

**Review of**  
**Réka Máté's dissertation**

**“Individual varieties of language maintenance:  
The example of Transcarpathian Hungarians”**

Réka Máté's dissertation on the language maintenance of Transcarpathia Hungarians in the village of Zhnyatino/Izsnýéte is a fine piece of work in the sociolinguistics of bilingualism, solidly embedded in the theoretical framework of the Dynamic Model of Multilingualism, co-developed by Máté's advisor, Prof. Ulrike Jessner, and analyzing empirical data the author collected herself. The work accomplished by the author is multifaceted, complex, and takes a comprehensive look at the situation of multilingualism in the village, embedded in a wider perspective of the region.

The merits of the research underlying the dissertation are clear and unquestionable, deserving the awarding of the title of Doctor of Philosophy on the author, even though the work suffers from a multitude of formatting problems and (ideally) should not have been accepted to proceed to the public defense in its present state because of them.

However, the merits outweigh the problems, and the present reviewer grudgingly supports that the author be awarded the title.

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**Theoretical framework:**

The work is embedded in the theoretical framework of the Dynamic Model of Multilingualism, which the author clearly understands well – however, a critical evaluation of the model and a discussion of other models or approaches, contrasting advantages and disadvantages of each, is completely missing from the dissertation, as is the thorough argumentation of what it is that this model handles that others perhaps do not.

**Research questions and methodology:**

The methodology used in the dissertation is appropriate for the research questions and is applied meticulously and thoroughly.

One slight case of misrepresentation is that research into the linguistic landscape is not a “method”, as stated on page 49 and elsewhere, but a strand of sociolinguistic research.

**Argumentation:**

The argumentation of the dissertation is clear and logical throughout.

The title of the dissertation is unclear: what is “individual varieties of language maintenance”? Varieties are dialects, individual varieties are idiolects, not “individual varieties”. And what are “varieties of language maintenance”?

An overly euphemistic phrasing regarding the Holocaust is used on p. 55: “The village has a third cemetery that used to be used by the Jewish community, that is currently not present in the settlement.”

Some verbatim quotes are used by the author to spell out what, presumably, she wants to say (e.g. the De Bot quote on p. 59) and without any comment on a 6-line long quotation.

One shortcoming of the argumentation is that the interview questions, listed in full in section 4.3.1 on pages 67–69, should have been provided in the appendix, whereas section 4.2.1 should have contained a discussion of how the list of questions was compiled, using what rationale, etc. – no such discussion is given anywhere in the description of the methodology.

Figure 3 on p. 93 lists, incorrectly, among the “most common borrowings of Slavic origin used in the interviews” the word *brigád* “brigade”, which is actually of French origin in Hungarian, *bálok* “balls [events]”, which is of German origin in Hungarian, and the words *érdekes* “interesting” and *kapcsolva* “connected”, which are not even loanwords in Hungarian.

### **Structure:**

The paper has all the necessary parts, but, in addition to inconsistencies in the front matter mentioned above, it has a combined Discussion and Conclusion chapter, which is quite unorthodox: these should be separate chapters.

### **Language:**

The dissertation is written in good academic English, free from errors and typos. The use of commas in the dissertation, however, follows Hungarian conventions rather than those associated with English (e.g. using a comma before an embedded that-clause, which English never does). There only one sentence in the dissertation that has no verb in the main clause (see sentence starting with “6 districts” on p. 44). There is a handful of cases of contractions used (*it’s* and *don’t*).

### **Format:**

As is indicated in the introductory paragraph of the present review, the dissertation suffers from a variety of formatting problems to the extent that it should not have been allowed to proceed to a public defense in this state.

While there is a list of tables and figures in the front matter, very inconsistently there is no list of Pictures or maps. The page numbering in the Table of Contents is completely wrong: it indicates Roman numerals for the front matter, no such page numbering exists in the dissertation. In a highly unorthodox fashion, the TOC lists things that occur before it and also itself (SIC!).

The dissertation fails to follow the convention established in the past 30 years of sociolinguistic research into Hungarian as spoken in countries outside Hungary, namely, that names of settlements are given in both their official and traditional Hungarian names, separated by a slash, at every mention (e.g. Zhnyatino/Izsnyéte). Examples (i.e. quotes from interviews) should be numbered (consecutively) – they are not. (NB: both of these points were included in the present reviewer’s comments provided to the author at the in-house defense in July 2023 and thoroughly ignored.)

Some verbatim quotes do not have the (compulsory) page numbers (see, for instance, p. 17, second full paragraph from the bottom). Several block quotations include the introductory clause written by the author (which they shouldn’t) (see, for instance, on pp. 21 and 23), and most of them do not have quotation marks.

The **bibliography** of the dissertation contains nearly 250 items – which is truly impressive. The state of the bibliography, however, is anything but.

There is considerable discrepancy between the works cited in the text of the dissertation vs. those listed in the references. Works cited but not listed are as follows: Bárányiné (2010), Erosheva (2005), Huszti (2005), Karmacs (2016) and (2017), Kiss (1995), Kremin and Byers-Heinlein (2021), Lubke and Muthén (2005), McLachlan and Peel (2004), Milroy (1980), Molnár (2005), Поставнова (2020), Rosenbaum et al. (1977), and Tóth (2018a) and (2018b) – 15 in all. Works listed but not cited are the following: Beregszászi (2005), Bourhis et al. (1981), Clyne (2009), Csernicskó (1998), Csernicskó (2012), Csernicskó (2016c), Csernicskó and Orosz (2019), Fábián et al. (2005), Fishman (1965), García (2003), Huszti et al. (2010), Karmacs (2009) and (2011), Kiss (2001) and (2003), Merriam (1998), Molnár D. (2018), Molnár and Molnár D. (2005), Montgomery (2017), Tóth (2015), and Walker and Meyerhoff

(2013) – 22 in all. There are some discrepancies in the way some sources are cited vs. listed: Bárányné et al. (2007) is cited as Bárány et al. (2007); Bartha (1998) is cited as (1999); there are two works by Blommaert and Backus (2013), but in the references they are not differentiated as 2013a and 2013b; three sources by Csernicskó from 2017 are cited, but they are not differentiated as 2017a, b, and c in the citations; two works by Csernicskó et al. from 2020 are listed, but they are not differentiated as 2020a and 2020b; two works by Karmacsi from 2018 are cited, but in the bibliography they are not differentiated as 2018a and 2018b; Pachné Heltai (2014) is listed as Pahné Heltai (2014); Thompson (2001) should be ThomAson in both the citation and the references; two works by Tóth from 2014 are listed, without a differentiation as 2014a and 2014b.

The bibliography items suffer from a myriad of formatting inconsistencies: there is almost no entry with some kind of problem. A multitude of items lack place of publication, publisher, and/or page numbers, in all combinations of these three details; the ordering of place and publisher is inconsistent throughout; Roman numerals are often used instead of the usual Arabic ones for volumes in many places; *Vol.*, *Issue* and *p.* and *pp.* appear in many entries (and shouldn't); the use of italics (for book titles and journal names) is inconsistent; in the case of dissertations, the university is not given in most entries; page numbers of many books are added (and shouldn't be); some journal names are abbreviated (and shouldn't be); capitalization in titles is completely inconsistent; and some Hungarian language chapter, book, and/or article titles are translated into English, while others aren't.

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