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Anita Kiss: Contrastive analysis of attitudes towards dialects
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Contrastive analysis of attitudes towards dialects

In Hungary and Transcarpathia, many studies have been carried out about the attitudes towards dialects among university students (cf. Kiss, 2009; Parapatics, 2021; T. Károlyi, 2002; Zimányi, 2015). The results of these examinations show a vastly different picture of the judgement of dialects. Some research displays an accepting attitude, while others display a rather dismissive attitude. In recent years, I have examined the attitudes of first-year teacher students at the University of Nyíregyháza towards dialect phenomena, which revealed that respondents do not hold negative opinions about dialects and are aware of the importance of conscious language use (cf. Kiss & Somfalvi, 2024; Kiss, 2025). This paper presents a comparative study of the dialect attitudes of Hungarian and Transcarpathian Hungarian students. The survey results showed that there were no significant differences in the dialect attitudes of the students of the two groups. This result can be explained by the fact that the dialects of both Transcarpathia and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county (where the majority of the Hungarian respondents live) belong to the North-Eastern dialect region, and thus show similar linguistic characteristics, and by the fact that the acceptance and respect of different language varieties is not only a local phenomenon, but also a wider one, regardless of geographical origin. The results of the study also showed that linguistic attitudes are not only a consequence of social factors, but also part of the linguistic culture, which needs to be consciously developed.

Keywords: language use, dialects, language attitudes, language diversity, language version

1. Introduction

Examining the speakers' attitudes and awareness connected to language variety and revealing their knowledge about conscious language use is a significant part of linguistic research. It is highly intriguing to observe this question among Hungarians living both within and outside Hungary's borders, as they live in different languages and cultural environments. Therefore, the social, economic, political, and cultural circumstances have an impact on their attitudes towards their language use, as well as the use of different languages and dialects.

Examining language attitudes is not only a linguistic matter; it is also connected to the formation of language identity. The identity-forming role of languages is especially pronounced in societies where more languages and dialects are used. Speakers with their language-related decisions and attitudes not only reflect on their own community, but they also express their relations and define their language identity with different dialects.

This study examines consciousness in language use and attitudes towards dialects among Hungarian students studying in tertiary education in Hungary and Transcarpathia. The purpose of this research is to reveal the differences between the participants of the two groups, considering their attitudes towards language diversity and dialects, as well as their thoughts on conscious language use.

The results of the research may help widen the literature on language attitudes and language diversity. Moreover, it may provide insight into the identity-forming processes of communities with different language backgrounds. The topic is relevant, since these days, due to increasing mobility, members of mono- and bilingual Hungarian communities can easily connect, and their dialects can have an effect on each other. We can achieve significant results from the connections between Hungarians living in Hungary and Transcarpathia, as well as from the language attitudes of students studying in higher educational institutions, which play an essential role in forming language consciousness.

2. The definition of language attitude

The attitude is a mental state of readiness, which is organized through experience and strongly influences the individual's reaction and behaviour (Allport, 1935: 810). In the conceptualisation of social psychology, attitude is a cognitive representational process that summarises the individual's evaluations of a particular person, group, thing or action (Domonkosi, 2004: 25). In general, attitude refers to beliefs and behaviours towards people, situations and ideas (Cseresnyési, 2004: 124; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975: 6).

The knowledge and beliefs associated with language are collectively referred to as language attitude. Different studies approach the concept of language attitude from various perspectives. Some research have defined language attitudes as a set of evaluative judgements about a language or a language variety and, more particularly, about its speakers (Ryan et al., 1982: 7). Other studies do not only include value judgements about entire language varieties, but also about different linguistic phenomena such as the judgement of code-switching (cf. Dewaele & Wei, 2014). Thus, language attitude is the behaviour or a judgement of a person or a community towards a language, a variety of languages, a variety of pronunciations, or any linguistic phenomena which can be positive or negative (Grin, 2013: 682; Trudgill, 1997: 58).

Language attitudes originate in societies, not in languages; consequently, they express social habits, behavioural rules, and prejudice instead of linguistic or aesthetic values (Kiss, 1995: 136). They are not only individual but also social in nature; thus, they can express group identity, belonging to a community, or even separation from the group (Domonkosi, 2004: 25–26). Peter Trudgill's (1974) research on language use in Norwich reveals that, in addition to the high social prestige of the standard variety, the examined communities also attach prestige to

their own non-standard varieties of the language and are attached to their own variety, even if it has been negatively discriminated against.

Different language attitudes can influence the changes in the language. Negative attitudes towards certain linguistic features, such as dialectal phenomena, can result in insecurity in the speaker's language use. This can cause speakers to feel antipathy towards their own dialect and to question its correctness. As a consequence, they may try to acquire a higher-status form of speech (Trudgill, 1997: 58). According to Klára Sándor (2016: 96), it is not usually the language form that we have a negative attitude towards, but the groups within which it is used. Thus, our attitudes towards language do not actually refer to the language itself, but to the community or individuals behind it. This can also be directed towards the individual's own language variety. If someone is ashamed of using a language due to some negative grievance, they will try to distance themselves from that community and adapt their speech as much as possible to the standard. Linguistic attitudes are not static, but rather dynamic phenomena, since if the status of an individual or community changes, attitudes may also change (cf. Dewaele, 2009; Kircher & Zipp, 2022: 6).

Therefore, language attitude research is a crucial part of linguistic research. This paper focuses on the study of language awareness and language attitudes among students in higher education because, as future teachers, they can play a significant role in reducing the language insecurity of students who speak dialects and teaching them to use their language consciously.

3. Research about attitudes towards dialects in Transcarpathia and Hungary

There are different varieties of languages, and these varieties are what make a language diverse. The varieties of Hungarian are not entirely separate from each other, but are connected in the way people use the language, forming a network of languages. Each of them has its own role, usage, and linguistic specificity. The most apparent differences are mainly in their spread, function, social prestige, and vocabulary. Dialects play a crucial role in the diversity of language due to their variety (Kiss, 2017: 199). Hungarian dialects are language varieties that differ from the Hungarian standard at all levels of the language and are bound to a specific regional area (Beregszászi & Dudics Lakatos, 2023: 86–87). Most Hungarians still use dialects today, but the convergence to the vernacular is faster among Hungarians in Hungary than among minority Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin (Kiss, 1995: 194; Csernicskó & Szabó Mihály, 2023: 211). Language is changing constantly as a result of social, economic, technological, and cultural developments, and this also affects dialects. The change in dialects is reflected in the narrowing of their scope of use and a reduction in their regional specificity. This can be explained by the increasing need or demand for mobility, including intra-country and rural-to-urban population movements, as well as commuting.

Therefore, dialect speakers are increasingly trying to acquire a standard language, as a consequence of which, depending on the situation, they use the standard or a regional version of it in communication, which is referred to as a regional standard (Kiss, 2017: 200–201).

Research has shown that the individual's attitude towards their language use can be influenced by others' beliefs about that particular language variant. For instance, if speakers are judged or despised because of their language use, they can form a negative impression not only of their dialect, but also of their own community (Sándor, 1999: 165–168). Therefore, over the last few decades, a pluricentric approach, which accepts language variations, has become increasingly important. It means that pursuing additive, functional-situational bilingualism could change dialectal speakers into more conscious language users. It could alter negative preconceptions (e.g., stigmatization) connected to dialects (Parapatics, 2022: 85). The terms monocentric and polycentric, used to describe national multilingualism, were introduced by William Stewart (1968). These two concepts represent different ways of describing the process of standardisation. The monocentric view is that there is a common standard, which does not take into account linguistic diversity. In the case of pluricentric languages, there is no single central norm that determines the 'correct' use of the language; rather, several national or regional varieties coexist and are of equal status (cf. Clyne, 1992).

There are differences in language use between Hungarians and Transcarpathian-Hungarians. One of these typical alterations is that the use of the Hungarian language in Transcarpathia contains more dialectal elements than in the motherland. Moreover, there are additional regional components that deviate from the standard, and the archaic forms persist for a more extended period. Additionally, members of the minority Transcarpathian-Hungarian community use dialects in situations where members of the motherland no longer use them anymore (Kiss, 1995: 192–194).

The examination of the Transcarpathian language use from a sociolinguistic approach started in the second half of the 1990s. Questions about language attitudes and the judgement of language variants are present in a series of research that involves the whole Carpathian Basin. The examination of the language use of Hungarians living in Transcarpathia shows that the Transcarpathian-Hungarian community has a positive attitude towards their mother tongue. For them, the Hungarian language serves as an identity marker, which holds significant importance, while the local language (Transcarpathian-Hungarian) expresses regional attachment (cf. Csernicskó, 1998).

Two surveys have been conducted to assess attitudes towards dialects among pedagogues. According to the results of the former survey, teachers acknowledged that people in their surroundings speak in dialects; however, they exhibited a distant attitude connected to dialectal speech (Lakatos, 2010: 146–

170). Ten years later, they conducted the survey again. By then, the promotion of a paradigm shift in mother tongue education (pluricentric approach) had happened. According to the results of this survey, a positive change had begun by that time, although a separating attitude towards dialectal language use was still typical (cf. Dudics Lakatos, 2019).

A study examining language consciousness and attitudes among higher education students in Transcarpathia revealed that the examined teacher-training students are aware of the pluricentric approach, pay attention to situational language use, and consistently use the standard forms in proper situations (T. Károlyi, 2002: 329–333). Another study revealed that the language-related value judgement of university students is influenced by having a linguistic education during their higher education studies. Moreover, the participants' positive attitude towards the use of the Transcarpathian-Hungarian language was perceptible. Most participants find their own settlement's language exquisite, but they are also aware that it differs from the motherland's version of the Hungarian language (Dudics Lakatos & Gazdag, 2023: 39–41).

In Hungary, the language-related value judgement was examined in the Hungarian population in the framework of the Hungarian National Sociolinguistic Research in 1988. According to the results, individuals with higher qualifications are more likely to consider a non-standard sentence grammatically incorrect. Participants living in the capital city marked the non-standard sentences correct in a smaller proportion than those who live in the countryside. Moreover, it was also revealed that women evaluated standard sentences as correct forms in more cases than men (Kontra, 2003: 577–594).

Surveys about attitudes were also conducted among university students. According to a 2009 research study, 92% of university students in Budapest do not have a dialectal background (Kiss, 2009: 3). In a later survey, attitudes towards dialects were examined among university students in Eger and Budapest. It revealed that two-thirds of Hungarian faculty students in Eger, and almost half of the students in Budapest, acknowledged that they had never had direct contact with any dialects, while the students from other faculties answered yes to the same question. It was also shown that most students in Eger accept dialects and find them equal to the standard form. Among the students in Budapest, a larger percentage held a negative belief about the dialectal phenomena (Zimányi, 2015: 234–237).

According to the results of the language-related attitude research conducted at the University of Debrecen, students in the pedagogy faculty consider the standard language appropriate in the school environment, although they also accept teachers using dialects in their lessons (cf. Kovács, 2014).

Andrea Prapatics (2021) examined students' awareness of dialects and language at various Hungarian universities. She analysed her data based on the national pattern and the answers of participants at Pannon University. She concluded that

the mentality of university students is standard-centered; they are less accepting of regional language forms, the reason for which is probably the lack of knowledge and consciousness connected to their mother tongue.

The results above show that both the Hungarian and Transcarpathian-Hungarian students' opinions about the judgement of territorial variety of language use show a varied picture. Indeed, students also have the experience that dialects are often subject to negative judgements, due to misconceptions, which affects their attitudes towards these dialects. Consequently, it is worthwhile to examine the question of language consciousness and the use of dialects in secondary schools and higher education as well.

4. The methods and participants of the research

This research is a comparative analysis involving university students from Transcarpathia and Hungary. The aim of this study is to examine the differences that occur between the two groups in terms of language attitude and how they relate to language diversity and dialects.

The research was conducted through an online survey completed by 108 students in teacher training. Questionnaire data were collected in 2024. I have previously undertaken a dialect attitudes survey among students at the University of Nyíregyháza (cf. Kiss & Somfalvi 2024; Kiss, 2025). This study presents a new research study involving university students who have not previously participated in the survey. In addition, I would have liked to extend the study to students studying in other higher education institutions, and therefore, Hungarian students from Transcarpathia were also involved in the research. The members of the Transcarpathian group are studying at Ferenc Rákóczi II. The Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education, while the Hungarian participants are students of the University of Nyíregyháza. The reason for choosing students from teacher-training programmes was that, as future teachers, they can help decrease the uncertainty of language use among students who use dialects; moreover, they will also be able to teach them conscious language use with an academic purpose.

The questionnaire was based on the results of similar studies published in the literature (Lakatos, 2010; Kiss, 2009) and on my previous experiences of collecting data. The questions were divided into two blocks. The first part concerned the personal background information of the respondents (gender, age, place of birth, current place of residence). The second part of the questionnaire was about dialect attitudes. The closed-ended questions were intended to find out whether respondents notice dialect features in their own and others' language use, how they relate to dialect features, in what situations they use them, and in what situations they think dialect features can be used. The open question asked respondents to define the term 'dialect'. This question was important in part to find out how students understand the term. On the other hand, this question also allowed us to gauge the respondents' subjective opinions about dialect speech.

The questionnaire also included Likert scale questions to examine their knowledge of conscious language use and their attitudes towards dialect. The questionnaire primarily consisted of closed-ended questions to ensure data comparability.

5. Research hypotheses

For the plans of the research, based on the results of previous empirical examinations, I listed the following hypotheses:

1. Research about the language use of Hungarians living in Transcarpathia has shown that for them, the identity marker function of the language is more important than for those Hungarians who live in the motherland (cf. Csernicskó, 2008). Therefore, I presume that the Transcarpathian-Hungarian participants will have a more positive attitude towards language diversity and dialects than the Hungarian respondents.

2. Earlier research's results about attitudes towards dialects show an immensely varied picture (cf. Dudics Lakatos, 2019). Both Hungarian and Transcarpathian-Hungarian studies partly report on participants' favorable value judgement connected to dialects, while others discuss less accepting attitudes (cf. Kiss, 2009; Parapatics, 2021; T. Károlyi, 2002; Zimányi, 2015). According to these, it is assumable that the Hungarian and Transcarpathian participants of my research group will also have different beliefs about dialects.

3. Studies connected to dialects have revealed that in most cases, participants are unaware of using dialects in their speech (cf. Dudics Lakatos, 2019; Sándor, 2015). I presume that among students in the research group, I will observe insecurities in distinguishing between standard language variants and dialectical forms.

In the research, I also wanted to find answers to the following questions:

1. How do the participants define dialects?
2. In which situations do they use these dialects?
3. How do they judge dialects in language use?
4. Do they recognize standard and dialectical language forms?
5. What type of knowledge do they have about conscious language use?
6. What are the differences in the dialect attitudes of Hungarian and Transcarpathian respondents?

6. Results

According to previous results, Hungarians living in Transcarpathia have a favorable opinion about their dialects. In several studies, participants were asked to choose the region where they believed the most exquisite version of Hungarian is spoken. In a 1996 study, 55,9% of the participants chose Transcarpathia, and 39% of them picked Hungary (cf. Csernicskó, 1998). In a following survey, two-thirds of the participants also marked Transcarpathia (Karmacsi, 2009: 415–422).

Similar results were shown in another survey, involving students from Transcarpathian higher educational institutions, in which 55,2% of the participants claimed that the most exquisite version of Hungarian is spoken in Transcarpathia (Gazdag & Dudics Lakatos, 2023: 39–40). In my own research, the participants were requested to answer the same question. The answers are shown in the first table. Similarly to previous results, the majority of participants (56%) identified Transcarpathia, while 38% of them were unable to judge it. The majority of Hungarian participants (44%) believe that the most beautiful version of the language is spoken in the Hungarian countryside, while 33% of them were unable to express an opinion about it. According to the Hungarian National Sociolinguistic Research in 1988, the majority of participants believed that the most exquisite version of Hungarian is spoken in Budapest. On the other hand, participants from the north-east language area thought that their own dialect is the most beautiful (Kontra, 2003: 244). In my research, the majority of participants come from the north-east language area, and the results show that only 15% of them believe that the best version of Hungarian is spoken in Budapest.

Table 1. Respondents' opinions on where people speak Hungarian best

Where do you think the most beautiful version of Hungarian is spoken?	Transcarpathians		Hungarians	
	pc	%	pc	%
I couldn't judge	21	38	18	33
in Budapest	1	2	8	15
in the Hungarian country towns	1	2	23	44
in Hungarian villages	1	2	4	7
in Transcarpathia	30	56	1	1
Total:	54	100	54	100

After this, I asked the participants an open-ended question to determine whether they were aware of the definition of dialect. In attitude studies, it is essential to ensure that participants can recognize the subject of the attitude. All participants answered the question, and they mostly mentioned the dialect's variety, the geographical boundaries, dialectical idioms, and the differences in pronunciation. The participants tried to formulate their answers based on metalinguistic knowledge, which in none of the cases contained obviously positive or negative assumptions. For example: 'The specific vocabulary of a given area is called dialect, which is an important part of the personality', 'Dialect is the variety of language that differs from the standard in pronunciation and vocabulary', 'People speak differently from one region to another, use different regional words, speak with different pronunciation', 'A dialect is a variety of a language spoken in a particular area or community. These variants may differ in pronunciation,

vocabulary, and grammatical rules'. A small percentage of the participants answered that mostly elderly people living in villages speak in dialects: 'The dialects contain words that are mainly used in villages. They differ from the standard', 'People speak and pronounce words differently in various communities. In some places, people speak the old way, especially the elderly'. People from different geographical areas speak diverse forms of the same language. These differences have already been studied by linguists, who have come to the conclusion that speakers are aware of these variants. They may also be able to recognize the area from which the speaker originates (cf. Clopper & Pisoni, 2007; Clopper et al., 2012; Wagner et al., 2013).

In the survey, respondents were asked if they noticed any differences between their language use and the neighbouring settlement's language use. The majority of the answers were yes in both groups; however, the Hungarian participants (80%) claimed it at a higher percentage than the Transcarpathian-Hungarian group (65%). Comparing the responses in Hungary with the results of first-year students in the academic year 2023 (Kiss, 2025: 85), it is evident that the present study found an increase in the number of students who answered yes to the question.

The answers revealed that Hungarian (72%) and Transcarpathian (62%) participants believe that dialects are also used in their own settlements. Furthermore, the majority of students acknowledged that dialectical forms are present in their own language use as well, as 52% of Hungarians and 61% of Transcarpathians answered yes to this question. It is interesting to compare the views of the Hungarian respondents with the results of the 2023 sample. In the previous survey, only 39% of respondents said yes, whereas in the current survey, more than half of the respondents shared the same opinion. The responses were analysed using a T-test, which showed a significant difference between the two groups' opinions: $t(117)=-3,045$ $p>0,05$ ($p=0,002$). This result indicates that the Hungarian respondents in the present study recognised the occurrence of dialect phenomena in their own language use to a much greater percentage than the Hungarian group previously studied (Kiss, 2025: 88).

Participants mostly use their dialects in friend or family groups (Transcarpathians: 43%, Hungarians: 31%), which proves that they make an effort to use the language more consciously. Some participants were not able to decide in which situations they use the dialectical forms (Transcarpathians: 24%, Hungarians: 28%). Moreover, only a small percentage of the participants acknowledged that they use their dialects everywhere (Transcarpathians: 11%, Hungarians: 7%). Participants in Transcarpathia (67%) and also in Hungary (61%) mostly believe that it is acceptable to use dialects in every situation (Table 2).

Table 2. Respondents' views when someone speaks in dialect everywhere

What do you believe about people who use dialects always and everywhere?	I find it right	I find it acceptable	I do not find it right	Total
Transcarpathians	12 (22%)	36 (67%)	6 (11%)	54 (100%)
Hungarians	9 (17%)	33 (61%)	12 (22%)	54 (100%)

On the other hand, participants thought more positively about those who pay attention to situational language use. It means that participants do not find it wrong when people use dialectical forms with their friends and family members, while they speak in standard forms in formal situations (Table 3).

Table 3. What is your opinion about people who use their most natural language forms (e.g., dialects) among friends and family members, while they speak in standard forms in formal situations?

	I find it right	I find it acceptable	I do not find it right	Total
Transcarpathians	27 (50%)	27 (50%)	0%	54 (100%)
Hungarians	36 (67%)	15 (28%)	3 (5%)	54 (100%)

The research revealed that 57% of Transcarpathian and 61% of Hungarian students consider dialects and standard forms equal. This result is similar to the opinion of students at Eszterházy Károly Catholic University, the majority of whom also find standard and dialectical forms equal (Zimányi, 2015: 237).

The two groups of participants had similar views about the definition of dialects. The Hungarian respondents mostly (59%) believe that dialects are used to express identity and communication. The majority of Transcarpathian students (72%) also emphasised the function of expressing identity, and 59% of them indicated that dialects are a tool of communication. However, there were more participants in both groups (Hungarian students: 35%, Transcarpathian-Hungarian students: 41%), who believe that mostly those who use dialects live in villages and work in agriculture. Moreover, some of them (Hungarian students: 26%, Transcarpathian-Hungarian students: 31%) also marked that dialectical language use is more typical among the elderly. Only a few participants had an explicitly negative opinion about dialects.

One purpose of the examination was to determine whether participants could distinguish between standard and dialectical vocabulary. In the questionnaire, I set a list of words that contained both standard and dialectical forms. Students were requested to mark those words that they considered dialectical. The dialect words are in bold in Table 4. Overall, both groups recognized the majority of dialectical words, although some mistakes were made by both the Hungarians and Transcarpathians as well.

In some cases, they identified standard words dialectal forms, for instance *krumpli* ‘potato’, *tied* ‘yours’, *dobjál* ‘throw in second person imperative form’, and *leány* ‘girl’, which have two variants in standard speech. It also occurred that they marked a dialectal form standard, for instance, the word *pocok* (vole). The answers show that only a few of the Transcarpathian Hungarian respondents considered the form *kellesz* to be dialectal, while the majority of the Hungarian respondents correctly recognized the dialect word. Also in the previous survey, the majority of Hungarian respondents correctly recognised the dialect word *kellesz* (Kiss 2025: 88). This could indicate that among Transcarpathian Hungarians, the word *kellesz* is so common in the community's language use that they do not feel its dialectal character. Similarly, the dialect words *jösztek*, *lábtó*, and *tallu* were correctly classified as dialect words by Hungarians at higher percentages than by Transcarpathians. However, the standard form *tied* was incorrectly classified by more Hungarians than by Transcarpathians.

Table 4. Standard and dialectal words

Which words do you think are dialectal? Mark them.	Transcarpathians%	Hungarians%
<i>furik</i> 'wheelbarrow'	87	94
<i>jösztek</i> 'come in second person plural'	61	87
<i>kokas</i> 'cock'	70	87
<i>lábtó</i> 'ladder'	54	80
<i>tallu</i> 'feather'	56	78
<i>kellesz</i> 'must'	31	74
<i>tied</i> 'yours'	41	63
<i>leány</i> 'girl'	31	48
<i>dobjál</i> 'throw'	39	37
<i>krumpli</i> 'potato'	59	30
<i>pocok</i> 'vole'	39	28
<i>gyermek</i> 'child'	6	6
<i>kánikula</i> 'heatwave'	30	6
<i>örökség</i> 'heritage'	2	0

In the following questions, participants were asked to mark on a 1–5 scale the extent to which they agreed with various statements. In the questionnaire, only two extreme rates were provided: 1 = "I do not agree at all" and 5 = "I absolutely agree."

The majority of Transcarpathian students (61%) marked 3, indicating a neutral opinion about the statement that these days only a few people speak in dialects. The Hungarian students mostly marked three as well (43%), although they were followed closely by those (33%) who agreed less with the same statement.

According to the second statement, educators are responsible for teaching students the standard forms, rather than dialects. In this statement, the emphasis is on “instead of”, which refers to the method of mother-tongue education, following a one-standard, replacing approach. The Transcarpathian participants marked 3 (32%) and 4 (33%) almost equally, indicating that some of them had held a neutral opinion about this statement as well, while the other part instead agreed with it. The majority of Hungarian participants (41%) instead agreed with the statement. The following statement was formulated similarly to the previous one: “The educators are responsible for drawing students’ attention to the value of dialects besides the standard forms.” In this statement, the word “beside” is emphasized, which refers to the pluricentric approach. Most of the Transcarpathian students (39%) and the majority of Hungarian respondents (54%) strongly agree with this statement. Consequently, students involved in the research mostly prefer the additive mother-tongue educational approach. Transcarpathian students held various opinions regarding the statement that, in these days, acquiring standard forms is extremely important. 35% of the respondents held a neutral view, 30% absolutely agreed with it, and 22% of the participants somewhat approved of it. The Hungarian respondents' opinions were more united, as the majority of them (52%) completely agreed with the statement. According to the following statement, people who speak in dialects are uneducated. Half of the Transcarpathian students disagreed with this statement, and 70% of Hungarians shared the same opinion. In both groups, the majority of respondents (Transcarpathian students: 37%, Hungarian students: 35%) completely agreed that it is beneficial to speak in one of the dialects and use standard forms as well. Moreover, both Transcarpathian-Hungarian (52%) and Hungarian (56%) students mostly agreed that dialects are valuable and it is crucial to preserve them.

7. Summary

This research focused on the dialect attitudes and language consciousness of Hungarian university students in Hungary and Transcarpathia. As a starting point for the study, it was presumed that Transcarpathian-Hungarian participants would have a more positive attitude towards language diversity and dialectal language use than the Hungarian respondents (1st hypothesis). The results did not support this hypothesis, as the respondents of the two groups held similar beliefs about language diversity, and there were no significant differences in their value judgements. This can probably be explained by the fact that both Transcarpathia and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county (where the respondents’ majority live) belong to the north-east language region, therefore they show similar dialectal characteristics.

In general, both Transcarpathian-Hungarian and Hungarian students had a favorable opinion about dialectical language use. Answers referring to negative attitudes could not be found in either group (2nd hypothesis). In both groups, the participants believe that dialectical forms are typical in their own settlement; moreover, they also acknowledge that dialects are present in their own language use. In most cases, the participants could distinguish between standard and dialectical vocabulary; they only identified a few words incorrectly, most of which have two standard variants. The respondents' knowledge of dialects is also confirmed by the fact that in both groups, the answers written by the students mostly covered the definition of the term as described in the literature summary. These results do not support hypothesis 3. Participants think it is essential to strive to use language consciously. The majority of respondents admit to speaking in dialect only among family and friends. However, they are not rejecting dialect speech, and agree that students should be taught about language varieties in an additive way at school. Hopefully, the participants involved in this research will be able to apply the appropriate approach as pedagogues, teaching students about language diversity and fostering a more positive value judgement in students regarding dialects and language diversity.

On the whole, the research broadens dialectical attitude examinations with important results; furthermore, it can also contribute to the understanding and acceptance of conscious language use and language diversity. The comparison of the attitude towards dialects in these two culturally and geographically dissimilar groups (Transcarpathian-Hungarian and Hungarian students), and the results received also show that language diversity and the openness towards dialects do not only depend on regional identity, but they are also based on the knowledge and experiences obtained in secondary and higher education.

The conclusion is that there were no significant differences in the attitudes of the two groups towards dialects. It also reveals that accepting and respecting different dialects is not only a regional phenomenon, but also a widely characteristic trait, regardless of geographical affiliation.

A significant aspect of the research is that attitudes towards dialects are not only a consequence of social circumstances, but they are also an integral part of the culture, which needs to be improved consciously. The favorable judgement of dialects and conscious language use is critical in the preservation and maintenance of languages. These are not only crucial at the level of language, but also in strengthening social relationships and cultural identity.

I plan to continue and expand the research in the future. Firstly, I would like to involve teachers in the study and examine their attitudes and knowledge of dialects, as well as the approach they take to teaching students about linguistic diversity. On the other hand, since this questionnaire is completed annually by first-year teacher students at the University of Nyíregyháza, I also plan to conduct a study comparing the results obtained from year to year. This may reveal whether

attitudes towards linguistic diversity and perceptions of dialects are changing positively or negatively.

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