Some of the Hungarian communities in America were established more than a century ago*. The bulk of Hungarian emigration to the United States took place between 1870 and 1914, with two smaller waves of immigrants arriving after World War II and in 1956–57. According to Waggoner (1981: 493), the total number of Hungarians in the USA in 1970 was estimated to be 495,000. This estimate, as well as any other, should be viewed with caution due to the well-known inadequacies of US Census data on mother tongue. Fishman (1966: 50) has pointed out that until a “current language mastery” census is conducted we must remain somewhat sceptical of numerical estimates.

Surveying Hungarian linguistic scholarship in the United States, John Lotz (1967) called attention to the need to describe Hungarian-American English language contact. Eleven years later Andrew Kerek (1978: 66) commented that the synthesis Lotz had called for was “still nowhere in sight”. As I write this essay (in October 1983), Kerek’s statement is as valid as ever.

My purpose is to survey the literature on H(ungarian)-A(mericans) (hereafter: H-A) bilingualism. I will look at some of the background information students of H-A bilingualism need to consider, and will then survey the literature on H(ungarian) as spoken in North America, i.e. Magygol, to use A. Makkai’s term (1979: 495) and that on E(nglish) as spoken by Hungarian-Americans (Hunglish in Makkai’s sense). While section I on background information and the sources of linguistic study does not pretend to be exhaustive at all, the sections on Magygol and Hunglish are meant as possibly complete surveys of the literature.

I. Background Information on Hungarian-Americans

General information on Hungarian-Americans is found in the Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups (Benkart 1980), in Széplaki (1975), which is “a

* The author is indebted to Jeff Harlig (University of Chicago) for his valuable criticism of an earlier draft of this paper.
chronology and fact book” as the subtitle of the book indicates, and in Széplaki’s bibliography *Hungarians in the United States and Canada* (1977).

Taborsky (1955) has dealt with the Hungarian press in America, Lotz (1967) has surveyed Hungarian linguistics, and Fishman (1966) has studied Hungarian language maintenance in the United States. The latter work remains the best sociolinguistic account of Hungarian-Americans. Information on H-A churches, their current life and activities, is found, for instance, in the yearbooks of The Hungarian Reformed Federation of America (published in Ligonier, Pennsylvania) and in Török (1978), which is an invaluable history of Hungarian Roman Catholic parishes in the US and Canada.


Linda Dégh’s paper, *The Ethnicity of Hungarian-Americans* (1980) is by far the best and most comprehensive ethnographic study. With Andrew Vázsonyi she has studied Hungarians in Canada (Dégh and Vázsonyi 1971—1975) as well as in the Calumet region southeast of Chicago, Illinois (Dégh and Vázsonyi 1969). Vázsonyi has published an excellent study on boarding house life in Hungarian immigrant communities both in English (1978) and Hungarian (1980).


Some A-H literature mocks the corrupted Hungarian used by immigrants: Adam Makkai’s poem (1966) and Pál Kántor’s “letter from America to Hungary” (1978) are cases in point. The linguistic aspects of the immigrant’s problems in adapting to American society are humorously exposed by Wass (1980) and Cseh (1975). The latter’s short story is entitled *Szí-esz-i-écs*, the Hungarian way of transcribing the English spelling of the word *c-s-e-h*, which is the writer’s unpronounceable Hungarian surname.

* American-Hungarian (A-H) means Hungarian as spoken or written by Hungarians living in America.
Some literary works written in Hungary also bear loosely on A-H life. Sebők (1914) wrote a short story about a poor emigrant woman’s life in America, and the novelist Áron Tamási, who spent 1923–26 in America working in factories, foundries and banks, wrote *Abel Amerikában* (Abel in America), a book vividly depicting the ups and downs of an immigrant’s life. Among the numerous travelogues written by contemporary Hungarian writers about the United States the only useful book from the sociolinguistic point of view is Ignácz (1980). Some of Ignácz’s sketches are masterly and faithful renderings of present-day H-A life.

Useful information on various aspects of H-A immigrant life can be found in Máthé (1942), Konnyu (1967) and A. Molnár (1977). Weinstock (1969) is a sociological study of the acculturation of the 1956 refugees in the US containing some data on the refugees’ use of English. Sós (1973) is an overview while Ludányi (1974) displays the sentiments against intermarriage. Although Sárközi (1981) deals with how 1956 refugees have fared in England, it offers some interesting comparisons for the study of Hungarian-Americans.

Problems of H-A identity are examined by Joseph Reményi (1934, 1937b) from a socio-psychological point of view. Sanders (1973) is an informed layman’s account of the linguistic dilemma of Hungarian-Americans. A. Makkai (1972) describes the cultural and linguistic plight of H-A children brought up as monolingual Hungarians in their families before they went to an American school. Makkai also offers a pedagogical strategy for avoiding the double disadvantage of semilingualism, i.e. speaking neither English nor Hungarian correctly in America.

Students of present-day H-A bilingualism will find some interesting information in Lőrincze (1980), Szántó (1983) and especially K. Nagy (1981). Borbándi (1977) is a West European Hungarian’s report on H-A communities. Finally, Nehler (1981b) is one of the few papers written about a Hungarian community by an American with no Hungarian background whatsoever.

“Efforts to preserve the Hungarian language” is the title of a chapter in Puskás (1982a) in which the author surveys the role of Hungarian schools from 1893, the year the first Hungarian schools were set up in America, through the 1920s. Two recent works relevant to Hungarian-language instruction in the US today are K. Nagy (1977) and Nádas and Somogyi (1980).

Not all Hungarians who crossed the Atlantic went to the United States: some immigrated into Canada. Canadian-Hungarians have also become the topic of various ethnic studies. Foremost among them is Kosa (1957), *Land of Choice: The Hungarians in Canada*. Dreisziger (1981) gives an account of immigrant lives and lifestyles in Canada between 1924 and 1939 offering information on the acquisition of English in the first generation and that of Hungarian in the second. Kovács (1981: 45) contains a reference to interethnic “disharmony” between Hungarians and Slovaks and arguments about the frequency and extent of the languages to be used in services. Dégh
(1980b) examines folk religion as motivation for ethnic survival in the Hungarian community of Kipling, Saskatchewan. Kovács (1980a) is a history of the same community, which is also called Békevár, while Kovács (1980b) deals with early Hungarian-Canadian culture in general. Finally, four papers on maintaining Hungarian in Canada should be mentioned: Hegedűs (1979–80), Horváth (1981), and Csapo (1983a and 1983b).

Dojcsák (1981) is a book and Dojcsák (1983) an article on a Canadian-Hungarian community. The latter contains some informal observations about Magygorol and Húnglish.

**Background Literature Usable as Linguistic Data**

Several books, albums and articles provide background information on Hungarian-Americans as well as corpora worth analyzing linguistically. Books which portray notable Hungarian-Americans (e.g. Káldor 1937) and their communities (e.g. Sári 1966, and especially 1978) often contain documents that faithfully reflect the languages of Hungarian-Americans. Especially rich in this respect is Sári’s *Clevelandi magyar múzeum* (Hungarian Museum of Cleveland), which contains not only documents but also plenty of photographs often providing valuable samples of Hungarian and Magygorol.

Two of the many albums are the *Golden Jubilee Album of the Magyar People in South Bend, Indiana 1882–1932* and *Az Amerikai Magyar Népszava aranyjubileumi albuma* (Golden Jubilee Album of the Newspaper “Amerikai Magyar Népszava”) published in New York in 1950. Both contain plenty of material worthy of linguistic analysis.

Könnyű (1961), the Hungarian original of Konnyu (1962), should also be mentioned in this connection.

Puskás (1982b: 551–579) contains transcripts of tape-recorded interviews with American-Hungarians and with people who re-migrated to Hungary. Fascinating though the fourteen interviews are, linguistically they are of dubious value since the author, rather than publish the interviews verbatim, has made editorial changes in the transcripts. However, three printed pages of correspondence between a Hungarian-American and his brother-in-law in Hungary have, fortunately, been published verbatim.

Next, Tezla’s two monumental books (in preparation) should be mentioned. His two-volume book to be published in Hungary will contain a plethora of documents drawn from newspapers, church and governmental archives, imaginative literature, and personal correspondence. The editorial material will comprise about 75 printed pages, including a Magygorol word-list. An American edition with the working title *The*
Hungarian Quest: A Documentary of Hungarians in America, 1895—1920 is also in preparation.

D. Nagy (1978 and 1979) are two volumes on the folklore of American-Hungarians gleaned from newspapers, calendars and similar publications. Although the material is rich and varied (prayers, anecdotes, weather forecasts and proverbs as well as canvassing songs and popular poems are some of the types of literature collected), it is unfortunately rendered nearly useless from the linguist’s point of view because serious doubts can be raised about the philological accuracy of the material, especially its spelling as printed in the two volumes. The section on Hungarian as it is spoken in America (1978: 256–260) and the list of English loanwords in American Hungarian (1978: 261–268) are fraught with inaccuracies and offer very little that has not been said by others earlier.

Finally, the language usage interviews used in the Project on Hungarian-American Bilingualism in South Bend, Indiana serve the double purpose of providing sociolinguistic information and a corpus worth analyzing linguistically. Kontra and Nehler (1981b) is the verbatim transcript of an English interview between a native speaker of American English and a 1956 refugee while Nehler (1981a) is a near-verbatim* transcript of a Hungarian interview with a second-generation Hungarian-American. Another part of the South Bend Project (Kontra 1984) contains, verbatim, the type-written autobiography of an old Hungarian woman.

Corpora for the Study of Hungarian and American English in Contact

Any written or spoken record of Magygorl and Hunglish can be used as a corpus for the study of H-A bilingualism. In principle written records can be subdivided into primary and secondary records. Primary records are all manuscripts, i.e. letters, hand-written minutes of parish council meetings and the like. These are called primary sources because they represent genuine language material unchanged in any way by editors or typesetters. There is certainly an abundance of primary written records of Magygorl and Hunglish, yet most of them are unavailable for linguistic analysis as they are buried in the storerooms of various collections. One interesting piece of this kind of material has been published by éjl [sic] (1974): it is a letter written in Hungarian by an American student from Portland, Oregon studying at the University of Szeged in Hungary.**

* The editors of Új Látóhatár have unfortunately “edited out” the interviewer’s uses of tetszik as in Melyik misére tetszik járam? Apart from these changes, the published interview is an adequate copy of the tape-recording. Nothing has been changed in the informant’s speech.

**Obviously, there is a difference between Hungarian as spoken or written by Hungarians in America and Hungarian as spoken or written by Americans learning Hungarian in Hungary. The former is Magygorl
Less reliable from the linguistic point of view are all the newspapers published by Hungarian-Americans since they inevitably bear the mark of their editors' pens. There are two problems in analyzing the Magygor (and to a lesser extent the Hunglish) of newspapers. First, editors make editorial changes in word usage, syntactic patterns and spelling, thereby misrepresenting actual usage and turning primary linguistic material into secondary. Second, the changes made by an editor reflect his idiolect and it is hard to know whether one is dealing with an editor's idiosyncratic use of Magygor or with something that enjoys general currency in America. All this said, newspapers are an important corpus to study. The National Széchenyi Library in Budapest is reputed to have the largest collection of A-H newspapers; alas, the use of that collection by researchers is restricted. It may be no accident that the first thorough linguistic analysis of A-H newspapers was carried out only quite recently (Kontra 1982a).

Mention should be made in this connection of The Edmund Vasváry Collection donated by a devoted H-A pastor to the Somogyi Library in Szeged. Among other things it contains a wealth of A-H newspapers and clippings. Unfortunately, a very small part of the collection was lost on the way to Hungary, therefore the entire collection can only be studied on microfilm at the American Hungarian Foundation, New Brunswick, N. J. (cf. Péter 1982: 604–605).

A very important secondary source is Péter Halász's Második Avenue (Second Avenue), a 670-page novel about the vicissitudes of a 1956 Hungarian refugee family arriving in New York City's Hungarian neighborhood. Besides portraying H-A life in great detail, the book offers several fine insights into the psychological and linguistic problems immigrants had to tackle. Written by a Hungarian-American, the language of the novel is well worth a thorough analysis as it contains a great many instances of code-switching that appear to faithfully represent actual code-switchings in Magygor speech.

As Adam Makkai (1979) has put it, "when a person having resided abroad for a decade or two returns to Hungary and shows the effects of . . . Magygor . . . he is frequently ridiculed. The shock-therapy works fast and in a couple of weeks the person is restored to 'pure Hungarian'." One journalist's attempt to reflect the strangeness of Magygor to Hungarian ears is K. Molnár (1983), an interview with the H-A movie producer Robert Halmi.

Finally, among the written materials to be studied, mention should be made of language books written for immigrants and their children. Obviously, these have shaped Magygor speech, and probably to a greater extent the Hunglish spoken in America. One such book is Green 1919: American Language Master: An English-Hungarian grammar, interpreter and dictionary (cf. J. Molnár 1984).

proper; the latter can only be called Magygor because, like Magygor proper, it is Hungarian with English interference.
Tape-recordings constitute the second main type of corpus. These include collections made by professional linguists on the one hand, and by historians, ethnographers and sociologists on the other. The very first collection was made by Elemér Bako in the 1950s and 60s: he recorded the life-stories of several Hungarian-Americans, mainly representing old-timers’ Hungarian speech in the eastern United States. Unfortunately, the transcription of Bako’s 150 hours of recordings (1965: 212) has not been completed—his is a dormant collection waiting to be analyzed.

Chronologically the second is Béla Kálmán’s (1970) 16-hour taped collection of Magygor speech recorded during his Ford scholarship in the US in 1968–69. Analysis of these recordings also awaits completion.

The third collection made by professional linguists is the recordings of the Project on Hungarian-American Bilingualism in South Bend, Indiana. They contain about 80 hours of Magygor and 60 hours of Hunglish speech. All of the Hungarian interviews were conducted by the present writer, a native speaker of Hungarian who taught at Indiana University, Bloomington during 1978–81. All of the English interviews were conducted by native speakers of American English: Gregory L. Nehler (Indiana University) and Jeff Harlig (University of Chicago). Thus the tapes contain Hungarian conversations between speakers of Magygor and a speaker of Standard Hungarian, and English conversations between speakers of Hunglish and a speaker of Standard American English. Basically, the South Bend collection contains three types of interviews: a Hungarian-language interview (Kontra forthcoming a), an English-language interview, and a language usage interview (published in Kontra and Nehler 1981b and Nehler 1981a). In addition, several hours of H-A radio programs* and interviews with H-A children have also been recorded. Transcription of the Hungarian tapes recorded for the South Bend Project has been completed. A description of the South Bend collections can be found in the Directory of Speech Archives of the American Dialect Society, compiled by Michael D. Linn. One copy of the entire collection is deposited at the Linguistics Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Nyelvtudományi Intézete, Budapest) for use by bona fide researchers.

* An interesting piece of spoken Magygor has been published in USA No. 33 (1981), the Hungarian-language periodical of the International Communication Agency of the USA, distributed by the United States Embassy in Budapest. It is a verbatim transcript of a television interview with Tibor Serly, containing good examples of “looking for the right Hungarian word,” e.g. féltékeny ‘jealous’ vs. félénk ‘shy’ and továbbítani ‘to forward’ vs. folytatni ‘to continue’ (cf. Bárdos and Bérczi 1981).
II. Magygol: Hungarian as Spoken in North America

Research publications on Hungarian as used in America are relatively few and of very uneven quality. Even the "major" projects manifest heterogeneity from a qualitative point of view. For instance, Szamek's Ph. D. dissertation, *The Eastern American Dialect of Hungarian: An Analytic Study* (1947) is somewhat marred by the author's insufficient knowledge of Hungarian. McRobbie (1979), an ethnolinguistic study of the Hungarian community of Békevár (Kipling), Saskatchewan, Canada has frequent references to the vocabulary, reading and writing tests used in the project but the reader learns nothing about the tests themselves and is left in the dark about how some of the author's diagrams have been arrived at. Győri (1979), a thesis written in Budapest, is—according to its author—an analysis of 200 issues of 40 different A-H newspapers. The reader is baffled, however, by a nearly total lack of documentation: in this 129-page paper the first example quoted with its locus occurs on p. 103!

One recurrent statement found in a number of papers on Magygol is the corruption or degeneration of Hungarian in America. Authors from Spissák (1906) to Győri (1979) lament the deterioration of "pure Hungarian" and accuse American-Hungarians of "mental laziness". The only dissenting voice is Fábián (1948: 40) who realizes that "American-Hungarians cannot be blamed for preferring English to Hungarian in America." Illustrative of the general uninformed state of writers is the contrast between the following two opinions: Spissák (1906: 262) claims that Magygol is so full of English loanwords as to render it unintelligible to speakers of Metropolitan Hungarian whereas Rubinyi (1921: 12), although not denying some degree of deterioration, claims that the pure Hungarian of newspapers like *Szabadság* all but counterbalances the effect of English on Magygol.

By and large it can be said that the data on which the Magygol literature is based is scanty and haphazardly chosen, therefore the very few generalizations that are made cannot be taken seriously. It seems that the first study of Magygol not marred by inadequate data and incomprehensive analysis will be the *South Bend Project*.

In this section the literature on Magygol will be surveyed according to the following topics: phonetics and phonology, grammar, vocabulary, word-formation, code-switching, names, and pronouns of address.

*Phonetics and Phonology*

Szamek (1947) in his chapter on phonology treats in detail the sound substitutions occurring in the adaptation of English loanwords, e.g. *beauty parlor* > [*bjudi paːlɛr*]
illustrates how English flapped $d$ is adapted in *Magygod* (p. 37). English word-initial $st$-often becomes $st$- (p. 42), but no explanation is offered as to why this happens.

Since at least Rubinyi (1921: 12) linguists have speculated about the amount of interference in *Magygod* according to the various linguistic levels. Rubinyi claimed that mixing E with H primarily occurred in vocabulary, morphological mixing was much less evident and syntactic interference minimal. Writing of the typical Hungarian-American who considers the acquisition of E very important, Janda (1976: 591) claims that "In time his linguistic performance in Hungarian showed great interferences from English mostly on the lexical and sometimes at the syntactic levels, although never on the level of phonology." The claim about the non-existence of phonological-phonetic interference can be dismissed easily (cf. Kontra forthcoming b). As to the amount of lexical interference vs. interference in pronunciation, a methodological puzzle has yet to be resolved. Suppose in a stretch of *Magygod* 50 English loanwords occur and in the same stretch 50 Hungarian words are pronounced with aspirated stops. Should we say that lexical interference is 50 times larger than phonetic because aspiration is just one recurrent manifestation of English interference, or should we say that there are 50 instances of lexical interference and 50 of phonetic interference?*

Kálmán (1970a: 382–383) characterizes Hungarian immigrants as showing no signs of phonetic interference at all while the second generation manifest aspiration of stops, pronounce dark $l$’s, sometimes pronounce $r$ in the American way and may pronounce $w$ in place of H $v$. Kontra (forthcoming b) has shown that Kálmán's claims are too strong: immigrants sometimes do aspirate stops and some second-generation speakers, contrary to Kálmán's claim, have not acquired the pronunciation of Hungarian $gy$. In the latter study the perception data of 40 informants and the production data of 27 informants are analyzed from the points of view of aspiration, consonant gemination, pronunciation of $gy$ and $r$, and the phonemic distinction of $\text{ment} [\text{ment}]$ 'went' and $\text{ment} [\text{maent}]$ 'saves', which is characteristic of a large number of dialect speakers but not of Standard Hungarian. As is to be expected, this study has shown that there is variation within a speaker’s pronunciation: e.g. a speaker may aspirate a stop in one word but not in another, and one minute he may aspirate the initial stop in a word and the next minute he may not aspirate it in the same word. Perhaps the most surprising finding of this preliminary report of the South Bend Project is that phonological production may be better than phonological perception. Some speakers of *Magygod* may produce geminate consonants or the $\ddot{e} : e$ distinction but not hear them.

* The criterion of intelligibility of *Magygod* to speakers of Standard Hungarian puts this question in a different light. 50 English loanwords in a stretch of *Magygod* make that stretch less intelligible than, say, 50 word-tokens pronounced with aspirated stops.
Hungarian vowel harmony, a hotly debated issue in current phonological theory, is little discussed in the Magyogol literature. Szamek (1947: 47) notes “a particularly marked violation” in the indiscriminate use of the verbal suffix –ol and quotes [pikkolni] ‘to pick’ and [fikszolni] ‘to fix’. Standard Hungarian for the former is [pikkelni]. Kontra (1981: 17) has remarked on the back suffix –ba in Magyogol e.g. Szauszbenba lakik már ötven év ‘He has lived in South Bend for 50 years’. Unlike in Magyogol, the name South Bend is treated as two words in Standard Hungarian therefore speakers of the standard say Szausz Béndben.

In her review of R. Vago’s The Sound Pattern of Hungarian, McRobbie (1982: 285) uses data from bilingual Canadian-Hungarian children to show that Vago’s vowel harmony rule and rounding harmony rule should be collapsed using angled brackets.

Intonation is even less discussed than vowel harmony. McRobbie (1979: 199) remarks that the intonation of her informants as a rule differs very little from Standard Hungarian and calls attention to an interesting finding: “in situations connected in one way or another with religious matters or activities, the intonation, tone of voice, and sentence speed undergo significant changes in every case without exception”. This style change, she claims, consists in the intonation becoming more exaggerated and self-conscious, and words unstressed in Standard Hungarian become stressed in a prayer. Kontra (1981: 18) notes that Magyogol sentence intonation is oftentimes influenced by English, e.g. Tudom, hogy mi az (<I know what it is>) vs. Standard Hungarian Tudom, hogy mi az.

Finally, Kálmán (1973 and 1975: 611) has observed that in the speech of second-generation speakers there are three degrees of consonant assimilation: (1) Standard Hungarian which is regressive, e.g. [nujorgba] ‘into New York’, (2) no assimilation, e.g. [nujorkba], and (3) progressive English assimilation, e.g. [hegyekpe] ‘into (the) mountains’ vs. Standard Hungarian hegyekbe [hegyegbe].

**Grammar**

An interesting morphological phenomenon in Magyogol, the use of the superessive case-ending –on instead of the Standard Hungarian inessive –ban in examples like Nubranszvikon ‘in New Brunswick’ is explained by Kálmán (1970b: 44) in the following way: most Hungarian city- and town-names take –on/-en/-ön (e.g. Budapesten ‘in Budapest’) while there are a few exceptions taking –ban/-ben (e.g. Debrecenben ‘in Debrecen’). All foreign city-names behave like Debrecen, cf. Pécsen ‘in Pécs’ vs. Bécsben ‘in Vienna’. American-Hungarians often use –on where standard speakers would use –ban because to them New Brunswick, to use an example, is not a foreign city but their hometown.
In the same paper Kálmán also notes that Magygor placenames consisting of a city plus state are treated as a unit receiving only one suffix at the end, e.g. Klivland Ohájóba laktam 'I lived in Cleveland, Ohio' vs. Standard Hungarian Klivlendben, Ohio államban laktam. This construction is also used in reminiscing about the old country, e.g. Szalóka, Szabolcs megyébe születtem, 'I was born in Szalóka, Szabolcs county' vs. Standard Hungarian Szalókán, Szabolcs megyében születtem.

Kontra (1981: 17) notes in passing that some second-generation speakers do not acquire the morphonological assimilation rule needed to form the comitative case of nouns and say things like cigányval 'with a Gypsy' instead of Standard Hungarian cigánnyal.

Szarnék (1947: 67) describes interference in the use of the indefinite article:

Standard Hungarian: János is pilóta volt 'John was also a pilot'
Magygor: János is egy pájlet volt,
and in pluralizing nouns after numerals, e.g.
Standard Hungarian: mind a négy lapát 'all four shovels'
Magygor: mind a négy sofflik.

Kálmán (1973: 204) describes a different case of not observing Standard Hungarian number concord:

Magygor: aranyos vótak 'they were nice'
Standard Hungarian: aranyosak voltak.

Kontra (1982a: 86—87) has a section on article usage in Magygor, the use of definite and indefinite conjugation of verbs, the use of various case-endings, and some idiosyncracies of Magygor syntax.

Magygor word-order is an interesting field for research but it is perhaps the most neglected area of investigation. Kálmán (1970a: 384) and Kontra (1981: 15 and 17) have a few examples of deviation from Standard Hungarian, and Fábián (1948: 35) notes that addresses are always given with the English word-order.

Vocabulary

There are several papers and short notices on Magygor vocabulary as well as a few corpus-based studies. To the former group belong Spissák (1906), Gesztesi (1909), Rubinyi (1921), L. Nagy (1921), which is a review of Rickert (1920), Balassa (1928), Zsoldos (1938) and Gondos (1940). These writers list English loanwords in A—H, and sometimes they provide artificially constructed dialogs between A—H speakers to illustrate the point that Magygor is unintelligible to speakers of Standard Hungarian. Révai Nagy Lexikona, the standard Hungarian encyclopedia between the two world wars, also has an article on Hungarian language in America (vol. XXI, p. 572), written much in the same vein as the early articles. Hoffmann (1911: 260—262) contains a list
of sixty-odd Magygol words, each followed by the English word on which it was modeled and by its Standard Hungarian meaning, e.g. *bighász* = *big boss* = *főmunkavezető*. Mencken (1937) has nothing new compared to Spissák (1906), Gesztesi (1909), etc.

Also to this group of impressionistic papers belongs Kelemen (1960), which is based on examples heard by the writer while talking to his fellow students on an American campus. It contains a few good examples of “looking for the right word” as well as conversational code-switches like *emberek, és sick vagyok* of *tanuling ‘Folks, I’m sick of studying*. Sanders (1973) is noteworthy for suggesting that names of diseases, which are adapted for reasons of euphemism, and words related to automobiles are two of the lexical subfields where penetration of English into Hungarian begins. Being a university professor, Sanders notes that if he did not read Hungarian–Hungarian (sic) journals regularly, he would not know such Standard Hungarian words as *kuka* ‘garbage can’ or *krimi* ‘thriller’, and would never dare write down a word like *meghibásodás* ‘developing a mechanical fault, breaking down’.

In a chapter entitled “Semantics”, Szamek (1947) deals with lexical problems, pointing out, for instance, cases of semantic borrowing such as *Magygol [liker] ‘an alcoholic beverage’ (cf. English liquor) vs. Standard Hungarian likőr ‘an alcoholic aromatic cordial essence’. His treatment of lexical borrowing, however, is often marred by suspicious Standard Hungarian data given as reference points, and sometimes “conclusions” are given without any data on which they might be based.

Kosa (1955. 24–25), who calls *Magygol* “pidgin-Hungarian”, attributes three characteristic traits to *Magygol* vocabulary: (1) immigrants picked up English names for objects they had no Hungarian words for, (2) in other cases they use both the English and Hungarian words, but with different shades of meaning, and (3) they use many English words and idioms with the apparent intention of displaying their English. Related to the last point is an informal observation by Sanders (1973: 91): “the poorer the person’s English, the more likely he is to mix English words into his Hungarian.”

Next, the corpus-based studies of *Magygol* vocabulary will be considered. Fábián (1948) is based on an unknown number of then contemporary A–H newspapers. He draws his examples primarily from advertisements and concludes that “as a rule, the words denoting objects and concepts that American–Hungarians became familiar with after arrival in the United States are English loanwords affixed according to Hungarian ways.” A welcome feature of this paper is its exemplification: most *Magygol* loanwords are cited in context. Lévai (1976) deals with the English loanwords in 275 pages of short stories and newspaper articles by János Lékai (John Lassen), a Hungarian Communist activist and writer who lived in the United States between 1922 and 1925. McRobbie (1979: 177) gives lists of loanwords drawn from her tape-recordings and provides a diagram showing the increase of lexical borrowing from one
generation of Hungarian-Americans to the next. However, one can neither deny, nor corroborate the validity of her diagram as nothing is revealed about how percentage values were calculated, lexical borrowings identified, etc.

One characteristic of Magyogol speech is the large number of Latin-derived words in it. Sanders (1973: 94) argues that this is caused partly by the lack of exact translation equivalents of English words and partly by the belief that, with minor alterations, any foreign word can be Hungaricized. Fábián (1948: 35) quotes the example of konvenció used not in its Standard Hungarian sense ‘common consent, custom’ but with the meaning borrowed from English: ‘gathering, conference’.* Several such examples of semantic shift are listed in Kontra (1982a: 85), e.g. bazár, billió, blokk, continentális, federális, hall etc. That semantic borrowing of this kind can cause genuine misunderstanding between speakers of Magyogol and Standard Hungarian became clear to me in the “Jail House Motel” in San Diego, California a few years ago. Having checked in with the owner, my H–A friend and I started unpacking in our room when my friend said Egy fia klozet sincs itt, mi?. I was baffled by the question, which I understood as There isn’t a single toilet here, is there?, all the more so because my friend had just come out of the toilet. On a moment’s reflection, however, I realized that he meant clothes closets. Klozet in Standard Hungarian means ‘toilet’ but in English closet meaning a particular room or outbuilding has long been replaced by toilet, bathroom etc. Now the word means ‘clothes closet’ (cf. Householder 1983: 10).

Three papers written for the South Bend Project deal with Magyogol vocabulary. Kontra (1982a) is an extensive analysis of five A–H newspapers. The examples are classified as loanwords, hybrid loans, or cases of semantic borrowing. After each Magyogol word its English model is quoted if it could be established, and each word is quoted in context and with its source. Kontra (1982b) is a preliminary report based on picture elicitation results obtained from eleven informants. It demonstrates that immigrant and American-born speakers are fairly different from the point of view of vocabulary dominance: the former group is dominant in Hungarian and the latter in English. Finally, Kontra and Nehler (1981a) is a study of ethnonyms like Hunky or hanki, Slavish, kapuvári ‘a jocular name for Blacks’, polák, vadmagyar ‘debased Hungarian’ etc. Mencken (1945: 601–602) also deals with hunk, hunkie or hunky.

Andrew Vázsonyi’s Túl a Kecegárdán (Beyond Castle Garden; in preparation), a Hungarian dictionary of the Calumet region, will be undoubtedly the best source for

* Interestingly enough, although not unexpectedly, in this case Standard Hungarian has experienced the same semantic borrowing: newspaper reports of party conventions before a presidential election in the USA invariably tell us about the demokrata párti konvenció ‘Democratic convention’. This meaning of the word is listed in the Concise Explanatory Dictionary of Hungarian (= Magyar Értelmező Kéziszótár, Budapest, 1972).
the study of *Magygor* vocabulary. Its richness and depth of treatment will probably be unmatched in at least the next few decades to come.

Finally, three papers should be mentioned for their demonstration of *Magygor* vocabulary in context. Nehler (1981a) is an interview with a second-generation American— Hungarian, Kálmán (1970a) contains two and Kontra (forthcoming a) one page of transcription of tape-recorded narrative text.

### Word-formation

Szamek (1947: 65) shows how Standard Hungarian words that have an English cognate are replaced by the cognate-based loanwords in *Magygor*. For instance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard Hungarian</th>
<th>Magygor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[trombita:lni]</td>
<td>[trampetolni]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[bomba:zni]</td>
<td>[bomolni]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[fors: rozni]</td>
<td>[forsolni]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[kopi:rozni]</td>
<td>[kopiolni]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[pumpa:lni]</td>
<td>[pampolni].</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

He notes that “when the words appear in their nominative singular form, however, they always are used in the dialect as Standard Hungarian words: [trombito—

Szamek (1947: 69–70) also notes the “almost invariable” use of the /-oš/ suffix with loan-nouns denoting occupations and composed of a back vowel and -er, e.g. [bučeros] ‘butcher’, [plommeroš] ‘plumber’ and [grosseroš] ‘grocer’.

In his dissertation Szamek (1947: 83) deals with the “extra” final vowels in *Magygor* nouns like káré ‘car’, farma ‘farm’ and hokszi ‘box’. He analyzes them as cases of “stem accretion”, that is, the vowel needed between the uninflected nominative and a case-ending “becomes attracted to the stem form.” This analysis is dubious. First, it has been claimed that the Hungarian dialect word káré ‘a two-wheeled handcart’ may by extension come to be used to mean ‘car’ in America (Kálmán 1973: 202). More importantly, the influence of other immigrant communities should be taken into consideration. “Extra” stem-final vowels are found in the American Greek words báksi and fárma (Seaman 1972: 196–197), in American Polish kara and baksala (Lyra 1961: 229 and 231), in American Finnish farmi, kaara and paksi ‘box’ (Lehtinen 1966: 246–247) as well as in American Lithuanian farma (Pažūsis 1982: 323). Pažūsis claims that farma shows the impact of American Polish on American Lithuanian. That some kind of *koine* of American immigrants may have shaped the form of at least some loanwords might be substantiated by further like loans, e.g. both American— Hungarian and American— Lithuanian have [laisnis] for licence (cf. Kontra 1982b: 539 and Pažūsis 1982: 325).
Code-switching

The term code-switching can be used to denote the alternating use of two languages as well as style-shifting within a language. H—A code-switching has not yet been studied systematically. Examples of interlingual code-switching are found, for instance, in Rubinyi (1921), Szamek (1947) and Kontra (1982a: 90–91). Rubinyi (1921: 13) quotes a newspaper advertisement in which a farmer wishing to sell his farm rounds off the ad by writing *farm valóságos bargain* 'The farm is a real bargain'. It is suggested that the use of the English word (i.e. the switch to English) is "like playing one's trump-card".

Szamek (1947: 47) proposed the only syntactic restriction on Hungarian–English code-switching in the literature: "When the adjective is in English the usage of a Magyar noun is resisted", e.g. *kis májndid* is an acceptable phrase but the synonymous *small eszű* 'birdbrained' is not.

Whether there is any intralingual code-switching (i.e. style-shifting) in Magygor speech will become clear when the Labovian danger-of-death questions (cf. Labov 1972: 92 ff.) in the South Bend tapes have been analyzed.

Names

Personal names, placenames, and names of animals used by American–Hungarians have been investigated by Mencken (1948: 440 and 524), Fábián (1948: 34—35), Kálmán (1970b), Farkas (1971), Janda (1977) and McRobbie (1979: 178-181). Szamek (1947: 70) remarks on the suffix -né being invariably replaced by Mrs. A married woman who was called Ácsné 'Mrs. Ács' in the old country soon became [msz aːʃ] in America. Janda (1977) examines 15 placenames of Hungarian origin in the United States and concludes that "aggregates of Hungarians are not a criteria for official naming of places" (pp. 224–225).

Patterns of Anglicizing Hungarian personal names are examined in Mencken (1948), Fábián (1948) and McRobbie (1979), the last one also has the only investigation into animal naming to date.

A comprehensive analysis of the names of American–Hungarians still awaits completion. When it is done, telephone directories might prove an important source of data. To such an analysis Csapo's (1983a: 83) report is relevant: she sent 1,750 mail questionnaires to Hungarian–Canadians who subscribed to a Hungarian newsletter and/or who had a Hungarian surname in the Vancouver telephone directory and/or whose surname was identifiable with surnames of Hungarian and non-Hungarian origin in the 1978 Budapest telephone directory. 433 questionnaires were returned by non-Hungarians whose surnames were identical with surnames of foreign origin in the Budapest telephone directory.
**The Fate of the tu/vous Distinction in Magyogol**

Kálmán (1970a: 384) reports that second-generation American–Hungarians cannot use vous-forms [Hungarian: maga, ön, etc.] in Hungarian. This should be interpreted as saying that the second-generation speakers whom Kálmán interviewed could only use tu-forms [Hungarian te].

McRobbie (1979: 201–202) reports that in Békevár, a Saskatchewan farming community, there is an attitude of preferring the more formal mode of address among some women, which she terms a survival of the traditional Hungarian peasant custom. The same formality between an old Hungarian woman in South Bend, Indiana and her equally old boarder, both of whom came from rural Hungary, is described in Kontra (1981:18). The interesting thing about these bilingual women is that their rule of usage breaks down, for instance, in a narrative about a visit to an American physician. Telling the story in Hungarian of her doctor who asked her something about Hungarian and did not believe her answer, this informant said: Nézd már, te akarsz engem magyarul tanítani? ‘Gee, you [= tu] are gonna teach me Hungarian?’ From the interviews it is evident that this woman would never use the informal pronoun of address in relation to the Hungarian physician of the South Bend community. The explanation of this informality in a report about the American doctor might perhaps be the tendency to treat those who do not speak one’s language as children. The same thing can often be seen in Budapest stores where Hungarian sales-clerks may use tu-forms, for instance, to Polish customers.

The informal mode of address is almost the rule among American–Hungarian professionals. Hungarians who travel in the United States are sometimes surprised by the informality used to them by people they have just met. Another linguistic manifestation of the social relationship between speakers is the way they want to be called by others. If a Hungarian advertises his house in a Budapest newspaper, he either puts his full name or his surname in the advertisement. This is not necessarily so with American–Hungarians. For example, in the weekly Californiap Magyarság a woman asks her potential customers this way: Hívják Juditot ‘Will you [= vous] call Judith’ (cf. Kontra 1982a: 91–92).

### III. Hunglish: English as Spoken by Hungarian–Americans

Perhaps surprisingly, the English of Hungarian–Americans has been even less investigated than their Hungarian speech. Nelson (1956) is the most comprehensive

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* The English sentence Call Judith, which must have induced the Hungarian sentence, might not be typical in this situation in all parts of the United States.

Nemser (1971a) is a revision of the author’s 1961 Columbia University dissertation on the production and perception of English interdental fricatives and stops by eleven Hungarian-Americans.

About 60 hours of English speech has been recorded for the South Bend Project. Some of the tapes contain language usage interviews based on Gal (1979), cf. Kontra and Nehler (1981b). Most of the recordings, however, contain responses to the English-language questionnaire specifically compiled for the South Bend Project. This questionnaire contains the following sections: (1) guided conversation mainly based on Shuy, Wolfram and Riley (1968), (2) vocabulary elicitation based on Pederson (1971) and four pictures of the Oxford Picture Dictionary of American English (cf. Kontra 1982b), (3) reading out words and passages similar to those used by Labov in his New York City study, (4) a “same or different?” listening test comprising 20 pairs of words, and (5) a writing test in which informants had to write as many English words in a minute as they could. As mentioned above, all of the English interviews were conducted by native speakers of Standard American English. Nehler (1981b) provides an informal characterization of the English of old-timers and of two 1956 refugees: a successful businessman, “whose English at times will pass as a native speaker’s” and a skilled laborer.

Before turning to some details of Hunglish, a brief look at how Hungarian-Americans learned English might be in order. Kosa (1955) is the only study based on fairly rigorous sociological data-gathering. He interviewed 91 Hungarian men living in the Province of Ontario. They all arrived in Canada as adults and had no Canadian schooling. All came from the poor classes of Hungary and most of them achieved a certain financial success in Canada. Thus immigrants of middle class origin or of higher education, as well as women, were excluded from the survey. Kosa’s findings can be summarized in the following: (1) except for one highly atypical case, none of the immigrants had studied English before coming to Canada, (2) they were unaware of how important the study of English is, (3) more than half of the informants never studied English, they just “picked up” what they knew, (4) 33 persons were taught either by friends or learned by themselves and only 7 persons studied English in school or through formal courses, (5) only 11 persons studied for a period longer than one year, and only 18 persons ever possessed an English grammar or dictionary. Kosa rightly points out that learning for his immigrants was not a systematic, purposeful activity: they learned the language incidentally. He says: “It would be grossly misleading to compare their methods of learning with those of the intellectuals. The latter learn language through a systematic program: they adopt the
grammatical rules, and acquire a certain vocabulary, then with the aid of these they try to express themselves” (1955: 24). Kosa’s description of how his old-timers learned English is worth quoting at length:

“These immigrants, on the other hand, picked up English casually as it was offered by the different situations of life. In their various activities such as work, transportation, shopping, etc., they had to understand and use certain sets of words corresponding to a given situation. As they had to face more and more situations in their new life, they acquired more and more sets. But numerous as the sets may have been, they never developed into a grammatical system which would ensure a correct use of the language. Nor were these sets systematically broken down into single words which would ensure a command of English. These immigrants learned what the situation of life taught them, but they did not learn to express themselves. . . . Thus many of them apparently do not know the structure of negative sentences. They may use one negative sentence correctly when it is supported by an acquired set; but their next negation may be grammatically faulty because, in this case, they cannot resort to a fixed set. The stuttering that suddenly makes itself heard in the English speech of the immigrant is usually a sign that he has reached the limits of his acquired sets.” (ibid.)

Obviously, this “natural situational acquisition” of English which Kosa excellently describes was sometimes aided (or hindered, depending on the quality of the teaching materials) by Hungarian-American newspapers. For instance, *A munka*, subtitled *The Day's Work*, a monthly published in Detroit, Michigan from 1919, carried English lessons regularly. Beside each picture in a lesson one or two English sentences were provided, followed by the English pronunciation of the sentence represented in Standard Hungarian orthography, and by its Hungarian translation, e.g.

**Friday, September Twelfth—Twenty Pages**

FRAJdé, szepTEMbör tuelft—TUENti PÉDSez.*

Péntek, szeptember tizennégy—húsz oldal.

**Vol. II, No. 1** (January 1920)

*He painted the stairway.*

hi PÉNted di SZTEERúé.

Ő befestette a lépcsőzetet.

**Vol. II, No. 3** (March 1920)

The literature on Hunglish will be surveyed in four sections: phonetics and phonology, grammar, vocabulary, and reading and writing.

**Phonetics and Phonology**

In V. Makkai (1978: 49) the claim is made that “many semi-bilinguals are able to learn the syntax and semantics of their second language to such perfection that they would be taken for true native speakers if it were not for their imperfect mastery of the

* Capitals in the Hungarian pronunciation indicate stress.
phonology". Hungarian-accented English is usually characterized as lacking [θ] and [ð], substituting [v] for [w], and rolled [r] for retroflex [r] (cf., e.g. Nelson 1956: 101-119, Janda 1976: 590 and V. Makkai 1978: 51). Just like Germans and probably several other immigrant groups in America, Hungarian-Americans sometimes make the opposite mistake of substituting [v] for [w]: they may pronounce [w]'s in place of [v]'s. V. Makkai (1978: 49) calls this phenomenon phonological overlearning. Nelson (1956: 114) reported that four out of her six informants occasionally substituted [w] for [v].

Two observations concerning [θ] may be quoted from Nelson: one of her immigrant informants uses [θ] "only when guarded" (1956: 146), and [fift] for fifth and [sikst] for sixth are common not only in a second-generation Hungarian-American's speech but also in local speech (1956: 111).

Kosa (1955: 26) claimed that the Hungarian immigrant "has two sound impressions for each English word: an active one which he uses in his pidgin-language, and a passive one which he only hears when it is used by English people." Immigrants make few efforts to coordinate the two sound impressions of a word and thus create a basis for misunderstanding. Kosa (ibid.) described a second-generation Hungarian-Canadian who normally spoke English without accent but, in speaking Magygorl with his parents, he had to pronounce English loanwords in "pidgin-Hungarian" because experience taught him that "the old folks would not understand the 'normal' English".

One characteristic feature of the Hungarian accent in English is the lack of aspiration. Non-aspiration of English stops may or may not cause misunderstanding. Kontra (1980) has claimed that native speakers of American English exhibit "contextual adjustability behavior", i.e. they will mishear what is spoken to them by foreigners or immigrants in order to get the intended meaning. They adjust the heard phonetic shapes according to the context, wherever context makes such adjustment possible.

Nemser's Experimental Study of Phonological Interference in the English of Hungarians (1971a; cf. also 1967 and 1971b) deals with the perception and production of English interdental fricatives and stops by 11 native speakers of Hungarian with a very limited knowledge of English. The most interesting findings of the study concern the interdents: the subjects imitate them as labial fricatives, sibilants or stops; they tend to perceive them as labial fricatives; but produce them as stops. In a review Nádasdy (1973: 430) criticized Nemser for saying hardly anything about the language learning career of the informants, and he pointed out, quite correctly, that "With such a limited number of informants (4 or 5 on each test), any one of them is responsible for a large part of the variance in data; it remains unclear to what extent (if at all) the responses were the function of particular teaching methods or textbook explanations."

Finally, Vago and Altenberg (1977) have analyzed Hungarian-accented English on the basis of a paragraph read out by their informants.
"Syntactical deviations influenced by Hungarian are numerous in the speech of the two older informants", says Nelson (1956: vi) but she gives only a handful of examples. One of them is *He's a so funny fellow for He's so funny a fellow (p. 140) and another concerns gender assignment: *The cow is calling 'woo' to his calf instead of . . . to her calf (p. 141).

Nelson used a few morphological questions in her study of Hunglish, and found, for instance, that 5 of her 6 informants say threwed a stone (p. 130). Once again, the influence of local English speech cannot and should not be disregarded.

Kontra and Nehler (1981b) is a sample of the English speech of a post-1956 refugee. An analysis of the English syntax of this refugee was presented at the First Hungaro—American Colloquium on Bilingualism at Columbia University, April 20—21, 1984 (cf. Kontra MS).

Vocabulary

Nelson (1956: 121) characterized her informants in the following way: "In general, the English vocabulary of the Hungarian colony at Albany is like that of the non-Hungarians in the locality. However, the foreign-born group naturally has a more limited knowledge of regional and local words than has the non-Hungarian population. The English dialect used by the Hungarians has a definitely local, rather than regional flavor . . ."

Kosa (1955: 25) terms the English of Hungarian-Canadians "pidgin-English", which is "the summary of the English sets acquired". This kind of English, Kosa goes on to say, "is characterized by a faulty grammar and a deficient vocabulary, the deficiencies often being filled in with Hungarian, German, Jewish, or Latin words and idioms".

Kontra and Nehler (1981a) describe some ethnonyms (e.g. Slavish meaning 'Croatian—American', and Hunky, which, for some, is homophonous with honky) used in South Bend, Indiana.

In a controlled picture elicitation of English and Hungarian vocabulary items (Kontra 1982b) it has been found that the immigrants scored 72.36% on the Hungarian test and 60.36% on the English test, but the 2nd/3rd-generation speakers scored quite differently: only 33.43% on the Hungarian test but 82.54% on the English one.
Reading and Writing

Kosa (1955: 26) observed that some of his informants learned to read English but not to write it. He added that intellectuals are different: with them "learning of reading and writing goes almost hand in hand". In his survey Kosa tried to use a reading test, "the completion of which had to be given up because of the reluctance of the respondents" (p. 27). An important finding of this partial reading test was that "when reading, common words were pronounced differently from ordinary speech" (p. 27). This difference, however, is not explained by style-shifting (cf. Labov 1972). Rather, it is due to the inability of immigrants to relate the graphic form of an English word to its phonetic form.

Some data on the English reading skills of the South Bend informants have been obtained by having them read out lists of words and passages.

Finally, the problems that English spelling poses for Hungarian immigrants are well illustrated by Halász (1972), who tried to gather support among Hungarian-Americans for the Spelling Reform Society in Australia. Halász's contention is rather simple: English orthography is so full of archaisms and idiosyncracies as to render it too difficult to master not only for foreigners but also for large numbers of native speakers. Thus a spelling reform is badly needed. Once it is introduced, Hungarian–English bilinguals will learn English spelling much more easily.

Analysis of a tiny fraction of the South Bend data, namely the results of the writing test in which informants had to write as many English words in a minute as they could, will shed some light on the English literacy of Hungarian-Americans.

Bibliography of Hungarian–American Bilingualism*


* Items in this bibliography are entered according to the English alphabet; thus Lőrincze, for instance, comes before Lotz. When an author’s name occurs both with and without Hungarian diacritics in print, the variants are listed separately, the one with the diacritics immediately following that without them. Now Hungarian–American data are separately grouped at the end of the list.


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