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The (online) dictionary of pluricentric Hungarian

Abstract

The Termini Research Network was founded 20 years ago and unites the Hungarian language research institutes of the regions in the Carpathian Basin outside Hungary. Its most important research program is the ‘de-bordering’ of the pluricentric Hungarian language in the framework of an online, interactive dictionary program.

The main focus of the research is to collect and analyse the specific vocabulary elements of the spoken and written Hungarian language varieties outside the borders of Hungary. In this study, we briefly report on the peculiarities of the dictionary using illustrative examples.

1. Introduction – Hungarian as a pluricentric language

The political fragmentation of the Hungarian language area, established after the First World War and then confirmed by the peace treaties following the Second World War, has fundamentally changed the direction and nature of the linguistic contacts in regions being stranded outside of the newly established borders of Hungary (Lanstyák 2008). As the number of Hungarian communities living outside Hungary has been in a minority position since reaching agreements that brought the First World War to an end (except for a short period between 1938 and 1944), results of language contacts have taken place at all levels of the linguistic system, including in lexicon.

Thomason and Kaufman’s 5-stage borrowing scale (1988: 74-100) is apt to characterise the degree of contacts between languages. At the first level in the scale, borrowing is limited to the casual lexical level and mainly to content words, while the fifth level is the borrowing due to very strong cultural pressure, which means the transformation of the typology of the language, and a significant change in the phonological and morphological rules. Hungarian language varieties spoken outside Hungary – depending on the language variant, style and register – are found between the first and second levels of Thomason and Kaufman's borrowing scale (Fenyvesi 2005: 5). The second level is

characterised by the appearance of elements of grammatical borrowings in addition to lexical borrowings. The spoken language varieties share a close relationship with the second level of the borrowing scale, while the written language varieties are closely related to the first level (Table 1).

Stage	Features
1. Casual contact	Lexical borrowing only
2. Slightly more intense contact	Slight structural borrowing; conjunctions and adverbial particles
3. More intense contact	Slightly more structural borrowing: adpositions, derivations, affixes
4. Strong cultural pressure	Moderate structural borrowing (major structural features that cause relatively little typological change)
5. Very strong cultural pressure	Heavy structural borrowing (major structural features that cause significant typological disruption)

Table 1. Thomason and Kaufman's 5-stage borrowing scale (1988: 74-100)

Among the lexical borrowings of the Hungarian language – as a consequence of centuries-old contacts between the Hungarian and Slavic languages – loanwords of Slavic origin form the largest layer of vocabulary (Gerstner 2003: 124-126). A substantial number of the lexical elements of Slavic origin has spread throughout the Hungarian language area; many of them are part of the standard variety. Studies on these loanwords have had a long tradition in Hungarian linguistics (Melich 1910, Kniezsa 1955, Kiss 1976).

2. The Termini Hungarian-Hungarian online dictionary

In 2001, the Termini Research Network (Péntek 2009), a network of Hungarian linguistic research centres operating in neighbouring states¹, was founded (Figure 1). The main focus of the research is to collect and analyse the specific vocabulary elements of the spoken and written Hungarian language varieties outside the borders of Hungary. The vocabulary², also accessible online since 2007, has been comprised of loanwords of foreign origin which are different from those in Hungary and are used by autochthonous Hungarian minority communities living in the Carpathian Basin, outside Hungary (the Hun-

¹ The network comprises Hungarian communities living in the following countries: SK: Slovakia, UA: Ukraine, RO: Romania, SRB: Serbia, HR: Croatia, SLO: Slovenia, A: Austria, HU: Hungary.

² <http://termini.nytud.hu/htonline/htlista.php?action=firstpage>

garian variants of the given area usually originate from the state language). In addition to words and phrases used solely in a country neighbouring Hungary, words that are also used in Hungary but with a different meaning, have been also collected into the database (Benő, Juhász and Lanstyák 2020). By the end of January 2022 the dictionary database contained 5034 entries (Benő et al. 2021).

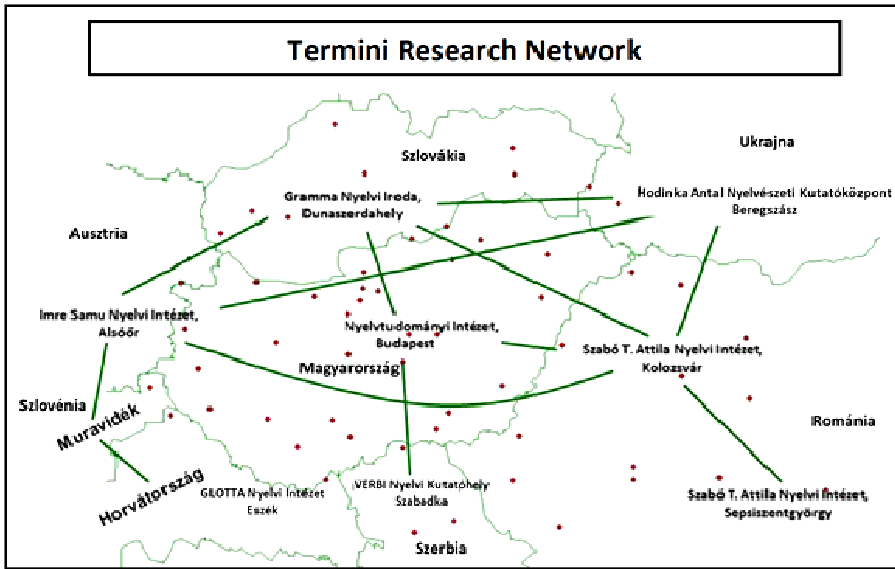


Figure 1. The Termini Research Network (Péntek 2009)

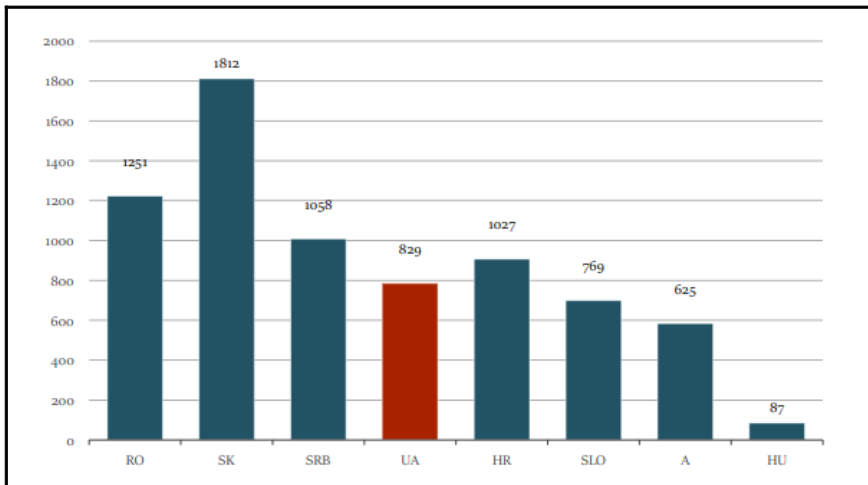


Figure 2. Entry distribution by region in Termini Hungarian-Hungarian Dictionary. How many entries contain a “nationality mark”? (January 2021, by regional distribution)

Since this online word list contains direct loanwords from numerous languages of the Carpathian Basin in contact with Hungarian (mainly from the official languages of countries neighbouring Hungary, including Slovak, Ukrainian, Russian, Romanian, Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian and German), the database is a rich source for providing research into contacts between the Hungarian and the Indo-European languages (Figure 2).

Figure 3. Insight into the editing interface

Finished entries are usually multimodal: in addition to the verbal data of the entry, there is an illustrative image, and from 2020 onwards, more and more articles will contain authentic audio data to help understand the meaning of the word (Figure 4). The online dictionary database can be a basis for expansions of Hungarian monolingual dictionaries. There is already research in the field of pluricentricity of the Hungarian language (see Muhr et. al. eds. 2020), although the lexicon has not been thoroughly studied so far. The result of our Termini-project is a dictionary database that offers an opportunity for comparative analysis of the vocabulary of non-dominant variants of the pluricentric Hungarian (Benő et al. 2021).

Termini Kutatóhálózat

Termini	Ht-online kezdőoldal	Ht-fórum	Linkek	Kapcsolat
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Keresés

Hol? címszóban jelentésben példamondatban

Hogyan? szó elején szó belsejében szó végén teljes egyezés

Példamondatok száma: egy sem kettő mind

Ékezet nélküli keresés (csak címszóban)

bulocska (fn) ~k, ~t, ~ja
(Gaszt) Ka (ált) (köz) (köz) zsemle ♣ *Ka Sokáig kuporgatott pénzből vásárolta meg a méregdrága angol szövetet, a legjobb szabót ajánlották hozzá, s akkor jött ez a gnóm, émélylítő szaga megtörte a megálmódott elegancia mulandó varázsát, és megidézte helyette a lukas gyomrú piaci kofákat, akiknek soha nincs idejük ebédelgetni, hát kis fonott bulocskákból csipegetnek, miközben honnan lenne fogalmuk arról, hogy a bulocska nem illik Gyurikához. (Bermiczky Éva: A tojásárus hosszúnapja. Budapest: Magvető, 2004., 88. old.) ♣ *Ka Ki ne mondott volna már életében olyat, hogy bulocska, paszport, prícep. (Kárpátinfo, 2008. december 30.)**



Főmenü

- [A Termini szótár bemutatása](#)
- [Szerkesztőség](#)
- [Keresés a szótárban](#)
- [Bejelentkezés](#)
- [Regisztráció](#)

Bejelentkezés

Felhasználó

Jelszó

Még nem regisztrálta magát? [Regisztráljon most!](#)

Figure 4. Multimodal dictionary entry

As this online dictionary contains direct loanwords from many languages in contact with Hungarian in the Carpathian Basin (mainly the official languages of the neighboring countries: Slovak, Ukrainian, Russian, Romanian, Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, German), the database is a rich source for examining contacts between Hungarian and Indo-European languages. This dictionary is not only different from printed dictionaries, but also from online ones. For external users, this database acts as a collection of words in alphabetical order, that is, more or less a standard dictionary: it contains all the data that average dictionary users need (e.g., spelling, pronunciation, type, origin, conceptual rating, meaning). However, it also contains several types of data that are not usually included in dictionaries (eg. the formal structure of a keyword, its belonging to a type of loanword, bibliographic data on its linguistic process-

ing). This data is not displayed to external users. This is therefore the other face of this dictionary, and this is what makes it an online database.³

gripás (mn) ~abb, ~an
 (Orv) **Er** (ált) (közh) (biz), **Va** (ált) (közh) (köz), **Hv** (ált) (közh) (köz), **Mv** (ált) (közh) (biz) influenza **♣** *Er Bihar megyében nincs járványveszély, ennek ellenére 5 gripás megbetegedést jegyeztek. (www.tvs.ro) ♣ Er Kicsit fáj a balkarom, tegnap édesanyám beadta az oltást, én minden évben megkapom a gripa* elleni oltást, amiután mindig 3 napig fáj a kezem, de nem leszek még véletlenül sem beteg, legalábbis nem gripás. *ez egy nagyon hülyén hangzó szó... valami nincs rendben vele (kekivansagai.freeblog.hu)*
 [szrb / ~m gripa 'náthaláz, influenza' / o náthás, influenzás < fr grippe 'szeszély, ábrándozás'; 'náthaláz, hurut'],
 [~m ← gripa],
 [hrv gripa (fn-f) 'náthaláz, influenz < fr grippe (fn-f) 'ua']
 (→chripka, chripkajárvány, chripkás, gripa, gripajárvány, gripp, grippe, grippjárvány, kripka, kripkajárvány, kripkás)
 Megjegyzés hozzáadása.

gripp (fn) ~ek, ~et, ~je
 (Orv) **Ka** (ált) (szak) (köz) influenza **♣** *Ka Hűléses megbetegedések, gripp [címben] (Kárpáti Igaz Szó, 2003. november 29. (177–178. szám), 14. oldal.) ♥ Ka Az idei gripp különösen súlyos szövődményekkel jár.*
 [or грипп 'ua' < fr grippe 'ua']
 (→chripka, chripkajárvány, chripkás, gripa, gripajárvány, gripás, grippe, gripes, grippjárvány, kripka, kripkajárvány, kripkás)

Bibliográfiai adatok:
 Lizanec Péter: A kárpátaljai magyar nyelvjárások atlasza II. kötet. Ungvár: ?Patent?
 Kiadó. 1996. 813. térkép.
 Megjegyzés hozzáadása.

grippe (grippé) (fn) ~, ~t, ~je
 (Orv) **Er** (ált) (közh) (vál), **Öv** (ált) (közh) (köz) meghülés; influenza **♣** *Er Romániában egy új grippe vírus jelent meg. (www.impulzus.ro) ♣ Er Közéleg a grippe vírus - figyelmeztet dr. Sátha Ferenc. (www.pluszportal.ro)*

Figure 5. The Standard Hungarian influenza and its variants in Termini online dictionary

Over the course of the project, we explore the similarities and differences that appear in the specific vocabulary of each non-dominant variant. The analysis of the online dictionary database has revealed that a number of loanwords used in the Hungarian language variants in countries neighbouring Hungary are known not only in one, but also in several other regions. Thus, for example, the Standard Hungarian (SH) word “*influenza*” (in English: flu) is a direct borrowing in all regions, and these words are strongly similar-sounding in most regions: RO, SRB, HR, SLO *gripa*, UA *gripp*, A *grippe*, SK *chripka* (Figure 5)

Likewise, we have also found similar words for “*polo shirt*” or “*sleeveless sporting*”, in several regions: RO *majó* ‘sleeveless singlet/undershirt’, UA *májka*

³ <http://termini.nyttud.hu/htonline/present.php?action=jelleg>

'vest', SRB, HR *majica* 'sleeveless singlet, vest' SLO *májca* 'polo shirt' (SH: *póló / pólóing*). The names for a variety of *soft drinks* are also similar in most regions: RO *szukk* 'soft drink', 'syrup', UA *sok* 'fruit juice' SLO *sok* 'fruit juice', 'soft drink', 'syrup', HR *szók* and SRB *szokk* 'fruit juice', 'soft drink', 'syrup' (SH: *gyümölcslé*).

In single cases, similarities in the entire phonetic form of the word and its meaning extending over several (five, six, seven) regions have occurred among direct borrowings. For instance, RO, SK, A, SRB, HR, SLO *cirkula* 'circular saw' (SH *körfűrész*), SK, SRB, HR, SLO, UA *szesztra* '(hospital) nurse, sick-nurse' (SH *nővér*), SK, SRB, HR, SLO, A, UA *tunel* 'tunnel' (SH *alagút*), SK, SRB, HR, SLO, UA *vetrovka* "windbreaker, trenchcoat" (SH *széldzseki*), etc.

The online version of the dictionary database also contains lexemes that sound alike but have different meanings related to them in each region. For example, the word *blokk* in the database has the following meanings:

- 1) RO, SK, UA, SRB, HR, SLO residential block, block of flats;
- 2) UA cardboard (cigarettes);
- 3) UA, SRB, HR a hollow building block made of clay.

The dictionary of foreign words published in Budapest in 2007 (Tolcsvai Nagy ed. 2007: 137), in addition to the above-mentioned meanings of the word *blokk*, provides 13 additional meanings. For the above 3 meanings, the dictionary specifies that they only occur in the official language use versions of the indicated countries. Numerous loanwords in variants of Hungarian outside Hungary occur not only in verbal communication, but they are also found in newspapers, magazines and fiction. The dictionaries of the Hungarian language, however, have ignored these words for decades since Hungarian normative linguistics did not consider them as part of the Hungarian language, which have entered the language use of minority Hungarian communities as a result of close contacts with the neighbouring states' languages (Csernicskó and Márku 2021).

After the collapse of communist regimes, sociolinguistics has gradually become part of Hungarian linguistics, and – as a result of long professional polemics (Kontra and Saly eds. 1998) – the development of a new language approach has begun, in particular, the revaluation of the language use of Hungarians living in neighbouring states. In 1994, Hungarian linguists in Slovakia raised the question with regard to the words used by Hungarians living outside Hungary: "If the Concise Dictionary of the Hungarian language does not provide space for them, then in what language dictionaries do they have to be dealt with?" (Lanstyák and Szabó Mihály 1994).

The second revised edition of *The Concise Defining Dictionary of Hungarian*, published in 2003 (Pusztai ed. 2003), included several words and definitions that are not used in Hungary, but are present in the language used in minority Hungarian regions. Only 383 words in the dictionary that represent the specific elements of the Hungarian language variants that exist outside of Hungary have entered the dictionary. This makes up 0.003% of its entries (Kiss 2004). These words were not included in the dictionary as part of the Hungarian standard in Hungary. In addition to each title, the dictionary indicates that the word is part of the Hungarian standard in Romania, Slovakia or Ukraine. Thus, these lexical elements, together with numerous others, constitute a part of the non-dominant varieties of Hungarian (Máté and Cserniczkó 2020). These words display the characteristics of a standard variety and should, therefore, be included in dictionaries that play a significant role in codifying Standard Hungarian. Since *The Concise Defining Dictionary of Hungarian* (Pusztai ed. 2003), some of the special lexical elements of the Hungarian language varieties outside Hungary have also been included in other dictionaries (Eőry ed. 2007).

These lexical borrowings, along with numerous others, constitute a part of what is best regarded as a Transcarpathian Standard Hungarian variety. As has been argued for by Beregszászi (1997) and Cserniczkó (1997), this variant displays the characteristics of a standard variant and should, therefore, be acknowledged as such, along with other regional standards of Hungarian, such as Slovakian Standard Hungarian and Transylvanian (Romanian) Standard Hungarian, and included in dictionaries that play a significant role in codifying Standard Hungarian. In the future, Hungarian dictionaries must be representing not only the Hungarian language in Hungary.

3. Conclusion

Such inclusion of regional standard words in major dictionaries published in Hungary, and the acknowledgement of their source variants that this entails, reinforce the view proposed by Lanstyák (1995a, 1995b) and Lanstyák and Szabómihály (1997), and shared by us, that Hungarian is a pluricentric language (that is, a language with more than one national variant and a different set of linguistic norms, like German, English, Spanish etc.) and should be regarded as such, with all the linguistic and sociolinguistic consequences that this entails.

The Termini Hungarian-Hungarian online dictionary is absolutely innovative and unprecedented. The professional value and social benefits of the

dictionary are already significant, as lexicographers, researchers, and university teachers have also collaborated with the Termini Hungarian Language Research Network on the display of cross-border language varieties in newly published Hungarian dictionaries. The database offers plenty of analytical options, so the editors of the dictionary and their regional staff will pay more attention in the future to making the database more accessible for research purposes as well.

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