

Evaluation of Krisztián Váradi's Doctoral (PhD) Dissertation

Multilingualism Doctoral School

Faculty of Humanities

Title: A typology of East Slavic (Ukrainian and Russian) lexical borrowings in the Transcarpathian Hungarian contact variety

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The dissertation, submitted by Krisztián Váradi in 2026, is an academically mature, well-structured, empirically rich PhD thesis in applied linguistics, minority language studies, contact linguistics and loanword typology. Its main strength is the scale and systematicity of the dataset: the author analyses 1,641 contextualised Slavic borrowings, with a broader dataset of 1,886 items, drawn from previous studies, literary works, news portals, social media, interviews, and other sources. The empirical scope is therefore considerably broader than that of previous studies in the field. It integrates etymological, chronological, grammatical, semantic, typological, motivational, adaptation-based and register-based perspectives within one framework.

The dissertation contributes to the study of Hungarian as a pluricentric language and to the documentation of regional Hungarian varieties spoken outside Hungary. The dissertation explicitly situates the research within the history of Transcarpathia, the changing role of Russian and Ukrainian, and the sociolinguistic situation of the Hungarian minority. On the other hand, it shows that lexical borrowing is not merely a matter of direct transfer from one donor language to one recipient language. Instead, it demonstrates that borrowings may involve dual donor-language attribution, intermediary and ultimate etymological sources, register-based differentiation, and various degrees of phonological, morphological, and semantic integration. Its main strengths are the size and systematic organization of the lexical dataset, the multidimensional typology, the clear connection between linguistic findings and Transcarpathia's historical-political context, and the attention to register-based variation.

Literature review

The literature review is broad, relevant, and well integrated into the topic. It covers key concepts of lexical borrowing, code-switching/code-mixing, loanword typology, adaptation, Hungarian as a pluricentric language, the multilingual context of Transcarpathia, and previous research on Slavic borrowings. The theoretical framework is not merely general; it is adapted to the concrete empirical problem of Ukrainian/Russian influence on Transcarpathian Hungarian. A major strength is that the review combines international contact-linguistic literature with Hungarian and Transcarpathian scholarship. The dissertation clearly identifies a gap: earlier studies often listed borrowings but did not provide a multidimensional analysis of etymology, chronology, semantic fields, grammatical category, borrowing type,

motivation, adaptation, and register. When discussing the motivating force of code-switching, the candidate successfully integrated Myers-Scotton's (2006) 'Rational Choice Model' into the literature review. /Myers-Scotton, C. (2006: 161). *Multiple voices: An introduction to bilingualism*. Blackwell Publishing./

Originality of research questions

The research questions are clear, relevant, and well aligned with the dissertation's aims. Their originality lies in their combined application to a large, systematically organised dataset. The dissertation's novelty is explicitly stated: previous collections were much smaller, while this study uses 1,641 analysed entries and documents actual usage through example sentences from multiple registers. The hypotheses are also explicitly stated, and the discussion chapter systematically returns to the research questions as well as the hypotheses.

Consistency of methodology

The methodology is generally consistent with the aims and research questions. The dissertation uses a large lexical dataset, clearly defined classification categories, quantitative summarisation, and qualitative linguistic interpretation. The method is especially appropriate because the dissertation aims to produce a typology rather than an experimental or survey-based study. The analytical categories—donor language, etymology, chronology, part of speech, semantic field, loanword type, motivation, adaptation, variation, and register—correspond directly to the research questions. The dissertation acknowledges its methodological limitations, including the non-exhaustive nature of the dataset, uneven distribution across source types, the interpretive difficulty of distinguishing borrowing from code-switching, and the uncertainty involved in donor-language and chronological classification. This reflexivity strengthens the credibility of the research.

Research finding and results

The findings are substantial and clearly connected to the research questions. Particularly important are the results that many items have dual Ukrainian–Russian origin, Russian influence remains stronger overall, the Soviet period is the dominant borrowing layer, and post-Soviet Ukrainian borrowings reflect recent sociopolitical change. The grammatical and semantic results are convincing. The register-based analysis is theoretically valuable because it demonstrates that lexical borrowing is shaped not only by language contact but also by communicative context, genre, institutional regulation, and sociopolitical change.

Conclusion

The conclusion is well organized and adequately reflects the findings of the dissertation. It summarises the major results, identifies theoretical contributions, discusses practical implications, acknowledges limitations, and proposes future research directions. The dissertation convincingly argues that Slavic borrowings form a structured, historically meaningful layer of the Transcarpathian Hungarian lexicon and that their study contributes to contact linguistics, minority language studies, loanword typology, and the pluricentric interpretation of Hungarian. The practical implications are also meaningful: the findings may support lexicography, language documentation, education, minority language planning, and editorial or translation practice.

Format and structure

The dissertation is formally well structured and logically organised; it contains the standard elements expected in a PhD thesis: abstract, acknowledgements, abbreviations, lists of figures and tables, table of contents, introduction, theoretical framework, methodology, results, discussion, conclusion, references, and appendices. The number and placement of tables and figures are appropriate. The dissertation uses tables effectively to summarise classification criteria, dataset composition, source types, chronological categories, and register-based results.

Language and style

The language style is clear, academic, and generally appropriate for an English-language PhD dissertation. The author writes in a controlled scholarly register and explains terminology carefully. Definitions are usually precise, and the argumentation is easy to follow despite the complexity of the material.

Overall assessment

The dissertation's greatest strength is that it transforms a previously fragmented field of loanword lists and smaller studies into a systematic, large-scale typological analysis. It also successfully connects lexical data with historical context, especially the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. I propose the acceptance of the dissertation because it meets the requirements of a PhD dissertation in applied linguistics, and makes a meaningful contribution to the study of Slavic–Hungarian language contact, Transcarpathian Hungarian, lexical borrowing and minority language variation.

Question to the Candidate:

You propose that the typological framework developed in the dissertation could be applied to other minority Hungarian varieties and multilingual settings. Which parts of your framework are most transferable, and which parts are specific to the Transcarpathian Ukrainian–Russian–Hungarian context?

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