Sustainable linguicism

MIKLÓS KONTRA

University of Szeged and Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest

Elitist language ideology in Hungary has been well known for many decades but its social significance became clear only after we conducted a sociolinguistic survey with a random stratified sample of 832 adult Hungarians in 1988. Grammaticality judgment data and oral sentence completion data will be used to demonstrate that Hungarian language cultivators (=professional purists, language mavens) target 92% of 10 million Hungarians when they propagate (read: force-feed) Codified Standard Hungarian in the media and in public education. The effects of educational mobility on language use in Hungary at the fall of communism will be analyzed to gauge the merits of the cognitive deficiency argument cited by Milroy and Milroy (1999). In a recent article Myhill (2004) has shown why prescriptivism in most European societies necessarily reinforces social inequalities but in Hebrew, Arabic or Icelandic societies it does not. I will advance the argument that language subordination tactics (Lippi-Green 1997) work best when prescriptive correctness and prestige-based correctness go hand in hand, and the linguistic variants at issue are hard or impossible to learn in school or later in life. For language mavens the most lucrative prescriptive rules are those that will always be violated. For linguicist societies they ensure sustainable linguicism, i.e. social discrimination between groups of people defined on the basis of language.

References

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