# SOCIAL AND LINGUISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF IMMIGRANT LANGUAGE SHIFT: THE CASE OF HUNGARIAN IN DETROIT

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### 0. Introduction

Linguistic research on immigrant minorities—primarily in North America, but also in Western Europe—has a long history. A new wave of migration in East-Central Europe due to political changes, economic instability, and military conflict has created a need for a re-evaluation of the theoretical questions and research methodologies that guide this investigation. The sociolinguistic approach to this inquiry focuses on concepts like immigrant/transitional bilingualism, language shift and language loss. Although the phenomena in question can be studied separately, I will attempt in this paper not only to define these concepts, but also to demonstrate their interrelationship through the empirical results of a case study performed on the Hungarian American minority in Detroit.<sup>1</sup>

# 1. A proposed theoretical framework

## 1.1. Interethnic communicative strategies

Irrespective of whether the background of migration is determined by economic, religious, ethnic, political or even military motivations, ethnic communities in minority settings generally have to face two facts simultaneously: (1) members of the community mostly do not speak the language of the host country, and (2) their existential security, chances of social and linguistic integration and the rise of their socio-economic status are deeply influenced by the new society and its institutional systems. In other words, it is almost inevitable that they will confront the other, dominant language, i.e. speakers

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> This research was supported by the Survey of Spoken Hungarian (OTKA T 018272) and the Zsigmond Telegdi Fellowship of the Linguistics Institute (Hungarian Academy of Sciences). I am grateful to Jeff Harlig, Bernard Tamas and Tamás Zoltán Kiss for their advice and discussion in the preparation of this article. I would also like to acknowledge the assistance of András Vargha and Ágnes Bankó.

who do not know the language of the new immigrants. The minority group can attempt to resolve this conflict in four possible ways (see Fase et al. 1992, 4-5; Bartha 1995a):

- (a) The minority group avoids communicating with people who do not speak their language. Of course, the success of the avoidance strategy varies by situation.
- (b) The minority group tries to develop a communication network in its own language. The success of this strategy is influenced by the interplay of many factors, like the ethnic group's relative economic and political status, internal network ties, subjective ethnic vitality (Giles et al. 1985), and institutional and organizational structures. It is likewise affected by the attitudes of the mainstream society toward ethnic minorities and the language policies of the government. These policies determine whether the minority language becomes segregated or integrated. However, it is no paradox that the legitimization of minority languages in certain domains makes assimilation attractive, thereby undermining the development of a separate communication network.
- (c) The sociologically dominant and subordinate groups interact in a third language. While the usage of a lingua franca or a pidgin is a common phenomenon in multilingual countries, it is rather exceptional and more individually based in subordinate immigrant settings.
- (d) The most frequent norm of interethnic communication is to interact in the dominant language.

At a given moment all four of the above-mentioned communicative strategies can appear in parallel as means of interethnic communication. Studying the different migratory and generational groups within the immediate post-migration and then post-settlement phases, it can be suggested that (a), (b), and (d) cannot be described as a set of discrete points, but as a process. In those minority groups in which interethnic communication norms change from (a) to (b) to (d), this change often correlates with language shift.

# 1.2. Language shift in immigrant settings

One of the central categories of immigrant contact situations is language shift. According to Gal's definition (Gal 1979, 17) language shift "consists of the socially motivated redistribution of synchronic variants to different speakers and different social environments". In an immigrant context we can go on refining this general definition. A convenient starting point is the concept of linguistic market in Bourdieu's theory (Bourdieu 1977; 1994): languages

compete in linguistic markets, "on a structured space of positions in which the positions and their interrelations are determined by the distribution of different kind of sources or capital" (Bourdieu 1994, 17). The real value of languages depends on their symbolic social values.

It is important to note that Bourdieu is no economic determinist, nor is he reducing language use to strictly economic terms. To the contrary, Bourdieu sees the economic market as but one type of market, or field. Fields are loosely defined games in which players try to hold or improve their social standing; in Bourdieuian terminology, players attempt to retain or increase their social capital. There are many overlapping markets in any society, such as the fields of art, science, literature, and politics. Different language groups can also be considered separate markets. Bourdieu tends to use this framework to understand the interaction among classes, but it can be easily applied to the interrelationship among ethnic groups.

In our case social interactions can be said to occur in two linguistic markets: the above described strategies refer to that market ( $M_1$  = external linguistic market) on which the communication of immigrant and dominant groups takes place; the second market is where members of the ethnic group communicate with each other ( $M_2$  = internal linguistic market) (see also Jaspaert-Kroon 1991). The redistribution of variants (language shift) can be present in these two domains. In immigrant settings  $M_1$  necessarily leads to this change (external or interethnic language shift), because it is impossible for a group permanently settled down in a new environment to avoid contact with members of the host community if the minority language is not "legal tender" for institutionalized fields like education, the labor market, politics, media etc.

Although M<sub>1</sub> and M<sub>2</sub> are not isolated from each other, language shift on the external linguistic market does not always result in the weakening of the minority language within the group. Moreover, if internal communicative norms and the distribution of variants and speaker's positions remain intact, the linguistic situation of the community can be characterized as stable bilingualism. Complete realization of language shift—which may be distinguished from an external type language shift—is when communication in the minority language entirely disappears also within the minority group. Experts differ as to whether a minority group can maintain its group identity after choosing to use the majority language exclusively (cf. Fase et al. 1992, 6).

Since the process must be seen as a simultaneous social and linguistic change in the life of a community (Gal 1991, 66-7), its study requires the involvement of multiple approaches. First, its social aspect can be successfully

understood within the multidisciplinary frameworks of the ecology of language (Haugen 1972) and symbolic fields (Bourdieu 1994).

Next, there are two levels of linguistic phenomena that should be analyzed: The first is the speech community's practice and the second is the individual's language use and knowledge. The former represents language shift itself. Changes in the individual's use and knowledge can be understood through the concept of first language (L1) loss or language attrition. In other words, language shift must be studied on three different but interrelated abstract levels.

It is unavoidable to define the ecological aspect which includes the historical and social context, since we know that in one context a similar historical, social, and economic setting favors language maintenance, while in another context it leads to attrition. We have to note, however, that immigrant bilingualism and language shift need not co-occur, for two reasons: (1) language shift also occurs in indigenous communities: this is the case of East Southerland Gaelic (Dorian 1980; 1983) or Hungarian in Burgenland (Gal 1979), etc.; and (2) there are immigrant groups which are strongly resistant to the attrition of their mother tongue, such as the Pennsylvania Dutch or Old Order Amish (see Kloss 1966; Hostetler 1968), or some Spanish speaking groups from Puerto Rico or Mexico in the US (see López 1982; Veltman 1983) or the Greek minority in Australia (Smolicz 1984). Consequently, highlighting specific extralinguistic characteristics of a given contact situation beyond the general tendency allows us to study the dynamics of language maintenance and shift (for further extralinguistic factors see e.g. Kloss 1966; Fishman 1966b; Grosjean 1982; Clyne 1982, 1992; Paulston 1994).

The level of the speech community needs to be evaluated next: what kind of rules are valid in language choice, style-shifting and code-switching; what virtual and symbolic roles in everyday communication one or another language plays; and what the functional division of labor among codes is. If members of the community significantly prefer to use the dominant language of the new environment irrespective of situation, topic or place, this is a clear indicator of language shift. This is a consequence of the environmental language becoming more and more prestigious in the system of values of the community, so that on this level of study it can be also essential to analyze the attitudes and ideologies adopted by the speakers towards the languages in question.

The third level—the individual's language ability—is narrowly linked to the previous one, because the dramatic change of linguistic functions, norms and patterns does affect the structure of language. Nevertheless, this change influences the language use of newcomers and the subsequent generations in a

diverse manner and to a varied extent. Since space constraints prevent me from presenting the above phenomena in their full complexity, in the following I will simply illustrate certain tendencies that have emerged from my investigation.

#### 1.3. On data

Data for the present report come from a larger study (Bartha 1995b) where the process of language shift was examined correlating with the three levels of analysis introduced above. In 1987 fifteen sociolinguistic interviews were conducted in Hungarian by the author with the instruction that if the informant encountered any difficulty in expression he could switch to the language in which he could express himself most easily. Each interview contained a conversation section, a language-usage questionnaire, and attitude and selfevaluation tests. Although many attempts were made to minimize the so-called 'experimental effect' (cf. Labov 1984, 30), and, although I attained the status of a good friend, the semi-formal interview situation was unnatural and quite different from the informants' everyday one-to-one interactions. Additionally the situation of speaking to a monolingual may evoke completely different communicative strategies in terms of code choice and attitudes toward language alternation or mixing during a certain discourse unit. Because of these methodological difficulties I also applied participant observation to gain data on bilingual speaking mode (cf. Grosjean 1982, 1992; Gal 1979, 6-12).

# 2. The community: ecology of language

The term 'Hungarian ethnic community in Detroit' is a generalization and denotes all those who live in the suburbs around the Detroit metropolitan area, who were born in Hungary (or in the former Austro-Hungarian Empire before the Trianon Peace Treaty), and those born in the United States, who identify themselves as Hungarian or Hungarian-American.

A wide range of socio-economic statuses, and attitudes toward the home country and varieties of the Hungarian language, are represented among the three major immigrant groups according to the significant migration waves in the last 80-100 years (for a detailed description see Fishman 1966b):

- 1. Old Americans (arrived in the USA between 1870 and 1920);
- 2. DPs (displaced persons, the post-1945 political immigrants);
- 3. '56 refugees (arrived in 1956-7 after the Hungarian revolution).

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#### 2.1. The Old Americans

Substantial differences among groups stem from their different socio-historical, cultural and political backgrounds, which determine different ways and intensity of social, linguistic, and/or cultural assimilation. For this paper I chose the Old Americans and their second generation children as my focus. The Old Americans played a critical role in establishing a symbolic community in Delray, the former immigrant section of Detroit. They were also central in maintaining the Hungarian language, and they represent the largest number of Hungarian immigrants in the twentieth century. Their American-born children are also included, of course, because language shift can only be studied across generational lines.

The Old Americans arrived in the US between 1870 and 1920 for economic reasons. A population explosion in the Austro-Hungarian Empire came at the same time as an economic downturn. An unequal development of the Hungarian agricultural and manufacturing industries led to widespread unemployment and a drop in the standard of living. Simultaneously, the industrial boom in the US produced a huge demand for labor creating an excellent job market for the East-European labor force. Better economic conditions and occupational opportunities in America attracted many, generally unmarried Hungarian men. They traveled by ship over the Atlantic with the clear intention of earning enough money to pay back their debts within a few years, or even to buy some land after going back to the homeland (Puskás 1982; Fejős 1993).

A general feeling of transition characterized the Old Americans' motivations, a feeling that was usually absent among the later migratory groups. As several authors point out (Tezla 1987; Puskás 1982, 1987; Szántó 1984), re-emigration also must be taken into account, although there are no precise statistical data that measure the number. Those who achieved their objectives before World War I tended to return to Hungary. After the war, however, the situation changed radically: Austro-Hungary lost the war; the Trianon Peace Treaty shrunk the Hungarian borders, placing home villages and towns into foreign countries; and new Federal immigration quotas would have made reimmigration into America extremely difficult (Szántó 1984, 63). Hungarians were deeply shocked by all these factors and motivated to settle down permanently in the US after having obtained American citizenship.

With respect to their professional distribution, two-thirds of them were agricultural laborers, the remaining one-third were skilled workers, craftsmen, merchants and a small number of intellectuals. The vast majority of Old Americans either were uneducated or had received virtually no education. Most of

them became factory workers, but until getting settled permanently, they were only low-status, unskilled guestworkers with modest wages with which they could barely survive.

# 2.2. The Hungarian community in Delray

Delray, the center of Hungarian immigration in Michigan, was a separate village near Detroit, which was annexed to the city in 1905. Hungarians, Germans, French, Armenians, Slovaks etc. had been arriving here for several decades (Hauk-Abonyi-Anderson 1977, 16). As Hauk-Abonyi and Anderson indicate, "although Hungarian immigration into the United States had reached its peak in 1907 [338,492], this was not reflected in Detroit statistics until 1920", the year of absolute peak of the first great wave in the inflow of Magyars (Hauk-Abonyi-Anderson 1977, 20). The reason for this was the fact that newcomers who were received on the East Coast (in the beginning at Castle Garden and later at Ellis Island) became first employed in mines or railroad construction companies in Pennsylvania or in Ohio. They spent 2-4 years at these jobs. There was a constant internal migration in the hope of better job opportunities and higher salaries (cf. Dégh 1992). Detroit's heavy industry strengthened around 1920; plants and factories were established which are still determining the character of the city.<sup>2</sup> This period meant a happy encounter of cheap Hungarian labor with abundant job opportunities created by the new economic situation.

After a period of transition, when Magyars only formed a community in a geographical sense (because of the lack of ethnic solidarity), they built up the ethnic, cultural, religious and social organizations that were indispensable to settling down permanently. This was a defense against discrimination and other external effects on the one hand, and a device for strengthening in-group consciousness on the other. Many features were set up to remind them of rural Hungary together with the attributes of urban culture that they lacked in their homeland.

Besides cohesion and ethnic solidarity, social differentiation also appeared. The base of the Delray community was made up of industrial unskilled and semi-skilled workers of peasant origin. The very fact that professionals constituted a reduced number in the community is explained by Beynon in terms of the needs and protection of the colony (cf. Beynon 1934, 606-7). He set up three major groups of first generation professionals:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Solvay Process Company, Peninsular Stove Factory, Detroit Graphite Manifacturing Company, etc.

- (a) those who were able to preserve their former prestige, standards of living and professions, partially by avoiding communication with their countrymen;
- (b) those "who were unable to capitalize their previous occupational experience" within the Hungarian colony;
- (c) those "who were able to maintain themselves occupationally only through the protection of the foreign language colony", i.e. outside of the Hungarian community (Beynon 1934, 605).

A greater part of professionals intended to integrate into the American society as soon as possible, thus they either refused to settle down in Delray, or left quickly for more prestigious American environments. Beynon presented data from the Detroit City Directory of 1931–2 on occupational distribution within the Hungarian colony and outside of it. 27.8% from a sample of 3,682 persons belonged to the occupational class labelled "professionals, public service (except labor), and clerical" within the colony, while outside of the community this rate of Hungarian professionals was 72.2% (Beynon 1934, 606). Soon arose a dichotomy of "we and they" together with a bi-directional stigmatization: "intelligentsia" looked down on the way of life as well as the language usage of lower-class Hungarians living in Delray, while working class group members, emphasizing separation and reinforcing internal coherence, wanted to adopt manners of the professionals which resulted in self-stigmatization.

Due to the open discrimination of the postwar period, all community members obtained American citizenship. Socio-economic differentiation among non-professionals caused a significant outflow from Delray in the 1960s: Delray became a symbolic center for the Detroit Hungarian minority instead of a place to live. In the case of the second generation, after having finished their education, the major part did not return to Delray. This group is socially more heterogeneous, often having mixed marriages. Although there were many unskilled laborers among the American-born, a large number were also in the professional, public service, and clerical occupations.

# 3. The speech community: language choice and attitudes

# 3.1. The history of language compartmentalization

Domains of Hungarian and English were completely separate in the first few decades of the settlement's history. Hungarian was the primary language of everyday social interactions and had some institutional status on the local level. Immigrant workers in Delray had personal ties only with each other.

Professional, middle-class people lived outside of Delray and even those who had to stay there due to their poor financial backgrounds did not associate with the lower-status, peasant-origin guestworkers<sup>3</sup> (Beynon 1934; Dégh 1992; Bartha 1995b). The direct relationship between economic aspirations and language use is shown in the following section of an interview with a middle-class Hungarian:

"I was a graduate engineer in Hungary. When I came to America, I tried to avoid Hungarian colonies in order to learn the English language more quickly. It was purely for economic reasons that I chose to mingle only with Americans. Otherwise I would have started in unskilled labor at the bottom. After a few weeks study in an English class, I mastered the language well enough to secure a job as a draughtsman and tooldesigner. After I settled in Detroit, I once thought that I would like to meet some other Hungarians. I went to a Hungarian restaurant once and met some laborers there. I never went back."

(Beynon 1936, 429)

The workplace could have been the main territory of interethnic communication, as well as of the daily practice of English, but there was no strong motivation to learn it in this transitional phase. Having given these characteristics of the linguistic situation, it is possible to consider that until the end of World War I immigrants developed their own networks of internal communication, trying to keep themselves in relative isolation from the English-speaking environment and even from other ethnic groups.

Even though Hungarian was the exclusive language of intraethnic communication, the linguistic situation was complex. Community members not only constituted a diverse mixture of habits and cultural customs from all regions of Hungary; they also brought a variety of Hungarian local dialects (cf. Dégh 1992). Due to their socio-economic background, most of these immigrants did not speak standard Hungarian. (On one extreme were individuals who were able to get some education in Hungary; on the other were those who arrived as illiterate peasants.) For these reasons, and since the period of this settlement has long passed, to define strict boundaries between variants or a set number of styles would be arbitrary or impossible.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The following section from an interview conducted by Beynon is characteristic of middle-class attitudes toward Hungarian workers: "...When I came to America, I heard that I could enter American professional circles. I haven't yet made the grade. So I have to stay here among these laborers of Delray. I don't have the money to associate with the people I want to meet, but the people around here are too dumb for me to associate with. So I don't associate with anyone at present" (Beynon 1936, 427).

As I stated above, by the postwar years Hungarian social and cultural institutions had been completely established. There were Hungarian-language churches for all relevant denominations. Hungarian newspapers, voluntary associations, as well as local political and religious societies became prominent. There were Hungarian movies and even a Hungarian theater, the so-called Hungarian Show, for which theater companies or famous actors were invited from Hungary to perform. Sometimes local groups put on similar shows. At the same time, the churches founded Hungarian elementary schools for the second generation, which became weekend schools in the 1920s due to changes in education laws. The use of Hungarian was central to all these institutions.

Churches and schools, as the most important domains of the institutional use of Hungarian and of language preservation, had a crucial role in creating and transmitting the sense of national culture (Dégh 1992) and the loyalty to the Hungarian ethnic heritage wherein the mother tongue was a highly valued symbolic capital.<sup>4</sup>

As I noted above, the Hungarian minority lived within at least two language markets. Within the dominant market, "good English" has a high value; it can be used for getting jobs, gaining acceptance, and generally acquiring status outside Hungarian circles. As a group with low status in the dominant market, largely because of the lack of English language skills, the Hungarian language field became a market in which the immigrants could gain high status. Making Hungarian highly valued—that is, giving it high symbolic capital—was therefore a defensive measure. As the group's English language skills increased, the need for this alternative form of symbolic capital declined. While this was the case for the first generation, the shifting importance of each language was especially true for the second. Not only were they more comfortable speaking in English than in Hungarian, making the dominant market more attractive; their first-generation parents also encouraged them to learn better English than themselves. The importance for the American-born generation changed from language to secondary symbols of Hungarian identity, like the food they

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> The high symbolic value of language had been and still has remained a central factor of national identity in Hungarian political thought since the nineteenth century, which stems from European nationalism, where, as Benedict Anderson declares, "in almost all of them [i.e. European states] 'national print-languages' were of central ideological and political importance, whereas Spanish and English were never issues in the revolutionary Americas" (Anderson 1991, 67). For better understanding the roots and components of ideologies which constitute the symbolic role national language played in the nineteenth century's scientific and political thought in Hungary see Gal's excellent analysis on the interplay of linguistic theories and national images (Gal 1995).

ate, the clothing they wore on special occasions, and the traditional Hungarian events they attended.

The decline of the symbolic value of the Hungarian language can be shown in concrete changes in the community. The school of the Holy Cross Roman Catholic Church was extremely important in the primary education of the second generation. The school had been founded in 1907 teaching 42 children. In 1923 it had 500, and in 1925–6 it had the maximum of 622 pupils. In 1970, due to lack of pupils and funds, it was closed.

The image of land and small-holder peasant life was no longer highly valued; rather being a well-paid worker as well as owning one's own car and new house became a sign of upward social mobility and economic success. In the 1950s people started to move out from Delray and now live in the ethnically heterogeneous suburbs of the Detroit metropolitan area. The basic language of both inter- and intraethnic communication became English.

Attitude responses provided the major source of evidence that in the community's ideologies 'language' is directly related to personal career. These findings are very similar to what Gal found in Oberwart (cf. Gal 1979, 103-8). Local forms of Hungarian are strongly stigmatized and are identified by both first- and second-generation speakers as the language of the past, of peasantness and poverty, while English is seen as the source of prestige, education, and higher status, etc.

Since the mid-80s only a few Hungarian churches and voluntary associations exist in the Detroit area. Both languages appear in church services, social events, and Hungarian ethnic radio, and English is continuing to become more predominant. This evidence of language shift is reinforced by my field research.

## 3.2. Language choice

The result of the language usage questionnaire, and more productively, my daily experiences during my weeks of observation in Detroit constituted a model of the patterns on language choice.

The questions relating to language choice on the language usage questionnaire sought information about which language the speaker would choose in a given situation and setting with a particular interlocutor. Table 1 represents the unmarked choices of each informant in different domains (a set of prototypical role of interlocutors, situations and locales). The letters "H", "E" or "HE" are shown in this table if the informant used Hungarian exclusively, English exclusively or both languages, respectively. Table 1 does not indicate a speaker's strategy to express momentary intent and social meanings by

Table 1
Language choice in different sociolinguistic domains

Generation			G	1				G	2	
Age of speakers	I.	Π.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.	VII.	VIII.	IX.	X.
Sociolinguistic domain	(92)	(87)	(85)	(85)	(89)	(91)	(59)	(61)	(63)	(57)
(Situations)										
FAMILY										
with children	H	ΗE	H	HE	HE	HE	E	E	E	$\mathbf{E}$
with grandchildren	ΗE	E	E	$\mathbf{E}$	HE	$\mathbf{E}$	E	E	$\mathbf{E}$	$\mathbf{E}$
parents among each other	H	H	HE	HE	HE	H	E	E	H	H
HUNGARIAN COMMUNITY										
a) informal										
Hungarian picnic	ΗE	ΗE	H	HE	HE	HE	HE	HE	HE	$\mathbf{E}$
feasts	HE	HE	HE	HE	ΗE	HE	HE	HE	E	HE
b) formal										
organizational meetings	Е	HE	_	HE	HE	HE		HE	E	
NEIGHBORHOOD							į			
neighbors	HE	$\mathbf{E}$	ΗE	E	H	E	E	$\mathbf{E}$	$\mathbf{E}$	-
local shops	Н	E	<b>E</b>	Е	E	Е	E	Е	Е	
SCHOOL										
elementary	H	HE	H	H	H	H	Н	H	HE	_
secondary	-	E		E	_		E	E	E	
CHURCH										
church service	H	H	H	HE	H	$\mathbf{E}$	E	HE	$\mathbf{E}$	HE
prayer	Н	H	HE	H	H	HE	E	E	HE	E
talking to priest	H	HE	HE	HE	H	E	E	E	$\mathbf{E}$	E
(+confession)										
parishioners	HE	HE	HE	HE	HE	E	E	HE	HE	HE
WORKPLACE										
with the boss	E	ΗE	ΗE	E	E	E	E	$\mathbf{E}$	$\mathbf{E}$	$\mathbf{E}$
with co-workers	ΗE	HE	HE	E	HE	E	E	E	E	E

conversational code-switching. Instead, it demonstrates where conversational code-switching can occur at all.

The relationships between generations, domains, and language choices are important for our understanding of language shift. The first and most obvious question, as has been discussed above, is the degree to which the second generation uses English more than the first generation. A second question is whether this difference in language choice is determined by situation; to what

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degree is language choice compartmentalized by domains. In other words, do the American-born speak Hungarian in fewer domains, and are they more likely to speak Hungarian in informal than formal settings? Finally, is the relationship between language choice and generation affected by domain?

The unmarked language choices of the ten informants in Table 1 were broken down by situation (and interlocutor) in each of six domains: family, Hungarian community, neighborhood, school, church, and workplace. For example each informant received three scores on the family and two scores on the school domain. The choice of each individual in each situation was given a score of 1, 0.5, or 0. The individual who spoke exclusively Hungarian or English was given a score of 1 or 0, respectively. The individual who used both languages was given a score of 0.5. The sample is too small for specific generalizable statements—such as to say what percentage of the American-born population in the Detroit area uses both languages in church—but it is enough to demonstrate tendencies through means statistics like the T-test and ANOVA.

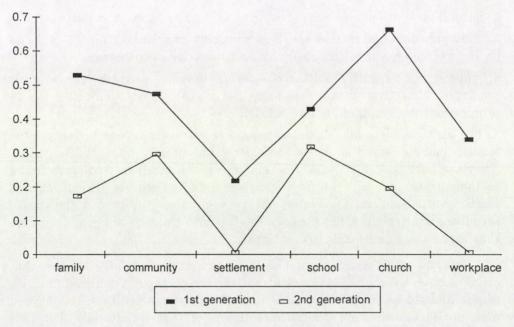


Fig. 1
Correlation between language choice and generation by situation

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As one might expect, the second-generation informants spoke significantly more English than the first generation. While the American-born informants received an average score of .16, their immigrant parents received an average score of .43. The most interesting finding, as Fig. 1 demonstrates, is that the variation in language use is not determined by situation. An analysis of variance test showed that the relationship between generation and language choice was not significantly effected by situation. However, it is important to note that the second generation speaks no Hungarian in the most important formal domain, the workplace. (The test indicates that Hungarian was used in another formal domain, school, but this can be deceiving. The second-generation informants were all approximately sixty years old; they had attended school many years before.)

A number of general statements related to Table 1 and Fig. 1 should be emphasized:

- 1. There is no sociolinguistic domain where Hungarian comes to be used exclusively.
- 2. Second generation speakers choose Hungarian less than their parents.
- 3. Although first generation speakers primarily use Hungarian, there is no individual who never selects English as a basic code of conversation.
- 4. Church can be considered the one formal domain in which Hungarian is dominant. Hungarian is still dominant because of religion's historical role in promoting cohesion, identity and solidarity.
- 5. The distribution of languages has been changed to the greatest extent in the family. The unmarked choice of the elderly among each other is Hungarian. They use both languages with their children and English only when speaking to their grandchildren. The American-born middle-aged use Hungarian and English with Hungarian-dominant parents and spouses, provided the spouse is of Hungarian origin. They use only English with children and grandchildren, that is the third and fourth generations.

Summarizing the progression of social and linguistic shift, it seems that changes in the symbolic environment, i.e. the weakening of the group in terms of size and cohesion, the absence of institutional domains like schooling and mass media, and the lack of social monitoring (cf. Gonzo-Saltarelli 1983, 184) as well as purist ideologies have led to a rapid, functional reduction where the Hungarian language is employed only for communication within a restricted social network. At the same time, as Campbell and Muntzel (1992, 185) describe these kind of situations, the dominant language, in this case English,

comes to be used "by an ever increasing number of individuals in a growing number of contexts where the subordinate language was formerly used. This situation is characterized by a proficiency continuum determined principally by age (but also by attitudes and other factors). Younger generations have greater proficiency in the dominant language and learn the obsolescing language imperfectly, if at all."

# 4. Bilingual individuals: symptoms of L1 loss

#### 4.1. Functional and structural loss

Researchers describe the process of language loss in terms of functional reduction and/or simplification in the linguistic system. These universal quantitative and qualitative changes are interrelated; they show variation in their distribution according to the linguistic situation and generation as well as individually.

In the speech of the Detroit Hungarians the process of functional loss can be equated with the individual process of loss mentioned above when the use of L1 is reduced and at the same time substantial functional and stylistic simplification takes place. The process should be investigated on two levels:

- (1) on the individual level: The number of situations decrease gradually over time among the first generation. As I have demonstrated above, even in those situations in which the Hungarian language appears, it is not used exclusively.
- (2) intergenerationally: The second generation uses Hungarian much more rarely and only when situational constraints require it.

Reduction in function and extensive use of English results in changes in the structure of the ethnic language. We can call these changes, which are overwhelmingly the result of simplification, structural language loss (cf. Huls-de Mond 1992, 103). There are two sources for the attrition process (see Seliger-Vago 1991, 7): (1) Externally induced changes are those which are attributable to the direct influence of the dominant language (e.g. transfer, interference, convergence). My data indicate that the most common strategies are rule generalizations, semantic extension and syntactic calquing. (2) Internally induced changes are based on the principle that unmarked forms are better preserved than marked ones (see also Dressler 1991; Seliger-Vago 1991; Andersen 1982; Campbell-Muntzel 1992). The strategies that embody this principle include analogical leveling, overgeneralization, category switch, etc.

In the case of American Hungarians internally and externally induced processes influence the L1 of both immigrants and their American-born offspring. Nevertheless, it is apparent that English has caused the changes in the language use of Old Americans where lexical changes are predominant, while at the same time grammatical modifications (internally induced) are most evident in their children.

Applying the proficiency continuum (Dorian 1981, 114-20) I would claim that first-generation speakers are Hungarian-dominant bilinguals, while their children are English-dominant, possibly L1 semi-speakers. Depending on the extent to which the acquisition of L1 was complete, American-born bilinguals can be divided into two groups: (1) those who were fluent speakers of L1 in childhood but gradually lost their competence, (2) those who did not ever fully acquire their parents' language in their youth, thus the starting point of their language loss is different ("lower") than that of the former group. Another problem is that incomplete acquisition and loss may lead to similar superficial phenomena.

The fundamental difference, however, between the first and the second generation is that the former group learned the L1 in a native Hungarian environment, while the latter one acquired it in an L2 immigrant setting. This means that the L1-input is completely different for the two groups of speakers (Gonzo-Saltarelli 1983).

It is also obvious from the previous sections that the second generation have never been exposed to the standard form of Hungarian. Their input, therefore, is their parents' dialect which, we must assume, is not identical to the corresponding dialect variant in Hungary for two reasons:

- (1) It has developed in isolation in a non-native environment, so those historical changes (particularly convergence towards the standard) which have taken place in the regional variants of Hungary, are absent.
- (2) Due to the dialectal composition of the Hungarian community in Delray, the dialects had a mutual influence on each other, which is identifiable in the speech of the second generation.

Last but not least, the parents' language loss produced an L1 variant (or variants) which differed to some degree from their initial L1 use. Gonzo and Saltarelli use the foregoing feature to place the language use of speakers born in an immigrant environment on a so-called emigrant language continuum.

# 4.2. The emigrant language continuum

Table 2 presents the change taking place in the emigrant language at both the individual and generational levels. The left-hand column shows several factors according to which the changes in an individual's language can be

	Stage							
	0 Standard	I Fading	II Pidgin	III Fragment				
Generation	1	1	2	3				
Linguistic setting	L1	L1 emigrant	L1 emigrant L2 emigrant	L2 emigrant				
Lexicon (memory)	Full	Loss	Restrictive	Selective				
Rules (process)	Full	Fading	Restrictive	Selective				
Function (communicative)	Full	Reduced	Restrictive	Occasion al				
Monitoring (normative)	Strong	Weakened	Weak	Weakest				
Interference	Minimal	Substantial	Considerable	Overwhelming				
Evolution	Simplification Complicated	Simplification	Simplification Restructuring Replacement	Simplification Restructuring Replacement				

Table 2
The continuum of emigrant languages

Based on Gonzo-Saltarelli (1983, 182), Table 1

analyzed. The following four columns represent the main characteristics of the community's language use across generations.

The first and second (0, 1) stages characterize the Old Americans. Stage 0 depicts the immigrating generation whose speakers still posses the linguistic and communicative competence of a native Hungarian speaker. This corresponds historically to the transitional period in which speakers retain normative linguistic intuitions that control their language usage. The influence of language contact is not yet present.

It is impossible to determine when, during the initial coalescence of the immigrant community, the first-generation speakers cross over to the fading stage. My data and the attrition literature show that language loss never stops in the first generation. Weakening tendencies are evident at every linguistic level; the most pronounced, however, is the reduction of lexical competence leading to a significant loss of the L1 lexicon. Dorian (1983, 163) considers lexical reduction in dying languages to be a universal. Gonzo and Saltarelli, on the other hand, find it the most typical feature of the emigrant language continuum (Gonzo-Saltarelli 1983, 185).

## 4.3. Symptoms of L1 loss

Instead of aiming for a comprehensive analysis of the process in individuals and attempting to provide a complete taxonomy, in the next section I would like to present a few examples of symptoms of language attrition.<sup>5</sup>

In interviews with the Old Americans the average frequency of loanwords was around 8 per cent. There are several reasons for massive borrowing from English.<sup>6</sup> In Stage I speakers had to acquire lexical items referring to new cultural and technological artifacts with which they were unfamiliar (Weinreich 1953, 57; Clyne 1982, 25): e.g. erkondisön (< air conditioner), ejszbakszi (< ice-box), vilcsér (< wheel-chair), nörszinghóm (< nursing-home), kokó/kók (< coke). A large amount of loanwords have also their Hungarian "equivalents" in the bilinguals' lexicon but speakers often make a distinction between them when they use the English form referring to their American environment and, inversely, they find the Hungarian equivalent more appropriate in topics related to Hungary: e.g. porcs (< porch vs. veranda), sztór/stór (< store vs. bolt), sztrít/strít (< street vs. utca), bucser (< butcher vs. hentes), bészment (< basement vs. pince), ticser (< teacher vs. tanár), szkúl (< school vs. iskola), ártbisop (< archbishop vs. érsek) etc. They also had to differentiate lexically similar items that already existed in the emigrant lexicon but with different meaning: e.g. konvenció (< convention 'assembly' vs. konvenció

In the distribution of grammatical categories I have found that, as one would expect, nouns were used the most, followed by verbs. Frozen expressions and adjectives were used with relatively lower frequency (cf. Poplack—Sankoff—Miller 1988, 63). Identifying borrowed verbs was problematic because they seemed to be the most integrated elements in Hungarian discourse. Accommodating to the rules of verb-adaptation into Hungarian inflectional morphology, speakers take an element from the closed-class of verb endings, the so-called adoptive suffixes l or z, and add it to the borrowed verb stem followed by tense and mood markers and personal endings, along with or without phonological integration. For example, pick - pik(k)-ol; retire - ritajer-oz/ol. The free-morpheme constraint in distinguishing single-word code-switches and borrowings, proposed by Poplack (1980) had not been supported by my corpus. For this reason I applied other strategies (Pfaff 1979; Myers-Scotton 1993) to identify borrowed items.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> We can find a large number of deviations from standard Hungarian in the language usage of South Bend and McKeesport Hungarians in the works of Kontra (1990) and Fenyvesi (1994), respectively.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> The large scale borrowing of English elements into Hungarian utterances is a very common strategy of older people's everyday conversations. However, it is difficult to distinguish between (1) 'established' loanwords (Poplack 1980) that are part of the community's lexicon; (2) words that are used by most and so are in the process of becoming elements of the community's repertoire; and (3) nonce borrowings that are used occasionally to fill momentary gaps or to express special intents or social meaning during conversation.

With reference to the Turkish-Dutch contact in the Netherlands similar findings can be found in Boeschoeten-Verhoeven (1985, 354).

'custom, agreement'), kompánia (< company 'firm' vs. kompánia 'a group of people') (for other examples see Kontra 1981; 1990). Lexical gaps were also created by lexical loss resulting from forgetting or "reduction in accessibility" (cf. Olshtain-Barzilay 1991, 140).8

There is a high frequency of integrated L2 core vocabulary elements whose borrowing cannot be explained as lexical loss: e.g. madör (< mother vs. anya), bradör (< brother vs. fivér/báty), vájf (< wife vs. feleség), meridol (< to get married vs. házasodik), femili (< family vs. család), cseszt (< chest vs. mellkas), förszt (< first vs. első), szekend (< second vs. második in the construction of szekend vélemény 'second opinion'), pripérol (< to prepare vs. csinál, elkészít) etc. Hungarian-dominant bilinguals use core borrowing as a strategy to express different social meanings and style shifts. In contrast, these loanwords are absent from the interviews with the English-dominant second-generation speakers, even if they are part of the bilingual lexicon, because they use code-switching for the same purposes (cf. Myers-Scotton 1993).

Analyzing the interviews of second-generation speakers, linguistic change is apparent on every linguistic level, affecting phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, lexicon, and styles. Most of these features are absent from the usage of their parents. The vast majority of internally induced changes

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Vázsonyi's dictionary (Vázsonyi-Kontra 1995) is an excellent summary of the borrowed lexicon of Hungarians in the Calumet region. Comparing this corpus with findings on the language use of other Hungarians in North America, we can suggest that borrowing patterns of Old Americans show strong consistency. One reason might be that, regardless of settlement location, the typological differences of the languages in contact are by and large the same; similar linguistic constraints direct the interplay between the languages. The socio-historical settings and relative status of the Hungarian language in America do not vary greatly; because of this, the differences in the use of Hungarian are mostly quantitative, besides the dialect differences brought from Hungary. We cannot speak of distinct Hungarian American languages. However, taking into account the language ecological differences that influence the dynamics of language shift, we can say that there are indeed different Hungarian American language variants.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> The bilingualism literature rarely deals with this problem. In this literature one often finds the argument that bilinguals do not borrow core vocabulary elements (Gonzo-Saltarelli 1983, 185). Cf. for example Schmidt's (1991, 119) statement about lexical reduction in Dyirbal: "Some items appear more resistant to dropping than others, e.g. islands of lexemes referring to body parts, human classification, and well-known animates form zones of resistance." At the same time, Mougeon and Beniak's Canadian French study had results that counter this argument. Ontario French working-class speakers had less positive attitudes towards the French language and its maintenance than their upper-class counterparts. In parallel, the working-class bilinguals used significantly more core elements from English (Mougeon-Beniak 1991, 207). This finding is consistent with my own according to which although core borrowing is not a result of lexical attrition but it is a very important device to express social status and communicative strategies (see also Scotton-Okeju 1973; Scotton-Ury 1977; Romaine 1989, 64-5).

are reductions, while some of those which can be explained by multiple causation can be considered simplification compensating with elaboration elsewhere (see Dressler 1991, 108-9).

Many grammatical and syntactic rules have been partially lost by second-generation speakers. The inappropriate use of indefinite/definite conjugation is very common in their speech. In Hungarian personal endings on the verb indicate definiteness or indefiniteness according to whether the verb has or does not have an object or its object is indefinite. (For subcategories see Bencédy et al. 1982, 183.) In most of the cases indefinite conjugation was used where standard Hungarian would require the definite one.

- (1) (a) Akkor megvettünk az új kocsit, azt muszáj törleszteni.
   perf.buy.past.3pl.indef
   'Then we bought the new car, we have to pay that off'
   S(tandard) H(ungarian): megvettük
  - (b) Az olyan durva egy ember volt, nem tudott, hogy kellett foglalkozni az asszonyokkal. know.past.3sg.indef
    'That was such a rude man, he didn't know how to deal with women'
    SH: tudta
  - (c) Kinyittuk a fiókot, oszt beteszünk mindegyikbe az ötcenteket, tízcenteket.

    put.1pl.indef

    'We opened the drawer, and put the five-cent, ten-cent pieces in'

'We opened the drawer, and put the five-cent, ten-cent pieces in SH: betesszük

- (d) Hát ű kérdezett tülem, hogy hol születtem.
  ask.past.3sg.indef
  'So he asked me where I was born'
  SH: kérdezte
- (e) Erzsi meg dugdosott nekem a mikrofont.
   upon.press.past.3sg.indef
   'And Erzsi pressed the microphone upon me'
   SH: dugdosta
- (f) Nézek, hogy ott áll, aztán mondom neki... watch.lsg.indef 'I'm watching him standing there, then I tell him...' SH: nézem

This phenomenon is a natural case of an internally induced change, called category leveling, when speakers "neutralize categorical distinctions by extending the domain of one category to another" (Seliger-Vago 1991, 11). The

loss of the definite/indefinite distinction and the overgeneralization of the unmarked feature is also supportive for the markedness proposal (Andersen 1982, Campbell-Muntzel 1992, Dressler 1991). Nevertheless, the process is not systematic in this stage:

(2) (a) Nekem akar adni pénzet, hogy ne beszéljem.
speak.1sg.imp.def.
'He wants to give me money so that I won't speak'
SH: beszéliek

(b) Senki se tudta mit gondolni. know.past.3sg.def. 'Nobody knew what to think' SH: tudott

Beside their preposition-like meaning or functioning as a particle (cf. Fenyvesi 1994, 61) a large part of Hungarian preverbs are used to express perfectivity or duration. In English tenses and other kinds of lexical means are used to express these meanings. First-generation speakers seem to have maintained the rules for preverb-verb constructions which can also be supported by the fact that they attach the appropriate Hungarian verbal prefixes to the borrowed verb stems: e.g. megszévol (< save; SH: megtakarít, megspórol); elmuffol (< move out; SH: elköltözik), etc. On the other hand, partial breakdown of the standard Hungarian rules can be registered in the speech of the American-born bilinguals. In addition, their repertoire, compared with monolingual Hungarians' or Hungarian-dominant bilinguals', is not so varied. The most frequently used preverbs are meg-, el- and ki- which are the most productive and oldest elements of the Hungarian preverb system. Second-generation speakers overuse verbal prefixes on the one hand, and create innovative forms<sup>10</sup> on the other:

Although, according to the attrition literature, structural loss often goes along with simplification, it is impossible to consider them equal. We can find counterexamples indicating that complex forms and innovations can also appear (in comparison with the forms of the initial stage) in the speech of younger people in transitional stages of the process. Language loss and innovation are not mutually exclusive, because less dominant speakers of the minority language are able to apply grammatical and communicative rules they know more productively according to cognitive, acquisitional factors as well as the interactional and symbolic significance they create for their languages (Gal 1992, 330; see also Dorian 1982, 56 f.; Dressler 1991, 100-1). This is also influenced by the lack or existence of purist language ideologies in their communities (Woolard 1992, 361).

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- - (b) Ilyen huncutságokat el próbált volna csinálni away make.inf
    'They tried to away-pull these kinds of pranks'
    SH: csinálni

Convergence tendencies are also common in the second generation's L1. Substitution of synthetic forms for analytic ones may be a visible index of structural loss (see also Maher 1991, 68). Since Hungarian with many agglutinative characteristics may be considered as a language of the synthetic type, its intensive contact with an analytic language like English can strengthen tendencies in which those morphological and syntactic functions that formerly were expressed by suffixes have been gradually replaced with analytic or periphrastic constructions. The extent of this kind of substitution correlates with a gradual decrease in the productivity of word-formation devices. One of these phenomena is the high degree of Hungarian personal pronouns in the interviews which is characteristic for almost all Hungarian groups living in the United Sates (see also Kontra 1990, 82). In the following examples personal pronouns are redundant, because, according to the rules of Hungarian inflectional morphology, the verb endings can express this information by having an element from the closed class of personal endings.

- (4) (a) Nem akarok dicsekedni, most is mikor én bemegyek, én bujkálva megyek oda.
  'I don't want to boast, but when I go in, I go secretively'
  SH: ...most is mikor bemegyek, bujkálva megyek oda
  - (b) Mindég ő viccelt, még azon napon, amilyenn meghalt, még akkor is. 'He was always joking even on the day he died, even then' SH: Mindig viccelt, még azon a napon is, amelyiken meghalt, még akkor is.

Another evident example of convergence is the substitution of the "potential" -hat/het with modal auxiliaries. However, category switch can be stimulated by both languages. On the one hand, although -hat/het is used more frequently for expressing different modalities, according to capability or possibility, depending on epistemic, dispositional or circumstantial features

(Kiefer 1985, 131), modal auxiliaries are also capable of expressing the same meanings. On the other hand, there may be the result of a strong English influence.

- (5) (a) Mikor én kicsi vótam, ki lehetett menni nekünk az utcára.
  'When I was a child it was possible for us to go out to the street'
  SH: Mikor (én) kicsi voltam, kimehettünk az utcára.
  - (b) Mikor az van rajta... nem szabad a gyerekeknek beszélni.
    'When that [radio program] is on children are not allowed to speak'
    SH: Mikor az van (rajta), a gyerekek nem beszélhetnek.
  - (c) Én is néztem, tudok menni valahová.
     'I also checked if I could go somewhere'
     SH: Én is néztem, elmehetek-e valahová.
  - (d) Meg lehet mondani, mit gondol róla.

    'It is possible to tell what he thinks about him'
    SH: Megmondhatja, mit gondol róla.

# 5. Concluding remarks

This article did not present all the concrete changes within the language shift in Detroit. Instead, the three-level approach used in this study is presented as a general procedure for investigating this social and linguistic process. It might be obvious from this overview that the Hungarian-Americans in question are in the final stage of language shift and the so-called emigrant language continuum. The question of how the minority language reorders itself in an immigrant contact situation in parallel with the acquisition of a new language and the gradual loss of the old during a transitional phase needs further investigations. Nevertheless, it would also be important to study whether certain phenomena (e.g. vowel shortening, analytic processes) are characteristic only for the Hungarian-American (or other minority) variants due to intensive contact or the attrition process, or whether some of these phenomena also appear, if sporadically, in standard Hungarian.

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