Linguistic self-hatred and distance from standard Hungarian

Fruzsina S. Vargha
Structure of the presentation

- Computational dialectology, computerized Hungarian dialect atlases
- Dialectometric study of Hungarian dialects: distance from the standard (482 maps from the corpus of the two main linguistic atlases collected in 1950–1960)
- Where is the most beautiful/ugliest Hungarian spoken? Hungarian National Sociolinguistic Survey
Special thanks to

- Miklós Kontra, research leader of the Hungarian National Sociolinguistic Survey
- Zsuzsanna Kocsis for her contribution to the data computerization process
Computational dialectology in Hungary
Bihalbocs: a dedicated tool for analyzing Hungarian dialects
Investigation points of computerized Hungarian linguistic atlases
denevér ‘bat’
(Atlas of Hungarian Dialects, Atlas of Hungarian Dialects in Romania)
Dialectometry

- Objective measurement of linguistic distance

- Two main approaches:
  - manual taxation of dialect maps (Goebl; Salzburg)
  - string edit distance techniques (Nerbonne, Heeringa; Groningen)
Sting comparison with Levenshtein distance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Levenshtein distance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>denevér</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>benevér</td>
<td>858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deneviër</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bőrmádár</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>szárnyősegír</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bőregír</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pupperegiē</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dialectometric analysis of Hungarian dialects

- 482 maps from the two main Hungarian dialect atlas, covering the whole language area
- the original narrow phonetic transcription and also its simplified version are analyzed
- comparison of each investigation point with a standard pseudo-location
Standard investigation point

- data transcribed using the Hungarian transcription system

- headwords of The Atlas of Hungarian Dialects in general, but word frequency is also taken into consideration

  - e.g.: burgonya – krumpli ‘potato’, innám – innék ‘I would drink’, bajusza – bajsza ‘his mustache’
Distance of Hungarian dialects from the standard (narrow transcription)
Distance of Hungarian dialects from the standard (no diacritics)
Where is the most beautiful/ugliest Hungarian spoken?
The Hungarian National Sociolinguistic Survey (HNSS) 1988

- Az ország különböző pontjain különbözőképpen beszélnek az emberek. Melyik vidéken beszélnek a legszebben? És hol a legcsúnyábban? [People speak differently in different areas of the country. In which area do they speak the most beautifully? And where do they speak the ugliest?]

- Acceptable answers: the name of a specific region, county, or town.

- Main conclusions:
  - the most beautiful Hungarian is spoken in Budapest;
  - in general respondents name their own variety as the most beautiful;
  - self-stigmatization is the most present at the westernmost region, where a western county, Vas came out as the ugliest.

Kontra 2003
Method to analyze the relation between the distance from the standard and linguistic self-hatred/self-esteem

- Every investigation point of the Hungarian National Sociolinguistic Survey (HNSS) is matched with the nearest location of The Atlas of Hungarian Dialects.

- Every location in HNSS is given a degree of similarity to the standard.

- Self-namings for each question were analyzed in function of the dialects’ distance from the standard.
Where is the most beautiful Hungarian spoken?

![Bar chart showing frequencies of similarity to the standard for "elsewhere" and "here" across different similarity scores. The chart includes bars for each score level (650, 700, 750, 800, 850, 900) with corresponding frequencies indicated by the height of the bars. The chart shows higher frequencies for "here" compared to "elsewhere" at each score level.]

$n = 546$
Those who name their variety as the most beautiful

Relative frequency (%)

Similarity to the standard

Relative frequency (%)

650 700 750 800 850 900

650 700 750 800 850 900

11.8

47.1

43.8

58.0

48.5

50.0

n = 263
Similarity to the standard in the function of linguistic self-esteem

Welch Two Sample t-test: $t = 3.4124$, $p$-value = 0.0006938

Most beautiful here

Most beautiful elsewhere

781

765
The most beautiful Hungarian is spoken...

- here
- elsewhere
Where is the ugliest Hungarian spoken?

![Bar chart showing frequency of similarity to the standard elsewhere and here.](chart.png)

- Frequency

- Similarity to the standard

- n = 491
Those who name their variety as the ugliest

![Graph showing relative frequency (%) of similarity to the standard.](image)

- 650: 35.5%
- 700: 25.6%
- 750: 12.0%
- 800: 8.7%
- 850: 9.7%
- 900: 0%

n = 62
Similarity to the standard in the function of linguistic self-hatred

Welch Two Sample t-test: $t = -3.6224$, $p$-value = 0.0005367
The ugliest Hungarian is spoken...

- here
- elsewhere
The most beautiful Hungarian is spoken in Budapest

n = 96
The ugliest Hungarian is spoken in Budapest

$n = 48$
The most beautiful Hungarian is spoken in Szeged
The ugliest Hungarian is spoken in Szeged
The most beautiful Hungarian is spoken in Debrecen

n = 28
The ugliest Hungarian is spoken in Debrecen

n = 44
Minorization of local varieties in the westernmost region

- Linguistic self hatred is more present in the westernmost region, which is the most distant area from the standard involved in the sociolinguistic survey.

- “Minorization” and “minoritization” are used mainly in studies about minority languages’ status and language planning.

- The process that characterize minorization is quite similar in our case: the speakers internalize the negative judgements formulated by others about their variety → they have negative attitudes towards their own dialect.

- Minorization in our case has its routes in the process of standardization: a variety has been chosen to be superposed upon others that were judged not only the most prestigious, but often the unique correct way to speak Hungarian.
Effects of minorization on language use in the westernmost region

- “Incorrect” forms are represented mainly by the language use of less educated older people.

- Youngsters tend to choose variants that differ from their parents’ and grandparents’ language use.

Kiss J. 1990, 1998
- nék [ne:k]

younger than 51

older than 60

51 - 60

AHD recordings

1960-1964
Conclusion

- The similarity of Hungarian dialects’ to the standard has an effect on the linguistic self-esteem of the speakers, especially in those regions where the similarity with the standard is low.

- Minorization of dialect speech at the westernmost part of Hungary can be a catalyst of linguistic change.
Thank you for your attention!
The most beautiful Hungarian is spoken in Szolnok

$n = 23$
The most beautiful Hungarian is spoken in Győr

n = 5
# Szombathely

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SZÉPBESZ</th>
<th>CSÚFBESZ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>—</td>
<td>SZABOLCS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUDAPEST</td>
<td>BARANYA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUDAPEST</td>
<td>SZEGED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEST</td>
<td>ZALA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUDAPEST</td>
<td>VAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEBRECEN</td>
<td>VAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALFOLD</td>
<td>VAS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Investigation points close to the standard (MNyA.)

### Narrow transcription:
- Nagyszalánc (Cssz-25, Abaúj)
- Deregnyő (Cssz-26, Zemplén)
- Alsódobsza (L-17, Zemplén)
- Nagybózsya (O-1, Abaúj)
- Gyón (E-19, Pest)

### No diacritics:
- Erdőhorváti (O-2, Zemplén)
- Fony (L-10, Abaúj)
- Hernádkércs (L-14, Abaúj)
- Tállya (L-18, Zemplén)
- Alsódobsza (L-17, Zemplén)
Investigation points far from the standard (MNyA. és RMNyA.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrow transcription:</th>
<th>No diacritics:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Szabófalva (RMNyA. H: 1)</td>
<td>Szabófalva (RMNyA. H: 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogdánfalva (RMNyA. N: 1)</td>
<td>Bogdánfalva (RMNyA. N: 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diószeg (RMNyA. U: 8)</td>
<td>Diószeg (RMNyA. U: 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pusztina (RMNyA. N: 2)</td>
<td>Pusztina (RMNyA. N: 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kórógy (MNyA. Ju-7)</td>
<td>Kórógy (MNyA. Ju-7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>