



UDC 811.112.2'42=111

323.15(439)"18"=111

Original scientific article

Accepted for publication on 9. 6. 2025.

<https://doi.org/10.29162/jez.2025.2>

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Constructing Resistance: A Discourse-Historical Analysis of *Sollen wir Magyaren werden?* (1833)¹

This study examines the publication *Sollen wir Magyaren werden?* ('Should We Become Magyars?'), a series of letters written in response to the Magyarization policies in 19th-century Hungary. The aim of the research is to analyze how the text constructs a counter-discourse against the forced assimilation of non-Magyar populations, advocating for linguistic and cultural diversity within the Habsburg Monarchy. The study employs the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), a method within Critical Discourse Analysis, to explore the text's argumentative strategies, rhetorical devices, and historical references. The theoretical framework emphasizes the interplay between discourse, power, and identity, situating the text within the broader socio-political context of resistance to Magyar nationalism. The methodology involves a detailed analysis of the text's historical context, genre, and structure, focusing on its persuasive and argumentative style, and the use of symbols, metaphors and intertextuality, e.g., historical, literary and philosophical references. The results reveal that *Sollen wir Magyaren werden?* deconstructs the dominant discourse of Magyarization, while advocating for the rights of non-Magyar communities living in the Kingdom of Hungary. The text challenges the legitimacy of Magyarization by exposing its ideological flaws and harmful consequences and emphasizes Hungary's multiethnic heritage. It argues that linguistic and cultural diversity are essential

¹ This research was conducted within the scientific project *Hrvatska književnost i kultura u pripremnom razdoblju hrvatskoga narodnog preporoda (1790-1835)* (Croatian literature and culture in the preparatory period of the Croatian national revival (1790-1835)) under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Suzana Coha, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb.

for national unity and progress and warns of the negative impact of coercive assimilation policies on non-Magyar identities. The study concludes that the text remains relevant as a reminder of the dangers of forced assimilation and the importance of protecting minority rights. It also opens avenues for further research into the broader interdiscursive network of texts and discourses emerging from the socio-political context of 19th-century Central Europe.

Keywords: Magyarization, Discourse-Historical Analysis (DHA), Counter-Discourse, Cultural Pluralism

1. Introduction

1.1. Aim of the study

The hardcover book titled *Sollen wir Magyarern werden? fünf Briefe geschrieben aus Pesth an einen Freund an der Theis / von D. H.* ('Should We Become Magyars? Five Letters Written from Pesth to a Friend on the Theis' / by D. H.), was published in 1833 in Karlstadt (today's Karlovac), by the publishing company of Johann N. Prettnner. Written predominantly in German, with a few elements from Hungarian, Latin, and several Slavic languages, it consists of a preface (*Vorrede des Herausgebers*), signed with the pseudonym Domoljub Horvátovič² and dated February 1st, 1833, in Karlstadt, followed by transcripts of five unsigned letters. The preface claims that these letters were written by an individual other than the author of the preface.

The book went through three editions in the same year, with an additional letter added in the third, leading to a change in the subtitle to *Sechs Briefe aus Pesth an einen Freund an der Theis* ('Six letters from Pesth to a Friend on the Theis') with the addition of *Dritte vermehrte und verbesserte Ausgabe* ('Third, expanded and improved edition'). The year, place, and publishing company remained the same as in the first edition. This paper will focus on the analysis of the first edition, while a detailed comparison with the expanded edition is currently in progress.

In the introductory chapter of this article, the content of the publication will be briefly outlined, followed by a presentation of the long-disputed issue of authorship

² The pseudonym, when translated to English, means literally Patriot (*Domoljub*) of the Croats (*Horvatovič*). The grapheme ч is the Cyrillic small letter "che", usually representing the voiceless postalveolar affricate /tʃ/. At the time of publication, the Croatian Latin morphonological alphabet was still in development, so it didn't employ all of the graphemes used today. Borrowing graphemes from other Slavic languages was quite common. Today, the second part of the pseudonym would be written as "Horvatič". Since the text was published under the pseudonym of its alleged editor and the authorship of the letters themselves remains disputed (see subchapter 1.3.), we will refer to the text without including the pseudonym but rather using the first two words of the title (*Sollen wir* 1833).

as well as the controversies the publication sparked upon its release. This is closely tied to the context in which the book was printed, namely the growing sentiment of resistance against the construction of Hungary as a culturally and linguistically homogeneous territory within the Habsburg Monarchy.

The aim of the discourse analysis of *Sollen wir Magyarern werden?* is to examine how the text challenges the discourse of Magyarization in 19th-century Hungary. By analyzing the argumentative strategies, rhetorical devices, and historical references, the study seeks to uncover how the author critiques the forced assimilation of non-Magyar peoples and advocates for linguistic and cultural diversity. Specifically, the analysis explores the text's role as a counter-discourse to the dominant nationalist narrative. Ultimately, the study aims to shed light on the intersection of language, power, and identity in shaping socio-political debates and to demonstrate the enduring relevance of the text in discussions about minority rights and pluralism.

The Discourse-Historical Analysis (DHA) was employed because it is particularly well-suited to examine texts embedded in complex historical, social, and political contexts. DHA, focused primarily on power relations and ideology, emphasizes the interplay between discourse and historical processes, making it ideal for exploring how the text questions, critiques and delegitimizes the dominant discourse. This approach allows for a nuanced understanding of the author's argumentative strategies, rhetorical devices, and the socio-political implications of his claims.

1.2. Content: A short outline of the preface and five letters

In the preface (*Vorrede des Herausgebers; Sollen wir* 1833: III–VIII), the reader is introduced to the context of the letters. The editor, signed with the aforementioned pseudonym, explains that the author of the letters (referred to simply as *der Verfasser*, “the author”) wrote them as a personal reflection and source of comfort during a time of distress caused by the Magyarization policies in Hungary. The preface claims that the letters were not originally intended for publication, but the author granted permission for their release, recognizing their broader relevance. The editor highlights the central theme of the letters: the question of whether the non-Magyar population of Hungary should adopt the Magyar language and culture. He emphasizes that the principles developed in the letters are not only relevant to the author's personal situation but also to the broader socio-political context of Hungary. The editor concludes by expressing his hope that the letters will provide insight into the challenges faced by the non-Magyar communities and contribute to a deeper understanding of the cultural and linguistic diversity in Hungary.

The First Letter (*Erster Brief; Sollen wir* 1833: 1–11) begins with the author of the letters describing his move to Pesth, the center of Magyar culture, where he witnessed the increasing process of Magyarization. He critiques the forced spread of

the Magyar language and culture, particularly in schools and public life, highlighting how non-Magyar languages like German and Slavic are being displaced. The author provides concrete examples of Magyarization policies, such as the requirement to speak Magyar in public offices and schools. He concludes with a warning about the negative consequences of Magyarization, particularly its threat to cultural diversity and the identity of the non-Magyar population. In the footnote, the editor explains the terminological distinction between “Hungarian” and “Magyar”. Specifically, “Hungarian” is used to refer to all peoples and ethnic groups living within the borders of the Kingdom of Hungary, including but not limited to the Magyars.

In the Second Letter (*Zweiter Brief; Sollen wir* 1833: 12–23), the author distinguishes between two aspects of Magyarization: elevating the Magyar language to the status of an official language (*curial language*) and its forced imposition on the non-Magyar population in Hungary. He argues that introducing Magyar as the official language is justified, as it could simplify administration. However, he strongly criticizes the forced spread of Magyar among the non-Magyar population, warning that it undermines their cultural identity and creates resentment rather than unity.

The Third Letter (*Dritter Brief; Sollen wir* 1833: 24–49) presents Magyarization as a massive undertaking that requires the assimilation of millions of Slavs, Germans, and Romanians. The author raises critical questions about the legitimacy of this process: Why should non-Magyar peoples abandon their language and culture? Is this even useful or necessary? He argues that non-Magyar peoples have lived in Hungary for centuries and that their rights and identities deserve respect. His historical arguments emphasize the long-standing presence and contributions of these communities to Hungarian society.

In the Fourth Letter (*Vierter Brief; Sollen wir* 1833: 50–74), the author compares the situation in Hungary with other multiethnic countries, arguing that cultural diversity is a strength that should be preserved. He emphasizes that patriotism should not be based on the oppression of other cultures but on the recognition and appreciation of diversity. He warns against narrow-minded nationalism, which marginalizes the non-Magyar population and endangers the unity of the country. Instead, he advocates for a vision of Hungary that embraces its multiethnic heritage.

The Fifth Letter (*Fünfter Brief; Sollen wir* 1833: 75–92) focuses on the importance of the mother tongue for education and identity. The author criticizes the Magyarization of schools, warning that it negatively affects the education of the non-Magyar population. He also critiques the use of the Magyar language in religious contexts, arguing that it could undermine the religious sentiments of the people. The author concludes with a vision of a multiethnic society where different cultures and languages coexist harmoniously. He asserts that this is the only way to ensure long-term peace and prosperity in Hungary. The letter ends with a short folk

fable in Hungarian, without translation. The fable tells of an owl that attempted to teach a single song to all the forest's feathered inhabitants throughout the winter. Despite their initial willingness to adopt the owl's tune, the other birds found it too difficult to follow. As spring arrived, each bird sang its own distinct song, and the forest echoed with the diversity of their voices.

1.3. *The question of authorship*

In contemporary Croatian philology, the prevailing opinion is that the author of the preface, who signed with the pseudonym Domoljub Horvatović, was likely Antun Vakanović (1808–1894), a Croatian politician who in the 1830s participated in the activities related to the Croatian National Revival, ideologically aligned with other Slavic national revival movements within the Habsburg Monarchy. Additionally, it is widely believed that the author of the letters was most probably Samuel Hojč³ (1806–1868), a Slovak Protestant priest and proponent of the Slovak National Revival movement. This view is supported by the most recent Croatian reference works and encyclopedias (e.g., HE 2025), as well as by some foreign sources, such as the Austrian Biographical Lexicon (Trogrić 2016: 156). However, this interpretation is not universally accepted, as some recent studies (e.g., Gyvicsán 2003; Frankovics 2017⁴) attribute the entire publication solely to Hojč.

The question of authorship appears to remain unresolved, and historical sources reveal that it became a subject of debate almost immediately after the publication's release. Gyvicsán (2003: 85) notes that during the Diet of Hungary 1832 – 1836, where Croatian representatives distributed copies of *Sollen wir Magyarren werden?*, some attributed the authorship to the Croatian nobleman Janko Drašković, who in 1832 published a polemical text titled *Disertatia iliti Razgovor darovan gospodi poklisarom*. However, the style of this work differs significantly from that of *Sollen wir Magyarren werden*. Another group of Hungarian representatives and the Hungarian press attributed the authorship to the prominent Slovak revivalist Jan Kollár (1793–1852), drawing parallels with Kollár's earlier writings.

The Croatian publicist and contemporary of the Croatian national revival activities in Karlovac, Imbro Ignjatijević Tkalac (1894: 243–244), attributed the authorship to his uncle, Antun Vakanović. Throughout the 19th century, other philologists and writers, such as Mirko Bogović, Đuro Šurmin, and Milivoj Šrepeš, sporadically joined the discussion, some attributing the authorship to the aforementioned fig-

³ In different sources other variants of his surname, like Hoič, Hoits and Hoitsy, can be encountered.

⁴ Frankovics (2017: 47) refers to the publication as a *letak* 'flyer' and mentions that Ivan Esih published a text on the authorship of *Sollen wir Magyarren werden?* as early as 1835. Considering that Esih was born in 1898, it is advised that the claims in Frankovics' article should be approached with caution.

ures, but others also to the leader of the Illyrian movement, Ljudevit Gaj, and others (e.g., Esih 1933).

However, later discoveries revealed that Vakanović was most likely not the author of the entire publication. Albert Pražák, in his 1926 article “Samuel Hoič” in the publication *Slovenske studie*, presented compelling philological arguments supporting the thesis that Hoič was the author of the letters (Esih 1933). According to Pražák’s research, Jan Kollár himself sent several copies of the publication to his Slovak and Croatian acquaintances, noting that its author was Samuel Hoič. A decade later, in 1843, Hoič identified himself as the author of *Sollen wir Magyaren werden* when seeking censorial permission for another publication (Gyvicsán 2003: 86).

Gyvicsán (2003: 81) adds that epistolary-formatted polemical writings were common in Slavic revival movements, but particularly so among the Slovaks. She mentions thousands of pages of Slovak political pamphlets, explaining that their proliferation was due to the absence of local Slovak political periodicals or daily press through which progressive ideas could be expressed. Consequently, Slovaks often chose to publish outside their local centers, as censorship there would not permit such works. They published in Basel, Hamburg, Leipzig, but also within the Kingdom of Hungary, including Croatian cultural centers such as Zagreb and Karlovac (Gyvicsán 2003: 83).

This study does not intend to further address the question of authorship as it is not deemed essential to the discourse-historical analysis of the text itself. Regardless of whether the Croatian Antun Vakanović authored the preface or the Slovak Samuel Hoič authored the entire publication, it undoubtedly serves as evidence of the vibrant collaboration between the Croatian national revival movement and the revivalist movements of other Slavic peoples within the Monarchy. This overview of the authorship mystery was aimed at highlighting that the most probable reason for the author’s decision to publish anonymously was an awareness of the potential repercussions of releasing such a text.

1.4. Impact and controversies following the publication

Numerous sources and mentions of the text itself, both shortly after its publication and later, provide a foundation for the assumption that the impact of the publication was both powerful and immediate. The primary evidence of this is the fact that three editions of the book were virtually sold out within a year, as well as the reaction of the authorities. Croatian delegates at the Diet of Hungary (whose session lasted from 1832 to 1836) distributed the book in both houses of the Hungarian parliament. It reportedly became the subject of heated debates, and eventually, the *Landtag* ordered that the publication be confiscated (cf. Tkalac 1894). However, they managed to seize only two copies, as the rest had already been sold out (Esih

1933: 5). Gyvicsan (2003: 84) notes that there were even more vehement texts on this topic, e.g., *Der Magyarismus in Ungarn* ('Magyarism in Hungary') by Ludovit M. Šuhajda published in Leipzig and *Magyarisierungsratschläge* ('Advice on Magyarization') by Jan Chalupka published in Basel, but these did not provoke such a reaction from the authorities.

However, the authorities' reaction did not stop at seizing the remaining copies of the book. Aurelius Hoermann, a Franciscan from Karlovac, who as a censor permitted the printing of the book, became the subject of an investigation and was eventually removed from his position as a censor (Tkalac 1894). Despite all, the repressive actions of the authorities achieved the effect desired by the proponents of linguistic and cultural assimilation in Hungary. Esih (1933: 6) writes that the extraordinary political impact (Ger. 'Aussergewöhnliche Wirkung') of the publication was discussed in Croatian local periodicals even 30 years later, and it was considered profoundly significant at a time when the Illyrian movement was beginning its active operations. It is believed to have greatly contributed to the articulation of the political and ideological positions of the Croatian national movement, as well as in shaping public discourse and mobilizing cultural and political sentiments within the Croatian national framework. Despite efforts to suppress it, the text resonated strongly, fostering a dialogue that transcended mere reactionary measures from those in power.

2. Theoretical framework

As mentioned in the introduction, the application of the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) is particularly justified when examining a text within its complex discursive and historical context. This is particularly significant given the text's role as a link between the Croatian National Revival and other revivalist movements within the Monarchy. It enables the analysis of both earlier and later texts by Croatian revivalists as part of an ideological network extending beyond the narrower Croatian or South Slavic ideas.

The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), a prominent method within Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), offers a comprehensive framework for analyzing discourse in relation to its historical, social, and political contexts (Wodak 2001). Developed primarily by Ruth Wodak and her colleagues in the Vienna School of Discourse Analysis, the DHA is grounded in several key theoretical principles. It emphasizes interdisciplinarity, integrating various disciplines such as linguistics, history, sociology, and political science to provide a holistic understanding of discourse (Reisigl & Wodak 2016). The approach is problem-oriented, focusing on specific social issues rather than purely linguistic phenomena, and advocates for triangulation, using multiple methods, data sources, and theoretical perspectives to enhance the validity of findings (Wodak & Meyer 2009).

Central to the DHA is its emphasis on historical context, tracing the evolution of discourse over time (Krzyżanowski 2010), and maintaining a critical stance towards power relations and social inequalities manifested in discourse (Reisigl & Wodak 2009). The approach employs several analytical categories, including discourse topics, discursive strategies, and linguistic means of realization (Reisigl & Wodak 2001). It also distinguishes between four levels of context: the immediate language or text-internal co-text, intertextual and interdiscursive relationships, extralinguistic social variables and institutional frames, and broader sociopolitical and historical contexts (Wodak 2001).

Methodologically, the DHA follows a three-dimensional analytical process: identifying specific contents or topics of a discourse, investigating discursive strategies, and examining linguistic means and context-dependent linguistic realizations (Reisigl & Wodak 2009). This approach has been applied to various domains of social and political life, including studies on racist discourse and anti-Semitism (Reisigl & Wodak 2001), national identity construction (De Cillia et al. 1999), political discourse and populism (Wodak 2015), gender discrimination in workplace discourse (Wodak 1997), and media representations of migrants and refugees (KhosraviNik 2010).

While widely praised for its comprehensive approach, the DHA has faced critiques regarding potential subjectivity in interpretation and the challenge of maintaining true interdisciplinarity (Blommaert 2005). Future research in DHA is likely to focus on refining methodological rigor, expanding its application to digital discourse, and further integrating cognitive approaches to discourse analysis (Hart & Cap 2014). Despite these challenges, the Discourse-Historical Approach remains a valuable tool for researchers seeking to understand the complex relationships between language, power, and society, providing a robust theoretical framework for analyzing discourse in its broader social and historical contexts.

3. Methodology

The publication comprises a Preface containing 654 words and five letters with varying lengths: the first letter includes 1,880 words, the second 2,269 words, the third 4,880 words, the fourth 4,674 words, and the fifth 3,244 words. The initial step in carrying out a discourse-historical analysis of *Sollen wir Magyaren werden?* entailed establishing the historical context of the text. This process involved positioning the specific circumstances of the time and location of publication within the broader political and social framework, notably the initiatives aimed at implementing linguistic and cultural assimilation of the ethnically diverse population within the Kingdom of Hungary under the Habsburg monarchy, and the resistance offered by members of Slavic national movements. By contextualizing the text within this

historical and social milieu, it became feasible to identify the key issues addressed within the text, including language policy, national identity, and cultural assimilation.

The next step was to identify the text's genre and structure. The text is a series of letters written in a persuasive and argumentative style, which shaped the way the author constructs and develops their arguments. Understanding the genre and structure of the text was essential for analyzing its discursive strategies and rhetorical devices.

The third step focused on analyzing the reflection of social power relations in the text as well as the discursive strategies used in the text, primarily on creating a counter-discourse to the predominant discourse of linguistic and cultural homogeneity, e.g., Magyarization. This involved examining how the author opposes Magyarization through logical and emotional appeals, how he constructs images of the Magyars in contrast to the non-Magyar ethnic groups (Slavs, Romanians and Germans), and uses historical narratives to legitimize the right of non-Magyar ethnic groups to their own language and cultural identity. This step was crucial for understanding how the text reinforces specific identities and ideologies.

The final step was to interpret the findings in relation to the historical and social context of the text, while discussing the implications of the text for understanding the role of discourse in shaping national identities and ideologies.

Although numerous software tools (such as NVivo or MAXQDA) are available to assist with discourse-historical analysis, offering capabilities in text mining and pattern recognition, they are not yet sufficiently trained on language material similar to the texts analyzed in this research. These tools still lack a nuanced understanding of the complex geopolitical, cultural, and historical contexts relevant to 19th-century discourse, which can lead to misinterpretations or overly literal readings of figures of speech, metaphors, and rhetorical devices from this period. Consequently, the extraction and analysis of the data were conducted manually.

Several analytical procedures were employed to examine the text in detail. Textual analysis was used to identify key themes, arguments, and discursive strategies at the lexical, syntactic, and rhetorical levels. This included identifying keywords and phrases related to Magyarization, collective identities, and cultural assimilation, as well as examining rhetorical devices used to construct arguments and persuade the reader. Recognition of intertextuality was another important tool, as it allowed for the analysis of the text's references to historical events, figures, and narratives. By identifying references to events such as the Battle of Mohács, historical figures like Nikola Zriny or members of the Arpad dynasty, or the usage of folk tales and fables, it became possible to understand how the author uses historical and mythical narratives to delegitimize Magyarization. Contextual analysis was essential for situating

the text within its historical, social, and political environment. This involved examining how the text reflects the tensions between the Hungarian political elite and non-Magyar groups in 19th-century Hungary and exploring how it contributes to the broader discourse of Magyarization and national identity. Finally, critical interpretation was used to uncover hidden power structures and ideologies in the text, as well as to link the text to previous ideological, philosophical, and political works.

4. Results

4.1. *Historical context, genre and structure*

The publication was released during a period when the Hungarian national movement gained momentum and the Magyarization of the non-Magyar population was being aggressively pursued. Hungary was a multiethnic kingdom inhabited by not only Magyars but also Slavs, Germans, Romanians, and other ethnic groups. The question of national language and identity was a central political issue; therefore, it can be assumed that the discourse within the letters is part of a broader political and cultural debate regarding the future of Hungary. The author positions himself against Magyarization and advocates for the preservation of linguistic and cultural diversity. His arguments stand in opposition to the dominant nationalist discourse promoted by the Magyar elite, who sought to create a homogeneous Magyar nation.

The letters were published under a pseudonym. Since it remains impossible even today to determine with complete certainty who the author was (or whether there were multiple authors), it can be inferred that the text was conceived with an awareness of its potentially controversial content, potentially dangerous for its author(s). This notion is further supported by the fact that the letters were published in Karlovac, far from the location in which they originated (the Slovak part of the Kingdom of Hungary), suggesting an intent to circumvent local censorship.

In this context, the ambiguous relationship between the figure of the editor and the author(s) is also noteworthy. In the preface, the editor of the publication, identifying as Domoljub Horvatović, explicitly expresses agreement with the views presented in the allegedly sent letters, while simultaneously clarifying that he is not their author. Moreover, although the second person occasionally appears in the letters, implying the individual to whom the text is addressed, it is evident that the letters function as political essays; the epistolary format might merely have served as a stylistic device.

There are elements within the text indicating that it is not solely aimed at mobilizing like-minded individuals, as it speaks at times very positively about the Magyars. The publication likely was aimed at a diverse audience, including intellectuals, politicians, and citizens of diverse ethnic, ideological and political backgrounds.

4.2. Deconstructing Magyarization: Strategies in creating counter-discourse

The dominant discourse of the time portrayed Magyarization as necessary for the unity and strength of Hungary. In contrast, the letters in *Sollen wir Magyarern werden?* present a counter-discourse that challenges such claims of the Magyar elite. It critiques the hegemonic aspirations of the Magyars and calls for the recognition of the rights and identities of the non-Magyar population. The author appeals to the conscience of readers and seeks to mobilize them to resist the oppression of their language and culture.

The author employs various discursive strategies to question and oppose the assumptions of Magyarization. Historically, he emphasizes Hungary's multiethnic past, pointing out that the Magyars are not the only legitimate inhabitants of the country. Culturally, he highlights the importance of native languages for identity and warns of the negative consequences of their suppression. Politically, he criticizes the coercive methods of Magyarization and stresses the right of non-Magyar communities to self-determination. Morally, he argues that Magyarization is unjust and unethical, as it violates the rights of other ethnic groups. Rhetorically, he directly addresses the emotions and concerns of the non-Magyar population, aiming to foster solidarity among them, as in the following example (*Sollen wir* 1833: 82):

(1) *Man will das Volk bilden, es zu einer reinen geläuterten Nationalität auferziehen, woraus dann der Patriotismus fließen sollte, und zu diesem Zwecke bedient man sich der Vertilgung und Ausrottung der Nationalität.*

'They want to educate the people, to raise them to a pure, refined nationality from which patriotism should flow, and for this purpose they use the extermination and eradication of nationality.'

Additionally, the author appeals to potential Magyar readers, urging them to consider the benefits of tolerance and mutual respect among different peoples, rather than imposing their own language or culture (*Sollen wir* 1833: 16-17):

(2) *Ein noch wichtigerer Vortheil ist es dann aber, dafs die Verfeinerung und Ausbildung der Sprache im directen Verhältnisse steht zur Veredlung der Sitten des Volkes, und dafs das Volk auf diese Art zu einer hohen Cultur erzogen wird, ohne dafs die Nationalität, welche der Grund so vieler Tugenden ist, auch nur im geringsten dadurch gefährdet wird.*

'An even more important advantage is, however, that the refinement and development of the language are directly related to the elevation of the customs of the people, and that in this way, the people are educated to a higher culture without the slightest jeopardy to their nationality, which is the foundation of so many virtues.'

The text can be seen as an attempt to deconstruct the arguments of Magyarization by exposing its ideological flaws, unjust methods, and harmful consequences.

The text does this on several different levels, deconstructing not only the ideology as such, but its justifications, methods, and consequences. On the level of ideology, the author deconstructs the idea that a homogeneous, Magyar-speaking nation is desirable or even possible. He emphasizes that Hungary has always been a multi-ethnic and multilingual society and that Magyarization policies ignore this historical reality. For example, he points out that Hungary is home to Slavs, Germans, Romanians, and other ethnic groups, each with their own language and culture. He also challenges the assumption that the Magyar language and culture are inherently superior to others, arguing that this claim is used to justify the oppression of non-Magyar communities.

On another level, the author deconstructs the argument that Magyarization is necessary for national unity. He argues that true unity can only be achieved through mutual respect and recognition, not through forced assimilation. For instance, he states that Magyarization policies are creating division and resentment rather than fostering unity. He also exposes the economic and political motives behind Magyarization, criticizing the Magyar elite for using language policies to consolidate their power and marginalize non-Magyar communities. For example, in the first letter (*Sollen wir* 1833: 6), the author exposes how the Magyar elite in the Arad County implemented language policies to control political, judicial, educational, and economic systems. By mandating that all official business, judicial roles, teaching positions, and even trade apprenticeships require proficiency in Magyar, the elite effectively excluded non-Magyar communities from participating in these spheres. The passage highlights the economic and political motives behind Magyarization, criticizing it as a tool for maintaining and expanding the elite's control over society.

The author critiques numerous other coercive methods used to enforce Magyarization, such as the imposition of the Magyar language in schools and religion. He argues that these methods are oppressive and counterproductive. For example, he describes how forcing non-Magyar children to learn in Magyar alienates them from their own culture and hinders their education. The author describes this as *Frevel an der Volksbildung* (a crime against public education; *Sollen wir* 1833: 78), emphasizing that such policies stunt the intellectual and cultural growth of non-Magyar communities, reducing education to a superficial exercise rather than a meaningful development of knowledge and skills.

He also exposes the hypocrisy of the Magyar elite, who claim to promote progress and modernization while using authoritarian measures to suppress other languages and cultures, as in the following example (*Sollen wir* 1833: 82):

(3) *Selbst die erwähnten Mittel also der Magyarisirung, die uns als die einzig wahren, einzig erspriesslichen angepriesen wurden, führen nicht zu dem Zwecke und richten einen unberechenbaren Schaden an. Finis sanctificat media, galt schon so oft, mag es*

denn auch jetzt gelten, raube man demnach den deutschen und slawischen Müttern ihre Säuglinge, und vertraue sie der Pflege der Weiber jener rohen Hirten der südlichen Pusten, und ich stehe dafür, sie werden echte Magyaren.

‘Even the aforementioned means of Magyarization, which have been praised to us as the only true, the only beneficial ones, do not achieve this purpose and cause incalculable harm. *Finis sanctificat media* (the end justifies the means) has often been the rule; let it apply now as well. Therefore, let us take the infants from their German and Slavic mothers and entrust them to the care of the women of those rough shepherds of the southern Puszta, and I guarantee, they will become true Magyars.’

Here, the author criticizes the Magyar elite for their contradictory actions: they claim to aim for the education and refinement of the nation (*das Volk bilden*) and the cultivation of patriotism, yet they pursue these goals through the eradication of other nationalities and cultures (*Vertilgung und Ausrottung der Nationalität*). The sarcastic suggestion to take children from their mothers and raise them as simple shepherds to become Magyars also regenerates a negative stereotype of Magyars as being descendants of wild tribes from the Asian Steppes.

The author also deconstructs the narrative of positive consequences of assimilation, e.g., the idea that Magyarization will lead to cultural progress. Instead, he argues that it will result in the erosion of Hungary’s rich cultural diversity. He also deconstructs the notion that Magyarization will create a harmonious society, predicting that it will instead deepen social divisions and create resentment among non-Magyar communities.

Additionally, the author reinterprets Hungary’s history, highlighting the long co-existence of Magyars, Slavs, Germans, and other ethnic groups, challenging the nationalist myth that the Magyars are the “true” Hungarians while other ethnic groups are considered outsiders (*Sollen wir* 1833: 31).

4.3. *Opposing (and re-generating) ethnic stereotypes*

The dominant narrative positioned the Magyar language and culture as superior and authentic, framing them as symbols of national unity and progress while depicting minority ethnic groups as impediments to these ideals. Such social categorization is often used to legitimize power dynamics and reinforce social hierarchies.

Regarding social categorization, two prominent features can be observed in the text. First, the polarization between Magyars on one side and members of all other nations in Hungary (Slavs, Germans, Romanians) on the other. The plural first person *wir* (‘we’) in the book’s title refers to all non-Magyar ethnicities in Hungary. Second, the portrayal of Magyars in the text usually oscillates between themes of dominance and oppression. Within this framework, the Magyars are characterized as a group that seeks to impose their language and culture on others. Furthermore,

it is claimed that the Magyars perceive themselves as the “true” Hungarians (1833: 32, 35) and that the cultural arrogance exhibited by many of them leads to the derision and suppression of other cultures. On the other hand, the author highlights various positive aspects of Magyar identity, claiming that their cultural legacy and language deserve both appreciation and cultivation, that Magyar literature and cultural expression can enrich the intellectual landscape of Europe. Magyar patriotism is also sometimes referred to as exemplary, though dangerous, for non-Magyars.

Other ethnic communities in Hungary, namely the Slavs, Germans, and Romanians, are commonly portrayed as the victims, but are presented as different from each other in terms of collective mentality, as well as regarding their roles and prestige within Hungarian society.

Slavs are commonly characterized as industrious and resilient, embodying a strong commitment to preserving their language and culture despite historical suppression. One of the numerous reflections on their dedication to linguistic and cultural preservation can be observed in the following example (*Sollen wir* 1833: 70):

(4) *Die Treue und Anhänglichkeit des Slawen an seine Sprache kennt keine Grenzen, er hat sie tausendfältig in den verflossenen Jahrhunderten, sogar durch sein Blut beurkunden müssen. Nicht Kriegszüge gegen diese Sprache unternommen, nicht verschwendeter Spott und Verachtung, keine Gewaltthat konnte sie der Erzieherin und Nährerin abwendig machen.*

‘The loyalty and attachment of the Slav to his language knows no bounds; he has had to demonstrate it countless times over the centuries, even through his blood. Neither military campaigns against this language, nor wasted mockery and contempt, nor acts of violence could turn him away from it as his educator and nurturer.’

The author often emphasizes the laborious nature of the Slavs (and Germans alike), which plays a vital role in the agricultural and economic activities of the region. Their adaptability and work ethic contribute significantly to the livelihoods in Hungary, elevating their status as valuable contributors to society. As the following example notes, they are viewed as capable of balancing several roles (*Sollen wir* 1833: 57):

(5) *Der slawische und deutsche Landmann ist zugleich Handwerker und verfertigt im Winter Holz und Töpferwaren.*

‘The Slavic and German farmer is also a craftsman and produces wood and pottery in the winter.’

The depiction of Germans in *Sollen wir Magyaren werden?* contrasts slightly with that of Slavs, as they are often seen as more educated and progressive, although there are statements like the following example that not only underscore the value placed on education and personal development among Germans, but claim that Slavs and Germans are like-minded in that aspect (*Sollen wir* 1833: 57):

(6) *Der deutsche und slawische Jüngling widmet sich mit Fleiß und Ausdauer jedem Fach des Wissens.*

‘The German and Slavic youth dedicate themselves with diligence and perseverance to every field of knowledge.’

Germans are regarded as key players in trade and industry, which enhances their status within the multicultural framework of Hungary. This status is intertwined with a belief in their superior intellect and professionalism compared to that of the Magyars. One might argue that the German mentality is depicted as a model for educational and economic aspirations within Hungary.

In stark contrast, the Romanians (*Walachen*) are portrayed as culturally less developed, facing disdain from the dominant Magyar discourse. Their lack of autonomy is poignantly expressed in the following assertion (*Sollen wir* 1833: 37–38):

(7) *Die Walachen, romanisirte Ureinwohner des Südwestens des Landes und der untern Donau, waren durch die hundertfältigen Plackereien, die sie schon von der römischen Grenzmiliz, noch mehr aber von den seit ein Paar Jahrhunderten hier vorbeiziehenden, oft Ruhe auch pflegenden Barbaren zu erdulden hatten, so sehr gesunken, daß sie, ohne einen Funken des Gefühls der Selbstständigkeit, sich dem ersten besten Eroberer, dem Mächtigsten zwischen den um sie streitenden, in die Arme warfen.*

‘The Wallachians, romanized indigenous people of the southwestern region of the country and the lower Danube, had fallen so significantly due to the numerous harassments endured first from the Roman border militia, and even more so from the barbarians passing through for a couple of centuries, who often also settled. They had sunk to such a degree that, without a spark of a sense of independence, they would throw themselves into the arms of the first conqueror who appeared, the most powerful among those fighting over them.’

This underlines a historical narrative that regards Romanians in Hungary as submissive and lacking agency, which has perpetuated stereotypes of inferiority among the Magyars.

The author hints at the potential for hybrid identities where various cultures and languages coexist harmoniously. This perspective advocates for a more inclusive understanding of Hungarian identity, acknowledging that cultural richness stems from diversity rather than uniformity. The text of the final, fifth letter concludes with a Hungarian folk fable that might be directed primarily at Magyars since it is written in their language, which advocates for self-reflection and understanding, thus initiating a deconstructive approach to identity discourse (*Sollen wir* 1833: 91–92).

4.4. Metaphors and symbols

The text is, from the preface to the concluding Hungarian folk fable, rich with symbols and metaphors that explore themes of power relations, identity, and lan-

guage. Here are some key examples that demonstrate how the author uses common symbols to depict and construct linguistic, political and cultural topics.

In describing the historical relationship between the Slavs and Magyars, the author uses the metaphor of the relationship between servants and masters (*Verhältnis der Knechte zu ihren Herrn; Sollen wir* 1833: 40), suggesting a hierarchical and oppressive power structure, and implying the need for emancipatory action. On the other hand, when referring to the Austrian ruling house, the author of the preface portrays it as a protector of freedom and faith, using the symbol of a guardian angel (*Schutzensel der Freiheit; Sollen wir* 1833: V).

When describing the possible impact of Magyarization, the author of the preface uses the symbol of the Chinese wall (*Chinesische Mauer; Sollen wir* 1833: IV) to describe how the exclusive use of Magyar language would threaten to isolate the inhabitants of Hungary from educated Europe, suggesting a barrier to cultural and intellectual exchange.

The Magyar language is also compared to shackles (*Fesseln; Sollen wir* 1833: 4), symbolizing the loss of linguistic and cultural freedom for non-Magyar peoples, to a tree that overshadows and stifles other languages and, even more extreme, to a grave (*Sollen wir* 1833: 5).

The need for preserving the languages of each ethnic group is underscored with the use of derogatory terms such as *Kauderwelsch* ('gibberish'; *Sollen wir* 1833: 69) when referring to a hybrid, mixed, or corrupted language, devoid of linguistic purity and identity. The mother tongue itself is often personified, depicted as an entity that resembles a collective mother, who helps raise and educate illiterate and naive children:

(8) *Die Sprache des Volks allein, an dessen Busen ich meine ersten Worte gelallt, in dessen Schofse ich zum Mann herangewachsen bin, kann mein Gefühl anregen, kann ich als meine Sprache ansehen.*

'The language of the people alone, at whose breast I babbled my first words, in whose lap I grew into a man, can stir my feelings, I can regard it as my language.'

In the final metaphor, the multicultural and multilingual Kingdom of Hungary is compared to a forest, and its inhabitants to different birds and animals. The owl's attempt to unify the forest's inhabitants with one melody fails, as each creature ultimately sings its own unique song, symbolizing the natural diversity of languages and cultures (*Sollen wir* 1833: 91–92). Using a Hungarian folk fable in Magyar to prove his point, the author uses intertextuality to deconstruct the arguments for Magyarization. Further examples of intertextuality are shown in the following chapter.

4.5. Intertextuality

By employing intertextual elements, *Sollen wir Magyaren werden?* positions itself within a larger intellectual and cultural discourse, appealing to readers familiar with these references and reinforcing its arguments through their symbolic and historical weight.

For example, the text frequently draws on historical and mythological references to illustrate its points. The mention of Leonidas at Szigeth, the Croatian-Hungarian nobleman and military leader Nikola Zrinyi (*Sollen wir* 1833: V) invokes the heroic defense of Thermopylae by the Spartan king Leonidas, a symbol of resistance against overwhelming odds. By comparing the Croatian defenders of Szigeth to Leonidas, the text elevates their struggle to a universal symbol of bravery and sacrifice. Through the mention of Zrinyi as a symbol of the Hungarian and Croatian unity in the wars against the Ottomans, the text reinforces the shared history and cultural significance of non-Magyar groups within Hungary.

The reference to Attila and the Huns (*Sollen wir* 1833: 44) serves to remind readers of Hungary's complex historical legacy. By invoking Attila, the text underscores the idea that Hungary's strength lies in its diversity rather than in the imposition of a single language or culture.

The mythological reference to Jupiter and the Cyclopes (*Sollen wir* 1833: 84), who forged thunderbolts for the god, is used metaphorically to criticize the artificial creation of new words by the Magyar Academy. This allusion suggests that the Academy's efforts are a forced and unnatural process, likening the creation of new Magyar terms to the Cyclopes' laborious and mechanical production of thunderbolts for Jupiter. This critique highlights the artificiality of imposing a linguistic uniformity that does not arise organically from the people.

The text also employs biblical and religious references to frame its arguments. For instance, the aforementioned symbol of the guardian angel of freedom and faith alludes to the protective role of divine intervention in preserving cultural and religious identity. This reference positions the resistance to Magyarization as a righteous struggle, akin to the biblical battles for faith and freedom. The mention of Mohács (*Sollen wir* 1833: V), a pivotal battle in Hungarian history, carries religious undertones as well. The defeat at Mohács is often seen as a turning point that led to the fragmentation of Hungary, much like the fall of Jerusalem in biblical narratives. By invoking Mohács, the text emphasizes the catastrophic consequences of internal division and external oppression, drawing a parallel between historical events and the current cultural struggles.

The text also draws on political and legal references to ground its arguments in historical and institutional contexts. The citation of laws from the Hungarian legal

code (e.g., Anno 1608, Anno 1655; *Sollen wir* 1833: 49) serves to remind readers of Hungary's long-standing tradition of respecting the rights of its diverse populations. These legal references are used to challenge the contemporary push for Magyarization, arguing that it contradicts the historical principles of the Hungarian state. Additionally, the phrase *quod non omnia, quae licent, etiam expedit* (not everything that is permitted is expedient; *Sollen wir* 1833: VI) is a Latin maxim that echoes Stoic philosophy. By invoking this principle, the text critiques the Magyarization policies as morally and practically unsound, even if they are legally permissible.

The reference to *Feudalrecht* ('feudal law'; *Sollen wir* 1833: 42) critiques the historical power structures in Hungary, highlighting their hierarchical and oppressive nature, suggesting that Magyarization perpetuates these inequalities rather than addressing them.

The text frequently employs cultural and national symbols to evoke a sense of shared identity and heritage. Mostly the symbols are connected to the peoples living in the Kingdom of Hungary, but in some cases, they are from other cultures. The reference to Ossian (*Sollen wir* 1833: 32), the legendary Celtic bard, serves to highlight the richness of non-Magyar cultural traditions. By invoking Ossian, the text celebrates literary and cultural contributions of minority groups within Hungary, arguing that their preservation is essential to the nation's identity.

The text also references contemporary political and cultural figures involved in current intellectual and cultural debates. For example, the text mentions František Palacký (*Sollen wir* 1833: 46–47), a prominent Czech historian and politician, whose works on Slavic history and identity are used to counter Magyar nationalist arguments. By invoking Palacký, the text aligns itself with the broader Slavic intellectual movement, emphasizing the legitimacy and value of non-Magyar cultures within Hungary. In a similar function, the renowned Slovak philologist and historian, Pavel Jozef Šafárik (*Sollen wir* 1833: 85), is mentioned. The text contains several references to the Hungarian literary journal *Tudományos Gyűjtemény* (*Sollen wir* 1833: 11, 46, 73, 75), as a source of nationalist arguments. This intertextual dialogue highlights the ongoing intellectual and cultural debates in Hungary, situating the text within a broader discourse on nationalism, identity, and language.

5. Discussion

The discourse-historical analysis of *Sollen wir Magyarren werden?* was aimed at analyzing how the text challenges the dominant discourse of Magyarization in 19th-century Hungary.

The analysis revealed that the text's counter-discourse operates on multiple levels. First, it critiques the ideological foundations of Magyarization, challenging the

assumption that a homogeneous Magyar-speaking nation is desirable or even possible. By emphasizing Hungary's multiethnic history, the author delegitimizes the nationalist narrative that positions Magyars as the "true" Hungarians. This aligns with the idea that nationalist narratives often selectively erase the empire's complex ethnic makeup and that nationalism relies on ethnic essentialism (Gellner 1983).

Second, the text exposes the coercive methods of Magyarization, such as the imposition of the Magyar language in schools, public offices, and religious contexts. The author's critique of these methods highlights their oppressive nature and counterproductive effects, particularly in alienating and marginalizing non-Magyar communities and hindering their education and cultural development.

Finally, the text deconstructs the narrative of positive consequences of Magyarization, arguing that it will lead to social fragmentation rather than unity and result in the erosion of Hungary's cultural diversity. By warning of the long-term harm caused by forced assimilation, the author of *Sollen wir Magyarren werden?* advocates for a vision of Hungary that embraces its multiethnic heritage and fosters mutual respect among its diverse communities.

The rhetorical strategies employed, ranging from logical appeals based on historical and legal references to emotional appeals addressing community identities, are consistent with the frameworks proposed by van Dijk (1998) concerning argumentation in discourse. The numerous intertextual references to mythological, biblical, legal, and historical sources further reinforce the argumentation, aligning with Fairclough's (2013) assertion that intertextuality acts as a discursive resource for constructing ideological positions. The utilization of metaphors such as *the Chinese wall* and *shackles* echoes the works of Ruth Wodak (1997, 2001, 2015), who notes the significance of symbolic language in the production of social meaning.

The scholarly context of *Sollen wir Magyarren werden?* must also be understood in light of the broader debates surrounding the Enlightenment and Romantic nationalism. Its engagement with Enlightenment ideals of rationalism and cosmopolitanism parallels the critique of cultural homogenization voiced by Voltaire (cf. Gray 1998) and Montesquieu (1949), both of whom argued that linguistic and cultural diversity are fundamental for human freedom and progress. Simultaneously, the emphasis on language and nationhood reflects Herder's (2010) *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* ('Ideas for the philosophy of the history of mankind'), which posited that language embodies the *Volksgeist*, the unique spirit of the nation, deserving nurture and protection.

Moreover, the text reflects the multiethnic nature of the Habsburg Empire, where various ethnic groups coexisted under a single monarchy. The author criticizes efforts toward Magyarization as disruptive to this historical balance. The emphasis on historical treaties and legal traditions echoes the feudal and contractual nature

of the Habsburg monarchy, where loyalty to the crown often took precedence over ethnic or linguistic allegiance.

Additionally, the text draws on classical republican ideas of civic virtue and the idea that true patriotism emerges from voluntary participation rather than coercion, concepts discussed extensively in the works of Berlin (2013) and Mouffe (2000). This aligns with the early modern debates about the moral foundations of political identity, where language and culture are seen as vital components of national integrity (Hobsbawm 1990).

6. Concluding remarks

In this study, only a segment of what the discourse-historical approach can uncover about the analyzed text has been presented. The selection was primarily guided by the aim to describe the relationship of this text to the dominant discourse of Magyarization. Even these selectively highlighted findings open multiple avenues for future research, which can deepen our understanding not only of this particular text and its immediate function but also of its place within the broader interdiscursive network of texts and discourses that arose from the socio-political landscape of 19th-century Central Europe, including the Croatian lands, the Kingdom of Hungary, and the Habsburg Monarchy.

It must be emphasized that the current analysis focused solely on the first edition of *Sollen wir Magyaren werden?* as a whole. Further investigations are planned to compare this edition with the two subsequent editions, especially examining the differences introduced in the third edition, notably the sixth letter, which is included in this expanded version. Such comparative analysis will shed light on how the author's positions and arguments evolved in response to shifting social and political contexts, as well as to internal editorial modifications.

Additionally, a promising direction for future research involves situating the text within an interdiscursive network of writings emerging from the Slavic revivalist movements. This will entail identifying the specific authors and texts that influenced *Sollen wir Magyaren werden?* and, conversely, exploring how this text impacted other subsequent texts, particularly in the Croatian national revival. By mapping these intertextual relations, it will be possible to determine the extent to which the text was shaped by, or challenged, key ideological currents, literary works, and political discourses of the era.

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KONSTRUIRANJE OTPORA: DISKURSNO-POVIJESNA ANALIZA PUBLIKACIJE *SOLLEN WIR MAGYAREN WERDEN?* (1833)

U ovom radu prikazana je analiza publikacije *Sollen wir Magyaren werden?* (Tre- bamo li postati Mađari?) iz 1833. godine, polemike protiv politike mađarizacije u Ugarskoj u prvoj polovici 19. stoljeća. Cilj je istraživanja analizirati kako se u tekstu konstruira protudiskurs koji oponira argumentima prisilne asimilacije nemađarskih populacija, pritom zagovarajući jezičnu i kulturnu raznolikost unutar Habsburške Monarhije. U analizi je primijenjen diskursno-povijesni pristup (DHA), meto- da unutar kritičke analize diskursa, kako bi se istražile argumentativne strategi- je, retorički postupci i povijesne reference u tekstu. Taj teorijski okvir naglašava međuodnos diskursa, moći i identiteta, smještajući tekst u širi društveno-politički kontekst otpora mađarskom nacionalizmu. Metodologija uključuje detaljnu analizu povijesnog konteksta, žanra i strukture teksta, s fokusom na njegov persuazivni i ar- gumentativni stil te uporabu simbola, metafora i intertekstualnosti, npr. povijesnih, književnih i filozofskih referenci. Rezultati pokazuju da se u *Sollen wir Magyaren werden?* dekonstruira dominantni diskurs mađarizacije i istovremeno zagovaraju prava nemađarskih zajednica u Kraljevini Ugarskoj. Legitimitet mađarizacije dovo- di se u pitanje otkrivanjem njezinih ideoloških nedostataka i štetnih posljedica te se naglašava multietničko nasljeđe Ugarske. Argumentacija se temelji na pretpostavci da su jezična i kulturna raznolikost ključne za nacionalno jedinstvo i napredak te se u tekstu upozorava na negativne učinke prisilnih asimilacijskih politika na identitete nemađarskih zajednica. Studija zaključuje da analizirani tekst ostaje relevantan kao podsjetnik na opasnosti prisilne asimilacije i važnost zaštite prava manjina te ukazu- je na mogućnosti za daljnja istraživanja šire interdiskursne mreže tekstova i diskursa koji proizlaze iz društveno-političkog konteksta srednje Europe 19. stoljeća.

Ključne riječi: mađarizacija, diskursno-povijesna analiza (DHA), protudiskurs, kulturni pluralizam

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