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# Voice actors in focus: language attitudes and practice in Hungarian dubbing

Balso aktorių požiūris į dubliavimą vengrų kalba ir jų patirtis

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## Abstract

In the present article, Hungarian voice actors' language attitudes and experiences are studied with relation to the texts to be read out while dubbing and narrating foreign language audiovisual products. The study was conducted with the great moral and practical support of the trade union of Hungarian voice actors and its two popular and famous members as the representatives of this profession have never been asked and studied from a sociolinguistic viewpoint before. With their help, 10% of the profession participated in the study, filling out a commonly designed online questionnaire. Since most of the foreign language audiovisual products that are released in Hungarian cinemas, television and online streaming channels still get Hungarian dubbing or narration, while its language quality is decreasing, it is worth investigating the process behind the final products. The study points out many problems of the texts' linguistic quality and presents the attitudes of those who have to give their voice to these, and might have a chance to correct them, or might not. The paper presents the first phase of an overall research that aims to explore the case of Hungarian dubbing from a sociolinguistic viewpoint. In the future, audiovisual translators' and consumers' – inland, transborder, and emigrant Hungarians' – attitudes will be studied to cover a wide range of stakeholders of the question.

**KEYWORDS:** audiovisual products, dubbing, Hungarian, language attitudes, sociolinguistics, voice actors

## Introduction

Contrary to the practice of several other countries (cf. e.g., Mera, 1999, p. 74), the majority of film industry products distributed in Hungary and originally made in a different language still receive Hungarian dubbing and narration. Such products range from cartoons and animated films to various documentaries, short films, art films, and world-famous blockbusters, whether in public, commercial television and online streaming channels or in DVDs or in cinemas and film theatres.

Due to positive attitudes towards English as a world language and because of the growing expectations of foreign language skills, it is becoming increasingly popular to watch foreign films and series in the original or other foreign language and/or with subtitles. However, this trend is mainly limited to younger people in general. More and more people want to improve their language skills while relaxing, while others are motivated to watch films

in a foreign language that they understand in order to avoid problems arising from untranslatable puns, texts with misunderstood, outdated slang words, or possibly ungrammatical texts. Others, however, would be hindered in interpreting or relaxing if they could not watch these in their mother tongue: many people would not even understand the original language, they would need more time to read the subtitle (for a recent report on both sides of the issue see Yle News, 2022; for recent research findings on them see Ameri & Khoshsaligheh, 2020; Ed-Dali, 2024). Also, blind and visually impaired persons would not have the opportunity to do so (on additional audio-narration in Hungarian see Hutterer, 2010). For first or multigeneration emigrant Hungarians and their children living abroad, the Hungarian dubbing can be one of the keys to learn and cultivate their mother tongue or heritage language (for some examples see Székely, 2014, p. 12). Finally, studying Hungarian as a foreign language can be supported by watching Hungarian dubbed products, both for immigrant families in Hungary and for anyone else worldwide (for a recent project on the didactic applications of audiovisual translation to foreign language learning regarding English, see Talaván & Rodríguez-Arancón, 2024). It is also pointed out that dubbed audiovisual products can promote plurilingual and pluricultural competences in language learning (see e.g., Baños et al., 2021).

Whether someone belongs to any of the above or other groups, the quality of Hungarian dubbing affects almost all Hungarian speakers, which needs to be addressed from a linguistic point of view. Most native Hungarian speakers encounter dramatised text and stylised speech almost exclusively through dubbed films; in many cases, it is the only source of cultural consumption. Various comprehensive studies indicate an increasing number of hours per year that people spend in front of the screen by watching television and/or streaming channels. In addition to Hungarian language programmes, viewers also watch a number of dubbed or narrated series, documentaries, cartoons and further international films. According to a 2017 analysis by the European Broadcasting Union, people spent up to 4–5 hours a day in front of a TV screen in Hungary in a given year (cf. Európa Pont, 2018), and according to the Standard Eurobarometer Autumn 2017 survey, the proportion of those who watch television every day in Hungary is 84% (cf. SE88, for further statistical results see Török et al., 2011; NMHH; Petróczi & Főző, 2019, p. 16; Sereg, 2020, p. 7–8). Hungarian cinemas generate a total revenue of several billion forints a year; in 2018, for example, they had a gross ticket revenue of HUF 21 980 225 652 from 15 629 169 visitors in Hungary (Tóth, 2019), and most of the productions were dubbed. Based on these data, there is no doubt that dubbed/narrated products have an impact on the (linguistic) socialisation and mother tongue use of the majority of adults and children (see also Sereg, 2020). Meanwhile, due to the unregulated market competition of studios and the fast, cheap and often unchecked translations, the (linguistic) quality of Hungarian dubbed content has generally deteriorated in recent years, as the former chair of the trade union of the dubbing profession in Hungary worded in his report (Rajkai, 2019, p. 2).

The research discussed in the present study examines this topic, more precisely the linguistic quality of present-day Hungarian dubbing and narration in an objective way and from several directions, with the active involvement of the Hungarian dubbing profession. It is also aimed to formulate proposals in the future, that are based on empirical findings, for the representatives of the profession.

The first phase of the multi-stage, comprehensive research explores the language attitudes of Hungarian voice actors with the aim of answering the following research questions:

- RQ1** *How do subjects generally feel about language use and the linguistic quality of texts to be read in their work?*
- RQ2** *What difficulties do they face in their work regarding the language quality of the read-out texts?*
- RQ3** *On which language problems do they react during their work and how?*
- RQ4** *To what extent can voice actors affect the linguistic quality of the final version of the production (if at all)?*

The hypotheses formulated for the first phase of the research are as follows:

- H1 *Hungarian voice actors, through their studies and work, use their language more consciously and strive to follow the standard norm regarding pronunciation as well as grammar and vocabulary, both in their daily lives and in their work.*
- H2 *They try to correct the language problems detected in the text to be read out.*
- H3 *However, they have little or no opportunity to correct the language problems even if detected.*

### Theoretical Background

Attempts were made to dub international films even before World War II in Hungary. A dubbing production company was established in 1951 (called Pannónia Film Studio since 1957), which already had an independent studio. In 1962, the one and only Hungarian television channel also started to dub its contents in its own studio (cf. Dallos, 2018). Hungarian soundtracks have been produced in studios ever since. According to the comprehensive analysis by Petróczi and Főző (2019, p. 16), there were “roughly 15 professional dubbing studios” in 2019, and, five years later, at the time of the publication of the present paper, there are already 18 (for the latest information, see the website of the trade union of Hungarian voice actors; Trade Union, 2024).

The creation of dubbed content, actually linguistic adaptations, is a complex process. The principal production manager, the translator and the production manager prepare the work in advance, the dubbing director, the sound engineer and the voice actors produce it, and the editor works on the post-production with the sound engineer, the director and the principal production manager. Ideally, each task is staffed separately with the support of an assistant director but nowadays only one person performs the duties of the director, the sound engineer, and the editor usually. The final product is a new, ideally coherent soundtrack in which the translation fits the image and the original mouth movement. The dubbed soundtrack is integrated by the broadcasters and distributors into their own audiovisual products and services.

The quality of each step affects the quality of the final product. Poor translation, for example, has a negative impact on the performance of actors but much can also depend on the equipment of the studios. Better quality requires more money; therefore, not all content is dubbed to the highest quality. The time spent on dubbing is getting shorter and shorter because, for example, the dates of presenting the original and the Hungarian version have got much closer due to digitalisation. In addition, the producer of the original film (mainly of blockbusters) has a huge financial interest in preventing the content from being published illegally by piracy. Therefore, studios often get a version of the original film that shows almost nothing but the mouths of the actors, which makes everyone’s job significantly more difficult.

Voice actors usually read the text in the microphone without rehearsal while hearing the original lines in their headphones. In smaller studios, work is often hampered by simple problems such as tight spaces and airlessness. Remuneration for voice actors has not changed over the past two decades in Hungary, which is actually a decline due to inflationary effects, as it is usually emphasised in different official reports on the profession (Petróczi & Főző, 2019; Rajkai, 2019). Wages are often not indicated in the contracts exactly. The decline in quality can also be caused by the fact that, in addition to popular and experienced voice actors, who usually work as theatre actors, there are also those who take the job for lower pay with less competence. It can happen because there are no input requirements for getting this kind of job today in Hungary.

The language of dubbed audiovisual content is primarily investigated in translation studies in both Hungarian and international contexts. Sereg (2020) examined its effect on the use of the mother tongue among Hungarian youngsters, as well as the attitudes of adult, general and professional (but not audiovisual) translators towards the deviation of dubbing from the norms of the target language, and towards the acceptance of interferences (see also Polcz, 2012).

Furthermore, as Hungarian onomastic research has been dealing with the practice and difficulties of translating proper names in various works for decades (for a comprehensive summary, see Slíz, 2019), the issue of audiovisual content regarding this topic is also addressed. Vermes (2015, p. 18) and Slíz (2019, pp. 21–22) partly mention it, while Farkas (2007) examines translation solutions that can be considered incorrect in film dubbing and subtitles, as well as in the short summaries of the films. As it is stated, these mistakes that distort or even alter the meaning completely can result in comprehension difficulties (Farkas, 2007, p. 169). The study also takes into account the operations to be used during the translation and the possible types of errors, illustrated with specific examples. For example, it is important for the translator to interpret the proper name, to properly define its reference value, and to choose the appropriate translation operation. The article provides several television examples of dubbing (and additional written data) containing translation mistakes.

Thus, these studies integrate sociolinguistic aspects but due to their objectives, they do not study the professionals' side. To the best of the author's knowledge, no research has been conducted so far on the language attitudes of the representatives of the Hungarian dubbing profession. In fact, it also seems to be a rarely examined topic worldwide. Several international studies were conducted regarding other dubbing languages and other speech communities; however, the main focus is on the viewers' attitudes in these cases, too (see e.g., Ruiz & García, 2007; Koverienė & Satkauskaitė, 2017; Ameri & Khoshsaligheh, 2020; for an overall study but from the viewpoint of translation studies see e.g., the book chapter of Gottlieb, 2018).

## Methodology

The data of the present study (as of the above-mentioned studies on the viewers' attitudes, cf. Ruiz & García, 2007; Koverienė & Satkauskaitė, 2017; Ameri & Khoshsaligheh, 2020) were collected by a self-designed questionnaire with the close cooperation of a few representatives of the Hungarian dubbing profession. Actor Zoltán Rajkai provided effective help at all stages of the research, from the very beginning to the discussion of the results. Also, at the time of data collection, he was the chairman of the trade union of the dubbing profession in Hungary.

The first part of the questionnaire for voice actors assessed their socio-economic status, including the following specific questions, e.g.: How many years have you worked as a voice actor and narrator so far? In addition to your work as a voice actor/narrator, how often do you appear in a) theaters, b) motion pictures, c) series on television or online streaming channels, d) other productions? Have you taken speech training? If not, why not? If so, what kind of experiences do you remember about the language and its use?, etc.

Further questions about their mother tongue attitudes and language experiences related to their work were asked by open and closed, direct and indirect questions. Every question of this part is listed as follows: What linguistic aspects bother you the most in other speakers' language use in everyday life? Please explain briefly and use as many specific examples as possible why you are disturbed by the above aspects. If nothing bothers you, please indicate it, too. Have you ever been corrected while using your mother tongue? Have you ever been corrected due to your dialect speech? If so, who? How did you react when you were corrected due to your dialect speech? How difficult is it for you to pronounce foreign proper names or other foreign language terms in your work? How often are you asked to read out the same foreign proper names and expressions with a different pronunciation? Do you think it is important that different foreign proper names and expressions are pronounced in a uniform way in the Hungarian dub? If you have any experiences regarding the two previous questions, please write them. What linguistic phenomena disturb you the most during your work as a voice actor in the texts to be read? What do you do if you face disturbing linguistic phenomena in the text you have to read? To what extent do you feel the need to indicate your problems with the use of the Hungarian language to your colleagues as a voice actor? Do you or would you correct to the standard form if you face a dialect word in the text to be read out which has no stylistic function in the context? In your opinion, how important is the linguistic quality of the text to be read out during dubbing and narration in terms of the use of Hungarian for native speakers living in native language environments? In your opinion, how important is the linguistic quality of the text to be read out during dubbing and narration in terms of the use of Hungarian for native speakers living in foreign language environments? Which features of Hungarian dubbing do you consider the strengths of the profession and why? Which features of Hungarian dubbing do you consider the weaknesses of the profession

and why? For some of the above questions, multiple options were given to choose, and some others were completely open questions. Where it was relevant, the participants were asked to indicate their answers and illustrate them with as many examples as possible.

In the following section, not every question is analysed separately, as they were asked to raise the participants' thoughts, experiences, memories and examples from many aspects. The questionnaire was designed online using Google Forms software, and the link to it was shared a couple of times in a closed Facebook group and via the mailing list of Hungarian voice actors. Given that the community in question is relatively small and difficult to reach, there was no possibility of representative or stratified sampling; therefore, a random sample was collected.

After processing and analysing the responses, we aimed to conduct in-depth interviews with some voice actors on a voluntary basis in the future. In these, the factors and examples presented in the answers to the questionnaire can be explained in more detail, and further aspects can be revealed. Spontaneous data collected by passive observation in dubbing studios will also be an important addition to the findings. The organisation of data collection by these two additional methods has been in progress. Therefore, the results presented in this paper should be taken as preliminary ones, as an important basis for further research of the topic. Although the above-mentioned research questions are answered and the hypotheses are tested, for the time being, by questionnaire data only, the significance of the study lies in the fact that the attitudes and work experiences of voice actors regarding language use have never been explored previously.

The fact that the research is carried out with the intellectual and moral support of the most popular, award-winning actors in the dubbing profession significantly reduces risk factors such as access to participants, the organisation of passive observation or the issue of proficiency in the subject. The above-mentioned trade union, which currently has 363 members, strives to improve the conditions for dubbing by all possible means, thus helping to raise the standard of Hungarian dubbing and the development of valuable and high-quality work (Trade Union, 2024; see also Rajkai, 2019). Carrying out the first and further sub-studies and disseminating the results as widely as possible also aim to contribute to the realisation of this practical goal.

## Results and Discussion

The questionnaire was completed by 69 Hungarian voice actors within a few weeks in the spring of 2020. According to estimates (Petróczi & Főző, 2019, p. 17), that means approximately 10–12% of the total number of Hungarian voice actors today, according to the survey of the above authors. The openness of the profession to the study is also shown by the

fact that the respondents made a number of appreciative comments to the questionnaire, and many provided their contact details for in-depth interviews voluntarily.

Although the sampling technique was random, the sample shows a varied picture based on the personal data of the participants. 44 men and 25 women filled in the questionnaire, most of them residing in Budapest and 15 in the neighbouring towns that are in the agglomeration district of the capital. Most of them were raised in Budapest, roughly a third of them came from various parts of the Hungarian language area, and two from Hungarian historical minority communities of the neighbouring countries. The majority of the respondents were 26–45 years old (27 subjects) and 46–65 (32 subjects), 3 were 18–25 years old and 7 were older than 66 years.

Most (38) of the subjects have been working as a voice actor for at least 25 years, 6 of them for more than 50 years. 22 participants have less than 25 years of experience in the profession but at least 10 years, and 9 subjects have less than 10 years. There are participants who have been voice actors for only one year, and the most experienced respondent has been working for 57 years at the time of data collection. Nearly half of the respondents appear on stage as actors besides working as voice actors, and 14 have never worked in a theater. 25 subjects never work in series, 28 in other productions (e.g., on television shows, galas, reading out an audio book, moderating, directing, editing, etc.). All but 5 respondents have taken speech training, usually as part of their general training. According to their answers, those lessons also made them more aware of their own language use.

It is worth mentioning here that the majority of the participants have high expectations for the use of their native language in their daily communication and in the texts to be read. They are most disturbed by grammatical

mistakes in everyday communication (51 notations) (more options could be chosen). They also have problems with articulation (37), pronunciation (39), further issues on speech production (35), and with the use of slang words that are not appropriate to the situation (32), the excessive use of foreign words (25) and obscene words (22). Only two subjects indicated that nothing was bothering them in the language use of others. Among the explanations expressed in the participants' own words, some have linked inappropriate language use to illiteracy and "unpretentiousness of one's character". Others referred to themselves as a language cultivator, or a "grammar nazi" (cf. e.g., Sherman & Švelch, 2014).

As expected according to previous findings (e.g., Lanstyák, 2007; Parapatics, 2020), some subjects also interpret dialect features as "grammar mistakes" but most participants accept these (at least what they know to be dialect forms) and idiolects in general (on the relationship between language varieties and film in an English context, see e.g., Elliott, 2000; Boberg, 2018; Dudek, 2019; Szentgyörgyi, 2021), e.g.,

*Dialect words do not disturb me, they even make speech spicy.*

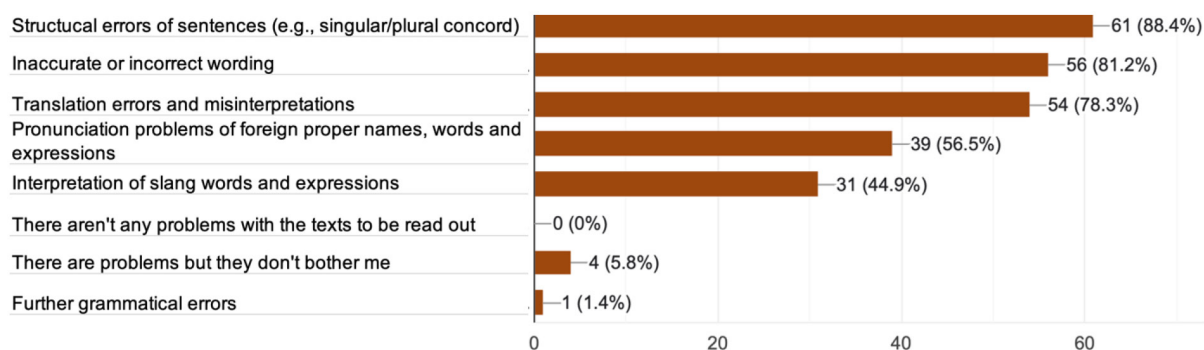
*Every person is unique, so it doesn't bother me at all if someone tells his/her thoughts with incorrect articulation or grammatical errors, as they belong to their own individuality.*

Several respondents emphasised the separation of profession and everyday life (on the classification of "correct" and "incorrect" language use in connection with mother tongue education in Hungary, see e.g., Heltainé Nagy, 2012; further considerations of this issue can be read below), e.g.,

*In ordinary speech, I am patient with many more things regarding others because they are not professionals.*

*I strive for a nice, clean Hungarian speech, too. It is not a problem if someone speaks differently but they should hear only grammatically and technically correct dubbing from TV.*

Mistakes in the texts to be read are already handled more strictly by the subjects. The most bothering for them are the structural errors of sentences (61 notations), the inaccurate or incorrect wording (56), the translation errors or misinterpretations (54), the pronunciation of foreign proper names, words and expressions (39) and problems related to the interpretation of slang words (31) (see Fig. 1). Regarding these, the responses often criticise the work of the dubbing directors and translators. Emphasis should be made at this point that the present and further studies on the results do not aim to pillory nor to generalise them but only to reveal what factors may lead to quality problems regarding the language from voice actors' viewpoint. The next phase of the research, precisely for a broader view, also aims to assess the attitudes and experiences of further workers in this profession, such as translators.



**Fig. 1** The most bothering language problems for voice actors in the texts to be read out (n = 69) (The author's work via Google Forms)



The next question that asked for concrete examples started a flow of the negative subjects' experiences, e.g.,

*We correct sentences translated into Hungarian many times. We change incorrect or the same qualifiers frequently.*

*... there are incorrect suffixes ... When I narrate or the sync goes live, it confuses me because I am shocked.*

*... plural-singular, Anglo-American calques, poor pronunciation instructions in brackets ...*

*In narration, overcomplicated structures, redundancy. Inaccurate use of technical terms.*

*In a movie, they regularly made me say "bison" instead of obvious "buffalo".*

*Many times there is a problem with the length of the sentences (too short or too long) but sometimes they are translated in an absolutely different way than what I hear in my ear.*

*We often get an incomprehensible, incoherent Hungarian text, throwing words at each other. Then we rewrite it, give it style, or listen to the original to figure out what it is all about. We do the translator's job. Or we read it blushing.*

The last sentence of the last quote already indicates another problem. Namely, that voice actors do not always have the opportunity to correct the mistakes: they cannot arbitrarily modify the resulting text even if the error is obvious. Although, they all consider it important to indicate this to their colleagues, with one or two exceptions, the discussion is not always followed by correction. 13 subjects reported that they often had to read the wrong version. The reasons are as follows, e.g.,

*The quality is overridden by the principal contractor's expectation that we cannot deviate from what is written by any letter*

*... we often agree with the colleagues. In this case, we will correct the text. Sometimes, however, the contractor sticks to the original text so we can't correct it*

*I always tell if I don't agree with the text but if the director says it has to be said as described, I don't argue, it wouldn't even make sense, well, I would say so.*

*Even as a Hungarian teacher, I am very, very disturbed if the text I am reading out is full of linguistic and grammatical errors. I feel like I'm setting a bad example for viewers at such times. The director's word is the first but many times their hands are bound by the «obligation» of the proofread text that is still full of errors.*

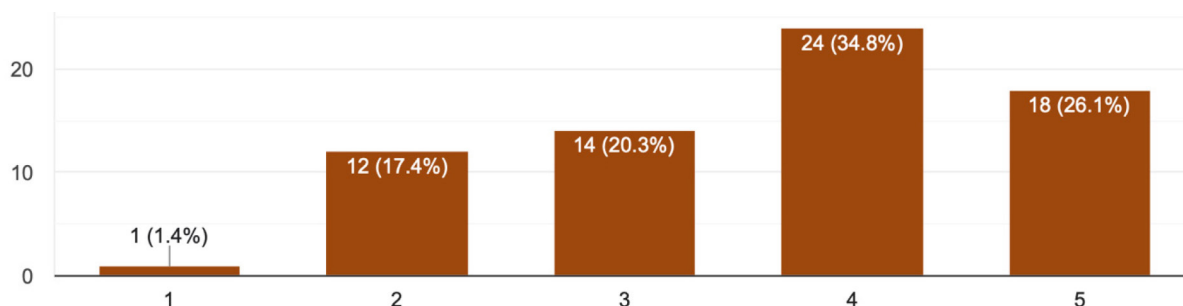
It is a limitation of the method used for the present study that it is not always clear for the researcher what kind of grammatical forms are considered "errors" by the participants. As it was emphasised previously, this issue should be explored in detail by further research such as by recording and analysing interview data. It is rather common among the members of the Hungarian speech community to represent standard language ideologies (cf. e.g., Lanstyák, 2007, 2011) that is mainly rooted in the prescriptive and standard-based approach of Hungarian mother tongue education (cf. e.g., including but not limited to Sinkovics, 2011; Kontra, 2019; Molnár, 2020; Parapatics, 2023; etc.). Therefore, many linguistic phenomena are considered "errors" by speakers that are actually correct but not according to the standard norm as they are part of a less prestigious regional dialect.

Only two participants indicated that they felt minimal or no responsibility for reporting text errors to the director and did not view it their obligation to correct them. One participant, aged between 18 and 25, has been working

as a voice actor for two years and has limited experience in other types of productions. The other participant, aged between 46 and 65, has been a voice actor for 25 years and is significantly more involved in various productions, including theatre.

One of the pivotal problems is the pronunciation of foreign proper names, words and expressions. It means not only whether the voice actor can pronounce them properly. One difficulty is that they often have to pronounce the same personal name in multiple ways depending on the particular production, so they cannot memorise them in just one way (see Fig. 2), e.g.,

*It's always the particular movie that decides how they pronounce a name. Except for evidence that has settled into Hungarian culture. E.g., Einstein: [ain-shtain] or [ain-stein].*



**Fig. 2** Frequency of the voice actors' responses on how often they are asked to read out the same foreign proper names and expressions with a different pronunciation (n = 69; '1' means "Never", '5' means "This happens in the vast majority of my works") (The author's work via Google Forms)

Based on the participants' experiences, it also happens that the diverse pronunciation of a first name is not motivated by the adaptation to the original soundtrack, but merely depends on the director's personal habit, e.g.,

*One director asks [mah-ree] for the name Mary, another [meh-ree]. Same with Rodger: [ro-jeer], [rah-jeer]. Richard can be [re-churd], [re-chard], [re-chud]. There are a lot of similar problems.*

*What's important to me is that in one production, everyone pronounces proper names the same way. It may differ for different productions. So, if in the work of X the request is that I pronounce the name Mary [mah-ree], then everyone should pronounce it like [mah-ree]. If in the work of Y, the request of the director is to pronounce [meh-ree], then in that production, all colleagues should pronounce it like this consistently.*

Several participants highlighted the need to build a consensus to the pronunciation of well-known proper names, e.g.,

*The name of a famous person can only be pronounced in one way.*

A bigger problem, however, is when the requested form of pronunciation differs from the original one, even if the viewers can also hear the difference between the two soundtracks in case of narration, or when voice actors are asked to pronounce them incorrectly, e.g.

*The translator writes a pronunciation list by heart, a bad one, without listening to the original version, and the director insists on it.*



*It depends on the translator what kind of pronunciation list s/he gives. Then on the director what s/he asks. And even though I had a French and English major, I do what I am asked to do because here I am «just» a bailiff.*

*We often get inadvertent, useless pronunciation lists, and it is often the case that American English is required when using any European language, which, if I were willing to do so, would ruin the quality of my work and would ruin my agio.*

However, the most significant problem regarding the topic is when the same foreign name is pronounced in several ways in the same production, e.g.,

*Three characters pronounced one name differently in one scene and I had to say a fourth version.*

*Different episodes of a series with different directors – different pronunciations?!*

*On one occasion, a series was dubbed by several staffs at the same time due to the short submission time. It has been the case that the pronunciation of proper names has not been requested in the same way, so it has been recorded with several pronunciations in the same series, as the translators have worked in parallel and different pronunciation lists have been given to the staffs.*

*After a foreign word/phrase has been recorded at the beginning of the film with a bad pronunciation, I have to say the same thing in the wrong way, because they don't call the other actors who worked there previously to correct.*

On the basis of the personal, sometimes short-tempered comments of the participants and the results of further analysed data, it can be stated that the members of the examined community feel that the linguistic quality of their work is their personal responsibility, even if it is not their job and even if they do not have the possibility of correction in every case. This is confirmed by a number of examples, in many cases, like sentimental confessions (on the issue of “correctness” and language ideologies see the considerations above; on language myths regarding, for instance, the “preservation” of a language see e.g., Lanstyák, 2007), e.g.,

*A lot of people will listen to what we say, we'll read it, so it's also a linguistic responsibility.*

*As an actor, my task is to teach the Hungarian language to people.*

*It's my native language. I love it. I feel a duty and responsibility in my job. Even in hopeless situations. It's a part of our identity.*

*I also consider it my individual responsibility not to «release from my hands» such a work that I consider wrong.*

*If they [the viewers] hear it incorrectly, it will be memorised then they will use it this way.*

*Preserving the Hungarian language is extremely important to me, as it is my mother tongue. I also consider it important that the viewers have to be able to rely on the correct speech that can be heard on television and radio.*

*Dubbing has/can play a big role in teaching people good things, especially youngsters. If something is released in a wrong way, it can cause great damage. Luckily, in many cases, the director thinks so and is demanding about it, so s/he is open to us to fix it. There are those who are not so flexible, although it is also true that there are texts where I would also like to read out the way it is written to show for the ones «above» how bad it is and make them take action on this matter. But there has never been an example of this. Or, worse, they wouldn't even show up.*

All subjects believe that the linguistic quality of the text to be read out during dubbing and narration has a great importance regarding the use of Hungarian in both mother tongue and foreign language environments, e.g.

*Many people learn and maintain their native language skills from Hungarian soundtracks and narrations.*

*It can also harm and help in spreading or suppressing a linguistic mistake or phenomenon.*

*In this profession, language use also has an educational benefit. We cannot allow something to be released incorrectly, anywhere in the world.*

The results, based on questionnaire data, for the time being, were suitable for getting answers to the research questions, as presented above, and they confirmed the hypotheses related to the first phase of the research. Regarding the first hypothesis (H1), the participants use their mother tongue relatively consciously, they strive for standard language use in their daily lives and especially in their work. As explained above, it is mainly rooted in the standard based culture that generally characterises the Hungarian linguistic mentality. These findings raise a further sub-topic to explore, namely, the appropriateness of the “monocracy” of the standard and the role of dialects in the different audiovisual products and in the language use of the different characters of them (see also Ruiz & García, 2007, pp. 228–229). The participants discuss most of the language problems perceived in the texts and try to correct them (H2) but this is not always met by the expectations of the director or the contractor (H3). The findings are not expected to change much but rather to be confirmed by in-depth interviews in the near future and will certainly allow a closer look at the experiences and at more factors that hinder high quality work. The same can be expected regarding the data to be collected by passive observation in dubbing studios.

## Conclusions

The present study of Hungarian voice actors gives a preliminary glimpse of the language quality and possibilities regarding Hungarian dubbing and narrating. It provides an insight into the participants' language attitudes about everyday language use and into the quality of the texts they have to read out, as well as into the less-known difficulties of their work. The majority of the participants are bothered by structural mistakes, inaccurate or incorrect word use (although, this issue needs further clarifications by involving additional methods and data), translation errors, and more than half of them addresses problems with the translation of foreign words and slang words in the text to be read out (see also Polcz, 2012; on the viewers' attitudes towards problems like this in a non-Hungarian context see Ruiz & García, 2007). Calling the colleagues' attention to these is considered important but several subjects have reported that their suggestions are not always accepted by the director, on an arbitrary basis or due to the contractor's expectations (see also Petróczi & Főző, 2019, p. 57). Therefore, although the participants express their personal responsibility for the language quality of the texts, it does not always depend on them.

The study presented only the first stage of a comprehensive research, which can have complex social benefits. On the one hand, the dissemination of it could make Hungarian consumers more aware of the language of dubbed audiovisual content. On the other hand, it can greatly contribute to the ongoing development of the quality assurance system of Hungarian dubbing and to the scientific discussion of its linguistic issues. This could not only help dubbing studios develop (if they are motivated to it) but would ultimately benefit general

consumers (who have no choice regarding the soundtrack in many cases), since their native, heritage or foreign language competencies could be also improved by watching productions with high-quality soundtracks. It is especially important among Hungarians outside the present borders of Hungary.

Based on the lessons learned from the preliminary results of the first phase, the research will be continued by exploring voice actors' thoughts in detail, the language attitudes and experiences of dubbing directors and translators in the second phase, and the third phase will examine the consumers', namely the TV viewers' viewpoint. With stratified sampling, data will be collected among Hungarian speakers of different ages, places of residence, life situations and marital status in Hungary, in the historical minority groups of the neighbouring countries and in emigrant groups abroad. Questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and passive observation will be used as methods to investigate the attitudes towards the Hungarian soundtrack of series, films, cartoons, documentaries, etc. The opinions, experiences and remarks will be compared to the findings regarding the production side of the topic. By all this, proposals can be formulated for the development of the linguistic quality of Hungarian dubbing and narrating, in possession of a sufficiently wide and complex insight.

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### Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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## Santrauka

### Andrea Parapatics

#### Balso aktorių požiūris į dubliavimą vengrų kalba ir jų patirtis

Šiame straipsnyje tiriamas vengrų įgarsintojų požiūris į kalbą ir jų patirtis įgarsinant tekstus audiovizualiniuose produktuose užsienio kalba. Tyrimą rėmė ir praktiškai prie jo prisidėjo Vengrijos įgarsintojų profesinė sąjunga. Šios profesijos atstovai iki šiol nebuvo apklausti ir tirti sociolingvistiniu požiūriu. Kadangi dauguma Vengrijos kino teatruose, televizijoje ir interneto transliacijų kanaluose pasirodančių audiovizualinių produktų užsienio kalba vis dar dubliuojami arba įgarsinami vengriškai, o jų kalbos kokybė vis prastėja, verta iširti galutinių produktų kalbos kokybę. Tyrime atkreipiamas dėmesys į daugelį kalbos kokybės problemų. Taip pat pristatomas įgarsintojų, kurie gali turėti galimybę klaidas ištaisyti arba ne, požiūris. Straipsnyje pristatoma didesnio tyrimo, kuriuo siekiama iširti vengrų dubliavimo atvejį sociolingvistiniu požiūriu, rezultatų dalis. Vėliau numatomas tirti audiovizualinių kūrinių vertėjų ir vartotojų – vidaus, tarpvalstybinių ir emigravusių vengrų – požiūris, siekiant aprėpti platesnį suinteresuotų grupių ratą.

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