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Acculturation Processes and Interethnic Relations among Germans in Hungary prior to 1945 in the Light of Hungarian Loans¹

Acculturation means the variegated process of adaptation to and integration into new or changed circumstances of living. Although it is a phenomenon that can also be examined with respect to individual fates and lives, the research of this field is mostly concerned with and concentrates upon larger communities (e.g. village communities) or entire ethnic groups.

National and ethnic minorities offer a perfect field of research with respect to acculturation processes and strategies, since adaptation and integration are not only natural concomitants of the lasting, often several-hundred-year-long co-existence of different languages and cultures but, beyond that – even merely because of the direct geographical-horizontal adjacency – in many cases its necessary consequence – with regard both to the relations between minorities and the majority, recipient nation and those between the minorities themselves. With respect to acculturation, contacts, interactions and inter-ethnic relations between the given ethnic groups – which also become manifest in specific variegated loaning, that is, transferring-borrowing processes primarily but not exclusively in the field of the material culture – have a key intermediary role. Loan words are literally expressive and telling witnesses of this, since experiences reveal that the borrowing group, together with the newly integrated reality content, very often adopts their denotation from the language of the transferring ethnic group. In this study, acculturation and inter-ethnic relations will be examined on the basis of their manifestation in the language through a minority ethnic group in Hungary, the Germans and German enclaves settled here after the occupation. Considering the limitations of the genre, no comprehensive, all-embracing analysis can be presented here. Consequently, so the most characteristic processes will only be introduced.

After the Turkish have been chased out, the Germans moved into Hungary from southern and central German territories in the framework of the re-population activities of the emperor and private landowners, faced several layers and forms of new and unusual circumstances of life. These provided potential areas for integration out of necessity more or less: not only the linguistic environment was

¹ The present article is an edited version of the lecture the author prepared for the conference entitled *Változások a Kárpát-medence tér- és identitás szerkezetében* [Changes in the Spatial and Identity Structures of the Carpathian Basin] organised by the Minority Studies Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences on May 30–31, 2002.

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unknown to them – enhanced by the fact that the ethnic map of their new home was rather colourful – but also the spiritual, material and economic culture that surrounded them, the regime, the social systems of relations and forms of behaviour in society, and even the climate and, partly in connection to this, the flora and fauna as well. One of the important and complex source-materials of the answers given to the new circumstances and challenges is constituted by those four hundred loan words taken from the Hungarian language and integrated into the German dialects of Hungary that I collected from various scientific publications and others of documentary character published before 1945, that is, prior to the end of the examined period. The penetration of the four hundred words is not the same: part of them can be found in almost every German dialect in Hungary, others are used in a specific area or in a few localities, and there are still others that can only be found in a single dialect. At the same time, it has to be added that in the given age, sources referring to the loans are rather sporadic and, in cases, accidental. Moreover, from an areal aspect, they are far from covering the whole of the territories inhabited by Germans – I managed to collect data from not more than 34 localities and four larger geographic units (Bánát [Banat], Szatmár (Satu Mare) region, Apatin and surroundings, Buda hills). For this reason, the number of loans would probably increase in the case of the complete documentation. Similarly, the same could be expected if, following from the technical specifics of the examined period, I would have worked with material taken from spoken language and not from written sources.

The four-hundred-word corpus, despite all its inadequacies, proved to be a coherent and systematic source-material during the investigations. Among others, this is indicated by the fact that the majority of the loans are connected to well-circumscribable thematic and conceptual categories and linguistic varieties. A sign of this is that we encounter among the Germans in Hungary, in their new home and amongst changed circumstances – and independent of the dialectal belonging and geographical position of the individual localities –, similar deficiencies, inadequacies and needs, and identical or at least similar strategies destined to make up for and cover these. The thematic categorisation of the above-mentioned loans is as follows (generally, I did not indicate all of the loans in the categories but only the most characteristic ones²):

² I would like to add to the publishing of the linguistic data the following: I present the individual loans only in the form they exist in Hungarian, the transferring language. In the examined period, the complete linguistic integration of the loans was characteristic among the Germans in Hungary, among others because of the strong position of the dialect and the almost complete lack of their knowledge of the Hungarian language. However, given that the Germans in Hungary speak different dialects, the individual Hungarian loans were embedded in function of the dialectal rules of the borrowing community. Therefore, it can happen in given cases that the loans have different dialectal forms. However, this rather interesting problem does not constitute the subject of my lecture. For the places of occurrence of the individual loans cf. the list of references and the following publications: Erb, Mária (1997) and Erb, Mária, (2001). In connection to the meaning of loans in the transferring and borrowing languages: Given that this is another very complex problem that does not constitute the subject of the present analysis, I only indicated the meaning of the words – see the enumeration under the language of the children – when I felt this justified because of the lack of their understanding, penetration or practical use.

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Culinary culture

bogrács; bogrács; bogrács; csicsóka; fogas; gulyás; kalács; kukoricamálé; lacikonyha; mák; palacsinta; pampuska, paprikás; pogácsa; puliszka; szárma; szilvórium; tarhonya; tepsi; túró; túrós csusza; túrós lepény

Garments, clothing

atilla, bakancs, bekecs, blúz, bocskor, bújbele; bunda; csákó; csizma; csurák; dolmány; fűzős; gatya; gombos; gallér, kabát; kalap; kalpag; kézelő; köpönyeg; kucsma; kurta; mente; papucs; sapka; suba; sujtás; szarvas; szűr; topánka

Behaviour culture and forms, greetings

áldomás, Éljen!; Halljuk!; Lássuk!; Hogy volt?!; alászolgája; néni; bácsi

Swearwords and curses

A teremtésit!; Az anyád!; Az apád!; Az árgyéusát!; B... az anyádat!; B... az Istenit!; B... a teremtette!; Ejnye, teremtette!; Fene egye meg!; Kutya teremtette!

Agriculture and animal husbandry

- Plants and cultivated plants: *bakator, csicsóka, kadarka, kukorica, paprika, pipacs, tulipán;*
- Domestic animals: *bika, boci, csikó, fakó, gulya, kacska, kakas, kese, mangalica, ménes, mokány, pulyka;*
- Words for driving and calling the animals: *bece, boci, buri(ka), gyí/gyíja, hess, kuc, pi-pi;*
- Other agricultural terms: *akol, béres, bitang, bojtár, cseléd, gazda, gulyás, hodály, karám, petrence, puszta, sallang, szállás, tanya;*
- Animal names (Names of cows, bulls, horses and dogs): *Betyár, Bimbó, Daru, Cifra, Csákó; Körmös, Rendes, Szarvas; Csillag, Dáma, Deres, Fakó, Fáni, Huszár, Madár, Szellő; Bundás, Farkas, Tigris, Tisza.*

Achievements of scientific and technical development

mozi, villamos, vonat

Official, administrative and military language

alispán, árenda, árendás, baka, deres, fillér, fogdmeg, hajdú, honvéd, huszár, intéző, ispán, korbács, korbácsol, kortes, korteskedik, pandúr, pengő, robot, robotol, tűzér, városháza, zupás, zsandár

The language of children (games, tools, rules of games)

bika ('a children's game played with five pebbles'), *csesz/cseszik* ('when the ball only touches the player'), *csiga, csigázik, félkéz* ('when the player hits only with one hand in the game called *pigézés*'), *kampó* ('the name of a ball game'),

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lukas ('when the player does not hit the ball'), *patkó* ('the tool used in the game called *patkózás*: a round piece of iron with a whole in the middle'); *patkózik* ('to play the game called *patkózás*'), *ujróta* ('the name of a ball game')

The loans enumerated without a claim to completeness are themselves very interesting, expressive, and telling witnesses of the influence Hungarian language and, in a wider sense, Hungarian culture had on the Germans in Hungary³. The fact that the majority of them can be placed into systematic categories like this makes the existence of certain more general mechanisms, regularities and cause-effect relations probable. A significant part of the documented loans is made up by those that denote typically Hungarian reality contents, ethno-realities (Hungarian exotisms, features). In their case, the words are borrowed together with the content denoted by them and they cover the inevitable denomination gaps of the German dialects. The utilized sources also discuss this in detail on several occasions (e.g. Eszterle 1929: 67; Kräuter 1907: 40), or point this out through presenting the Hungarian words of this category under the "[...] words denoting particular Hungarian circumstances" (e.g. Horger 1899: 714) label. We can find words in every above-mentioned group of our linguistic corpus that can clearly be classified among these and constitute perfect examples of the acculturation and integration of the Germans into "Hungarian reality": e.g. *bogrács*, *gulyás*, *lacikonyha*, *palacsinta*, *pogácsa*, *atilla*, *bújbele*, *dolmány*, *csákó*, *gatya*, *mente*, *alászoigája*, *Hogy volt?!*, *paprika*, *bakator*, *kadarka*, *alispán*, *pengő*, *pandúr*, *zsandár*, moreover the examples from the language of the children.

The influence of Hungarian eating and culinary culture becomes manifest in certain typical materials and ingredients but it is also present in the "Hungarian-style" way of preparation of certain meals – e.g. the frequent use of paprika. To read about this in detail, see the book of Katalin Wild on the culinary culture of the Germans in Hungary (Wild 1998: 10–11.). It is here that I would like to touch upon the issue of the so-called "international loan words" and "international loan words related to a culture" – although the problem concerns not only certain loans that appear in this group – that can be found in the language of several national groups, including of the Hungarians, in the Central and South-eastern European area: e.g. *csurák*, *málé*, *palacsinta*, *szárma*. At the same time, the exact order of the transfer of international loan words from language to language is difficult to be reconstructed, so it may be presumed that the Germans living in various areas of the country borrowed the given word from different languages in function of the ethnic composition of the given territory.

The influence of Hungarian clothing culture is revealed by the adoption of the names of certain articles of clothing, pattern designs and techniques of

³ As they convey rather complex information, I find their interdisciplinary analysis not only possible but outright necessary with the involvement of various sciences and fields of sciences, e.g. contact linguistics, dialectology, sociology of language, ethnography and psycholinguistics, just to mention the most important ones.

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decoration. It is interesting to note that we can find the following two hybrid craft names among the loans: *csizmemacher* (from the Hungarian *csizma* [boot] and the German *Macher* “maker”) and *papucsenmacher* (from the Hungarian *papucs* [slippers] and the German *Macher* “maker”). It is noteworthy that Hungarian clothing culture had a considerable effect on the Germans prior to the arrival of the Turkish as well: Writing about Hungarian words melted into the language of the Heanz, János Ebenspanger mentions among others the fact that the clothing of the Heanz peasants gradually turned Hungarian similar to their way of thinking (cf. Ebenspanger 1882: 6). Borrowing a given word did not always involve the adoption and use of the object denoted by it but the practical co-existence and inter-ethnic system of relations of the differing ethnic groups, it seems, made at least its linguistic denomination necessary. We can find an example to this in the loan glossary of Antal Horger concerning the Germans of Bánát: “szűr: an article of clothing made of rough fur cloth, worn by the *Hungarians*”, – at the same time “*suba*: a coat made of rough fur cloth, worn by the *Wallachians*”⁴ (Horger 1899: 712).

From among the loans in the thematic category of “forms of behaviour”, I would like to touch upon the ones that may be the most interesting: the swear words and curses. Their number adds up to twenty in the entire corpus, so they make up 5% of all of the loans, which can be considered substantial. The subject appears several times in the respective sources as well and not only regarding recent but also older German enclaves and even other minorities in Hungary. Károly Schäfer writes that swearing is a peculiarly Hungarian product “among our meek Germans” (Schäfer 1896: 579). Vilmos Lehr sheds light to the multiethnic character of the problem and puts it as follows: “The Wallachian vocabulary of Hungarian infantryman hardly goes beyond swearwords, since experience shows that this is the first thing that one learns in the course of practical language learning” (Lehr 1895: 186). Karin Ney conducted research in four Saxon villages in the surroundings of Nagyszeben (Sibiu) at the beginning of the 80s. One of her interviewees made the following conclusion regarding this matter⁵: “Germans are so much in want of imagination! When they once truly feel like swearing, they go as far as “Scheiße!” only, a Saxon man noted once. A furious Saxon, however, has a vast repository of swearwords and curses to let his fume out – generally, in the Romanian language! A Saxon swears in Romanian, a Romanian in Hungarian. [...] One can swear in Hungarian the best but the Romanian is not bad either! (Ney 1894: 125)”. It can be that these statements are infused with features of ethnic characterisation that could possibly be debated but, in any case, they coincide with the indicators of quantity regarding the swearwords received from the sources and the fact that the

⁴ The names of the two ethnic groups are italicised in the original text as well, probably with the purpose of emphasising them.

⁵ The German citation is translated into English on the basis of its Hungarian translation prepared by the author.

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Germans in Hungary borrowed the majority of their swearwords from Hungarian. The frequent use of these words in Hungarian everyday usage probably also contributed to this together with the fact that German dialects were likely to have “deficiencies” in this field. I have to mention the fact that acculturation was not complete with respect to swearwords. Although the Germans in Hungary adopted certain lexemes and word forms, all of them went through a significant improvement of their meaning with the exception of one and lost the rude component of their meaning – they practically adapted to the above-mentioned meekness of their new users.

We can encounter strikingly numerous Hungarian loans in the fields of cultivation and animal husbandry. Some of them denote realities that are not typically Hungarian and in their case neither communication deficit nor naming inadequacy can be revealed from the part of the dialect, since the preponderant majority of the Germans in Hungary belonged to the social stratum of the peasants. In these cases, the Hungarian word probably gradually expelled the indigenous correspondent of the German dialect or – and several examples prove this – the loan word integrated into the German dialect next to its German correspondent with both words subsequently going through a change of meaning, usually with the original meaning narrowing down. I do not have the possibility to touch upon all of the reasons of the integration of the numerous Hungarian loans, so I will briefly point out the most important cause-effect relations. Hungarian and, depending on the ethnic composition of the area, Romanian or Slovak labourers and domestics were often employed in the households and individual farms of the Germans in Hungary, so the Hungarian language was frequently present in everyday communication regarding the farm. Besides this, in a considerable part of the villages inhabited by Germans, the horse-herders, herdsmen and shepherds were Hungarians, as it is also set forth by a number of contemporary sources (Hajnal 1906: 67; Potoczky 1910: 45). Besides all this, a key role has to be attributed to markets and the trade of goods conducted at them. It is likely that in a multilingual country like Hungary, implicitly but in a very practical way, Hungarian was the intermediary language between the other languages at the scenes of these gatherings: it had the role of a *lingua franca*. It is probably this practical strategy we are to expect behind the great number of Hungarian words used to drive and call the animals, moreover the Hungarian name of the domestic animals, since it is rather difficult to make animals get used to new names and commands⁶. However, not only Germans in Hungary used and continue to use today Hungarian names to denote domestic animals: Ignác Reichnitz introduces the same phenomenon with many examples in the case of the Wallachians of Hajdú county (Reichnitz 1896: 301), while Larissa Naiditsch – and let us go beyond the borders – renders account of the fact that the Germans living in the surroundings of St. Petersburg use Russian names without exception to denote domestic animals (Naiditsch 1994: 35.).

⁶ It is very likely that the domestic animals received Hungarian names first and the analogical extension of this to dogs and cats originates from a later date.

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It is not surprising that the official and administrative language is present with numerous loans: naturally, the German settlers integrated into the public and administrative structures of their new home as Hungarian citizens. Given that the official language is a linguistic variety with a rigid terminology, it leaves hardly any space for synonymy. Therefore, it does not surprise us that we can find many telling proofs about the integration and adaptation of the Germans to the new circumstances.

Hungarian loans used in the language of the children make up 10% of all of the loans and, with this relatively high proportion, shed light to one of the significant characteristics, namely, the generation-specific nature of acculturation and inter-ethnic relations. Linguistic data reveal through the loans referring to games and playing that German children in Hungary learned many games from their Hungarian counterparts and this could be possible only through interactions and joint activities. It might have contributed to this that this age group is more open than that of the adults and still free from possible prejudices. It is interesting, however, that almost all of the loans referring to games are connected to jumping, running games and games of skill, in which verbal communication is minimal. No vocabulary could be documented in connection to round games and round dance that would have constituted a greater and, particularly, more extensive (foreign) linguistic challenge. Beyond common games, the so-called "child-exchange system" probably also contributed to the increase in the number of loans (cf. Kósa 1981 and 1987, and Andrásfalvy 1978). Starting from the end of the 19th century, however, it was the gradually increasing presence of Hungarian language in minority education that had a most powerful effect but this issue goes beyond the issue of the loan words.

In sum, I sought to shed light upon a few important characteristics of the multifold issue outlined in the title from a linguistic aspect. At the same time, I believe it is important for researchers in the case of a traditionally multinational country like Hungary to map these not necessarily proportionally balanced but certainly multilateral systems of relations that function on a reciprocal basis, with respect to all ethnic groups concerned.

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