víka* (in stressed position), *ebíd, egíssíg, elvittik, felesíg, fösvíny, fűrís, tèrmís, töríkeny* (in unstressed position). László Murádin studied the spread of dialectical *i* on the base of The Atlas of Hungarian Dialects in Romania (it just as a manuscript existed) (Murádin 1984). The whole area of the Mezőség cannot be characterized by this feature, therefore we study the area where this dialectical *i* is used (Szék, Magyardécse, Ördöngösfüzes, Feketelak, Tacs, Zselyk, Szásznyíres).

On the bases of geolinguistic data gathering, we have come to the conclusion that the citizens of Visk have an ancestry from the North of Mezőség region. In the dialects of this area the dialectical *i* is used. We can assume, that the ancestors of Reformed people in Visk migrated from this area in the 15th century. Summing up the data, the population of Visk is originated North to the issue of Nagy-Szamos and Kis-Szamos (Ördöngösfüzes, Nyíres, Magyardécse, Tacs, Mezőveresegyháza).

3) One of the characteristic features of the dialect spoken in Aknaszlatina is the shortening of long vowel and consonant sounds. Henceforth, I review the history of this specific phonetic phenomenon, sum up the most important facts about it, than I summarize the taxonomic peculiarities of the changes in length of the sounds.

The shortening of long vowel and consonant has been observed on different parts of the Hungarian speech area. Each of these dialects is used in the diaspora with a foreign language influence. Therefore the majority of the researchers explained the shortening with this feature. István Csapodi in his thesis wrote about the dialect in Aknaszlatina: „The unuse of long consonant may caused by Russian or Vlach influence” (1907: 33).

The shortening of the long vowels *ú, ű* és *í* (the tongue is in high position) is widespread on the Hungarian speech area. In the dialect of Aknaszlatina the shortening of labial long vowels (*ó, ő*), and the illabial *é*, the low *á* can be observed. The shortening is peculiar for the whole vowel system, however the sound *á* and *é* only alternates.

The shortening of *á, é, ó* and *ő* can be observed as in stressed as in unstressed syllables: *èpissèk, kèmmèny, hodito, kömüves* (stressed and unstressed), *fáj, jány, lo, so, kö, lö, három, János, goja, hónap, mokus, ora, növér,* (stressed), *akác, kalász, biro, diszno, fono, istálo, napraförgo, èrdö, fèlsö, idö, kendö, sütö, szeplös, szitakötö* (unstressed).

The elongation of vowels can be observed in stressed position, if the following consonant has shortened: *hālod, ēte, āba, āgya, bène, hòlo, hòzám, lèni*. In unstressed position this feature is not peculiar. It also appears when *l* is being lost (sometimes in unstressed position as well): *dōgozott, fōd, vōna, elfōdēte*.

According to István Csapodi: „The originally long consonant can be shortened, if it is unstressed, but they

prolong the first syllable, even if it contain a short vowel” (1907: 33). There are good examples for it in data gathered by me: *anya*, *bòldogan*, *ègyetlen*, *kòrte*, *màgyarok*, *mègy*, *mòngvad*, *Ùngvár*, *ùtána*.

The shortening of consonants can be observed at the end and also in the middle of the word: *alut* 'he slept', *it*, *ot*, *ked*, *magasab*, *alat*, *beföt*, *halot*, *hanyat*, *ivot* (at the end), *atam* 'I gave', *tutam* 'I knew', *alugyak*, *belöle*, *bodza*, *csilagos*, *dinye*, *fêlveté*, *fügöny*, *hoszu*, *jötem*, *onen*, *otan*, *töle*, *ülö*, *vila* (midd position).

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