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Multilingualism in urban Hungary, 1880–1910

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Based on statistical sources, this paper examines to what extent citizens of the most advanced provincial cities in fin-de-siècle Hungary were multilingual. I argue that multilingualism was a far less present phenomenon than scholarship suggests. The exact features of multilingualism were closely connected to the local social relations (religion, gender, etc.) and market of languages. The growing nationalism promoted by the Hungarian government and the expansion of Magyar public space had an ambiguous impact on multilingualism, depending on the local society.

Keywords: multilingualism; Hungary; urban history; statistics

Since the emergence of ethnography and modern statistics in the nineteenth century, literature on the Habsburg Empire emphasized its extreme diversity in terms of languages and religions.[1] The Habsburg Empire is often described as the most heterogeneous in nineteenth-century Europe (Csáky 2010, 69–75; Cohen and Feichtinger 2014, 5–6). In fact, if one takes a look at any map depicting the linguistic or religious divisions of the Habsburg Monarchy, one indeed gets the picture of diversity. But did this macro-level heterogeneity of languages reflect the linguistic practices of the citizens themselves? My impression is that current scholarship, alongside nostalgic literature, mistakes the multilingualism of the Habsburg Monarchy and that of its citizens in their everyday lives.

An endless and ever-growing literature has been written on multilingual provinces, borderlands and cities, such as Bohemia, Moravia, Galicia, Bukovina, Transylvania, Prague and Trieste. Far less consideration has been given to the cultural and linguistic practices of monolingual and monoreligious areas, such as the entirely German-speaking and Roman Catholic Alpine lands, or to the almost purely Magyar-speaking Central Hungarian lowlands. Indeed, wherever linguistic heterogeneity was an obvious social fact, the exact details of this diversity have been rarely investigated thoroughly. Present-day scholars often cite nineteenth-century observations about linguistic practices. Yet, as it will be shown in this paper, these observations belonged to the wealthier and better educated strata of society, who notoriously overestimated the linguistic abilities of their contemporaries, transmitting their own experience to the entire society and downplaying the enormous social and educational differences in a post-feudal and still very diverse society. Thus, several recent scholarly pieces are based on an ill-defined methodology: when investigating a particular geographical entity, they register the plurality of languages/ethnicities/national

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belongings of its citizens, they demonstrate the fact that local cultural practices were performed in several languages (for instance, printing houses and theaters), sometimes they even identify some citizens who were in fact multilingual and then, without further support, they arrive at the conclusion that the very population of that particular city or region was multilingual itself. Macro-level multilingualism is thus often blurred with individual, and while the former can be supported by satisfactory sources, the latter is poorly underpinned by evidence. Moritz Csáky, for instance, argues for widely spread multilingualism in Vienna and several other major urban centers of the Habsburg Empire. His argument is supported by the examples of educated intellectuals, suggesting that their multilingualism can be transmitted to the entire population (Csáky 2010). Analyzing the urban population of the late Habsburg Empire, Catherine Horel claims that "most people possessed two languages, their mother tongue and German for education and career, and often even a third one" (Horel 2005, 357). Her argument is, however, not supported by satisfactory sources and she also overstates the need for German for the vast majority of the population. In a similar way, drawing on some German newspapers published in Zagreb and on the position of German language in some fields of the state administration, Sujoldžić, Jernej, and Glovacki-Bernardi (2012) arrive at the conclusion that "the majority of speakers were still at least bilingual and […] we can talk about the existence of a multilingual environment in the Northwestern part of Croatia in the mid-eighteenth and in the nineteenth century." These "speakers," however, are not clearly defined; neither is it stated how the presence of German in the culture of Zagreb could influence the entire Northwestern Croatian population, whose majority obviously did not consume the cultural products of Zagreb.

This paper aimed at analyzing multilingualism in its social environment in some Hungarian cities in the period of the late Habsburg Monarchy. The focus here is neither on the relation between state power and language use nor on the very construction of language-based communities, as other works have sufficiently addressed these themes already (Rindler Schjerve and Vetter 2003; Judson 2014). Instead, this paper seeks only to estimate the very number of monolingual and multilingual speakers and put these numbers into the context of the growing nationalism in fin-de-siècle Hungary. To overcome the earlier discussed methodological problems, a yet ignored source, statistics concerning multilingualism will be used. As it will be discussed later, Hungarian censuses recorded the linguistic skills of the citizens and these records have been preserved by the Hungarian National Archives. Three arguments will be made. First, multilingualism was a far less dominant phenomenon than scholarship suggests. Second, the exact features of multilingualism were closely connected to the local market of languages and social relations (religion, gender, etc.). Third, the growing nationalism promoted by the Hungarian government and the expansion of Magyar public space had an ambiguous impact on multilingualism, depending on the local society.

The national context: multilingualism in Hungary

Fin-de-siècle censuses in the Kingdom of Hungary recorded seven languages spoken by a population exceeding 100,000 people: Magyar, Romanian, German, Slovak, Ruthenian, Serbian and Croatian (MKKSH 1912).[2] This macro-level multilingualism, however, did not automatically implicate wide multilingualism among the citizens themselves. As Marácz (2012) claims, "[m]ultilingual speakers were actually a very small minority." Statistical evidence reinforces this argument: according to the censuses, in 1880 82% of the population (OMKSH 1882) and in 1910 still 75% spoke his/her native language only

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(MKKSH 1912). Indeed, the census did not record the depth of the knowledge of a second language and neither was it absolutely clear how deep knowledge was required to be recorded as a "spoken second language." Berecz (2014, 29–30) thus claims that authorities used this uncertainty to overestimate particularly the knowledge of Magyar, suggesting that monolingualism was in fact even higher than statistical figures show. In a country where the population fell into seven large language groups, this figure is indeed very low and suggests that the vast majority of citizens were able to communicate with people sharing the same mother tongue only.

Beyond the immediate language contact zones, several institutions enabled learning languages in addition to the mother tongue. In order to teach the state language to the citizens, Magyar was a compulsory subject in all primary schools since 1879, though the efficiency of its instruction remained very low (Berecz 2014). German was taught in middle and high schools, though only a minority of the population attended these institutions (in the school-year 1912/1913, 63,000 students were enrolled in the most popular high school type, the *gymnasium*, while the entire population of the country exceeded 18 million (Szabó 1978)). In the education of middle- and upper-class girls, French had a predominant role, which resulted in the fact that French was the only foreign language which was declared to be spoken by more women than men. Migration also contributed to learning languages, particularly in cities and in industrial hubs, which attracted workers and young girls serving as maids in various geographical and linguistic backgrounds. *Kinderaustausch*, sending children to other families to learn languages was a popular practice with the better-off (Kósa 1987). The army's contribution to language learning was insignificant, as only a few words of command had to be learned (Deák 1990, 99–102).

Despite the expansion of education and economic integration of the country, the majority of the Hungarian population still lived in rural areas (two-thirds of the total population lived in settlements of less than 5000 inhabitants in 1910 (Hanák 1978)), lived in the same place where s/he was born (69% in 1910) and did not attend school beyond elementary. In most communes, this restricted the need to know languages beyond the native language, leading to the aforecited low numbers of multilingual population.

The source: census record of multilingualism

The main source of my analysis lies in census data concerning multilingualism. Starting in 1880, the Hungarian authorities were unique in contemporary Europe recording not only mother tongue but also any further spoken language (Kovács 1928). This means that the four censuses taken in 1880, 1890, 1900 and 1910 created a unique database of the Hungarian population's linguistic skills.[3]

Naturally, census data concerning language are an ambiguous source. Both Hungarian and Austrian statistics concerning mother tongue or *Umgangsprache* (the language of everyday conversation) remained the target of intensive nationalist polemics throughout the nineteenth century and beyond (Brix 1982; Pakot 2010). During the past decades, a handful of scholars have drawn attention to the social constructions behind statistics (Kertzer and Arel 2002). Therefore, conversely to nationalist argumentation, it is clear that the mere changes in data concerning mother tongue do not indicate whether genuine shift, governmental manipulation or national indifference, or any combination of these, stood in the background, since merely speaking a language did not result in a fixed identity.

Yet, I suggest that the statistical data concerning multilingualism are a source which can be used for inquiring into the linguistic practices of late Habsburg Hungary. The

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government exercised pressure on certain groups of citizens (employees of the state railways, for instance) to declare themselves Magyar speakers. If someone declared a mother tongue different from Magyar, the knowledge of a mere few hundreds words were enough to claim the knowledge of Magyar as second tongue. Despite the univocal wish that all citizens of the country spoke Magyar, further spoken languages were not condemned by contemporary authors (Szemenyei 1908). In fact, for the Hungarian government, only the number of people speaking Magyar was interesting; the manipulation of multilingualism concerning other languages did not yield any political benefit. Once a citizen declared Magyar as mother tongue, the knowledge of any further language could be claimed freely. Since the statistical data on multilingualism were not utilized for direct political purposes, I believe that it can be used for analyzing linguistic behavior of the Hungarian population.

Unfortunately, the remaining data do not enable a comprehensive investigation. The actual level of language knowledge was not recorded. Census methodology was inconsistent and the linguistic concepts behind it also changed (for instance, in 1880, Serbian and Croatian were regarded as a single language, but in 1910 as two separate languages). Only two data can be consistently investigated throughout the entire period: (1) the number of monolingual population and (2) the number of people declaring a mother tongue different from Magyar, who also declared knowledge of the state language.

The target: mid-size cities of fin-de-siècle Hungary

This paper is obviously unable to cover all settlements of the Kingdom of Hungary; a comprehensive study would fill a monograph at least. Instead, it will be limited to a cohort of 10 cities, which functioned as centers of larger regions in the country. Analyzing the urban hierarchy of 1910 Hungary, historical geographers Beluszky and Győri (2005) established five categories of urban settlements. On top of the Hungarian urban hierarchy was, of course, the capital Budapest. Budapest was followed by 11 regional centers: Pozsony (Bratislava, Preßburg), Kolozsvár (Cluj), Kassa (Košice, Kaschau), Debrecen, Temesvár (Timişoara, Temeschwar, Temišvar), Szeged, Nagyvárad (Oradea), Pécs (Fünfkirchen), Győr (Raab), Arad and Brassó (Kronstadt, Braşov).[4] They were further followed by 50 county seats, 65 middle towns and 203 small towns. This hierarchy was established upon urban functions rather than on the mere demographic data or administrative position. The higher rank a particular settlement enjoyed in the hierarchy, the larger population it served by urban services in fields such as schooling, administration, jurisdiction, finance and banking.

The leading city of the urban hierarchy, Budapest obviously needs separate investigation. Budapest was national capital and metropolis at the same time, and its population was more than 10 times higher than the average of the regional centers, making it a largely different world from the mid-size provincial cities of Hungary (Lukacs 1988). Here, therefore, only the next level, the regional centers, will be scrutinized.[5] The examination of the other more than 300 settlements with urban functions is unfortunately also beyond the scope of this paper. Patterns of multilingualism make the analyzed 10 cities fall into five categories.

Absolute monolingualism: Debrecen and Szeged

The first category is absolute monolingualism, represented by the two largest cities of the predominantly Magyar-speaking Great Plain, Debrecen and Szeged. Debrecen has been Magyar-speaking for centuries; only a small German-speaking Jewish community settled

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Table 1. Mother tongue and language skills in Debrecen and Szeged, 1880–1910.[6]

	Debrecen				Szeged			
	1880		1910		1880		1910	
Total population	51,122		90,153		73,675		115,306	
According to mother tongue								
Magyar	49,892	97.59%	89,189	98.93%	70,709	95.97%	111,358	96.58%
German	781	1.53%	532	0.59%	1749	2.37%	2213	1.92%
Slovak	204	0.40%	74	0.08%	184	0.25%	173	0.15%
Romanian	35	0.07%	64	0.07%	70	0.09%	325	0.28%
Ruthenian	9	0.02%	21	0.02%	19	0.03%	8	0.01%
Serbo-Croatian	7	0.01%	–	–	303	0.41%	–	–
Croatian	–	–	16	0.02%	–	–	74	0.06%
Serbian	–	–	17	0.02%	–	–	906	0.79%
Other	193	0.38%	240	0.27%	643	0.87%	249	0.22%
According to knowledge of languages								
Monolingual	43,952	85.97%	78,776	87.38%	64,407	87.42%	98,483	85.41%
Multilingual	7170	14.03%	11,377	12.62%	9268	12.58%	16,823	14.59%

in the nineteenth century which soon Magyarized. Three languages, Magyar, German and Serbian, were spoken by the eighteenth-century population of Szeged. Both German and Serbian disappeared soon: native German speakers turned into Magyar speakers by the beginning of the nineteenth century, while most Serbian speakers left the city or stayed but converted to Catholicism and took also Magyar (Reizner 1899). By the mid-nineteenth century, Szeged was almost purely Magyar-speaking. In addition, the entire public space (understood here as education, media, culture, religion and administration) and the self-perception of both cities were clearly Magyar (Szélpál 2012). Table 1 aptly shows the dominance of Magyar language recorded in the censuses.

Given their almost pure Magyar-speaking character, it makes no sense to talk about linguistic heterogeneity either in Debrecen or in Szeged. In total, 12–14% of the inhabitants of these cities knew a second language, in most cases German. In both cases, Magyar-speaking Jews contributed to this knowledge significantly: in Debrecen 49% and in Szeged 62% of them declared knowledge of a second language at least, mostly German. Otherwise, the vast majority of the Christian population only spoke their mother tongue.

A particular feature of the geographical distribution of the population in these cities makes the picture a bit more complicated: in Debrecen 43% and in Szeged 35% of the population lived not in the city itself, but in homesteads around the city. This population had little contact with the city and lived in fact a rural lifestyle (Erdei 1942). Excluding this part of the population from the analysis, both cities still appear as almost purely Magyar-speaking but the ratio of citizens declaring the knowledge of a second language is now 18% in both cities. It is presumable that in this monolingual, urban environment, this 18% of the population learned a second language in school or through economic activity with the non-Magyar-speaking parts of the Habsburg Empire.

Vanishing diversity: Pécs and Győr

A far more dynamic picture is shown by the second category, represented by the two cities of Transdanubia, Pécs and Győr. Both had a mixed population in the eighteenth century but increasingly became monolingual during the nineteenth, as shown in Table 2.

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Table 2. Mother tongue and language skills in Győr and Pécs, 1880–1910.

	Győr				Pécs			
	1880		1910		1880		1910	
Total population	20,981		42,589		28,702		47,844	
According to mother tongue								
Magyar	19,139	91.22%	41,015	96.30%	21,057	73.36%	40,152	83.92%
German	1470	7.01%	996	2.34%	5276	18.38%	6027	12.60%
Slovak	90	0.43%	105	0.25%	444	1.55%	160	0.33%
Romanian	2	0.01%	5	0.01%	2	0.01%	22	0.05%
Ruthenian	1	0.00%	2	0.00%	3	0.01%	5	0.01%
Serbo-Croatian	77	0.37%	–	–	359	1.25%	–	–
Croatian	–	–	104	0.24%	–	–	618	1.29%
Serbian	–	–	14	0.03%	–	–	85	0.18%
Other	202	0.96%	348	0.82%	1561	5.44%	775	1.62%
According to knowledge of languages								
Monolingual	13,291	63.35%	31,369	73.66%	12,722	44.32%	25,182	52.63%
Multilingual	7690	36.65%	11,220	26.34%	15,979	55.67%	22,662	47.37%

Győr used to be a German–Magyar bilingual city until the early nineteenth century. The Christian German-speaking population started to assimilate linguistically in the Vormärz period; according to statistician and geographer Fényes (1851), by the mid-nineteenth century only a tiny minority spoke German as native language. The local Jewry followed this process with a tiny delay and became also completely Magyar-speaking by the turn of the twentieth century. At the same time, the entire public space of the city became monolingual (Vörös 1971). In 1905, two nearby and predominantly Magyar-speaking villages, Győrsziget and Révfalu, were integrated into Győr, strengthening the Magyar-speaking dominance further.

Compared to Debrecen and Szeged, in Győr a higher proportion of the population knew a second language (in 1910 still a quarter of its population). German speakers and Jews, regardless of their declared mother tongue, significantly contributed to this part of the population (only 25% and 40% of them declared monolingualism in 1910). Magyar speakers, obviously, needed less elaborate language skills. Only in the downtown, where German speakers traditionally lived, was a substantial part of Magyar speakers bilingual, as still 40% declared knowledge of a second language in 1910. This suggests that German survived underneath Magyar in the downtown. In other districts of the city, however, monolingualism was the dominant linguistic pattern. Altogether, Győr was a city on the way to complete Magyar monolingualism.

According to a local census taken in 1839, the proportion of Magyar-, German- and Croatian-speaking population of Pécs was roughly the same (38%, 32% and 30%, respectively) (Katus 1995). In the following decades, Croatian practically disappeared and only a tiny minority declared Croatian as mother tongue in the last census of the period. German was also overshadowed: in 1910, a substantial number of citizens declared German as their mother tongue only in the mining district, due to the immigration of skilled miners from the Alpine and Bohemian lands. Otherwise, citizens of the formerly German-speaking areas of Pécs declared mostly Magyar as mother tongue by 1910. At the same time, the city's public space moved toward Magyar monolingualism: the last theater play in German was performed in 1876 and the last German paper changed its language to Magyar in 1906 (Kardos 1932).

Multilingualism, however, did not disappear. According to Fényes (1851), in trilingual Pécs Magyar and German were spoken by almost all inhabitants of the city. The 1880 data

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verify this claim only partially. According to the 1880 census, only 56% of the city's population spoke at least two languages. Among the native Croatian speakers, multilingualism was almost completely common but only less than half of the German and Magyar speakers declared knowledge of a second language. In the next three decades, the proportion of multilinguals significantly decreased. By 1910, the majority of the population of Pécs declared themselves to be monolingual. The knowledge of Magyar became almost universal among the native Croatian speakers and high among native German speakers (77%). At the same time, the linguistic skills of the native Magyar speakers definitely decreased: in 1910 only 41% of them declared knowledge of a second language. Due to the large number of German-speaking miners, Magyar speakers in the mining district were the most skilled with languages (two-thirds of them spoke a second language at least). In the downtown, where less than 10% of the population declared German as mother tongue, still 40% of Magyar speakers claimed to be multilingual. In all other districts, the large majority of Magyar speakers did not know any language beyond their native language. Similar to other investigated cities, almost all Jews of Pécs declared Magyar as their mother tongue in 1910, though around three-quarters of them knew German as well. This means that with the exception of the migrants in mining, Pécs was on the way to becoming a Magyar monolingual city.

Restructured multilingualism: Pozsony and Kassa

The two cities of Northern Hungary, Pozsony and Kassa were trilingual throughout the whole period, as Table 3 demonstrates. Since the Middle Ages, the bulk of Pozsony's population spoke German, while Magyar- and Slovak-speaking population were also present. Between 1880 and 1910, the city's linguistic profile recorded in the censuses changed significantly. The number of citizens declaring German as mother tongue did not change and that claiming Slovak increased roughly by a third. At the same time, the number of Magyar speakers boomed, making the distribution of German and Magyar speakers approximately the same in 1910. The language in the city's public space changed from the 1880s radically: schooling and local administration became purely Magyar and the cultural sphere practically Magyar–German bilingual; Slovak was used only in some workers' districts (Glettler 1988; Babejová 2003).

Table 3. Mother tongue and language skills in Pozsony and Kassa, 1880–1910.

	Pozsony				Kassa			
	1880		1910		1880		1910	
Total population	48,006		73,459		26,097		40,476	
According to mother tongue								
Magyar	7518	15.66%	30,010	40.85%	10,361	39.70%	30,791	76.07%
German	31,477	65.57%	31,768	43.25%	4367	16.73%	2832	7.00%
Slovak	7521	15.67%	9816	13.36%	10,675	40.91%	6039	14.92%
Romanian	12	0.03%	22	0.03%	11	0.04%	45	0.11%
Ruthenian	5	0.01%	3	0.00%	17	0.06%	51	0.13%
Serbo-Croatian	160	0.33%	–	–	10	0.04%	–	–
Croatian	–	–	303	0.41%	–	–	24	0.06%
Serbian	–	–	20	0.03%	–	–	14	0.03%
Other	1313	2.74%	1517	2.07%	655	2.51%	680	1.68%
According to knowledge of languages								
Monolingual	24,171	50.35%	27,045	36.82%	11,121	42.61%	15,987	39.50%
Multilingual	23,835	49.65%	46,414	63.18%	14,976	57.39%	24,489	60.50%

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As the German speakers formed the vast majority of the city's population until the late nineteenth century, it is not surprising that the dominant language in almost all spheres was German. According to the 1880 census, of the two minority groups, native Magyar speakers accommodated to this situation better, as less than a fifth of them were monolingual, while the same figure was ca. 30% in the case of Slovak speakers. In the case of both groups, it was the German language which was spoken most widely. Native German speakers enjoyed this comfortable situation, as only 37% claimed to speak a second language. This figure is in sharp contrast with the observation of local author and alderman Paul von Ballus, who in 1823 claimed that the vast majority of parents sent their children to other Hungarian towns to learn Magyar and "Slav" (Ballus 1823, 200). Yet, it is difficult to imagine that this was in fact the case; it rather seems that the wealthy Ballus generalized the experience of his own and his social environment.

In the following 30 years, the number of registered Magyars boomed; furthermore, the pattern of multilingualism changed as well. In the case of the native Slovak speakers, the figure of multilingualism remained the same (69%), although Magyar as a second language started to enjoy a more favorable position than German. The ratio of monolingual Magyar speakers increased but they were still rather multilingual (70%). At the same time, German speakers learned the state language: now 70% of them were multilingual, which in most cases meant knowledge of Magyar. The education policy definitely had an impact on this process, as female German speakers had a much higher chance not to speak any language beyond their native German than males. The slightly decreasing level of multilingualism of Magyar speakers was thus well compensated by the booming number of native Germans being able to speak a second language, which made the proportion of multilinguals in Pozsony increase from 50% to 63%.

Similar to Pozsony, the population of Kassa spoke predominantly German since the Middle Ages, while Magyar and Slovak were also present. The Kassa-born art historian, Imre Henszlmann (1813–1888), described the city in 1846 as chiefly German-speaking; however, the (incomplete) 1850/1851 census recorded 41% Slovak speakers, 33% Magyar speakers, a mere 12% (Christian) German speakers and 7% Jews (Czoch 2009). This proportion profoundly changed in the following decades and by 1910, the city had a clear Magyar-speaking majority according to the census. At the same time, the public space of the city became almost purely Magyar (Borovszky 1896).

Despite the profound change in the declared mother tongue, figures of multilingualism show a remarkable stability. According to the 1846 impressions of Henszlmann, knowledge of Magyar was common among non-native speakers. Statistical evidence of 1880 justifies his impressions only to a certain extent. In 1880, two-thirds of the Slovak speakers could allow themselves not to speak any other language, but this figure fell to 40% in 1910. Among monolingual Slovak speakers in 1910, there were two times more women than men, suggesting the role of education- and gender-based differences in the job market in learning languages. German speakers were far more likely to speak a second language. As early as 1880, four-fifths of them declared knowledge of a second language at least, justifying Henszlmann's observations. In 1910, the census found only 435 monolingual German speakers (15%). The very opposite process happened to Magyar speakers. While in 1880 only 21% of them could survive being monolingual, 30 years later this figure increased to 42%. As a result, in 1910, 91% of the population of the city declared knowledge of Magyar either as mother or as second language.

When interpreting these numbers, the wide-spread national indifference in both cities has to be taken into account (Mannová 2002; Henschel 2013). The shift in mother tongue declarations is therefore rather irrelevant, though it is beyond dispute that a

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substantial number of people did change their linguistic behavior. Two processes are quite clear: citizens in both cities having a mother tongue different from Magyar learned the state language at an increasing rate. This statement was particularly true among males in both cities and among the German speakers of Pozsony. At the same time, the number of monolingual Magyar speakers definitely increased, which suggests that the slow dismantling of multilingualism started in both cities.

Persistent minorities: Nagyvárad and Kolozsvár

While language change was wide-spread in the Western and Northern cities of Hungary, it was a far less common phenomenon in the Eastern part of the country, in Nagyvárad and Kolozsvár. In the early eighteenth century, Nagyvárad was populated mostly by Magyar speakers, while the Orthodox population spoke Romanian, Greek and Serbian (Borovszky n.d.). Jews appeared in the eighteenth century, and due to their constant immigration the largest Jewish community in provincial Hungary came into being on the eve of World War I (Lakos 1912). In the mid-nineteenth century, the population of Nagyvárad spoke chiefly Magyar (around two-thirds), Romanian (one-sixth) and German (one-sixth, mostly Jews) (Fleisz 2005, 44). As Table 4 aptly demonstrates, German practically disappeared in the following decades as a declared mother tongue, as the Jewish community rapidly Magyarized (Lakos 1912). Given the confessional differences, the native Romanian speakers did not absorb completely in the vast Magyar-speaking population of the city. In 1910 around one-third of the Greek Catholics and the half of Orthodox declared Romanian as their mother tongue. Apart from Greek Catholic institutions, the public space of Nagyvárad was monolingual Magyar throughout the entire era (Fleisz n.d.).

Reflecting on the uneven proportion of the linguistic communities, Fényes (1851) claimed that knowledge of Magyar was already common in the mid-nineteenth century. The 1880 statistics confirm the experience of Fényes: around three-quarters of the native Romanians and four-fifths of the native Germans spoke a second language at least, in most cases Magyar. In the next 30 years, even more native Romanian speakers learned Magyar (a mere 18% of native Romanians spoke their mother tongue only in 1910).

Table 4. Mother tongue and language skills in Nagyvárad and Kolozsvár, 1880–1910.

	Nagyvárad				Kolozsvár			
	1880		1910		1880		1910	
Total population	31,324		61,034		29,923		58,481	
According to mother tongue								
Magyar	27,219	86.89%	56,527	92.62%	23,490	78.50%	49,634	84.87%
German	1171	3.74%	1098	1.80%	1469	4.91%	1457	2.49%
Slovak	344	1.10%	173	0.28%	128	0.43%	103	0.18%
Romanian	2050	6.54%	2870	4.70%	3979	13.30%	6581	11.25%
Ruthenian	46	0.15%	23	0.04%	4	0.01%	6	0.01%
Serbo-Croatian	33	0.10%	–	–	24	0.08%	–	–
Croatian	–	–	26	0.04%	–	–	32	0.05%
Serbian	–	–	22	0.04%	–	–	40	0.07%
Other	461	1.47%	295	0.48%	830	2.77%	628	1.07%
According to knowledge of languages								
Monolingual	18,789	59.98%	43,018	70.48%	17,252	57.65%	35,005	59.86%
Multilingual	12,535	40.02%	18,016	29.52%	12,671	42.35%	23,476	40.14%

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Thus, it is not surprising that the Magyar-speaking population did not need elaborated linguistic skills. In 1880, only a third of them declared knowledge of a second language at least; three decades later, this figure dropped to a mere quarter. Magyar monolingualism grew so far that in 1910 even the majority of Jews declared knowledge of their native Magyar only (56%); out of the analyzed cities, this is by far the lowest number.

The estimated proportion of German- and Magyar-speaking inhabitants of Kolozsvár was the same in the fifteenth and in the seventeenth centuries (Benkő 2004, 18; Gaal 2005, 333). Despite the settlement of German speakers in the city after the incorporation of Transylvania into the Habsburg Empire, most German speakers changed their language to Magyar, and by the mid-nineteenth century German nearly disappeared. In the mid-nineteenth century, only the small Lutheran congregation maintained some German in its elementary school, otherwise the once German speakers changed their language to Magyar. Romanian speakers were also present, in particular in the outskirts of the city. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Kolozsvár was an almost purely Magyar-speaking city, whose public space was also nearly purely Magyar (Sonkoly 2002; Gaal 2005). The censuses of 1880 and 1910 recorded a remarkable stability in the declared mother tongue: only the proportion of German speakers decreased significantly, mostly due to the Magyarization of the local Jews (Lőwy 2005).

The native Romanians, despite forming a relatively small minority in the city, spoke its dominant language at a surprisingly small number in 1880: only half of them declared knowledge of a second language. This was due to the fact that they mostly inhabited the suburb Felek (Feleacu). The almost purely Romanian-speaking Felek was detached from the city two years later; instead, another village, Kolozsmonostor (Cluj-Mănăştur), was integrated into Kolozsvár in 1895. This latter was inhabited by a roughly equal number of Magyar and Romanian speakers in 1880. In 1910, 72% of the native Romanians of Kolozsvár declared knowledge of a second language at least, in most cases Magyar. The same figure in Nagyvárad was 82%; the difference can be explained by the fact that Romanian speakers concentrated in Kolozsmonostor, while in Nagyvárad no predominantly Romanian-speaking district emerged.

The 1880 census recorded 63% monolingual Magyar speakers. This figure remained roughly the same in 1910, when exactly two-thirds of native Magyar speakers declared they did not speak any other languages. The fact that in a practically monolingual and monocultural city roughly a third of Magyar speakers declared knowledge of a second language can be explained by the multilingual environment of Transylvania. Kolozsvár was a target of immigration from the whole territory of Transylvania, especially from neighboring Kolozs, Szolnok-Doboka and Torda-Aranyos counties, where many villages were inhabited by both Romanian- and Magyar-speaking peasants. Immigrants to Kolozsvár thus brought their knowledge of Romanian into the city. At the same time, Jews of Kolozsvár, as in other cities, claimed mostly Magyar mother tongue and declared also knowledge of a second language at a high number (57%, in most cases German). As a result, despite their definitely different social status, German and Romanian were spoken by roughly the same number of native Magyars of Kolozsvár.

Persistence and change: Arad and Temesvár

The two cities of the Southern Great Plain, Arad and Temesvár represent a mixed model, where elements of both the Northern–Western and Eastern Hungarian cities appear. Since Ottoman rule ceased in 1688, Arad was inhabited by German-, Magyar-, Romanian- and Serbian-speaking inhabitants, and later also Jews settled in the city (Lakatos 1881;

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Table 5. Mother tongue and language skills in Arad and Temesvár, 1880–1910.

	Arad				Temesvár			
	1880		1910		1880		1910	
Total population	35,556		60,969		33,694		68,471	
According to mother tongue								
Magyar	20,500	57.66%	45,161	74.07%	7497	22.25%	27,740	40.51%
German	5613	15.79%	4025	6.60%	19,067	56.59%	30,064	43.91%
Slovak	446	1.25%	231	0.38%	408	1.21%	306	0.45%
Romanian	6635	18.66%	9466	15.53%	3372	10.01%	6657	9.72%
Ruthenian	19	0.05%	5	0.01%	29	0.09%	1	0.00%
Serbo-Croatian	1741	4.90%	–	–	1768	5.25%	–	–
Croatian	–	–	29	0.05%	–	–	122	0.18%
Serbian	–	–	1785	2.93%	–	–	2827	4.13%
Other	602	1.69%	267	0.44%	1553	4.61%	754	1.10%
According to knowledge of languages								
Monolingual	17,598	49.49%	30,195	49.53%	13,532	40.16%	21,556	31.48%
Multilingual	17,958	50.51%	30,774	50.47%	20,162	59.84%	46,915	68.52%

Márki 1892). According to Fényes (1851), German was the most widely spoken language in the mid-nineteenth century. The 1880 census, however, recorded the vast majority as Magyar speakers, which became even more evident by 1910, as Table 5 demonstrates. It seems that the German-speaking milieu of Arad was on the way being absorbed by the Magyar, similar to the Western Hungarian cities. On the other hand, similar to the inhabitants of Kolozsvár, the Romanian population did not change the declaration of their mother tongue either. Native Serbian speakers, however, either insisted on claiming Serbian, or turned to Magyar or Romanian, depending on their social status (artisans and merchants to Magyar, day laborers to Romanian) (Kollárov 1912, 480). During the years of Dualism, the public space of Arad became increasingly Magyar, with the exception of a few Romanian cultural and educational institutions (Horel 2010).

The expansion of the Magyar-speaking public space had a remarkable impact on the linguistic patterns of the population. The knowledge of Magyar expanded rapidly. In 1880, almost two-thirds of the local Romanian speakers could afford being monolingual, but in 1910 only a quarter of them were still unable to comprehend a language beyond their native Romanian. The Serbian speakers were far better connected to the other linguistic communities of the city: as early as 1880 only a fifth of them were monolingual and in 1910 this figure dropped to below 15%. In a similar way, in 1880, a third of German speakers were monolingual, but by 1910 this figure halved (16%). At the same time, the Magyar speakers' linguistic abilities slightly decreased: in 1880 approximately half of them were able to speak other languages, in 1910 this figure dropped to 41%. Though this is still a relatively high number, it suggests the slow move toward Magyar monolingualism.

The history of Temesvár's population was fairly similar to that of Arad. Temesvár became part of the Habsburg Monarchy in the early eighteenth century and attracted German-, Serbian-, Romanian- and Magyar-speaking settlers. Despite the rapid increase of people declaring Magyar as their mother tongue, the city still had a large number of citizens insisting on claiming their first language as German, Romanian or Serbian in 1910. Similar to Pozsony, and in contrast to Arad, German kept quite an advanced position in Temesvár's public space, in particular concerning media and culture. The city's public space became chiefly Magyar and German bilingual (Barát 1902).

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Because from the eighteenth century the dominant language in Temesvár was German, the native Germans could allow themselves not to comprehend other languages. For instance, in the mid-nineteenth century, municipal clerks did not understand Magyar (Berkeszi 1900). This dominant position enabled almost half of the German speakers in 1880 to be monolingual. In 1910, mostly due to the increase of male plurilingualism, this figure dropped to 31%. Needless to say Magyar enjoyed the most favorable position among languages that were spoken by native Germans. Among the Romanian-speaking population, the level of multilingualism remained stable, two-thirds claiming knowledge of a second language at least. Remarkably, in 1910 only 43% of local Romanian speakers knew Hungarian, which suggests the advanced position of German on the local market of languages. Similar to Arad, the Serbian-speaking population was the best connected to the other linguistic groups of the city, as over 80% of them declared plurilingualism in both censuses. Similar to their Romanian-speaking fellow citizens, for the plurilingual native Serbs of Temesvár knowledge of Magyar was not self-evident. Only 52% of all Serbs claimed knowledge of the state language, so around one-third of all Serbian speakers knew German or Romanian but not Magyar.

While by 1910 multilingualism became common among non-Magyar speakers, the citizens of Temesvár declaring Magyar as mother tongue slightly moved toward monolingualism. In 1880, less than a quarter of Magyar speakers could afford speaking their mother tongue only. This figure is an apt demonstration of how important German was in the city's public life in the early years of the Dualist system. In 1910, the proportion of Magyar-speaking monolinguals increased to 30%. Jews declaring themselves Magyar speakers were here too above the average in claiming plurilingualism (85%). Temesvár, similar to Pozsony, was thus a city with a substantial number of multilingual citizens, yet, the slight move toward Magyar monolingualism can be traced.

Conclusion

The findings presented here show how closely multilingualism was connected to social factors. Males had a far higher chance to understand "foreign" languages than female citizens; Jews outnumbered Christians in being multilingual, and although the statistical sources do not contain data concerning education, social status and multilingualism, it can be supposed that there was a certain connection between these factors. The local market of languages was also important: this meant the 1880 Slovak and Magyar speakers of Pozsony understood German but not vice versa and then the restructuring of this market made the majority of locals learn Magyar by 1910.

Between 1880 and 1910, several similar processes happened in all the 10 analyzed cities. The most remarkable change was the booming number of people claiming Magyar as mother tongue, as shown in Table 6. Besides immigration, this change was largely due to changing patterns of declaration of mother tongue among Jews, and to a certain extent among Christian German and Slovak speakers. Due to confessional differences, the Serbian- and Romanian-speaking citizens of the Transylvanian and Banat cities insisted on their mother tongue declaration far more.

Not only did the number of citizens declaring Magyar as mother tongue increase, but Magyar became the only language in the public space in most investigated cities. Only in Pozsony and Temesvár did German survive as a language enjoying still a considerable proportion in certain spheres of culture. As the Magyar public space expanded everywhere, Magyar speakers needed knowledge of foreign languages less and less; monolingualism

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Table 6. Mother tongue and language skills in the ten most urbanized cities of Hungary, 1880–1910.

	1880		1910	
Total population	379,080		658,782	
According to mother tongue				
Magyar	257,381	67.90%	521,577	79.17%
German	72,441	19.11%	81,012	12.30%
Slovak	20,445	5.39%	17,180	2.61%
Romanian	16,168	4.27%	26,057	3.96%
Ruthenian	151	0.04%	125	0.02%
Serbo-Croatian	4481	1.18%	–	–
Croatian	–	–	1348	0.20%
Serbian	–	–	5730	0.87%
Other	8013	2.11%	5753	0.87%
According to knowledge of languages				
Monolingual	236,835	62.48%	406,616	61.72%
Multilingual	142,244	37.52%	252,166	38.28%

among Magyar speakers grew significantly in all cities (except for Debrecen and Szeged, which had already been practically monolingual).

The expansion of the Magyar public space and the increase of the Magyar speakers, however, not only undermined multilingualism but significantly contributed to it at the same time. People with a mother tongue different from Magyar learned the state language during their education and during their encounters with Magyar speakers at an increasing pace. Knowledge of Magyar language among non-Magyar speakers mounted in all investigated towns. This process was the most remarkable in Pozsony, where the local German-speaking population and public were so dominant in 1880 that the majority of them did not need knowledge of any other language, but by 1910 this has profoundly changed. In fact, it was the Magyar nationalist policy of the Hungarian government which encouraged the Magyarization of local administration and the school system, and thus contributed to the multilingualism of the local native Germans. In a similar way, Magyar was learned by native Germans of Temesvár, Slovaks in Kassa, etc.

The other way nationalism contributed to multilingualism was assimilation. Liberal nationalism opened the door for Jewish assimilation; in exchange, Jews in the modern urban centers became chiefly Magyar-speaking but the elders still remembered and the younger citizens were still taught German as an important form of cultural capital. To a restricted, but still considerable extent, the same process happened to many originally German- and Slovak-speaking families.

Most students of nationalism in modern Europe would presuppose the heterogeneity of culture (multilingualism in this case) in the pre-national age was turned to homogeneity by modernity and state-driven nation-building. The findings presented here suggest that in the starting phase, linguistic pluralism was definitely lower than scholarship claims: the average of the multilingual population of the most urbanized provincial cities of the linguistically highly diverse Hungary remained only ca. 30%. In the second stage, multilingualism increased, as due to the expansion of education and the integration of national economy, people having a mother tongue different from Magyar learned the state language. At the same time, assimilation also happened, which maintained linguistic plurality for generations. The two synchronic tendencies (increase of monolingual Magyar speakers and multilingual others), in fact, almost completely counterbalanced each other. While the ratio of people claiming Magyar mother tongue significantly grew, the proportion of people who

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spoke at least two languages did not change. Only in the third stage did linguistic plurality finally shrink and was homogenous cultural (linguistic) space made. Nationalism therefore played a paradoxical role in shaping linguistic patterns. The spread of Magyar language among the non-Magyar speakers was a default goal of all Hungarian governments in office between 1867 and 1918. In the scrutinized urban centers, this project was largely successful (although it was not the outcome of governmental policies only but economic and demographic factors played a role, too). This undermined the ability of Magyar speakers to know other languages, but at the same time encouraged and significantly helped the rise of multilingualism among a number of other groups.

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Notes

1. I am thankful to Ágoston Berecz for his comments on an earlier version of this text.
2. Defining Croatian and Serbian, Slovak and Ruthenian as separate languages, was of course a deeply politically motivated concept. For the wider context of language engineering in Central Europe, see Kamusella (2008).
3. If not noted otherwise, calculation will be based on 1880 census (OMKSH 1882) and on the 1910 calculations of the Hungarian Statistical Office (Hungarian National Archives, XXXII-23-h, box 719).
4. Naming locations in Central Europe is always a complicated issue. To avoid anachronism, in the following only the official (Magyar) name of 1910 will be used, while other name variants will be given in parentheses the first time only.
5. Due to the lack of archival sources, I must refrain from the analysis of the regional center with the lowest ranking, Brassó.
6. The sources of all tables are OMKSH (1882, 1:658–715) and Hungarian National Archives, Fond XXXII-23-h, box 719.
   In 1880, children aged 0–3 years were not put in the categories of mother tongue but were counted in a different category as "unable to speak." In 1910, children of the same age were proportionally distributed to the groups of mother tongue. For 1880, I made the same calculations.

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