Miklós Kontra

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Research Themes

- Hungarian-American bilingualism
- The Budapest Sociolinguistic Interview (when the Iron Curtain collapsed)
- Hungarian National Sociolinguistic Survey (with a country-wide representative sample, N = 832)
- The Sociolinguistics of Hungarian Outside Hungary (i.e. in [Czecho]Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, and Austria)
- Linguistic Human Rights (with Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson, Grin and others)
- Educational linguistics
Findings of Interest

- The language subordination of an entire nation (not to be discussed today)
Language Regard
Methods, Variation and Change
Edited by Betsy E. Evans, Erica J. Benson and James N. Stanford
Language Subordination on a National Scale: Examining the Linguistic Discrimination of Hungarians by Hungarians

6 Language Subordination on a National Scale: Examining the Linguistic Discrimination of Hungarians by Hungarians

Miklós Kontra

6.1 Introduction
Beliefs, attitudes, and ideology related to language matters all intertwine and come under the umbrella term language regard, says Dennis Preston (2011:10). In this chapter, I demonstrate how the entire Hungarian nation believes in and subscribes to a standard language ideology (Milroy 1999), which serves as the basis for verbal hygiene (Cameron 1995), language subordination (Lippi-Green 1997), or linguicism (Kontra 2006), i.e., social discrimination between groups defined on the basis of language. Most Hungarians support linguicism to the point of self-damage, and, interestingly, many Hungarians regard themselves as responsible for their own linguistic subordination. In this chapter, evidence from various sources is presented, including a country-wide sociolinguistic questionnaire study and a follow-up study in Budapest conducted seventeen years later, sociolinguistic interviews, and historical accounts of Hungarian language regard.

6.2 The Sociopolitical Background in a Nutshell
For well over two centuries now, Hungarians have been worrying about the life or death of their language and the purity of Hungarian. In 1784, when the Kingdom of Hungary was part of the Habsburg Monarchy, Joseph II decreed that German replace Latin as the official language, which Hungarians perceived as German cultural hegemony and reacted by insisting on their right to use Hungarian. It was not until 1844, sixty years later, that Hungarian was declared the official language in Hungary.

Preston is partly Hungarian, someone who has described himself as “half Hungarian and half Hiddlbury.” (Tagliamonte 2016:31). Thus he is somewhat familiar with the Hungarian language regard situation, but he also knows better than most Hungarians. I wish to thank Susan Gal, Juliet Langman, Edith A. Moravcsik, and the editors for their extremely useful comments on earlier versions of this chapter.
Gypsies in Hungary and the census

Three groups of Gypsies in Hungary:
1. Hungarian-speaking
2. Romani-Hungarian bilinguals
3. Boyash-Hungarian bilinguals (Boyash = an archaic dialect of Romanian)

Oppression, persecution, discrimination, segregation.

*Szeretetteljes szegregáció* = loving segregation
Hungarian ambassador to US, 1999

Our government incessantly seeks to support Gypsy cultural, ethnographic and literary programs, but the Gypsy language – which has two distinct dialects – is not a modern language with a writing system. Consequently, our government strives to avoid the situation when Gypsy children close themselves into this linguistic ghetto and become underprivileged for ever.

What is your mother tongue?

- Bolgár
- Cigány (romani, beás)
- Görög
The 2017 Ukrainian education law as a means of linguistic genocide

Native languages in Ukraine, 2001 Census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number of people</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainian</td>
<td>32,500,000</td>
<td>67.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>14,200,000</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1,300,000</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Percentage of pupils in Ukrainian-medium schools (national average) and in Hungarian-medium schools in Transcarpathia whose exam results in Ukrainian Language and Literature prevent them from gaining admission to higher education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Ukrainian schools</th>
<th>Hungarian schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Potential areas in the intersection of language endangerment/political instability interesting to your research (3 minutes)

Ukraine today is THE example (in Europe)

Political instability, coupled with military factors (NATO) and business interests (EU), which make (Linguistic) Human Rights insignificant, in fact, a political nuisance.