

# A receding paradigm as a tool of language discrimination

István Kozmács\* 

Constantine the Philosopher University, Nitra, Slovakia

## ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Received: August 17, 2020 • Accepted: September 29, 2020

Published online: February 16, 2021

© 2020 Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest



### ABSTRACT

The 1Sg forms of *ik*-verbs are identical in the definite and indefinite conjugations in Standard Hungarian. The use of nonstandard forms can evoke discrimination despite the fact that it has been well-known for a long time that by the 18th century the *ik*-paradigm survived only in some eastern and western dialects of the language (Simonyi, 1906a, p. 14; Brassai, 2011, p. 253; Benkő, 1992, p. 213). In the early 19th century the language revival movement revived the disappearing *ik*-conjugation (Révai, 1806) and made it part of the educated, literary, and later standard variety.

The present paper demonstrates how a paradigm that almost completely receded became the tool of language stigmatization as a result of the actions of those with linguistic power, and shows, on the basis of a questionnaire based study, to what extent the *ik*-paradigm is present in the language use of 14–19-year-olds at the beginning of the 21st century.

### KEYWORDS

conjugation, language discrimination, Hungarian language, language revival movement

This paper addresses the issue, on the one hand, of how the use of the *ik*-conjugation of Hungarian can still be the measure of educated speech in Hungarian despite the fact that, according to historical linguistic evidence, this conjugation was no longer used in most of the Hungarian language area over 200 years ago. On the other hand, I aim to demonstrate, on the basis of a questionnaire based survey, that education is the most important factor in the continuing use of the conjugation (or the remnants of it).

\* Corresponding author. E-mail: kozmacsistvan@gmail.com

## A RECEDING PARADIGM

In the verbal inflection of modern Hungarian, there are two conjugations: in one, the indefinite conjugation, all verbs can be conjugated. There are two paradigms within the indefinite conjugation, the *ik*-conjugation and the non-*ik*-conjugation. The other conjugation is the definite conjugation, which is limited to transitive verbs (regardless of whether they are *ik*-verbs or not). Intransitive verbs can also be conjugated along the definite conjugation when they express the extent of an action (cf. *Lefutotta a távot*. “S/He ran the whole distance.”).

Before discussing the nature and problems of the *ik*-conjugation, it is important to point out some differences between the indefinite vs. definite conjugation. The difference in their use is that “a verb form conjugated for the indefinite conjugation can accept a landmark of various cases, and a sentence structure without an elaborated landmark is also possible” (Tolcsvai Nagy, 2015, p. 128). The compulsory object can be profiled depending on the speech situation, or deleted if both the speaker and the listener know, through their background knowledge or the context, what this deleted definite object is.

*Ik*-verbs are a class of Hungarian verbs that receive the *-ik* ending in the present tense third person singular (instead of the zero morpheme of the indefinite conjugation – cf. *ül* “s/he/it sits”, *néz* “s/he/it watches”, *fut* “s/he/it runs”): *esik* “s/he/it falls”, *fázik* “s/he/it is cold”, *eszik* “s/he/it eats”, *iszik* “s/he/it drinks”. The *-ik* suffix most likely developed from a mediopassive verb derivational suffix, which expressed events where the subject is a patient rather than an actor. Later, the suffix came to mark forms of transitive verbs that occurred without an overt object (cf. *Mit csinál? Eszik* “What is s/he/it doing?” “Eating”)– or at least that is the direction in which the use of the suffix started to change in Ancient Hungarian times. After the separation of the indefinite and definite conjugations and the stabilization of the *-t* suffix as the marker of the accusative,<sup>1</sup> the function of the *-ik* derivational suffix did not stabilize as the marker of transitive verbs without an overt object. This resulted in the development of an incomplete paradigm for the *ik*-verbs: it occurs only in the present tense and only in the singular, but in all three moods (indicative, conditional, and imperative). In parallel with this, real active verbs became *ik*-verbs by the 17th century, while the verbs that used to be *ik*-verbs became non-*ik*-verbs, and many formerly non-*ik* mediopassive verbs became *ik*-verbs. As a result, the system of the *ik*-conjugation completely unraveled in modern Hungarian, with the following groups of *ik*-verbs being distinguished currently. The categorization is based on an ideal, with no regard to regional dialects (hence the statements that claim, for instance, that *alszik* “sleep” is a verb that is conjugated in the *ik*-paradigm in all of its forms):

1. **Regular, stable:** in the present tense, the person markers are *-m*, *-l*, and *-ik* in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd persons, respectively. Verbs that belong here are *tetszik* “like”, *alszik* “sleep”, *eszik* “eat”, *iszik* “drink”, *dolgozik* “work” etc.
2. **Vacillating:** their person marker in 1Sg can be *-m* or *-k*, in 2Sg *-l* or *-sz*, and only 3Sg has *-ik* unequivocally: for instance, *botlik* “trip”: *botlok* ~ *botlom* “I trip”, *botlasz* “you trip”; *ébredszik* “be waking up”: *ébredszek* ~ *ébredzem* “I’m waking up”; *lakik* “reside”: *lakok* ~ *lakom* “I reside”, *laksz* “you reside”, *lakik* “s/he resides”; *ugrik* “jump”: *ugrok* ~ *ugrom* “I jump”, *ugrasz* “you jump” etc.

<sup>1</sup>In the Ancient Hungarian period objects did not bear case marking.



3. **Pseudo-ik**: verbs that have person markers in the *ik*-paradigm only in 3Sg<sup>2</sup>: for instance *bújik* “hide”: *bújok* “I hide”, *bújsz* “you hide”; *folyik* “flow”: *folyok* “I flow”, *folysz* “you flow”; *illik* “fit”: *illek* “I fit”, *illesz* “you fit”; *megjelenik* “appear”: *megjelenek* “I appear”, *megjelenesz* “you appear”, *születik* “be born”: *születek* “I am born”, *születsz* “you are born” (Not all pseudo-ik verbs are used in 1Sg.) New *ik*-verbs derived from nouns also belong here: e.g., *biciklizik* “ride a bike”, *mobilozik* “use a cell phone”, *számítógépezik* “use a computer”.
4. **Vacillating pseudo-ik**: verbs that can be non-*ik* even in 3Sg, e.g.: *bomol/bomlik* “desintegrate”, *tündököl/tündöklik* “coruscate” (Balázs, 2001, pp. 113–115).

As we can see, in the *ik*-conjugation the person marker for 1Sg in all three moods is the ancient VxSg1 *-m*, a suffix that is used in non-*ik* paradigms only in the definite conjugation (cf. *várok valakit* “I’m waiting for somebody” ~ *várom őt* “I’m waiting for her/him”). We can also see that, regardless of the vowel of the verb stem, the vowel of the conditional and imperative 3Sg suffix is *é*, a nonharmonic vowel (cf. *laknék* ~ *lakna*). In Table 1, forms that are normatively expected of users to this day are marked with bold and italic. Forms whose use has receded to the extent that they occur only in very refined and somewhat archaic speech are marked in all caps and italic. Forms whose use is considered a mistake in today’s *ik*-paradigm is marked in bold. We can state that most speakers (including the participants of the survey discussed below) conjugate *ik*-verbs analogously to non-*ik* verbs in the indefinite conjugation (Table 2):

From the full paradigm of the *ik*-verbs, the 1Sg and 3Sg indicative forms are used today, and we can find more forms conjugated in the *ik*-paradigm in the imperative than in the conditional. The survey results discussed below will lend support what Horváth and Reményi (1990)

**Table 1.** *Ik*-paradigm vs. non-*ik* paradigm (*eszik* “eat”, *tesz* “put”, *lakik* “reside”, and *lak* “place”)

	Indicative		Conditional		Imperative	
	<i>ik</i>	non- <i>ik</i>	<i>ik</i>	non- <i>ik</i>	<i>ik</i>	non- <i>ik</i>
1Sg	<i>ESZEM</i>	<i>teszek</i>	<i>ENNÉM</i>	<i>tennék</i>	<i>EGYEM</i>	<i>tegyek</i>
2Sg	<i>ESZEL</i>	<i>teszel</i>	<i>ennél</i>	<i>tennél</i>	<i>egyél</i>	<i>tegyél</i>
3Sg	<i>ESZIK</i>	<i>tesz</i>	<i>ENNÉK</i>	<i>tenne</i>	<i>EGYÉK</i>	<i>tegyen</i>
1Sg	<i>LAKOM</i>	<i>rakok</i>	<i>LAKNÁM</i>	<i>raknék</i>	<i>LAKJAM</i>	<i>rakjak</i>
2Sg	<i>LAKOL</i>	<i>raksz</i>	<i>laknál</i>	<i>raknál</i>	<i>lakjál</i>	<i>rakjál</i>
3Sg	<i>LAKIK</i>	<i>lak</i>	<i>LAKNÉK</i>	<i>lakna</i>	<i>LAKJÉK</i>	<i>lakjon</i>

<sup>2</sup>No detailed description of the *ik*-conjugation or the change of person markers can be provided in this paper. The only remark I want to make here is that the *-l* or *-sz* marker of 2Sg depends on the stem-final consonant rather than the type of conjugation: *-l* is used after spirants, and *-sz* is used after all other consonants, cf. *alsz-om*, *alsz-ol*, but there is vacillation in *ébredesz-ek* ~ *ébredesz-em*, *ébredesz-el*, pseudo-*ik* (due to the lack of *mászom*) *mász-ok*, *mász-ol*. (See also Table 1.) A summary of the history of the *ik*-conjugation can be found in Hungarian in MNYTNY 1992: 213–224. The first account of the history of the *ik*-conjugation, still influential today, was provided by Simonyi (1906a), who demonstrated through many examples how *ik*- and non-*ik* conjugations were blended.



**Table 2.** The indefinite conjugation of *ik*-verbs (*eszik* “eat”, *tesz* “put”, *lakik* “reside”, and *rak* “place”)

	Indicative	Conditional	Imperative
1Sg	eszek ~ tesztek	ennék ~ tennék	egyek ~ tegyek
2Sg	eszel ~ teszel	ennél ~ tennél	egyél ~ tegyél
3Sg	eszik ~ tesz	enne ~ tenne	egyen ~ tegyen
1Sg	lakok ~ rakok	laknék ~ raknék	lajak ~ rakjak
2Sg	laksz ~ raksz	laknál ~ raknál	lajjal ~ rakjál
3Sg	lakik ~ rak	lakna ~ rakna	lajjon ~ rakjon

indicated in a small quantitative study, namely that 70.5% of the indicative forms, 55% of the 3Sg imperative forms, and only 1% of the conditional forms were used in the *ik*-paradigm. As Horváth and Reményi (1990, p. 18) state, “no speaker said, in the first person singular, *Ha nem lenne semmi ennivaló itthon, akkor én se enném semmit*. ‘If there were no food at home, I would not eat anything either.’ In third person singular only one speaker, judging from their comments, most likely a teacher who attempts to be very conscious about their speech, said *Ha adnál neki, Pista is ennék a gulyásból*. ‘If you gave him some, Pista would eat some goulash.’”

## LANGUAGE POWERS-THAT-BE AND EDUCATION

Many works concerning the Hungarian language and its description contain opinions and judgments about other people’s speech.<sup>3</sup> In the past, writing a grammar constituted a type of norm, as it does in the present, when it is part of a norm-producing process, which inherently carries value judgments. *Sebestyén and Szathmári (1969, p. 113)* states the following (my translation):

“Writing a grammar is a normative activity independent of the intention of the author, in both the past and the present, since in the complicated web of the language, given the relationship of varieties clinging to each other, it is often not clear whether something is subordinated or coordinated.”

As far as *ik*-verbs are concerned, *Simonyi (1906a)* stated that the revival of the *ik*-conjugation is due to school education and the imitation of the literary language. His question from 1906 is still valid: “to what extent was the school or literature right in reviving the old conjugation, demanding everyone to conform?” (*Simonyi 1906a, p. 1*). The latter issue is especially crucial: linguists and literary scholars revived a paradigm that was no longer used by speakers and imbued it with the prestige of being correct Hungarian.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. “In speech there are many ugly, improper forms which are due to the fact that nobody looks for the characters of words and cannot compare them to other languages or sayings in other languages, but everyone speaks the same way as they learned to speak as babies, they will speak like that in their old age; and because of that this beautiful and wise language became ugly and peasant-like. *Geleji, 1645*” (= *Simonyi, 1906b, p. 5*).



Simonyi (1906a) discussed the issue in detail and in a way that is still valid. In connection with the revival of the *ik*-conjugation, he writes that Miklós Révai's proposal about the revival of the *ik*-conjugation was met with the support of the learned people of the time who worked in the language revival movement. The new paradigm became widely used in fiction in a few decades, and its use became the expectation in schools (Simonyi, 1906a, p. 51). Révai himself wrote that it is the job of the school to stabilize the forms he considered mistakes (e.g., *eszek* instead of *eszem*) (Bánóczy, 1879, p. 352, the Latin original in Révai, 1806, p. 938–939).

The attempts on the part of Révai and his followers to revive the *ik*-conjugation met the criteria of subordination (see below), even though the leading figure of the Hungarian language revival, Ferenc Kazinczy did not use the *ik*-conjugation regularly before he learned about Révai's proposal, and even Révai himself freely used non-*ik* forms in his poetry. Kazinczy's followers assigned such prestige to the *ik*-conjugation that "they saw mistakes and lack of knowledge in every error made in the *ik*-conjugation, and persecuted the offenders with strong criticism and epigrams, shouting mocking comments at speakers in county assemblies to annoy them" (Simonyi, 1906a, p. 52).

In the same paper Somonyi (1906a) writes that *ik*-conjugation forms occurred in regional dialects at the turn of the 19th century only in the indicative 3rd person forms, while other forms of the conjugation were used only at the periphery of the Hungarian language area (Brassai, 2011, p. 253; Benkő, 1992, p. 213; Simonyi, 1906a, pp. 41–44). In an earlier paper, he already concluded that reviving the *ik*-conjugation was a mistake, since "it produced a useless difference between the school's literary language and the language of most of the Hungarian people" (Simonyi, 1903, p. 9). So, Simonyi considered the forced use of the *ik*-conjugation in Hungarian an unnecessary burden, stating that it is schools that contribute the most to the survival of the once receding paradigm (Simonyi, 1903, p. 88).

It is not an overstatement, then, to say that the way (cf. Melich, 1908, 9–12) and his followers elevated the *ik*-conjugation to the level of the prestige variety and strengthened its position in education meets the criteria of subordination, in the terminology of Lippi-Green (2012, p. 70):

*"Language is mystified.*

You can never hope to comprehend the difficulties and complexities of your mother tongue without expert guidance.

*Authority is claimed.*

We are the experts. Talk like me/us. We know what we are doing because we have studied language, because we write well.

*Misinformation is generated.*

That usage you are so attached to is inaccurate. The variant I prefer is superior on historical, esthetic, or logical grounds.

*Targeted languages are trivialized.*

Look how cute, how homey, how funny.

*Conformers are held up as positive examples.*

See what you can accomplish if you only try, how far you can get if you see the light.

*Non-conformers are vilified or marginalized.*

See how willfully stupid, arrogant, unknowing, uninformed and/or deviant these speakers are.



*Explicit promises are made.*

Employers will take you seriously; doors will open.

*Threats are made.*

No one important will take you seriously; doors will close.”

This approach looks at the connection between varieties and their speakers from the perspective of the ideology of power. As Tolcsvai Nagy (2017, p. 40, my translation) says, “[h]ere the direct intention to subordinate is primary, that is, what arguments, ways, and means the representatives of an ideology try to control other social groups or entire societies and language communities in areas of language use and language interpretation”. In agreement with Tolcsvai Nagy, who claims that “[t]he discriminative use of the standard comes from the user, not the variety”, we witness, in the revival of the *ik*-conjugation and its placement in the standard, how the users of a high (later standard) variety elevate a paradigm which no longer exists in most of the language area and whose use can be made into an expectation to serve as the basis of discrimination. Education contributes to the maintenance of the nonexistent paradigm in that it selects one possible variant (e.g., *eszem*) and prohibits another (e.g., *eszek*), or at least deems it erroneous and incorrect. Kontra (2005, p. 188) holds the view that in education usually “those things are emphasized which are more difficult to use and to learn, which are used by the elite”.

While we have data in the linguistics literature regarding the receding of the *ik*-conjugation, sources propagating language cultivation nevertheless make statements such as the following, in response to a reader’s question regarding the use of *ik*-verbs:

“*Ik*-verbs [...] do not have a definite vs. indefinite conjugation, they only have one conjugation, the *ik*-conjugation. [...] In everyday speech, informal, and unofficial situations the non-*ik* conjugation is acceptable, so *Eszek egy kiflit* ‘I eat a croissant’ cannot be objected to very much if it is uttered in a cafeteria or kitchen, or we can say *Pesten lakok* ‘I live in Pest’ in a friendly conversation, but in a public, official situation and in writing such forms are incorrect and to be avoided. So, if you want to **speak really correctly and in a refined way**,<sup>4</sup> you should use the forms *lakom, eszem, alszom*.”  
Source: <https://e-nyelv.hu/2009-08-14/ikes-es-targyas-ragozas/>, the website of the Hungarian Language Service Office.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to the fact that the text incorrectly claims that *ik*-verbs do not have both indefinite and definite conjugations (when in fact they do), it is not difficult to identify the perspective under which the “really correct” form is also branded refined.

The handbooks of language cultivation that are in use in Hungary today differ from each other regarding the issue of the use of the *ik*-conjugation only in the extent of their stigmatization.

<sup>4</sup>Emphasis mine.

<sup>5</sup>The website states: “Professional background: Magyar Nyelvstratégiai Kutatócsoport [Research Group on Hungarian Language Strategy] (2000–), Magyar Szemiotikai Társaság [Hungarian Semiotics Society] (1991–), Médiaértés Egyesület [Media Understanding Society] (2014–). Cooperating partners: Anyanyelvőpolók Szövetsége [Association for Mother Tongue Protection] (1989/2006–), Magyar Nyelv és Kultúra Nemzetközi Társasága [International Society for the Hungarian Language and Culture] (1970/2012–).



The handbook of language cultivation (*Nyelvművelő kézikönyv*) is the most permissive of the variants (Grétsy and Kovalovszky, 1983, p. 1,013; my translation):

“the *ik*-conjugation lost its peculiar role during the natural development of language, and the intrusion of non-*ik* forms does not cause problems, on the contrary, to some extent it makes utterances more unambiguous. The natural and almost necessary decline of the *ik*-conjugation has been happening for a long time; attempts to thwart this process are in vain, as examples demonstrate, and they are also unnecessary. We have to be understanding and patient while the current mixed state, from which stylistic choices can be made, develop into unity.”

In contrast, the authors of the concise dictionary of language cultivation (*Nyelvművelő kézisótár*) consider it important to differentiate stylistically between the variants (Grétsy and Kemény, 2005, p. 258; my translation):

“the correct use of the *ik*-conjugation can be required only in the indicative of the pure and stable *ik*-verbs. [...] The grammaticality judgment of even educated speakers becomes uncertain when it comes to the use of *ik*- and non-*ik* verbs. But it is important to bear in mind the differential stylistic value of the pairs of forms resulting from the decline of the *ik* system of forms”

The dictionary of Hungarian language correctness (*Magyar nyelvhelyességi lexikon*, Balázs, 2001, p. 113) states that “the *ik*-conjugation can be expected in full only in the present tense use of pure, correct, and stable *ik*-verbs”, however, adding that “preserving and using the -*m* person marking suffix is important in the indicative present 1Sg forms of **pure verbs** (sic!), because the non-*ik*-conjugation **strongly suggests ‘inferior’<sup>6</sup> use”.**

Despite the scholarly argumentation and consensus regarding the decline of the *ik*-conjugation, school education and language cultivation keep it alive today. Gál’s, 2020 survey of Hungarian language use among Hungary Hungarian and Slovakia Hungarian high school students in 2017 included five questions regarding *ik*-verbs in its questionnaire. It did so partly because the same questions were used in the study (Lanstyák and Szabó Mihály, 1997) she used for comparison in her investigation of language change. Two questions focused on 1Sg imperative forms, two questions on 1Sg indicative forms, and one on the hypercorrect *ik*-conjugated form of a non-*ik* verb. The survey, completed by 279 subjects in Hungary and 540 subjects in Slovakia and done by Gál (2020), presents the following picture.

Two questions of the questionnaire required the 1Sg imperative forms of *ik*-verbs, while another questions required the indefinite conjugation present tense 1Sg form of a non-*ik* verb (one that speakers often conjugate, in a hypercorrect way, as if it were an *ik*-verb).

For the respondents, one extreme solution<sup>7</sup> was to provide the expected *ik*-forms of all four *ik*-verbs and the standard form of the non-*ik* verb as well. In this case, the regular *ik*-conjugation was used: that is, the *ik*-conjugation imperative 1Sg forms of *ik*-verbs, *viselkedjék* of *viselkedik* “behave” and *egyék* of *eszik* “eat”; the *ik*-conjugation form of the *ik*-verbs in present tense 1Sg, *alszom* of *alszik* “sleep” and *elkéssem* of *elkészik* “be late”; and a regular non-*ik* form of a non-*ik* verb, *edzek* of *edz* “train”. The other extreme among the responses was to provide no standard *ik*-form, that is, to not conjugate the verb “correctly” (= in the standard version). In such a case,

<sup>6</sup>My emphasis.

<sup>7</sup>At one end of the scale, which can be deduced from the answers.



a respondent did not use the *ik*-conjugation at all, and the form they provided for *edz* was not hypercorrect (not *edzem*, but *edzek*).

An overview of the data shows the following:

- (a) Not all respondents (114 of them, 13.9%,  $N = 819$ ) provided the expected *ik*- or non-*ik* conjugated forms in their answers. They provided the following:
  - i. either another form of the given verb or another verb entirely (for instance, *faljon*, of *fal* ‘devour’, instead of *egyék/egyen* ‘eat’),
  - ii. or a form which was ungrammatical in the context (e.g., *edz* ‘he is training’ instead of *edzek* ‘I am training’).

Of the Hungary respondents, 27 (9.7%,  $N = 279$ ), and of the Slovakia respondents, 87 (16.2%,  $N = 540$ ) did not provide an interpretable response as far as the use of the *ik*-conjugation is concerned. This is a considerable proportion, which I do not seek to find an explanation for in this paper.

- (b) None of the respondents from either Hungary or Slovakia used the *ik*-conjugation consistently.
- (c) 9 (3.2%,  $N = 279$ ) of the Hungary respondents and 21 (3.8%,  $N = 540$ ) of the Slovakia respondents conjugated imperative forms in a non-*ik* way and indicative forms in the *ik*-way (3.6%,  $N = 819$ ).
- (d) Most of both the Hungary and Slovakia Hungarian respondents gave forms that contained no *ik*-conjugation at all: 159 (58.9%,  $N = 279$ ) and 217 (44.5%,  $N = 540$ ), respectively. Of all respondents, 45.9% ( $N = 819$ ) responded in such a way. A lower proportion of NN-KKK<sup>8</sup> responses among the Slovakia respondents is due to the fact that they used the hypercorrect *edzem* form in 23.8% of the cases (while the Hungary respondents did so only in 9.6% of the cases).
- (e) Further results are as follows, as summarized in Table 3:
  - i. Slovakia Hungarian respondents used considerably more hypercorrect forms (using the *ik*-conjugation when the indefinite conjugation should be the standard form) [1].
  - ii. A similarly low proportion of both groups of respondents used imperative *ik*-forms ([2]).
  - iii. Only 8.9% of the Hungary respondents and 14.0% of the Slovakia respondents used the standard forms of both present tense *ik*-verbs ([3]).
  - iv. Slovakia respondents used the standard form of at least one of the present tense *ik*-verbs (by 12%) ([4]).

Based on this, we can state the following:

1. The *ik*-conjugation is nonexistent for almost half of the respondents in the case of the verbs tested in the questionnaire, whereas for the other half it is a paradigm that exists only in traces.
2. This survey demonstrates that the imperative 1Sg *ik*-form is the least known: only 19, or 2.3% of the respondents ( $N = 819$ ) used it.
3. Most respondents used no inflected forms in the *ik*-conjugation.

<sup>8</sup>Neither form has *ik*-conjugation.





**Table 3.** The use of the *ik*-conjugation (2017)

		HU	SK
[1]	<i>edzeM</i>	9.6	23.8
[2]	<i>viselkedJÉK</i> or <i>egyÉK</i>	6.6	6.9
[3]	both <i>ik</i> -verbs in present 1Sg - <i>M</i>	8.9	14.0
[4]	at least one <i>ik</i> -conjugation present 1Sg - <i>M</i>	34.0	46.2

**Table 4.** *Ik*-verbs in HNSR

	MNSZV 1988	HU 1997	SK 1997	HU 2017 <sup>a</sup>	SK 2017 <sup>a</sup>
Elkésem	29.5	17.2	35.6	8.6	16.3
elkések	70.5	82.8	64.1	88.2	76.4
Egyék	19.9	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.0
Egyen	80.1	100.0	99.6	99.6	98.6

<sup>a</sup> Where totals do not add up to 100%, subjects provided unexpected (e.g., *el fogok késni*) or ungrammatical (*elkésni*) forms.

4. Slovakia Hungarian respondents used the 1Sg -*m* *ik*-conjugation suffix more than the respondents from Hungary, even in the case of non-*ik* verbs.

An earlier study from 1988 (HNSR<sup>9</sup>), and the study serving as a model for the current study (Lanstyák–Szentmihályi 1997) examined the use of the *ik*-conjugation. All three studies used the following two fill-in questions. The results are summarized in Table 4.

The comparison demonstrates that the imperative *ik*-form is no longer used by the respondents, and that the present tense 1Sg *ik*-form receded considerably among respondents in Hungary, while it is retained among respondents in Slovakia. We can also see that Slovakia Hungarian respondents used the 1Sg -*m* suffix more than the Hungary Hungarian respondents, in both studies. This is due to the teaching of Hungarian in schools and the stigmatization of the regional vernacular variety. The stigmatization of the speakers' variety by others forces them to strive to produce the variety which is regarded as correct by those holding the linguistic power. This results in the more frequent use of the investigated inflection on the one hand, and hypercorrection on the other, and the "extent of hypercorrection [...] is always proportionate with linguistic insecurity, whereas linguistic insecurity results predominantly from normativity and prescriptivism" (Sándor, 2001, p. 248). Sándor remarks in a note that considering some form of speech incorrect also entails judgment of students' personalities.<sup>10</sup>

Teaching Hungarian in Slovakia schools that use Hungarian as the language of instruction demonstrates strong standardizing ideology and prescriptive intentions centered around

<sup>9</sup>Hungarian National Sociolinguistic Research, <http://www.nytud.hu/depts/socio/index.html>.

<sup>10</sup>The phenomenon is overviewed and analyzed in detail by Jánk (2019).



language cultivation. Meanwhile, students do not actually encounter the standard Hungarian variety in their language use (Vančo, 2017a, 2017b, 2019). This feature of education results in the inflections of the *ik*-conjugation being used in higher proportions. At the same time, as the results of the study discussed above show, the *ik*-conjugation does not exist in the Slovakia Hungarian vernacular of the students. This is also supported by data regarding regional dialects, since forms of the *ik*-conjugation were not found in Slovakia Hungarian research sites.<sup>11</sup>

The form *viselkedjék*, that is, the imperative 3Sg form of *viselkedik* “behave”, which was produced minimally by Slovakia Hungarian respondents, is part of some regional dialects to this day,<sup>12</sup> but very few people used it. The reason for this may be that the non-*ik* variant (*viselkedjen*) of *viselkedjék* is not stigmatized, and therefore no effort has to be made to use the *ik*-form. Alternatively, it can also be avoided if considered regional dialectal (for more on this issue, see, for instance, Pléh and Bodor, 2001).

Based on the above, I can state that those holding linguistic power (writers, language cultivators, and the school) sustain, to this day, and regard as the measure of educated and “correct” speech the use of the *ik*-conjugation, despite the fact that the *ik*-paradigm was already no longer in use in a considerable part of the Hungarian language area 200 years ago. The results of the discussed questionnaire-based survey demonstrate, on the one hand, that of the forms of the *ik*-conjugation, only 1Sg forms are used, and on the other hand, that it is education that helps maintain the *ik*-conjugation (or rather its partial use), thereby keeping minority Hungarian speakers in Slovakia – who do not even have access to the standard variety of Hungarian – in linguistic insecurity and forcing them to hypercorrect, while these speakers say that “in my opinion, we regard the *-m* ending as more elegant, and we use it when we intend to speak “elegantly”” (János Gál, Zsére, personal communication).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Present paper has been carried out as part of the project VEGA 1/0170/18 “Hungarian Minority Language Variety in Slovakia”.

## REFERENCES

- Balázs, G. (2001). *Magyar nyelvhelyességi lexikon [A dictionary of correct Hungarian]*. Corvina Kiadó, Budapest.
- Bánóczy, J. (1879). *Révai Miklós élete és munkái [Miklós Révai's life and works]*. Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, Budapest.

<sup>11</sup>(cf. *iszom~iszok* <http://www.bihalbocs.hu/mnyarmnya/munkaterk/iszom1.html>; *innám~innék* [http://www.bihalbocs.hu/mnyarmnya/munkaterk/innam\\_innek.html](http://www.bihalbocs.hu/mnyarmnya/munkaterk/innam_innek.html) *aludjam~aludjak* [http://www.bihalbocs.hu/mnyarmnya/munkaterk/aludjam\\_aludjak.html](http://www.bihalbocs.hu/mnyarmnya/munkaterk/aludjam_aludjak.html)).

<sup>12</sup>*aludjék~aludjon* [http://www.bihalbocs.hu/mnyarmnya/munkaterk/aludjek\\_aludjon.html](http://www.bihalbocs.hu/mnyarmnya/munkaterk/aludjek_aludjon.html).



- Benkő, L. (Ed.) (1992). *A magyar nyelv történeti nyelvtana II/1. A kései ómagyar kor. Morfematika [A historical grammar of the Hungarian language, II/1. The late Old Hungarian period. Morphematics]*. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest.
- Brassai, S. (2011). A magyar mondatról III [About the Hungarian sentence, 3]. In: Brassai, S. (Ed.), *A magyar mondat [The Hungarian sentence]*. Segédkönyvek a nyelvészet tanulmányozásához 120. Tinta Könyvkiadó, Budapest, pp. 191–357.
- Gál, A. (2020). *A szlovákiai magyar nyelvhasználat vizsgálata középiskolákban [Slovakia Hungarian language use in high schools]*. Konstantin Filozófus Egyetem Közép-európai Tanulmányok Kara, Nyitra PhD dissertation, Nitra.
- Geleji, K.I. (1645). *Magyar Grammatikatska [Hungarian grammar]*. Gyulafehérvár.
- Grétsy, L. and Kovalovszky, M. (Eds.) (1983). *Nyelvművelő kézikönyv II*. Akadémia Kiadó, Budapest.
- Grétsy, L. and Kemény, G. (Eds.) (2005). *Nyelvművelő kézikönyvtár*. Tinta Kiadó, Budapest.
- Horváth, V. and Reményi, A.Á. (1990). Az ikes ragozásról [About the ik-conjugation]. In: Balogh, L. and Kontra, M. (Eds.), *Élőnyelvi tanulmányok: Az MTA Nyelvtudományi Intézetében 1988. október 5–6-án rendezett élőnyelvi tanácskozás előadásai [Studies on modern language use: Papers from the sociolinguistics conference organized at the Linguistics Institute, HAS, October 5–6, 1988]*. MTA Nyelvtudományi Intézete, Budapest. pp. 9–19.
- Jánk, I. (2019). *Nyelvi előítélet és diszkrimináció a magyartanári értékelésben [Linguistic discrimination in Hungarian teachers' evaluations of students]*. Konstantin Filozófus Egyetem Közép-európai Tanulmányok Kara, Nyitra.
- Kontra, M. (2005). Mi a lingvicizmus és mit lehet ellene tenni? [What is linguicism and what can one do about it?]. In: Gábrity Molnár, I. and Mirnics, Z. (Eds.), *Közérzeti barangoló. (Műhely- és előadás-tanulmányok) [Wandering around our feelings: Papers from workshops and conferences]*. Magyarságkutató Tudományos Társaság, Szabadka. pp. 175–202. [http://web.unideb.hu/~tkis/kontra\\_lingvicizmus.htm](http://web.unideb.hu/~tkis/kontra_lingvicizmus.htm).
- Lanstyák, I. and Szabómihály, G. (1997). *Magyar nyelvhasználat – iskola – kétnyelvűség [Hungarian language use, school, and bilingualism]*. Kalligram Könyvkiadó, Dunaszerdahely.
- Lippi-Green, R. (2012). *English with an accent: Language, ideology and discrimination in the United States*. Routledge, London–New York.
- Melich, J. (1908). “Révai Miklós nyelvtudománya [Miklós Révai's linguistics]”. *Értekezések a nyelv és széptudományok köréből*, 20(4). Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, Budapest.
- Pléh, C. and Bodor, P. (2001). Nyelvi szuperego és a stigmatizáció kérdése a magyar nyelvközösségen [Linguistic superego and the issue of stigmatization in the Hungarian speech community]. *Thalassa*, 12(1): 3–19.
- Révai, M. (1806). *Elaboratior grammatica hungarica. Ad genuinam patrii sermonis indolem fideliter exacta, affiniumque lingvarum adminiculis locupletius illustrata*. Volumen secundum. Pestini.
- Sándor, K. (2001). “A nyílt társadalmi diszkrimináció utolsó bástyája”: Az emberek nyelvhasználat [“The last bastion of open societal discrimination”: People's language use]. *Replika*, 11(45–46): 241–259.
- Sebestyén, Á. and Szathmári, I. (1968). Régi nyelvtanaink és egységesülő irodalmi nyelvünk Bp., Akadémiai Kiadó. 454 l. In: Kálmán, B. (Ed.), *Magyar nyelvjárások. A Kossuth Lajos Tudományegyetem Magyar Nyelvtudományi Intézetének évkönyve*. Debrecen, Vol. 15, pp. 113–119. 1969. [https://epa.oszk.hu/02200/02298/00013/pdf/EPA02298\\_mnyj\\_1969\\_113-117.pdf](https://epa.oszk.hu/02200/02298/00013/pdf/EPA02298_mnyj_1969_113-117.pdf).
- Simonyi, Z. (1903). *Helyes magyarság [Correct Hungarian]*. *Nyelvészeti Füzetek* 8. Atheneum Irodalmi és Nyomdai Rt., Budapest.



- Simonyi, Z. (1906a). *Az ikes ragozás története* [The history of the ik-conjugation]. Nyelvészeti Füzetek 28. Atheneum Irodalmi és Nyomdai Rt., Budapest.
- Simonyi, Z. (1906b). *Geleji Katona István: Magyar grammatikatska (1645). jegyzetekkel újra kiadta Simonyi Zsigmond* [István Geleji Katona's Hungarian grammar, 1645: Republished with notes by Zsigmond Simonyi]. Nyelvészeti füzetek 30. Atheneum Irodalmi és Nyomdai Rt., Budapest. 1906.
- Tolcsvai Nagy, G. (2005). *Az ige a magyar nyelvben: Funkcionális elemzés* [The verb in the Hungarian language: A functional analysis]. Segédkönyvek a nyelvészet tanulmányozásához 181. Tinta Kiadó, Budapest.
- Tolcsvai Nagy, G. (2017). A nyelv kulturális, ideológiai értelmezése [The cultural and ideological interpretation of language]. In: Tolcsvai Nagy, G. (Ed.), *A magyar nyelv jelene és jövője* [The present and future of the Hungarian language]. Gondolat Kiadó, Budapest. pp. 32–45.
- Vančo, I. (2017). A határon túli magyar tannyelvű és magyar tematikájú közoktatás [Primary and secondary education in Hungarian and about topics of Hungarian relevance outside Hungary]. In: Tolcsvai Nagy, G. (Ed.), *A magyar nyelv jelene és jövője* [The present and future of the Hungarian language]. Gondolat Kiadó, Budapest. pp. 357–430.
- Vančo, I. (2017). Nyelvtanítás és oktatás. In: Gróf, A., Kolláth, A., and Szoták, S. (Eds.), *Szélrózsza: A Termini Magyar Nyelvi Kutatóhálózat, 2014. évi lendvai konferenciájának anyaga, Budapest, 7. November 2014* [Cardinal points: The materials of the 2014 conference of the Termini Hungarian Linguistic Research Network, Lendva, Budapest, November 7, 2014]. Termini Egyesület, Budapest, pp. 92–95.
- Vančo, I. (2019). A szlovákiai magyar nyelvtanítás kihívásai [The challenges of teaching Hungarian in Slovakia]. *Új Pedagógiai Szemle*, 69(5–6): 102–105.

