

## The mother tongue and general language consciousness of the Hungarian inhabitants in Subotica in relation to the Hungarian media in Hungary and Vojvodina

The data of the census carried out on the territory of Vojvodina (Vajdaság), which were published in November 2012, showed the loss of 39 000 Hungarian (Magyar) inhabitants comparing to the situation ten years before. This critical factor has to be observed by all means. The questions arise: can this rapid decrease in number of native speakers be stopped or slowed? Can we be satisfied with extenuation of the statistical data or some more significant measures should be taken? Does the decrease in the number of the Hungarian inhabitants cause crisis in the national identity? Does it impair the vernacular language consciousness? Does it trigger the processes of assimilation? How significant are the problems of re-forming, decaying and losing the mother tongue?

This study examines the mother tongue and other language consciousness of the Hungarian inhabitants of Subotica (Szabadka) considering the aspect of the media in Vojvodina and Hungary. The study tries to contribute an alternative solution for this crisis, which is oriented towards saving the mother tongue of the Magyars in Vojvodina and securing its future. Among all cultural strategies, it focuses on the role of the media in Hungary and Vojvodina, and suggests the hypothesis according to which the language of Magyars in Vojvodina can be saved first of all by starting several more radio and TV stations and by making even more programmes of the local importance in their language. These programmes will fulfil the needs only if the language used in them is of high standard, void of all foreign (especially Serbian) language patterns. The key motif is – partly because of the previously mentioned ideas –the propagation of a high standard language model.

The research was carried out by the method of layered sampling using a questionnaire with thirty questions. These questions were organised in four thematic units, which are the following: – attachment to the Hungarian language as the mother tongue. – judgements, impressions about the relationship between the Serbian and Hungarian language. – the connection between the Hungarian language and media. – the status and the future of the Hungarian language in Vojvodina.

The research proved that there is a need for operating a regional TV-channel that could be received all around Vojvodina, and one or several short-range radio-transmitters of the local importance, all of them using high-standard Hungarian language. The reactions, emotional attitudes, judgements of the examined population relating to the different factors of the media undoubtedly reveal and vindicate important interactions. The starting point for charting these interactions is surveying and assessing the mother tongue consciousness of the above mentioned population, namely the examination of the: – Hungarians' attitude towards their mother tongue and the Serbian

language in Subotica, – system of relations built between the two languages, – judgements and presuppositions of the interviewed subjects, – negative changes that can be found in the language of the Hungarians of Vojvodina.

In this study the above mentioned expectations and attitudes towards the national strategies are supported and validated by using socio-linguistic methods. Furthermore, it is outlined that some real measures have to be taken in order to restrain the decrease in number of native speakers of Hungarian language, and a possible solution is given to this critical situation.