AKADÉMIAI KIADÓ

Postcolonialism in Central Europe • (A linguistic perspective)

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ABSTRACT

The paper discusses the post-1990 historical developments in Central Europe as a specific instantiation of postcolonialism, particularly in the linguistic domain. After the severe communist rule and Soviet military occupation in most countries (which enjoyed a non-typical colonial status), this region was freed, but many socio-cultural features of culture, language policy, language use, and everyday communication activities show that many forms practiced during the colonial period are still maintained. These remnants show a certain postcolonial way of life in the region. The paper first surveys the literature, discussing the validity of the notion of postcolonialism for the given period in Central Europe. In the second part, general post-colonial features pertaining to the Hungarian language community are introduced. These features are detailed first focusing on the developments in Hungary, then on the minority Hungarian communities across the border around Hungary. Factors are presented including communicative systems, language policy, language variants, reflection, and self-reflection on the language community and identification, language rights, and public education, with attention paid to adherence to colonial schemas and the quick transition to postmodern communication forms.

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND THE INTERPRETATION OF THE POST-COMMUNIST PERIOD

The Hungarian linguistic and ethnic community lives in the heart of Central Europe, in the Carpathian Basin. (There are Hungarians outside this region, mostly individual emigrants.) The history of the Hungarian language community gives a clue to the historical developments of the whole region of Central Europe over the last 150 years.

The Hungarian Kingdom, roughly within the borders of the state in the Middle Ages, was one semi-independent part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy for fifty years, as a result of the Settlement (*Ausgleich*) of 1867. The Hungarian Kingdom was a state with a Hungarian population of up to 50% and with ethnic and linguistic minorities, as the whole Monarchy was multi-ethnic. This political, economic, and cultural situation was broken up over the course of World War I. Central Europe has had a special history during the 20th century. The future of the region was basically determined by the Paris peace treaties (1920) that followed World War I (for the basic, mistaken motivations of the decision makers and the tragic consequences see Leonhard, 2018). New states were established (e.g., Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia), others were enlarged (e.g., Romania). New state borders were, at least in part, artificially determined, as they did not follow traditional linguistic and ethnic borders. Most new states were burdened with minorities cut from their natural communities, though living as aboriginals (indigenous people; cf. Cobo, 1982) who stayed on their ancient territories. In most cases these minority populations covered one hundred percent of a given territory just over the national borders, and they found themselves in new states with a totally new public administration and official languages. These circumstances led to continuous conflicts between the newly formed state majorities and the minorities living with the new territories, in most cases triggered by the nationalist policies of the new countries—policies that aimed for the ethnic and linguistic homogenization of these states, entailing serious violations of human rights. Also, the peace treaty and its consequences forced masses to flee to other countries (as happened during and after World War II, too). The newly formed Hungary lost two thirds of its earlier territory and 56% of its population after World War I, while 3.2 million people of Hungarian origin were detached to the newly formed neighboring states; these detached Hungarians prototypically lived along the border in areas with one hundred percent Hungarian populations (Romsics, 2001, p. 147). Hungary itself became a nearly homogenous country with an almost 100 percent population of Hungarian origin.

World War II made the circumstances even more tragic and difficult. Besides the devastation of the war, the new peace treaties left the states and borders almost untouched, preserving all the tensions and conflicts. Still, the geographical state of Poland and Germany changed radically; and the Baltic region was dissolved into the Soviet Union. As a new factor, collective responsibility was introduced and executed by certain states with traumatic consequences (e.g., mass deportations, deprivation of citizenship, and basic human rights). In 1945 the whole region was occupied by the Soviet army and was placed under Soviet colonial rule (a specific form of colonialism), which ended in 1990–1992. The countries and societies of the region were forced to introduce the Soviet communist system in every domain of life, controlled by the Soviet and

the local communist parties. During this period, the aftermath of the two world wars had a serious effect also on the language policies of these countries, covered by the surface of the communist ideology in most cases. In 1990–1992 Central Europe was freed from Soviet occupation, and a postcolonial historical period began. Ever since this historical turn, the region has had a double face. On the one hand, modernization has been performed in a very fast, determined and effective fashion, bringing radical changes again to all aspects of life. On the other hand, the cultural and socialization schemas of the previous era still live on and influence the ways of life in the region.

The next section discusses the basic features of colonialism and postcolonialism in relation to Central Europe.

COLONIALISM AND POSTCOLONIALISM, IN CENTRAL EUROPE

It is a postcolonial effect that history writing does not interpret the history of Central Europe between 1945 and 1990 as a colonial period. The region was under Soviet rule after World War II, occupied by the Soviet army, except Romania, and Yugoslavia—a fact that in of itself calls for a colonial interpretation. Certainly, colonialism has many forms (cf. Osterhammel, 1995; Conrad, 2012), and Soviet rule showed many characteristics of Western colonialism in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries.

The Soviet occupation took the form of colonialism in certain factors: it was the reign of foreign (i.e., Soviet) rulers, directed in the political, economic, and social interest of the colonizer (with the direct help of local governors). The Soviet colonizers and their local representatives were convinced of their cultural and political superiority, not recognizing the more advanced state of the occupied countries. There were traces of early colonization: the division of the region (by the peace treaty) and the providing of free labor (about 600,000 people were taken from Hungary to forced labor camps in the Soviet Union after the end of World War II; of these, two thirds never returned). On the other hand, after a post-war period, spontaneous migration was completely prohibited during the whole Soviet period. Also, the Central European countries were used as a source of raw materials that were fundamental for the USSR. Nevertheless, these developments were not channeled into the world economy, as had happened in Western colonization, but were strictly constrained within the communist sphere.

The other decisive factor was the radical social transformation triggered in a top-to-bottom manner and brutally aggressive style, based on the Bolsheviks' communist ideology. The colonizers and their governors managed this process with the strong conviction of their superiority and in the form of a political and ideological mission. The radical social change was supported by certain social groups, at least in the first years of the Soviet rule. The colonial reign made its way into local political power, economic, and social structures, the law, education, mass media, infrastructure, culture, and everyday social relations.

The colonial reign was not full; rather, the colonizing army and the foreign elite stayed in the "islands of rule", behind security fences, in particular after the first uprisings.

Postcolonialism as an intellectual (ideological and political) movement came into being when Western colonies in Africa and Asia gained their independence in the 1960s and 1970s. Postcolonialism came from Cultural Studies, literary studies, the archeology of knowledge and other poststructuralist intellectual trends. In its original form, postcolonial theory is concerned

with the cultural and ideological aftermath of colonialism: it focuses on the earlier discourse orders that perspectivized the relation between colonized and colonizer in a hierarchical, essentialist, and Eurocentric frame. In the original framework, its main theoretical sources are drawn from poststructuralist and Marxist approaches along with leftist political movements. The founding works of the theory are Said (1975), Bhabha (1990), and Spivak (1990, 1999).

Postcolonial theory has changed into a wider interpretation of colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism, and in many investigations it is used without its original leftist and Marxist background. This alteration is necessary and expedient for a wider application in the humanities and social sciences. Also, some shortcomings of the theory have been recognized, e.g., representation and identities were in the focus, while the material dimension remained in the background; and the theory also made use of stereotypes, just like the ideologies that it criticized. Nevertheless, the theory is on the verge of description and criticism (even activism), even today.

In the post-millennial scene, the basic idea is that colonialism did not end with independence (Conrad, 2012; see also the literature on Central Europe referred to in the present paper). Many features that belong to the colonial scene in the wider sense have been realized recently (Osterhammel, 1995; Conrad, 2012). Many of these features listed below prove to be significant from the Central European perspective.

The former colonies have dependence relations with the former colonizers, and post-millennial neo-colonialism further supports this relation. Also, the effects of colonization on the colonizers are realized and discussed: mutual relations, histories and effects seem to be important, as in many cases no sharp borders between colonized and colonizer can be set up. In other words: the double historical perspective, Eurocentrism as if Europe remained untouched in the course of colonization cannot be maintained; the hidden tensions and the aftermath of oppression and violence come to the surface.

In many countries the local elites remained almost the same, and political structures did not change fundamentally. In many cases, there remained the notion of asymmetrical, hierarchical cultural differences in the background: the source of modernity, universal development of human societies, general progress (with a linear time interpretation), the "civilizing mission" of the western world—a superior domain compared to the primitive colonies. Modernization has been organized with principles and methods that are ideologies of the colonial age.

In the cultural domain, written and oral histories (both scientific and popular) of the former colonies are constructed with a colonial mentality, i.e., the central theses of the colonial discourses organize the histories of the colonies and the general discourse about colonialism. These trends are based on colonial cultural dispositions which had been aimed at the reception and acceptance of the foreign colonial reign.

The question can now be raised: how does all of the above come to the millennial state of Central Europe, and to the Hungarian language community in particular? The answer lies in some of recent publications focusing on this specific problem: the developments of the post Soviet region. One volume (Pucherová and Gáfrik eds., 2014) approaches some of these questions in detail, mainly in literature, visual culture, memories of collective and individual Soviet colonial traumas, and the relations of the region freed in 1990 to join the western world (see also the volume 48 (2) 2012 Journal of Postcolonial Writing on Central Europe).

Pucherová and Gáfrik (2014, p. 12) considers the term "postcolonialism" at least one suitable expression to characterize the situation in Central Europe: "Post-communist discourse [...] shows that the experiences of the countries formerly belonging to the USSR and the Eastern

Bloc, and those previously colonized by West European powers, share a number of characteristics. These are, for example:

> structures of exclusion/inclusion (the centre/periphery model and theorizations of the liminal ans "in-between"); formations of nationalism, structures of othering and representation of difference; forms and historical realizations of anti-colonial/anti-imperial struggle; the experience of trauma (involving issues of collective memory/amnesia and the rewriting of history); resistance as a complex of cultural practices; concepts such as alterity, ambivalence, self-colonization, cultural geography, dislocation, minority and subaltern cultures, neo-colonialism, orientalization, transnationalism."[1]

Since – as was mentioned above – colonialism has delayed effects on the colonizers, globally, in the broader sense, "this region should play a major role in the current debates in postcolonial studies on European identity" (Pucherová and Gáfrik, 2014, p. 14). Postcolonial scholars have not recognized the importance of the region: "Nor are post-communist studies yet considered as part of the same discourse that seeks to re-evaluate the consequences of decolonizations and rethink the cultural and mental implications of both colonial and anti-colonial discourses. One reason for this, [. . .] is the typically Marxist orientation of postcolonial critics based in the West, which has made them resist seeing the Soviet Union as an imperialist power" (Pucherová and Gáfrik, 2014, p. 14).

The volume quoted here concentrates on specific questions such as the following (listed from Pucherová and Gáfrik, 2014, p. 15):

- How does the recognition of Soviet expansion as part of European imperialism alter the understanding of Western modernity?
- What effect did the Cold War have on the East-Central European space, reconfigured after 1989? How has this affected individual and collective identities?
- How can a post-communist subject be reconstituted out of the void that became his or her main identity marker under Soviet cultural domination and Western Orientalism?
- What types of postmodernism developed in Central and Eastern European cultures as a result of Soviet domination?
- How does Russian colonialism continue into the present and what does it mean for the current world order?

In the following sections of the present paper, I give an overview of some developments characteristic of the Hungarian language community in the domains of communication systems, language policies and (self-)reflexive everyday language use. In the present study, post-colonialism is a non-activist term, used and adjusted for the scientific description of this specific historical situation with a process-like character.

POSTCOLONIAL EFFECTS IN THE HUNGARIAN LANGUAGE COMMUNITY

The Hungarian language and its speaker community as a whole were exposed to political, even military and administrative decisions without the real chance to discuss and influence these

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[1]The authors refer here to Kołodziejeczyk and Sandru (2012, p. 113).

decisions. The historical developments have had a severe outcome in language use and communication. Some of these are treated below.

The communication system of societies and states show typical historical instantiations (cf. Luhmann, 1998, p. 312ff). One basic type is the hierarchical communication order. This system is centralized; control and influence are directed from top to bottom; and the information sent from the center usually spreads successfully through to the destination, the target audience. The other type is the heterarchical communication order. This system is shared and decentralised; it has a network structure; and the contacts hinge upon the spatio-temporal conditions of the situation.

One of the first political decisions completed by the communists in Central Europe after 1945 was to put social and state communication under strict central ideological supervision, introducing a total, hierarchical communication order. The measure of this totality differed between the countries and also between certain periods; still, party control remained in service in the whole region until 1990. Any kind of public information was allowed to go out only with the overall central party control. This control was, for instance, extremely severe during the 1950s in the whole region, looser in 1968 in Czechoslovakia and in the 1980s in Hungary, and much stricter in the DDR and Romania than in Hungary during the final decade. As a result of the social homogenization efforts, people were forced to publicly speak one ideologically controlled variety of the state language, unified in its semantics and pragmatics: people had no choice but to use the words related to social life with the meanings defined centrally, to repeat the same clausal and idiomatic constructions used by the political leaders, and to not deviate from the central ideological line – thereby avoiding the risk of punishment (whether formal or informal) for a joke or a critical note, for instance. The centralizing language policy used censorship as a fundamental instrument (cf. Schöpflin, 1983). Censorship was directed primarily inwards, but also outwards – in relation to other states and countries. On the one hand, the central control and censorship defined those entities (e.g., books, newspapers, ideas and innovations, words, works of art) that were allowed to go across the border and those that were banned from coming in, and, on the other hand, what could go out even to the neighboring "sister" countries within the region.

This hierarchical communication system was changed formally to a modernized heterarchical one within a strikingly short period of one month, in 1990.

One basic change was the transformation of public discourse. The instinctive distrust felt when talking to strangers or principals faded in general, at least with respect to the commitment to the central ideology required earlier throughout the society. Certainly, many social and institutional dependencies kept on functioning. At any rate, the legal and structural conditions of the overall system took on a new shape, one contrary to the previous one:

- Any kind of communication from diverse sources, including that of the state and public administration, became subject to independent control and discussion.
- Any communication with local scope (e.g., information about and statements by and in settlements and districts, bureaus, firms and other workplaces, including schools and other institutions) was rendered independent from the direct control and practice of the central government organizations and other (e.g., political party) headquarters.
- Informal talk among family members, friends, colleagues and acquaintances was freed from the fear of informing (i.e., reporting on ones' views and acts by spies; such informing was

organized and maintained by the secret police until the last minute of the collapsing regime) and also from its constraining power on linguistic expression.

Colonial and postcolonial linguistic features in Hungary

This new freedom of speech and information affected the reflexive and self-reflexive processes of the Hungarian language community. On the one hand, those living in the Hungarian state realized the existence and practice of linguistic variants within the Hungarian language. Before 1990 traditional rural dialects were declared unsuitable for the goals of the communist ideology, in accordance with the political stigmatization of the peasantry. Rural dialects as well as urban varieties (slang, vulgarity) were stigmatized in public; rural dialects were criticized even in textbooks. Closely related to these negative evaluative decisions, the standard varieties were declared the right forms. Still, the standard variety was deprived of its middle class origin, adjusted to the standardized party language (a certain type of "newspeak"), and disseminated to the whole population through public education. This led to various forms of linguicism. After 1990 the variants were considered once again in their normal functional status: people began to use their vernacular and other social variants to express individual and collective identities, world views and personal behavior and to denote subtle factors of social relations that had been almost totally prohibited and forgotten in the communist era. Dynamism and creativity were revitalized; the traditional registers were rehabilitated. Still, these developments were not initiated nor welcomed unanimously.

It is a true-to-life experience that innovation in technology, in social relations, and in ways of life all accompany innovation in language. New ideas, objects, processes and relations should be named, discussed, and described through linguistic expressions. Thus, the conceptualization and linguistic expression of innovations require linguistic innovation. Since ways of talk were freed from central control and censorship, normal human imagination underwent a revival in the Central European region. This complex process has had its potential in the relation between style and individual reflexive self-identification. The traditional stylistic criteria gradually turned into linguistic and cultural potential for the expression of identity and self-identity, with the individual and the historical nature of culture and communication in focus. Thus, style became one important relational medium for individual diversity and identity.

This shift from matching the stylistic ideal to the functions of the current communicational intention and to the speaker's self-identification is characteristic of the "post-middle class" society. In this cultural situation, style is the spontaneous, direct construal of certain contents. It utilizes the potential for meaning formation from the side of individual and social actors and from culture with current motivation, and it uses the potential of the language system only as a secondary source.

The main functions of the individual behavior in linguistic formation are as follows:

- the self-construction of the individual, or its attempt or its illusion, in relation to the object of attention,
- the social relevance of the acts by the speaker,
- the creative and innovative force demonstrated by the speaker,
- the construction of the current discourse space and the relation between the interlocutors.

Style is construed by the speaker through subjectification (Langacker, 2006; Tolcsvai Nagy, 2005), which is the implicit presence of the speaker through the implicated expression of her/his attitude, beliefs, and viewpoint, without being an overt and objectified participant of the scene described in the discourse. It is quite rare when the speaker announces that "I am going to speak to you in a kind of official or coarse style".

The result of this change was that stylistic forms that oriented intersubjective and interpersonal encounters became ambivalent; interlocutors felt uncertain about the current behavior and goal or even the basic individual characteristics of their partner, all of which is necessary for successful communication. This led to false attributions, misunderstanding, and, as a matter of fact, to avoidable conflicts. The traditional normative practice of style as a part and a medium of human dignity tried to find its functions in the millennial age, but was weakened by the practice of almost unbounded variability. On the other hand, since a style's main function became in many cases and social groups the expression of social action, the speaker's innovative force, identity, and self-identity, and the continuous construal and processing of the current discourse space, this latter type of stylization generated tensions between normative and creative practices in communication, reinforcing uncertainty in communication.

Also, millions of Hungarians, mostly from the younger generations, were surprised to learn at the end of the 1980s that large Hungarian-speaking populations lived immediately on the other side of the border. This realization had a huge impact on those within the mother country, and with the newly discovered functions of linguistic variability, this development radically transformed the overall idea of language and of Hungarian in particular. Discussions and public conflicts originating from the diverse functions attributed to the mother tongue appeared in discourses that focused on political and cultural power and dominance, language norms for public education, and the media. Political movements and ideologies chose or created their own languages within the language—a totally fresh experience for the new generations. These developments proved to be something hard to comprehend for large social groups (e.g., for the elderly), and also for many it brought the feeling of uncertainty: aggressiveness was attributed to those speaking in an unexpected or unknown register. Those who were not accustomed to such alterity and plurality had traumatic experiences (contrary to those who enjoyed this freedom) and felt lost in the new diversity; they were alone or belonged to newly formed cultural minorities. There were those who saw the decline or death of the Hungarian nation in the lack of a central and joint, ancestral standard variety held in high esteem, while others supported the intention to create new forms to construct new meanings.

In the wake of linguistic plurality, three characteristic language ideologies have been developed and used in discourses over the Hungarian language (partly before 1990, in the so-called second public):

- The idealization view: every language has an ideal variant in its pure, intact, and fulfilled form; thus, language change is deterioration, and speakers and communities should elaborate and adjust to the ideal version.
- The national view: language is the essence of the nation as such; the national language has a tragic history; it is attacked and threatened with annihilation by external forces; speakers should recognize and maintain the national essence of the mother tongue.

- The structural view: language is structure, a tool for communication; independent of the individual and the community, it has no substantial historical and cultural relations; speakers have proficiency in their mother tongue and they know how to use their linguistic knowledge.

All three show postcolonial effects: the first two try to find the traditions (whether real or not) behind the collective linguistic and national amnesia, the third one tries to avoid any allusions to the past, fleeing from uncertain and ambivalent anchors towards a practical interpretation—without the presumed burden of history.

Hungarian minority communities in neighboring states

After World War II, all minority languages were discriminated against once more in the Central European region. Every country in the region had and still has ethnic and linguistic minorities (with the smallest one just in Hungary). These developments were sometimes carried out in an overt way; for instance, Hungarian and German as a minority languages were simply banned for years in Czechoslovakia in all public settings (schools, public administration, healthcare, jurisdiction, public transport, together with minority language forms of personal and place names, etc.). And there were hidden ways to oppress minorities and minority languages: there was a lack of minority language media and textbooks, and teachers and officials (e.g., policemen, physicians, presidents of the executive committee of the council, i.e., the political and administrative leader of the settlement) who only spoke the majority state language were brought in from other regions of the country.

Concerning minorities, nationalistic tendencies dominated the language policies of the countries. The language of the ethnic majority ("the nation forming population", using the national language) was the official language, namely, the standard version of the language used by the majority. The legal regulation of these matters was based on the communist ideology combined with a tacit or overt nationalism. In most countries the language minorities were oppressed by the authorities in all respects, as well as by members of the majority in everyday situations—often in emotional statements of exclusion (see for instance Lanstyák, 2000, pp. 77–121). The situation within the region was worst in Romania, Czechoslovakia, Ukraine and Bulgaria. Minorities had relatively more language rights in Poland, Yugoslavia and Hungary (this latter with the smallest proportion of minority population). The severe suppression and prohibition of language rights changed over the decades. In Romania and Czechoslovakia there were shorter periods of ease, but on the whole strict formal and informal rules were maintained. In Yugoslavia, after an initial hardcore period, the general circumstances changed for the better from the 1960s—but were still far from the normal.

After 1990 the cases of ethnic and language minorities could not be hidden, and the tensions that stemmed from oppression had to be put on the agenda. All states declared human rights—including the rights of the minorities—as the constitutional basis of the political system. At the same time Czechoslovakia (three years later the Czech Republic and Slovakia), Ukraine, Romania, Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia also declared and interpreted themselves as nation states in their constitutions. Hungary and Poland have no such definitions in theirs.

In Central European countries with large minority populations the question of language rights has been subject to permanent political, legislative and administrative struggle since 1990. Most states intend to restrain the use of minority languages in all domains of everyday life. Language laws or minority laws were codified and introduced in many countries, partly due to

international obligations, partly to keep minority rights within limits. Those countries that have a high proportion of national and ethnic minorities made similar laws in many respects, as follows.

The results of the factors listed above have had serious consequences for the existential conditions of the Hungarian minorities. These regional communities were totally isolated from the mother country and also from the majority societies before 1990, since Hungarian was rarely or not allowed in public and administrative use, and the artificially triggered tensions between majority and minority groups also hindered normal communication among members of different language communities. Hungarian and other minority languages were discriminated against in many ways—in public administration and education, in health care, and in general domains, mainly in cities and larger settlements. Meanwhile small villages were controlled linguistically by the head of the local soviet, the teachers, the policeman and the doctor, who were usually sent from other regions of the country and who were often of non-Hungarian origin and lacked Hungarian language skills. Nevertheless, language contact in territories with traditionally multilingual populations had far fewer informal conflicts.

It was and is a hard task to find the right answers to such problems as these when a smaller or larger social and ethnically minority group is isolated from their mother country, even from any external connections. The answers, rather intuitive, included (among others) self-isolation, self-maintenance, and the preservation of the local dialects in local speech communities, where the mere act of speaking in the mother tongue counted as the demonstration of one's basic values.

After 1990 the situation in this respect has changed only in a tempered manner and with only moderate results, in spite of the declared right to free speech. In everyday communication the use of the mother tongue was practiced with much more self-consciousness and will, and also more openness for bilingual situations. In this setting, vernacular language use is not a political act nor part of ideological movements; rather it is the normal social behavior to speak the mother tongue – a sign of getting free from colonial aspects. Still, officially supported linguistic discrimination in quasi-colonial style hinders this development in many places and situations. Bilingual circumstances are familiar for the younger generations and with less oppression among peers, code switching is a more natural situation for them. E-communication may ease the tensions among young generations, but there are not much data available yet. It may be supposed that e-communication among young people with diverse mother tongues takes place rather in the language of the majority.

But uncertainty exists and does not decrease, e.g., in private decisions (demonstrated by attitude surveys), not only in direct communication settings, but also in long term decisions, e.g., in the cases of children sent to school with mother tongue or state language instruction (Vančo, 2017). In this communication domain no real official state support is offered to overcome the difficulties, except in Slovenia. The remnants of the colonial mentality, a sign of the postcolonial situation, are clearly observable in this respect.

Another factor is the continuous struggle for language rights. Since 1990 it has occurred publicly on the political scene—in the countries around Hungary, in the European Union, and also in local actions, in the everyday communication practice. This is a typical postcolonial situation: the cultural memory of the majority and the minorities, intentions of exclusion with the minority language and forced inclusion with the majority language have a significant role, besides the legal setting itself.

In the course of these developments, a postcolonial factor is the focus on linguistic performance both in the mother tongue and the state language. However, high level language skills are needed to cope with new economic, social, and intellectual developments—but this factor is backgrounded in the forced political struggle.

Besides the postcolonial factors mentioned above, there is the hidden problem: the unsolved tensions in state language education, i.e., second language education for minorities. Since the political frame of the nation state implies the idea of the ethnically and linguistically homogeneous state, the official expectation is that all citizens will speak the national language with the same competence. This expectation is demonstrated in the deficient (old-fashioned and colonial-like) methodological viewpoint of language pedagogy in most countries in question: minority students whose mother tongue is different from the national language are taught the national language with the same methodology used for the majority students who speak it as their vernacular, in many cases even from the same textbook. The students of minority origin have a double handicap: they have not natively acquired the national language at the highest level, in spite of being bilinguals in most cases; and they are not taught the national language as a specific kind of second language. The result of this false interpretation and practice on the part of the nation state is that minorities cannot have the desired and needed proficiency in the national language (for details see Vančo, 2019). This state of affairs seem to change very slowly, after almost one hundred years of misconducted public education.

Holistic reflections

There are some factors that occurs in the Hungarian language community as a whole, which has been united since 1990 in the communicative sense. These postcolonial factors have discursive reflections in the whole community.

During the communist era, the official contacts and joint linguistic projects with researchers from Hungary and Hungarian linguists from the neighboring countries were almost completely banned from all sides. After 1990, a new fresh wave of investigations began, with high level results. It is by no means accidental that within this complex and many folded process, two ways of investigation emerged as fundamental (besides others, e.g., linguistic variables): language attitude surveys and detrianonization.

Attitude surveys were planned to map the attitudes of native minority Hungarian speakers in the neighboring countries, to understand the motivations and results of their decisions concerning the situations where they use the mother tongue or the official state language. When and why do they code switch? The results show the general trends in the relations towards Hungarian as a mother tongue and the official state language in their tense relations. The significance of these investigations lies in the course of social developments: the many local results show the intention to find the right answers and the extreme difficulties these people face in a formally free world, but loaded with obstacles.

Detrianonization is the process of breaking down the artificial borders between the parts of the Hungarian language community raised by the post-World War I and II peace treaties. This process demonstrates the overall pluralistic unity of the language community and the language itself, in their variants. It is being completed in linguistic works (dictionaries, descriptive papers, including data from all parts of the language territory; see e.g., the linguistic activities of Termini (http://termini.nytud.hu), Benő and Péntek, 2011), and also an intellectual and social process of

reflection and self-reflection to demonstrate the unity for its members (as mentioned above, before 1990 generations were not informed about the Hungarian communities across the borders).

Another characteristic trend concerns the ideal version of the language, initiated from the mother country, the center. There is a widely accepted notion of the ideal Hungarian, based on the idealization of minority variants of Hungarian, particularly the ones in Erdély (Transylvania, now in Romania), and even by reinterpreting the existing rural dialects as one "perfect" Székely (Szekler) dialect in a wider non-scientific perspective. This notion also comes from the feeling of being on the periphery, combined with a partly imaginative collective memory, in defence against colonial rule.

CONCLUSIONS

The paper described the historical developments after 1990 in Central Europe as a specific instantiation of postcolonialism, in particular in the linguistic domain. The first part outlined the historical background and the main features of the post-communist period from a communicative and linguistic perspective. When in 1990 the region was freed from Soviet rule, many socio-cultural features of culture, language policy, language use and everyday communication activities that were practiced during the colonial period survived. The paper argues that these remnants show a certain postcolonial way of life in the region. The paper first surveyed the literature to discuss the validity of the notion of postcolonialism for the given period in Central Europe. In the second part, general postcolonial features in the Hungarian language community were introduced. These features were detailed first focusing on the developments in Hungary, then on the characteristics of minority Hungarian communities across the border around Hungary. Factors like communicative systems, language policy, language variants, reflection, and self-reflection on the language community and identification, language rights, public education, and others were presented. All of these developments must face adherence to colonial schemas and quick transition to postmodern communication forms.

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