LINGUISTIC DISCRIMINATION IN PEDAGOGICAL EVALUATION

A study of teachers of Hungarian language and literature in Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania and Hungary

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Abstract

There is a paucity of research on dialect awareness among teachers, particularly in Hungary. The aim of our research was to demonstrate the existence of linguistic discrimination. The research involved more than 502 Hungarian Language and Literature teachers and teacher trainees from Hungary (*N*=216), Slovakia (*N*=128), Romania (*N*=108) and Ukraine (*N*=50). Data were collected primarily through a technique similar to matched-guise tests; however, the method of the present research had some additional complexity. The large-scale research (*N*=502) clearly supported the assumption that linguistic discrimination was widespread in pedagogical evaluation. Oral performances were recorded which varied in content, language variety and code/mode of language use. Oral performances produced in the standard variety or in the elaborated code of language use (or both) were favored. By contrast, oral productions in dialectal and restricted language—despite the fact that their content was correct—received unfavourable evaluation. Linguistic variability in oral productions with the same content resulted in as much as a full grade of difference in the mean of grades. The differences were statistically significant for each sample, hence the prevalence of linguistic discrimination is proved.

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1. INTRODUCTION[1]

A particularly problematic issue of the educational process is the evaluation of students by teachers as it can be influenced and negatively affected by many factors. The gravest problem in such cases is when the teacher's evaluation does not reflect on the knowledge that is tested but rather on the teacher's partly or fully fictitious ideas about this knowledge. A very typical issue along these lines is when teachers—usually unconsciously—assess and evaluate students' linguistic abilities instead of their knowledge, thereby discriminating against them on the basis of language.

Research on this topic usually addresses the role of family background, linguistic socialization and their interconnectedness (e.g., Bernstein, 1981; Tse et al., 2010). Teachers' language attitudes and language ideologies are frequently assessed in the context of (self-)correction practices (e.g., Davies, 2001; Collins, 2009). Few authors ever tackle the issue of how the assessment of the content knowledge of children of various social backgrounds acquired at school depends on the children's language varieties and general linguistic behaviour. From the other perspective, the teachers' language use also needs to be taken into account, namely what they require from the students and how they relate to differences with respect to their expectations (Bakshi, 2020; Wiese et al., 2015).

Two points are important to note when summarizing the above-mentioned research. First, children of different social class backgrounds acquire different varieties and modes of language use (cf. Garret et al., 1999). Second, a great number of teachers have a normative and prescriptive perspective (cf. for instance Bakshi, 2020; Milroy, 2007; Rutten, 2016; Saowanne & McCargo, 2014), which means, in practice, that they assign greater value and inherently higher prestige to the use of the standard variety.

The present paper consists of three main parts. The first part summarizes the findings of previous investigations and discusses the background of the present research. The next section introduces the methodology of the research. Finally, the last part offers an in-depth discussion of the results.

In the following part of the paper, I present the results of the main study (N = 502) involving four countries (Hungary, Slovakia, Romania and Ukraine), sorted by country.

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[1] *A shorter, less detailed German-language version of the study has been accepted for publication in the journal jATES - Journal of Applied Technical and Educational Sciences (see Jánk, in press). The two papers are different in several essential respects. Firstly, the present paper offers an in-depth discussion of the linguistic situation and the context of the research. Secondly, the theoretical framework is more complex and multifaceted. Thirdly, data analysis has been performed for each sociological variable. Finally, the description of the results is more detailed. Major overlaps between the two articles concern the section on methodological background, the description of linguistic disadvantage and the description of the final results.*

The most central research question of the present study is whether linguistic discrimination can be shown to be present in teachers' evaluation of students, and if so, to what extent. Or more precisely: do the vernacular variety and mode of language use acquired at home have an effect on teachers' assessment and evaluation of students' achievement at school, both in the L1 classroom and beyond? Is it possible that children's content knowledge is often assessed more negatively by teachers primarily because they use their vernacular language varieties?

Most scholars tackling these issues agree that students' failures at school result to a great extent from differences between their language varieties used at home and those (expected) at school. More specifically, the problem stems from the fact that several teachers harbour prescriptively and subtractively oriented attitudes to such differences. While some students are given advantages on the basis of their language use, others are discriminated against on the basis of language. However, whether this factor can be proven to be present in summative evaluation or to affect it in any way has not been unequivocally demonstrated by research so far, only indicated to a limited extent (cf. Gal, 2006; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000).

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND QUESTIONS

Critical sociolinguistics, which has gained increasing significance in recent decades, questions several basic notions of traditional sociolinguistics, calling for their reinterpretation. This applies to the notions of language and language variety as well. Critical sociolinguistics breaks with the tradition that views language in a Saussurian way, as an objectivized structure, interpreting parole with respect to the illusory closed systems and subsystems derived by this metaphorization. Instead, it foregrounds the intersubjective nature of language, its emergence from discourses, which invites a new kind of conceptualization and metaphorization (cf. Blommaert & Rampton, 2011; Pennycook, 2016).

Critical sociolinguistics adopts the metaphor of fluidity to interpret particular modes of languaging. The possibilities of transfer across languages and language varieties are captured via the notions of translingualism, superdiversity and metrolingualism (García, 2009; Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010; Pennycook, 2016). Accordingly, the linguistic/language resource is identified as the basic unit of describing speech. A linguistic source consists of a semiotic sign and associated attributions of meaning and value, whose abstract manifestations include language and its varieties (Blommaert, 2016; Jørgensen, 2008; Pennycook, 2016; Vertovec, 2007).

As can be seen from the above, critical sociolinguistics considers such basic notions as language, language variety, mono- and bilingualism as overly narrow. Proponents of the theory believe that these are modernist conceptions that assign linguistic and ethnic structures to each other in an essentialist manner. Thereby they lead to conceptual constructions in the framework of which some speakers' utterances can only be inaccurately described. Moreover, they create an opposition between those in power and the oppressed, often assigning certain groups of speakers

to the latter (Deumert, 2010). At the same time, it is important to note that these criticized notions are not and cannot be completely discarded, as even critical sociolinguistics could not operate without them. Although new concepts are foregrounded (e.g., historicity or repertories), these must necessarily co-exist with the previous ones. As stated by Blommaert (2016, pp. 251)," Sociolinguistic systems are characterized by mobility; in the constant interaction within and between systems, elements move across centers and scale levels. In such forms of mobility, the characteristics of the elements change […] The reason for such changes is historical: The value and function of particular aspects of a sociolinguistic system are the outcome of historical and local processes of becoming". Such basic concepts as language and language variety are still at work, but they are interpreted from a different perspective.

Every language and language variety has its own historicity, varying in its length and speed of change (Blommaert, 2016; Rutten, 2016). The longer is this historicity, the more of a stable unit it may seem to us (see, e.g., the English language with respect to Hungarian or one of its varieties). Thus, linguistic resources are assigned to languages in our consciousness, becoming abstractions. Nevertheless, the language of a given discourse, i.e. the transient instantiation of language actually demonstrates the fluid organization of languages or language varieties of different historicities into utterances. This is what Blommaert (2016) refers to as synchronization. The linguistic sources participating in synchronization and the associated discursive arrangements may be assigned to a varying number of different abstract units (languages, language varieties).

In the present work, I discuss dialects, standard language and linguistic disadvantage with this theoretical background in mind. Therefore, when I refer to situations of linguistic disadvantage or dialectal speakers, even as these categories involve a certain level of abstraction, I aim to highlight layers of particular, transient utterances. The reason for abstraction is that the present research is not primarily targeted at specific discourses but much rather at general trends and regularities.

2.1 Linguistic disadvantage, language-based discrimination and linguistic socialization

Schools are pivotal to the maintenance of culture by allowing for norms, values and other elements of culture produced by a community to be passed on to new generations, so that they can acquire the necessary social knowledge (including scientific results and everyday skills). This social knowledge crucially involves the standard language variety (including its historicity); however, the goals and methods of teaching it (cf. additive vs. substitutive methods) vary greatly and give rise to several issues. The main problem is not with teaching the standard variety but rather with the personal bias that feeds into this process, going hand in hand with the teachers' ignorance of their students' linguistic background (Bourdeaud'hui et. al. 2020; Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995, pp. 483–487). One key difference among students

concerns their linguistic backgrounds: their linguistic resources and repertoires (including vernacular varieties and modes of language use) may be very different, which has a profound influence on their chances of progress in the educational system. Language is the primary means of passing on knowledge at schools. Therefore, the successful completion of particular tasks (such as understanding the teacher's instruction or passing a test in reading comprehension) crucially requires and presupposes linguistic competence and resources, as determined by the teacher, including previously acquired language skills. However, as a function of their socialization, not all children possess the linguistic knowledge and skills necessary to perform specific tasks. In addition, when a student does not have a good command of a particular language variety, she may have comprehension problems; and even when she has mastered it as a non-vernacular variety, she may be stigmatized on a linguistic basis (Blundon, 2016).

Such cases can be described by the notion of linguistic disadvantage. In sociolinguistics, this concept is interpreted as a communicative problem, knowledge gap or discrepancy with respect to the dominant language variety which results from an individual's socialization, determines her linguistic repertoire, and limits personality development and/or social (including school) success (cf. Blundon, 2016, pp. 218–218). In other words, in cases of linguistic disadvantage, the child has limited or no access to the tools, resources and repertoires of linguistic behaviour which would facilitate successful problem-solving. Such is the case when the student does not understand the teachers' instructions or explanations. The key question is what strategy is adopted by the teacher in such situations, what is her attitude to the child, and whether she is aware of the problem in the first place.

Needless to say, linguistic difference or diversity does not automatically lead to linguistic discrimination. Linguistic discrimination (or linguicism) is evident when there is negative or positive discrimination between individuals or groups on the basis of their language varieties and language use (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). Linguicism is manifested in a variety of scenes of communication, often with those practicing it remaining fully unaware of the issue. Of such scenes, one of the most significant is the world of schools, where linguistic discrimination is primarily legitimized and practiced by teachers who have very often interiorized the nation state`s and its institutions' monolingual habitus and act (Blommaert, 2016; Bourdieu, 1980, pp. 52–60)
From the child's perspective (or more generally, from the perspective of language users), linguistic disadvantage may occur on two levels, namely in linguistic perception and linguistic production. Hence, a distinction can be made between two scenarios in the (narrowly conceived) teaching-learning process involving a teacher and a student:

1) *Linguistic disadvantage derived from the child's linguistic perception:* owing to discrepancies in language use, the student has only a limited grasp of information (e.g., instructions, exercises, teaching material) that is necessary for the learning process.

2) *Linguistic disadvantage derived from the child's linguistic production:* owing to discrepancies in language use, the student's linguistic output (e.g., verbal behaviour in the classroom; written and oral tests) differs from what is expected by the teacher (e.g., standard variety).

The two are strongly correlated, as production arises in the wake of perception, and both types of linguistic disadvantage influence the students' rate of success at school. However, it must be emphasized that (in and by itself, on a theoretical level) linguistic disadvantage does not automatically lead to discrimination, even though it is clearly a precondition for it. More specifically, linguistic disadvantage is "only" a possible basis of prejudice and stereotypes (in the sense of sociology and psychology), giving rise to discrimination, the key difference being that while prejudice involves attitudes and opinions, discrimination is manifested in overt acts against a person or groups (Giddens, 2006, p. 491). To put it differently, linguistic disadvantage first needs to be reflected in stereotypes (such as linguistic standardism), and then these latter need to inform overt patterns of behaviour, for linguistic discrimination to occur. Concomitantly, the language attitudes of a speaker (in the case at hand, the teacher) should not by itself be regarded as discriminatory, only when these attitudes bear on her behaviour (comments, assessments, etc.) (cf. Dovidio et al., 2005, pp. 17–89; Giddens, 2006, pp. 382–492).

Linguistic discrimination, i.e. the overt behaviour of a teacher based on negative language attitudes, can be further differentiated according to where it occurs, viz. in oral/written remarks or in summative evaluation (grades). In the former case, linguistic stigmatization is at work, which may increase linguistic uncertainty on the student's behalf, thus indirectly and implicitly affecting her linguistic production and achievements (however, such effects are hard if not impossible to measure). When linguistic discrimination is present in summative evaluation, what happens is that a teacher's decisions about grading are informed by linguistic differences. In view of the above, when the research goal is to detect the prevalence of linguistic discrimination at schools, one needs to study not only a teacher's attitudes but also her overt behaviour, i.e. the feedback she gives to the linguistic production of her students.

Linguistic disadvantage may result from the student's language variety, including her dialect, or her language use influenced by social status (in the sense of Bernstein). The former is primarily manifested in phonology, morphology and lexis, whereas the latter influences lexis and syntax, with previous investigations highlighting the length and complexity of sentences as well as the richness of vocabulary as primary factors. Therefore, in a study of linguistic discrimination, it seems necessary to consider syntactic and lexical characteristics derived from social class membership in addition to dialectal features.

3. A SHORT SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS OF PREVIOUS INVESTIGATIONS

Despite the fact that the role of linguistic discrimination in pedagogical processes represents one of the key topical issues concerning the relationship between

linguistics and pedagogy, it remains an underexplored area both in Hungary and internationally. Apart from a few exceptions, few experts have ventured to do in-depth research on this topic. The reason is fairly clear: even though we know about and discuss the phenomenon, the objective measurement and unequivocal demonstration of linguistic discrimination in pedagogical assessment are notoriously hard to accomplish. Previous investigations in this area have focused on issues of family background and linguistic socialization (as well as their interrelatedness), linguistic disadvantage and teachers' linguistic attitudes. However, they have stopped short of providing a comprehensive account, and the fact that linguistic discrimination may be responsible for low rates of success at school has received limited coverage; for the most part it has only been implied rather than explicitly demonstrated.

In this section, I only discuss previous studies which are especially relevant for the research that is reported here. These studies were either foundational for the research design or their findings have informed the methodological procedures of the present research.

3.1 Bernstein's theory and empirical study of linguistic codes

Since its inception at the end of the 1950s, Bernstein's theory of (communicative) language codes and its highly complex terminology have undergone several modifications. Bernstein's theory posits that social class status and the family role hierarchies it gives rise to influence the forms of communicative language codes, with success (or failure) at schools having a loopback effect on social class status. In other words, differences in school performance derive from discrepancies in linguistic codes in turn resulting from social status (cf. Bernstein, 1971, 1974, 1981). Richmond (2017, pp. 20) describes the phenomenon quite succinctly: "The language which these children inherited from their families and their upbringing equipped them badly for dealing with the abstractions, the conceptualisations, the generalisations and the distinctions which were the stock in trade of the conventional curriculum". This deficit or difference, which led to their underachievement, arose because they used a "restricted code" of language while "middle class" children used an "elaborated code".

From a cognitive semantic perspective, the two language codes differ in the degree to which reference points are made accessible, and in modes of perspectivization (cf. Labov, 2010), which affect grammatical construal on lexical and syntactic levels under Bernstein's approach. Typical features of the restricted language code include shorter, fragmented and structurally simpler sentences; more use of stereotypical expressions; more limited vocabulary; smaller number of personal remarks and words with abstract meanings; less varied use of adjectives and adverbs; less frequent use of verb forms in first person singular. The elaborated language code is of course characterized by the opposite, namely structurally more complex and longer sentences; richer vocabulary; a higher share of personal remarks and words

with abstract meanings; varied use of adjectives and adverbs; and higher frequency of first-person singular verb forms (see, e.g., Bernstein, 1971, pp. 140–182).

Bernstein's theory has been criticized for several reasons (see Davies, 2000; Labov, 1972; Lawton, 1968, 1975; Rosen, 1974). According to his critics, the notions are too vague to have predictive power, including the concept of language code. With regard to research methodology, the main concern is that the database backing up Bernstein's theory is severely limited, not least because the informants were put to the test in artificial situations only. This is problematic because discrepancies in language use observed in such situations do not necessarily reveal which language codes are available to the speaker. In particular, they may follow from the speaker's different assessment of the discourse setting rather than limitations of her linguistic repertoire (cf. Davies, 2000; Lawton, 1975; Rosen, 1974).

A milder point of criticism about the theory concerns the nature of linguistic differences. Linguistic disadvantage can be interpreted as a delay in language acquisition, i.e. children coming from positional (working class) families may also master the elaborated code, it may only take them a longer time to do so. This leads us further to the next and most important issue, namely to the role of linguistic disadvantage at school: is it really plausible to derive a child's low rate of success at school from her language code? For one thing, it seems clear that several other factors are at play here. Moreover, it seems possible to argue that the restricted language code produces a very limited degree of disadvantage (if any), since at primary schools children have few opportunities to produce lengthy texts anyway, therefore they have little use for the elaborated code. However, this may only hold true for speech production, not for perception (cf. Lawton, 1975). Therefore, critics of the theory suggest, for example, the term "difference" instead of "disadvantage" (Labov, 1972; Rosen, 1974).

While these critical remarks may be justified, they clearly leave the possibility open that patterns of language use brought from the family have a significant impact on a child's rate of success at school. Indeed, several studies have systematically shown that the core of the theory holds true in education. Some works (e.g., Tizard & Hughes, 1984; Wells, 1986) used the original theoretical framework to demonstrate that working-class children are linguistically neglected by their middle-class teachers. Others (e.g. Cummins & Swain, 1986) adopted a slightly different terminology but reached similar conclusions in a bilingual environment. One of the best-known studies is due to Cummins (1989), who revealed that bilingual children's language abilities are hidden from teachers. Of course, these studies also attracted their own share of criticism (cf. MacSwan, 2000).

In the final analysis, Bernstein's verbal deficit theory and the resulting concept of compensatory education (along with the programs it gave rise to) did not find unanimous support among researchers. At the same time, it is worth mentioning that (partly because of the theory's complexity and its numerous modifications) some of the criticisms should also be treated with reservations. After an in-depth discussion of this topic, in which they synthesize the theory and its criticisms, Bolander and

Watts (2009) offer the following concluding remarks: "Regardless of whether or not code theory can be put to some use in helping to solve this task, there is still enough in Bernstein's overall work to warrant a critical and serious re-evaluation of it. Much depends on researchers' willingness to admit that they were wrong in accusing Bernstein of proposing a *verbal deficit* theory and to grant that a concerted effort to tackle the present-day problems of language and education can benefit from rehabilitating him" (pp. 170).

3.2 The language attitudes of teachers

The notion of language attitude concerns people's dispositions, opinions and beliefs with regard to languages, language varieties and their users, i.e. whether their reactions are favourable/positive or unfavourable/negative (Trudgill, 2000, pp. 9-29). Language attitudes are shaped by several factors (e.g., folk beliefs, ideologies, traditions, customs and stereotypes of a community), one of which is the social group propagating the use of a particular language variety; in the case at hand, this group consists of teachers (Coupland, 2007, pp. 34–40). Language attitudes have been investigated by several researchers. However, studies of the language attitudes of teachers are much less common, especially studies focusing on linguistic disadvantage and differences in language use (codes in Bernstein's sense of the term).

The language attitudes of teachers have been surveyed in several speech communities (see e.g. Davies & Langer, 2014; Hagen, 2010; Tegegne, 2015; Wiese et al., 2015), although such studies have been rare and they vary greatly in methodology. The results do converge, however. Firstly, we find statements such as the following: "the greatest dialect-related problems […] continue to be the attitudes and prejudices that many people hold towards non-standard dialects […] combined with the lack of understanding about the nature of dialect differences and of their social significance" (Cheshire & Trudgill, 1989, p. 106). Secondly, scholars agree that schools (and in particular, teachers' dispositions toward linguistic variability) are among the major reasons or propagators of this language attitude. As explained by Wolfram et al. (1999, p. 20), "in terms of language, proponents of the deficit position believed that speakers of dialects with non-standard forms have a handicap—socially and cognitively—because the dialects are illogical, or sloppy, or just bad grammar."

As shown by several studies (e.g., Choy & Dodd, 1976; Davies & Langer, 2014; Dooly, 2005; Tegegne, 2015), teachers and teacher trainees in a range of different speech communities attach greater value and higher prestige to the standard language variety in their daily work. Use of the standard as opposed to other varieties is treated as a special priority, and a prescriptive approach is adopted along with the method of substitution, whereby deviations from the standard are treated as mistakes. Notably, this may happen even when teachers proclaim that dialects represent values to be preserved, and when they do not openly consider the standard as the most beautiful or most valuable variety. This paradox can be probably put down to the fact that teachers (as well as many other language users) are likely to have

been exposed to a descriptive-contrastive rather than prescriptive approach during their university studies; however, they are struggling to implement it in practice. They are aware that it is wrong to stigmatize dialects and they may even openly express such views but in everyday practice they do not deliver on their commitments.

4. RESEARCH CONTEXT

In present-day Hungary, almost everyone agrees that the Trianon treaty that Hungary was forced to sign after World War I represents the largest trauma in the country's history. After the war, the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy collapsed, as its continued existence was against the big powers' interests and came under increased pressure by rising nationalism in the region. As a result, new state borders were created in accordance with the big powers' interests and the territorial claims made by newly formed states. Importantly, the borders were not specified solely on the basis of ethnic boundaries but much rather on the basis of political bargains and interests of the day. In many cases, territories with an overwhelming Hungarian majority were assigned to the new states, and in total around 3 to 3.3 million Hungarians ended up living outside of Hungary's new borders (cf. Zeidler, 2020). The term 'Hungarians beyond the border' primarily refers to Hungarians living in present-day Austria, Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia. Based on the official census of each country (with some of the statistic data recorded in 2011), the Hungarian population has the following size in neighbouring states: 1.240.000 (Romania), 452,000 (Slovakia), 263,000 (Serbia), 130,000 (Ukraine), 83,000 (Austria), 14,000 (Croatia), 6,500 (Slovenia). However, these numbers are constantly decreasing, thus preserving the cultural and linguistic identity of ethnic Hungarians living in minority status is becoming more and more difficult (see related census data and statistical studies).

In a bilingual and minority context, what is meant by 'Hungarian language' is different from what we find in Hungary. The overwhelming majority of ethnic Hungarians living beyond the borders (as well as a sizeable proportion of Hungarians residing in Hungary) do not speak the standard language variety but rather some dialect. Moreover, this dialect generally absorbs elements of the local official language (e.g., Slovakian, Romanian). Nevertheless, in the ethnic identity of minority Hungarians, there is a strong sense of belonging to the Hungarian speech community. As a result, language shift usually goes hand in hand with a shift in ethnicity. Therefore, for minority Hungarian communities to survive, the preservation of their language is extremely important, and can only be achieved if Hungarian is not relegated to the spheres of private life (cf. Csernicskó & Szabómihály, 2011; Péntek 2001, pp. 7–12). Education, and especially the teaching of Hungarian as a school subject, has an indispensable role in this context. Schools using Hungarian as a language of instruction, whose number keeps shrinking, are of strategic importance, and the role and responsibility of teachers of Hungarian working there cannot be overstated.

It is for these reasons that my research was not confined to the study of teachers of Hungarian working in Hungary, but rather I also studied teachers living and working beyond the borders. This added up to a total of 502 teachers and teacher trainees. In addition to teachers of Hungarian from Hungary (*N* = 216), the sample also included teachers from Slovakia (*N* = 128), Romania (*N* = 108) and Ukraine (*N* = 50). That it is to say, I included several teachers in my research for whom the teaching of Hungarian is not simply part of their job but rather also a pre-requisite for the preservation of their communities' ethnic identity.

5. METHOD

When studying the role of linguistic discrimination in teachers' evaluation of students' work, one cannot avoid having to filter out the effect of any other factor that might play a role (e.g., factors of nonlinguistic disadvantage, the halo effect), since these would clearly distort the results. Traditional methods (e.g., questionnaire-based research or observation) are not suitable for making visible and provable the linguistic discrimination of students by teachers on linguistic grounds. The most fundamental problem is that the linguistic disadvantage that is at the core of this phenomenon is closely interwoven with other factors, which serve as a basis for other forms of disadvantage (for example, social). Some of these clearly affect the linguistic production of children but can be detected elsewhere as well. Disadvantage in social status can be manifested in other forms (such as inadequate nutrition and housing, a lack of opportunity for extracurricular activities, isolation in society and at school, etc.), which all have a negative (and latent) effect on school performance. Thus, choosing to investigate the role of linguistic discrimination in teachers' evaluation of students inevitably requires that other factors (i.e., all aspects of non language-based disadvantage), which do not serve as the basis of linguistic discrimination, be excluded, since they would significantly distort the research results. The range of these factors can be defined as follows: (1) non-linguistic types of intelligence (multiple intelligences—cf. Gardner, 2006), (2) most social psychological factors (e.g., phenomena of person perception, i.e. appearance characteristics, the halo effect; the Pygmalion-effect—cf. Sritharan & Gawronski, 2010), and (3) non-linguistic disadvantage and extralinguistic sociocultural disadvantage that follows from socioeconomic status (cf. Collins, 2009; Bradley & Corwyn, 2002).

These factors are very obviously part of the teaching process and of teachers' evaluation of students, and, as such, they have to be taken into account when drawing comprehensive conclusions. However, in order that linguistic discrimination in teachers' evaluation of students and its severity be demonstrated and proven, all other factors that are based on non-linguistic differences and present in evaluation have to be maximally excluded (as a priority of research design).

This motivated me to develop a new method similar to (or, possibly, a modified version of) the verbal guise technique (VGT) (for details, see Jánk, 2019), which is capable of measuring the role of linguistic discrimination in teachers' evaluation of

students. The basis of the method is the same as in VGT, with subjects listening to sound samples recorded from speakers with different accents. However, the method also has several novel aspects. Firstly, recordings differ not only in the variety used (regional vs. standard) but also in mode of language use (code, in Bernstein's terms). Secondly, the basis of comparison is not an abstraction (cf. the standard variety as a construct or abstraction) but an actual and real text. Thirdly, teachers' summative and qualitative evaluation is also analysed. Fourthly, the questionnaire is sensitive to groups of characteristics relevant for the teaching process. Finally, there are no forced answers (except in the situational evaluation, see in more detail below).

These novelties represent a significant step forward with respect to previous research. Most importantly, the presence of linguistic discrimination becomes theoretically provable and linguistic discrimination based on regional and social linguistic disadvantage becomes measurable and identifiable. As a result, the method supports a systematic study of the way in which these affect school performance.

5.1 The listening material

The original version of the method used in this investigation was developed in 2016 and tested in a pilot study in the same year (Jánk, 2019). Following this, the method was modified and made more precise, which made it possible to carry out the main data collection reported on in this paper in 2017 and 2018.

The essence of the method can be summarized as follows. First of all the participants filled out the background questionnaire. In the background questionnaire, apart from classical variables (e.g., gender, age, place of residence), I also elicited data that had the potential to show up important correlations with linguistic discrimination in education. These included type of settlement (e.g., village; town; small city; capital depending on the number of; type of school where the informant teaches (e.g. primary school; elementary school; high school; vocational high school; teacher groups/professional status (options: teacher trainee; novice teacher [number of active years is less than 5 years]; experienced teacher [number of active years is more than 5 years]).

After filling out this introductory part of the questionnaire, teachers were instructed to read a short and simple textbook text known to them (e.g., about the traditional definition of a word class), for example:

Adjectives
expresses a property, but may also indicate a condition and an origin
degrees of adjectives: adjectives can express degrees of modification
3 types (with suffixes):
-positive (-)
-comparative (-er)
-superlative (-est)

Then the teachers were asked to evaluate the students' recorded (mock oral exam) retelling of the same text. Evaluation included the assignment of global grades with written commentaries and the assessment of the students' diligence and academic achievement on a five-point Likert-scale. The same procedure was repeated several times with different texts and different recordings. After each text was read by the subjects, they were asked to listen to a recording, fill out a questionnaire, and evaluate the performance/oral performance. The texts of the performances had been, however, written by me and then recorded by students using different dialects. For example, the following sample text represents the restricted mode of language use and includes only 60% of crucially important information.

Text of oral performance/exam on adjectives *(restricted language use and 60% of crucially important information)*
The adjectives are word class. It expresses a property. We can degree them. To express degree of modification. There's three types. One is the positive. There isn't suffix. For example: *rich*. Another is comparative. There's suffix which is -er. For example: richer.

Next consider another example with the same information content but expressed in elaborated language use:

Text of oral performance/exam on Adjectives *(elaborated language use and 60% of crucially important information)*
The adjectives are one type of word class. We can use these to express properties of something. Moreover, adjectives can express degrees of modification. There are three degrees of modification. The first one is the positive degree. In this case, there is no suffix, as in *rich*. The second one is the comparative degree. When we use this type of comparison then the suffix is -er. For example: *richer*.

Performances varied along three variables: (1) the variety in which they were told (standard or regional dialect), (2) mode of language use (restricted or elaborate, with variation in sentence length, sentence structure, repetition vs. the use of synonyms), and (3) how much of the crucially important information they contained (all or only 60%).

As an independent variable, (1) pertains to level of compliance with the standard language variety. In one case, the recording came from a 12-13 year-old child speaking the standard variety, in the other case from a child who was speaking a dialect. The Hungarian child who lives in Slovakia was using the Eastern Palóc dialect, whereas the one who lives in Hungary was using the standard variety. One reason behind my choice is that differences between standard Hungarian and the Eastern Palóc dialect are highly conspicuous (cf. Rási, 2018). The other reason is that originally my research goal was to study only teachers of Hungarian and university students in Hungary and Slovakia before the investigation was extended to Romania and Ukraine as well.

Mode of language use (2) as an independent variable affects sentence length, sentence structure, repetition and vocabulary in the recorded mock oral exam. Drawing on previous research, I modelled two modes of language use, namely restricted and elaborate. The restricted mode of language use was characterized by shorter, simpler sentences and less varied vocabulary (more repetitions), whereas the elaborate mode involved more complex sentences and more varied vocabulary (fewer repetitions). I produced the texts myself and they were read out loud during the recordings.

Amount of crucial information (3) as an independent variable concerns how much of the base text's relevant information was reproduced. Again, I created two versions: answers containing all necessary information (number of missing pieces of information: 0), and answers which were incomplete in content (number of missing pieces of information: 4). A key question of the research was to what extent this discrepancy would be perceived by the teacher: whether s/he would be able to focus on the content or this criterion would be overridden and rendered secondary by the two independent variables just described. Based on the findings of cognitive psychology about the functioning of attention, the latter scenario seemed more likely, although focusing on content and on language use can hardly be construed as a dichotomy, rather they are part of a continuum. In other words, both factors influence evaluation, but to different extents (cf. Eysenck & Keane 2000, 130–136, 147–165).

With the three independent variables, eight different recordings (mock answers) could have been produced, but only five were used in the research. The reason for this is that as revealed by the pilot study, listening to eight recordings was too much of a strain for the test subjects. Fewer subjects filled in later parts of the questionnaires, and those who did tended to put less effort into doing so.

This method primarily allows for the measurement of two phenomena. The first is linguistic discrimination, the other one is linguistic bias and language attitude. From the point of view of the present research, the former was most important to demonstrate and prove, but the latter was also taken into account, due to its crucial role in interpreting linguistic discrimination.

Linguistic discrimination can be demonstrated and proven through the grades (scale: 1–5 or 1–10 or 1–12 depending on the specific country) the teachers participating in the study assigned to the performances. Two logical possibilities exist here: either there is no discrimination (or only a negligible amount) in the evaluations, or there is, in considerable and statistically measurable proportions. If the results indicate the former, and there is hardly any discrimination at work, the main basis for evaluation would be content, and performances with the same content would receive the same grades on average, whereas performances with different content would be evaluated (significantly) differently especially because the questionnaire instructions specifically ask subjects to evaluate students' retelling of the text from the point of view of content. If linguistic discrimination is present in the evaluations by teachers and teacher trainees, then the grades given to performances with equivalent content and grade averages would be different, since there would be a

difference in the evaluations of answers with the same content. Various patterns might emerge, since we do not know what role language use and the variety used will play in the evaluations, and how these factors interact with content. In any case, linguistic discrimination is demonstrated when grade averages of answers of equivalent content differ significantly, or when content-wise complete answers produced in dialect or in the restricted code are evaluated similarly or more negatively than standard and elaborated but incomplete answers.

5.2 Questions and tasks

In the 2017-2018 survey, the participants had to evaluate each student's performance (based on a recording) in the following ways:

1) grading the student's performance (in accordance with the grading system of the country)
2) written justification of the grade (open-ended question, answering it was not obligatory)
3) the evaluation of specific statements about the performance on a five-point Likert scale (1-not true at all; 2-mostly not true; 3-partly/somewhat true, partly/somewhat not true; 4-mostly true; 5-completely true)
4) more global evaluation with regard to the student's personality, his/her attitude to the subject on a four-point scale, supplemented with the 'I can't decide' option.

The justifications and the responses given to particular statements support the same conclusions. Statements in the questionnaire can be divided into two groups, the first concerning the performance itself and the second concerning the student.
The statements about the performance that participants had to evaluate were the following:

- 'The student supplied all crucial information'
- 'The student was fully prepared.'
- 'The student's performance convinced me that he/she has understood the material rather than having simply memorized it by rote learning.'

In the former case, evaluation was carried out on a 5-point Likert scale, whereas in the latter, a 4-point scale was used along with the "undecided" option mentioned above. This option was provided because in contrast with statements about specific student performances, there was no way the informant could have made reliable inferences here. On the basis of an audio recording lasting less than a minute, it is impossible to decide to what extent the student likes or understands grammar, or how well-behaving he/she is. The global part of the evaluation included the following statements about the student's personality and his/her attitude to the subject.

- 'The student we have just heard likes Hungarian language as a subject.'
- 'The student we have just heard understands Hungarian language as a subject.'
- 'This student has a good mind.'
- 'This student is one of the best in the class.'

- 'The student's behaviour is good.'
- 'The student is hard-working.'

As can be seen, all of these are statements whose truth value cannot be objectively assessed on the basis of a one-minute performance. It is important to remark that from evaluations in the second block, only linguistic attitudes, prejudices can be inferred, they do not (necessarily) establish linguistic discrimination. Such discrimination is primarily manifested in the grade-based evaluation.

5.3 Data analysis

Data analysis was performed by the SPSS statistical software. As a new research method was being tested, in the course of analyses it was crucial to determine the range of statistical computations that were adequately and flexibly suited to the data under study. The sample did not have a normal distribution and involved several interrelated components; furthermore, the variables had a high number (larger than three) and had a high level of measurement (proportion scale). For these reasons, from among within-subject tests, I primarily employed Repeated Measures variance analysis and simple variance analysis instead of the more widespread 'traditional' statistical tests (such as the Chi-squared test and the t-test). In particular, this is because the latter cannot be (usefully) performed under the conditions just described, as they would produce distorted results (cf. Babbie 2007: 277–373). For determining significance levels, the Bonferroni test was adopted.

Finally, it should be mentioned that in all studies of linguistic discrimination (just as in several other types of sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic, etc. surveys), a question can be inevitably raised about research ethics. Specifically, with some surveys, it is impossible to avoid misleading the participants to a certain degree; if they were informed about the research topic, the survey would be likely to yield wrong, inaccurate (or at least highly distorted) results. Therefore, in the present research it was also expedient to refrain from any precise specification of the research topic (linguistic discrimination). Moreover, from the perspective of a general definition of pedagogical evaluation, no misleading occurred, as the study was focusing on the participants' evaluation practices, and in particular on linguistic aspects thereof.

6. RESULTS

In the remainder of this paper, I present the findings of a large-sample (N=502) measurement taken in four different countries (Hungary, Slovakia, Romania and Ukraine). However, no attempt is made at an exhaustive treatment, as my primary focus is on data obtained for Hungary. One reason for this is that a comprehensive analysis of all four countries would be beyond the scope (and space limitations) of the present paper. Additionally, the data on Slovakia, Romania and Ukraine are fundamentally similar to those on Hungary, displaying the same trends and supporting the same conclusions.

6.1 The results of the survey in Hungary

A total of 216 teachers and teacher trainees of Hungarian Language and Literature participated (in almost equal proportions) in the Hungary part of the 2017/2018 survey.

The first part of the questionnaire included eight dependent (background) variables. In addition to the usual sociological variables (e.g., gender, age, place of residence), further types of data were also elicited (such as the number of active years spent as a teacher and the type of school they worked at). The data can only be regarded as largely homogeneous along the variable of gender, with 90% of informants being women (similarly to previous statistical data).

With regard to age groups, a relative majority, 61.1% of the informants were between 30 and 65 years of age, with informants under 30 having a share of 37% and those above 65 accounting for only 1.85%. In line with this, 56.6% of the informants were experienced teachers, with at least five years of experience. Teachers at the beginning of their careers (with less than 5 years of experience) made up 16.2 percent of the sample, whereas teacher trainees were represented at 29.2%. Most informants were teaching in the capital (17.1%), the rest working in small (17.1%), medium-size (16.7%) or large cities (14.8%) at the time of the survey. Of the informants, 44% were teaching children between 6 and 14 years of age at primary schools, 19.6% were teaching at secondary schools, and 26.9% were not involved in teaching at this time.

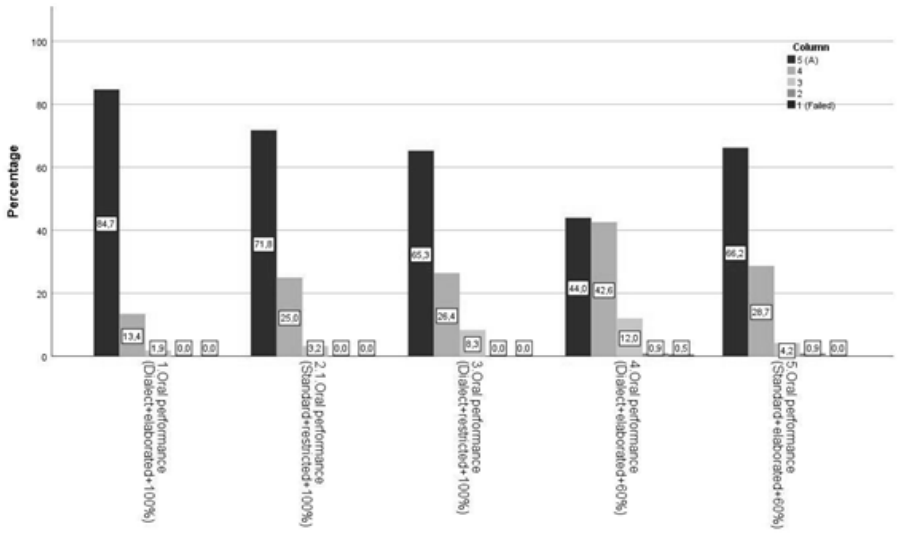
From the grades, their explanations, and the evaluations of the statements in the latter it can be unequivocally concluded that linguistic bias and linguistic discrimination are strongly present in teachers' evaluations of students.

Figure 1. shows the distribution of grades in the sample of Hungary. The grades and grade averages clearly demonstrate that the presence of regional varieties or of restricted code constitute a disadvantage for students when evaluated on the content of their oral performance by teachers (with the restricted code being more disadvantageous than a regional variety) even if they are fully prepared and demonstrate this to their teachers. In the case of the first two performances, 15.3% and 28.2%, respectively, of teachers gave one grade lower to students than what would have been expected on the basis of content, whereas in the case of the third performance this figure was 34.7%—a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.001$; Wilk's $\Lambda = 0.009$; $\eta^2 = 0.991$). At the same time, in the cases of incomplete-content performances (4th and 5th performances), 44% and 66.2%, respectively, of the respondents gave at least one grade higher despite the shortcomings. These results indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean of grades for the third and the fifth oral performance ($p = 0.596$).

This means that students were not rated on the acquired knowledge but on the basis of discrepancies with respect to a language variety which was mostly unfamiliar to them (cf. 4. section). And in cases when the disadvantageous variety and language use co-occur in a student's performance, linguistic discrimination is even greater and

more intense. The averages and the distribution of grades indicate that this discrimination reaches almost exactly the same extent as the advantage of students speaking the standard variety and using the elaborated code. Such students are able to cover up their disadvantage in the eyes of two-thirds of the teachers and teacher trainees, while students affected by linguistic discrimination receive at least one grade lower from more than one-third of the respondents despite their content-wise complete performances.

Figure 1. Distribution of grade in the sample of Hungary (N = 216)



Numerically, the following data were obtained in the full sample for Hungary. In the case of the first performance (dialect, elaborated and 100%), 33 informants (15.3%) were of the opinion that the student's answer did not deserve the best grade (5, excellent), whereas for the second performance (standard, restricted and 100%) the same figure was 28.2%, with 61 informants assigning one grade lower than would have been justified. The first performance received grade 4 (good) from 29 informants (13.4%), and grade 3 (average) from 3 of them (1.9%), whereas the second one received grade 4 from 57 (25%) and grade 3 from 7 informants (3.2%). Looked at from the opposite perspective, 84.7% of teachers and teacher trainees (and 71.8% in the case of the second performance) were fair in their evaluations, not showing any sign of linguistic discrimination.

The third performance (dialect, restricted and 100%) received even worse evaluations than the previous two, with 75 informants (34.7%) assigning a grade lower than 5 to the student, which accounts for more than one third of the teachers and teacher trainees in the sample. Of these informants, 57 people (25.4%) gave grade 4 to the student, and 18 people (8.3%) chose grade 3. Thus, linguistic discrimination

appears to be the strongest in this case, and it is significantly higher ($p < 0.05$) than in evaluations of the first performance.

By way of summary it can be ascertained that in evaluations of the first two performances, the informants who discriminated students linguistically had a share of 15.3% and 28.2% respectively, whereas the corresponding figure is 34.7% for the third performance. That is to say, the student was not evaluated on the basis of acquired knowledge but rather on the basis of language variety and/or mode of language use. When both kinds of linguistic disadvantage were at play, linguistic discrimination was even more pronounced. Looking at grade averages and grade distributions, we can conclude that the discriminatory effect of linguistic disadvantage is exactly the same as the benefit of students using the standard variety and the elaborated mode of language use. The latter group of students are able to cover up their gaps of knowledge when evaluated by two thirds of teachers and teacher trainees, while the former group, even when producing answers with impeccable content, receive at least one grade lower from more than one third of teachers.

With regard to particular statements, the most important results are as follows (again, no claim is made on an exhaustive treatment). Almost half of informants completely overlooked gaps in content when the student was using the standard variety and the elaborated mode of language use. When the standard variety was not combined with elaborated language use, this was true for only 30.1%. And when the student was using a dialect and the restricted mode of language use, 41.7% of teachers and teacher trainees had the impression that the performance had been incomplete in content, even though the student had provided all the necessary information.

Teachers and teacher trainees were least certain whether the child really understood what he was talking about when the answer was produced in a dialectal variety. In the case of children speaking the standard variety, the opposite effect was found, irrespective of how much of the required content had been reproduced. Moreover, teachers and teacher trainees were most likely to assume that the student understood the subject matter when the standard variety was combined with the elaborated mode of language use.

Statements about students show the same picture, with the results suggesting that linguistic discrimination is on the whole very significant and powerful. In reaction to three of the six statements, informants choosing the “undecided” option fell between 40% and 60%, whereas for the remaining three statements, it was between 20% and 35%. This means that in most cases teachers and teacher trainees had an inclination to make judgments about personal characteristics for which no reliable evidence had been provided by linguistic factors. In the study, half (and for certain statements, up to two thirds) of teachers assumed that they were able to infer such personal characteristics as diligence and general behaviour.

In conclusion, linguistic discrimination and negative language attitude were manifested along both parameters, standard vs. dialectal variety and elaborated vs. restricted language use. For all personal characteristics, the informants provided more favourable assessments for students using the standard variety and the elaborated

mode of language use. In particular, the higher prestige of the standard variety and the elaborated mode of language use informed judgments about such traits as diligence and general behaviour. At the other end of the spectrum, students using a dialect and the restricted mode of language use received less favourable evaluations in almost all respects.

The same phenomena also showed up in the data samples for other countries, either more forcefully (see the sample of Slovakia) or in basically the same way (see the sample of Romania). In view of this and because of space limitations, the results of these parts of the sample, and the conclusions they support, only receive brief mention in Sections 6.2 to 6.4. below.

6.2 The results of the Slovakia survey

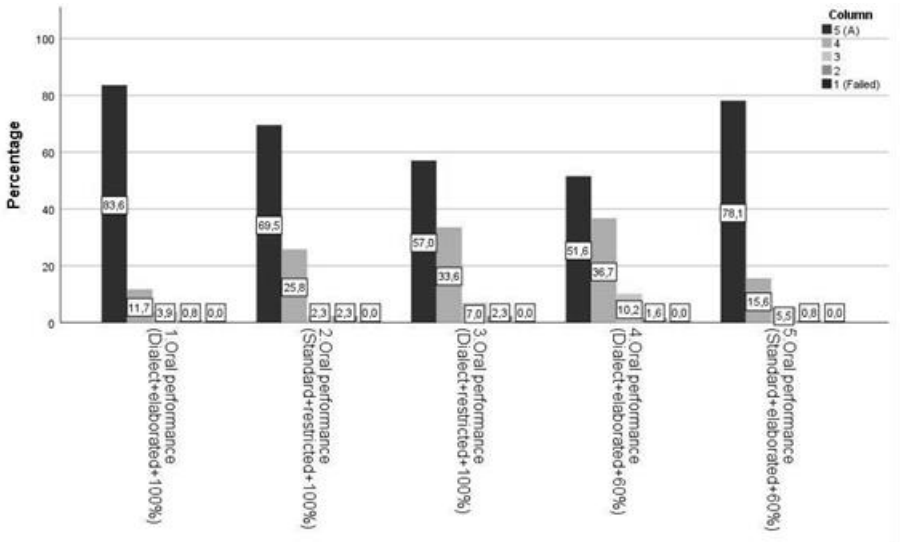
A total of 128 teachers and teacher trainees participated in the Slovakia part of the 2017/2018 survey. The data show here, too, that, to an even greater extent than in the data from Hungary, linguistic discrimination, coupled with linguistic bias, is strongly present in teachers' evaluations of students.

In the cases of the first, second and third performances 16.4%, 30.5%, and 43% of the teachers and teacher trainees respectively discriminated on the basis of language. In the cases of the incomplete performances 51.5% and 78.1% of the participants gave at least one grade higher despite the shortcomings of content (all of these differences are statistically significant: $p < 0.001$; Wilk's $\Lambda = 0.005$; $\eta^2 = 0.991$). Furthermore, the second figure shows that the evaluation of the last oral performance (standard, elaborated and 60%) was better than the third (dialect, restricted and 100%) and the second one (standard, restricted and 100%). This is indicative of extremely strong linguistic discrimination.

The grades given by the participants demonstrate that what is decisive in teachers' evaluations of student performance is not the content of the answers but rather the variety and language use that students employ. A student is discriminated against if their language use is not elaborated or standard, and if it is neither, their disadvantage increases further. Likewise, when a student's language use is elaborated or they speak the standard variety, they are at an advantage, which increases further if their language is both elaborated and standard.

It is also important to note that for all statements, teachers and teacher trainees rated the performance given in the standard variety and elaborated code most positively. With regard to all characteristics—from how much the student liked the subject to his/her diligence—this was the best predictor of the highest evaluation, while the use of a regional dialect and restricted language use served as predictors of the lowest evaluations. And this was the case even though "undecided" was offered as an option among the answers, as it was selected by between one-third and half of the participants only.

Figure 2. Distribution of grades in the sample of Slovakia (N = 128)



6.3 The results of the Romania survey

A total of 108 teachers participated in the Romania part of the 2017/2018 survey. The results of this part of the investigation also show that linguistic bias and linguistic discrimination are strongly present in teachers' evaluation of students.

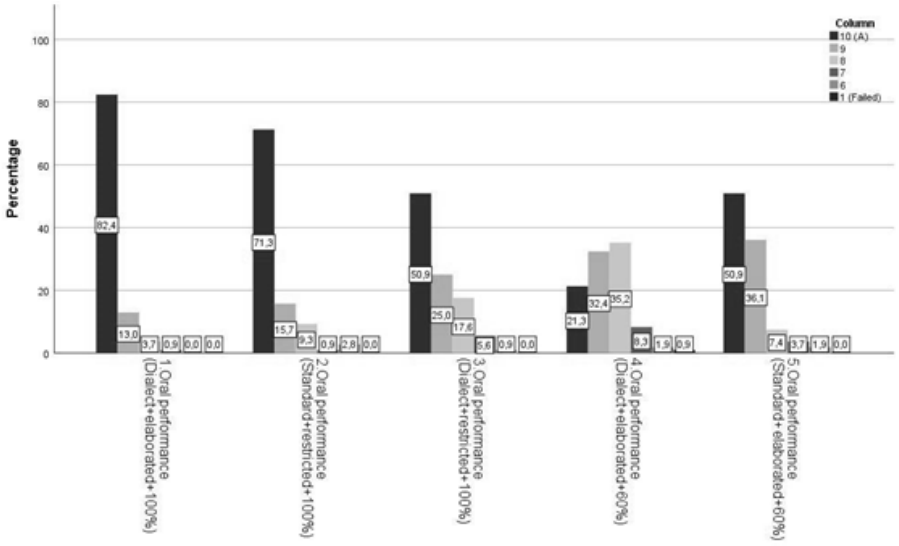
In the case of the three complete performances, 17.6%, 28.7%, and 49.1% of the participants respectively gave at least one grade lower to students than what they deserved based on their knowledge. In the evaluation of the incomplete performances, discrimination also played a role, but in this case it was positive discrimination: the fourth and fifth performances were given at least one grade higher by 21.3% and 50.9% of the respondents respectively than would have been expected based on their content. Furthermore, there is no statistically significant difference ($p=0.336$) between the mean of grades for the third (dialect, restricted and 100%) and the last oral performance (standard, elaborated and 60%). Specifically, this means the following.

The grades given to performances show that in textual evaluations, the content of the performance was less important than the variety and language use of the students. Both can be the source of advantage or disadvantage for students: when a student uses the standard and/or the elaborated code, they enjoy positive discrimination, whereas when they use a regional dialect and/or the restricted code, they are subjected to negative discrimination. Discrimination is strongest if variety and code are both positive or both negative, with the two factors reinforcing each other.

The explanations given regarding the grades indicate the same: they show that an important reason for this is that evaluating students' oral performances is actually about assessing their language use rather than about evaluating their knowledge.

The analysis of statements about the performances and the students shows a marked presence of linguistic discrimination in the sample from Romania as well, even though discrimination is weaker here than in Slovakia or Hungary.

Figure 3. Distribution of grades in the sample of Romania (N = 108)



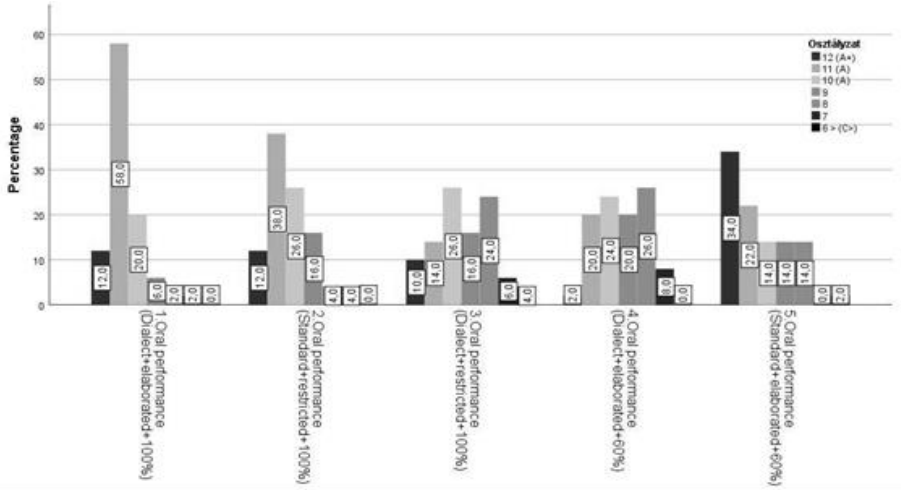
6.4 The results of the Ukraine survey

This is the last country that was included in the survey of 2017/2018, with only a total of 50 teachers and teacher trainees.

Just as in the other three countries, the Subcarpathia survey also unequivocally shows that linguistic discrimination is strongly present in teachers' evaluation of students. This means that—taking into account the unique grading system of the country and lumping together grades 9 through 12—in the case of the first three performances at least 10%, 14%, and 50% of the participants respectively graded students less favourably than their knowledge would have warranted. In parallel with this, for the fourth and fifth performances, 46% and 70% of the participants respectively gave more positive evaluations than the performance merited. The performances using regional and restricted language were rated much more negatively than they deserved (compared to the other performances and also in view of their content elements), while the performance given in the standard and elaborated language use was evaluated much more positively. This means that the language use and variety

of the performance were just as important as its content. The textual evaluations supported this, since they indicated that in assessing an oral performance, the language use and standard vs. dialectal language variety of the student were evaluated to a much greater extent than their knowledge. Linguistic bias was shown to be at work in the case of both regional dialectal speech and restricted language use, even influencing whether teachers noticed and reacted to information in the first place.

Figure 4. Distribution of grades in the sample of Ukraine (N = 50)



The statements about student performances and the students themselves also indicated a strong presence of linguistic bias in the Subcarpathian survey. In the case of every personality trait—from the student's attitude to the subject to mental abilities—the best predictor of a positive evaluation was the student's standard language use and use of the elaborated code, while the strongest predictor of a negative evaluation was their use of a regional variety and the restricted code. The fact that "undecided" was offered as an option did not mitigate this effect either.

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The goal of my study has been to uncover and demonstrate linguistic discrimination, which I have attempted to achieve with a method I developed for this purpose. The study of 2017/2018 used a total of 502 teachers and teacher trainees as participants, showing clearly that linguistic discrimination is strongly present in teachers' evaluation of students. Student performances were rated differentially depending on content, language variety and mode of language use, with the performances using the standard and/or elaborated code being rated the most positively. Performances

using a regional dialect or the restricted code were always rated negatively, even when in terms of content the performance was free from shortcomings.

In the framework of critical sociolinguistics, the results can be interpreted by observing that a linguistic source can be the root of advantages and disadvantages in two different ways. One is when a semiotic sign is absent from an individual's verbal repertoire. The other is when meaning and value attribution, or their synchronization, are not adequate, with challenges affecting these areas. The present paper has primarily demonstrated these latter at an abstract level, focusing on general trends and conclusions. Naturally this does not mean that the former could not be just as important in particular discourses, considered in their fluidity and dynamism.

In terms of grade averages, linguistic discrimination produced a difference of at least one grade for performances of the same content. These differences were statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) in the case of every group of participants, proving the presence of linguistic discrimination. The student speaking a dialect but using the elaborate code was evaluated at least one grade lower than what the content of her answer had justified by 15.5% of informants. The corresponding figure was 28% with the child speaking the standard variety but using the restricted code, and 46.2% with the pupil speaking a dialect in the restricted code. As for the child speaking a dialect in the elaborate code, 40.7% of future and practicing teachers of Hungarian gave her a better grade (at least by one grade) than what the content of her performance would have justified. The student speaking the standard variety in the elaborate code received a similar boost in 66.2% of cases.

It was a conscious decision on my behalf that written justifications of the grade were not discussed in the analysis, as reflecting on them was not realistic within the scope of the paper (since all answers had been evaluated by informants separately, the material consisted of 1100 written justifications). Generally speaking, the following can be ascertained: a) justifications correlate with the grades, b) two opposite attitudes (positive and negative) emerge in relation to dialectal speech; c) justifications typically highlight the structure and manner of execution of the answer in addition to attitudes to dialect.

In the case of both weaker (C or lower) and the best (A) grades, justifications gave clear evidence of standardism as a language ideology. The informants produced comments like the following on performances in dialectal speech: "The wording was correct but the student is not using standard language" or "The student also used grammatically incorrect words" (i.e., dialectal variants). Correspondingly, performances in the standard variety received praise such as "The style was nice, the student was using standard language" or „the student told the answer in a very sophisticated way, conforming to the standard". It should be mentioned, though, that positive language attitudes can also be documented in written justifications, albeit only sporadically. For instance, "The content is correct and I loved listening to her", "I really liked this »flavorous« diphthong-rich speech".

When it comes to the performances' structure and manner of execution, informants mostly highlighted features of the standard and the elaborate code on the one

hand, and those of the restricted code on the other. Examples for the former include the following: “This is what a perfect answer looks like. The student is careful, she is choosing her words in good style”; “The student has a very rich vocabulary, she is linking sentences very well, she is also using technical terms”; “Perfect answer, professionally prepared, sophisticated style”. It should be noted that all of these referred to a student performance lacking some important elements of content; despite this, each teacher evaluated it as excellent (A). By contrast, the opposite linguistic features take centre stage in the evaluation of performances in the restricted code, for example: “Her vocabulary is hardly sophisticated, the style is »sloppy«”; “she did not use complete, well-rounded sentences”. In these cases, none of the informants assigned a higher grade than B to the student’s performance. This clearly indicates the fact that the notions of meaning and value attribution used in critical sociolinguistics are not only highly relevant from the students’ perspective; they are at least as important with regard to their teachers.

As revealed by statistic measurements, the first variable did not produce significant variation in the grading of student performances. Some trends can be observed, however. Although the correlation between average grading and the informants’ gender cannot be considered statistically significant (p = 0.892), female informants did evaluate performances more favourably on average than men. In other words, men were stricter in grading. Around 10% fewer men evaluated the performances as good in comparison with women. A further parameter of variation concerned teacher groups. On average, teacher trainees evaluated the first three, contentwise complete performances less favourably than novice or experienced teachers. At the same time, the fourth performance received better evaluations from them on average than from teachers already working at schools (for the fifth performance, the evaluations converged). This may suggest that teacher trainees majoring in Hungarian for teaching purposes are somewhat more prone to linguistic discrimination, especially in a negative way, than teachers who have already embarked on their careers.

Finally, the evaluations also varied along the parameter of which forms (age groups) the teachers were working with. Those teaching at primary/elementary schools produced the most favourable evaluations in comparison with other groups, especially those teaching the age group of 10 to 14 year-old students. Along the additional variables, no relevant variation was found.

In contrast with the above, there were no statistically significant differences in the evaluations of the performance which used the regional variety and the restricted code while being content-wise complete vs. the one using the standard and the elaborated code but lacking some content. This is possibly because the disadvantage of the student with the latter kind of performance is twofold, just like the linguistic disadvantage of the former, and in both cases this pushes the importance of knowledge into the background.

Similarly, linguistic bias, which strongly correlates with linguistic discrimination, was demonstrably present with the teachers and teacher trainees, and this can be

detected in the evaluations connected with the various statements. Here, even though "undecided" was offered as an option, only a minority of the respondents resorted to it. This only exceeded 50% in the case of one statement; the teachers were least confident in drawing conclusions about student behaviour. With regard to other statements, a much higher proportion of teachers and teacher trainees believed that they were able to evaluate various properties, personality traits of the student on the basis of a one-minute-long performance. In the full sample, on average 60-65% of informants were confident enough to assess whether the child was among the best students in her class. In relation to the student's love of grammar, this confidence rate was around 70-75% (with the exception of the Romanian sample, where the figure is at 50-60%), and with regard to the student's diligence, it was around 75-80%.

Another aspect of this is that there was no statement for which teachers and teacher trainees had not given the most favourable evaluation to the student speaking the standard variety and using the elaborate code (despite some content elements missing from her answer). Neither was there any statement for which the student using the restricted code in dialectal speech had not received the worst evaluations, even when her answer was perfect in terms of content. This means that when linguistic sources expected by the teacher are not available to the child, or they are synchronized differently within a particular utterance (cf. Blommaert 2016), her performance is rated lower. Put differently, the arrangement and abstraction of linguistic sources constitute important prerequisites for academic achievement.

To summarize, linguistic discrimination can be interpreted by a pedagogical halo effect. The greater a student's linguistic disadvantage (especially linguistic sources and synchronization), the smaller their chance of academic success. The greater a student's linguistic advantage, the easier the time they will have during their school years, at least as far as evaluation of their oral performances by teachers is concerned.

On the basis of the above findings, we can firmly state that linguistic discrimination (both positive and negative) strongly affects the evaluation of students by teachers and teacher trainees both in Hungary and in areas populated by Hungarians in neighbouring countries. However, it is important to also state that most teachers are likely unaware of the fact that they practice linguistic discrimination. They do not know that they judge students by their use of linguistic markers in situations where it is not standard language use which they want to measure and evaluate, and they are probably also not aware why this kind of evaluation presents a considerable problem on the level of both education and society.

Results indicate that language variety and mode of language use play a key role in determining academic success and failure. In other words, linguistic resources and their arrangement are absolutely determining factors in school discourse. No matter how hard a student works and prepares for classes within the range of their possibilities, several teachers will not be evaluating them on the basis of how well-prepared they are.

One possible consequence of this is that students will develop a certain kind of learned helplessness (cf. Seligman, 1972), that is, in time, they will stop making an effort in order to become successful if they experience unfair evaluation that disregards all their efforts. The Pygmalion effect, that is, a self-fulfilling prophecy will prevail: students will identify with the role teachers (and society) assign to them based on prior expectations and presuppositions. The presupposition based on linguistic bias is that the closer to the standard variety and the elaborated code one's speech is, the greater one's knowledge, the better prepared and more talented one is, whereas the farther one's speech is from the standard and from elaborated code, the weaker one's abilities and the lower the level of one's knowledge. The end result is that many talented students are lost to the school, which is an enormous loss not only from the perspective of the individuals but also from that of society.

Even though the available empirical results are restricted in scope to teachers of Hungarian, it can be plausibly assumed that similar trends characterize the evaluative practices of other teachers as well. If that is the case, the effect described above has an even greater role in determining school success or failure, creating a halo effect. This represents the most important finding of the present paper, echoing what Robert K. Merton (1968) called the Matthew effect of accumulated advantage (in reference to a parable recorded in the Gospel of Matthew): For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away.

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