

# Acquired stupidity epidemic in Hungary: Hungarian not a Uralic language?

Jaakko Häkkinen, 11th November 2012 (updated 18th November 2012)

In Hungary there spreads a severe ASS-epidemic (ASS = Acquired Stupidity Syndrome): a growing number of people believe that Hungarian is not a Uralic language, because some ignorant imbes... mentally challenged persons have assured them so for many years now. This epidemic is also accompanied by a serious paranoia, which leads the patients (from now on called ASSes) to see every reference to the Uralic status of Hungarian as a dark conspiracy of the Austro-Hungarian Habsburgs, the Soviet communists, king Aššur-nāšir-apli II, Sauron of Mordor, some other long-gone rulers, or even Erich von Däniken or other extra-terrestrial humanoids.

There is even a political party, Jobbik, which attacks the "Finno-Ugric linguistic theory based on fraudulent reasonings and politically motivated arguments." (<http://www.hungarianambiance.com/2009/09/jobbik-wants-revision-of-finno-ugric.html>) Of course laymen should not be blamed too heavily, because they only believe what some scientists tell them. More shame should be cast over linguists like Angela Marcantonio, who should know the real situation better and who still intentionally spreads her anti-Uralic lies among the common people.

However, there is a simple medication for this dreadful epidemic: **information**. It seems obvious that the information about the relatedness between Hungarian and other Uralic languages has been buried far too deep in the libraries of the universities for common people to find it out. Therefore I shall present the evidence right here by comparing Hungarian to its closest relative Mansi, spoken in Northwestern Siberia. Even a blind and halfwit person can see that the similarities between Hungarian and Mansi are far greater and deeper than the similarities between Hungarian and Etruscan, Sumerian, Turkic or any other language which the ASSes would prefer as their favourite fantasy relative.

However, fantasies should be kept strictly apart from science: only evidence counts, and after seeing the following evidence, nobody with close to normal intelligence can any more deny the Uralic status of Hungarian. *Rejoice, for thou shalt be healthy again!*

*Feel free to translate this text into Hungarian and spread it to the suffering patients!*



Map modified from: <http://www.oocities.org/paivirentz/uralic.html>

## 1. Example sentences

Here are analyzed two example sentences in Hungarian and East Mansi (from Middle Konda) containing only shared cognate words.

**ATTENTION!** Originally I presented only such Hungarian sentences which contain all those preserved Uralic elements which we see in the Mansi sentence. Understandably some Hungarian readers wondered what is this "Pseudo-Hungarian" language, so I saw it necessary to add the modern standard Hungarian sentences (provided by László Fejes in <http://www.nyest.hu/renhirek/hulyesegjarvany-magyarorszagon>). It is illustrating to compare these two Hungarian sentences, because they give us a picture what Hungarian could possibly look like, if it was still spoken in the Ural region and if it developed in close contacts with Mansi. Modern Hungarian still has those Uralic elements, but they are used in a different way: the old word for 'dog', *eb*, is overtaken in popularity by the newer word *kutya*; the new case endings have replaced the old ones in many functions, although the old ones are still used in marginal functions. Some of the verbal prefixes are used also in Mansi, but because they are used differently in Mansi and Hungarian, I haven't added them in my "Pseudo-Hungarian" sentences.

### 1. 'Dog's ears are in front; he hears a mouse'

**Hungarian:** *A kutya fülei elöl vannak; (ő) egeret hall.* (How the sentence is said in modern Hungarian.)

**Hungarian:** *(egy) eb füle elött; ő egeret hall.* (How the sentence would look like with the Uralic elements.)

eb   fül-e   elő-tt;   ő   eger-et   hall-Ø  
'dog' 'ear-his' 'front-in' 'he' 'mouse-at' 'hears'  
-px.3sg   -loc.                   -acc. (no person marking)

**Mansi:** *öämp pöälyä eelt; täw täŋkərmə kooli.*

öämp pöäly-ə eel-t;   täw täŋkər-mə kool-i.  
'dog' 'ear-his' 'front-in' 'he' 'mouse-at' 'hears'  
-px.3sg   -loc.                   -acc. -vx.3sg

All the words in these sentences are cognates, inherited from the common protolanguage, and all the meanings are the same. From the grammatical elements, the possessive suffix of 3rd person singular (Hu. *-e* ~ Mn. *-ə*) and the locative case ending (Hu. *-tt* ~ Mn. *-t*) are cognates. Mansi has preserved the Proto-Uralic accusative ending *-m*, but Hungarian has the secondary accusative ending *-t*.

### 2. 'I would kill my horse; I shoot it'

**Hungarian:** *Megölném a lovam; lelövöm.* (How the sentence is said in modern Hungarian.)

**Hungarian:** *lovam ölném; lövöm.* (How the sentence would look like with the Uralic elements.)

lova-m   öl-né-m;   lövö-m  
'horse-my' 'kill-would-I' 'shoot it-I'  
-px.1sg -cond.-vx.1sg -vx.obj.1sg

**Mansi:** *lom äläänaam; ləyləm.*

lo-m   äl-ään-aam;   ləγ-ləm  
'horse-my' 'kill-would-I' 'shoot it-I'  
-px.1sg -cond.-vx.1sg -vx.sg.obj.1sg

Again all the words in these sentences are cognates, inherited from the common protolanguage, and all the meanings are the same. From the grammatical elements, the possessive suffix of the 1st person singular (Hu. *-m* ~ Mn. *-m*), the conditional modal marker (Hu. *-né* ~ Mn. *-ään*), and the 1st person singular ending of the object/definite conjugation (Hu. *-m* ~ Mn. *-aam/-əm*) are cognates. The *-l* in the latter person ending in Mansi tells that there is one object; the same *-l* can still be seen in the Hungarian first person singular ending *-lak/-lek* like in *szeret-lek* 'I love you'; here it denotes the second person singular and not any more to a singular object in general.

Structural similarities are: the word order SOV (subject, object, verb), suffixal agglutinateness (grammatical markers are added after the word root), the lack of genitive and expressing the possession by adding the possessive suffix in the possessed object (not "dog's ear" but "dog ear-his"), distinction between subject/indefinite and object/definite conjugation of verbs.

There are hundreds of shared words between Hungarian and Mansi, and many grammatical elements. Here I only present the shared numerals representing the basic vocabulary and some most strikingly similar shared case endings representing the grammatical elements:

- 1: Hu. *egy* ~ Mn. *äk*<sup>o</sup> (uncertain/irregular)
- 2: Hu. *két* ~ Mn. *kit*
- 3: Hu. *három* ~ Mn. *kuurəm*
- 4: Hu. *négy* ~ Mn. *ńələ*
- 5: Hu. *öt* ~ Mn. *ät*
- 6: Hu. *hat* ~ Mn. *koot*
- 7: Hu. *hét* ~ Mn. *söät*
- 10x: Hu. *-van/-ven* ~ Mn. *-mən/-pən*
- 20: Hu. *húsz* ~ Mn. *k<sup>o</sup>os*
- 100: Hu. *száz* ~ Mn. *seget*

(Family) local cases:

- 'in': Hu. *-nött/-nott* ~ MnT *-näät* ('with')
- 'from': Hu. *-nöll/-nól* ~ Mn. *-nəl*
- 'to': Hu. *-ni* ~ Mn. *-nə*

Other cases:

- 'in': Hu. *-tt* ~ Mn. *-t*
- 'without': Hu. *-tal/-tel* ~ Mn. *-tal*

## 2. Sound correspondences

As we saw in the example sentences, all the words were cognates and had the same meaning, and most of the grammatical elements were also cognates and had the same meaning. Next I will show the regular sound correspondences between Hungarian and Mansi. I could well reconstruct the common "Hungaro-Mansic" protolanguage on the basis of these correspondences (like \*ä > Hu. *e* ~ Mn. *öä*), but I will leave that analysis to my future works.

*ŋ* is a voiced velar nasal: like *n* but pronounced in the similar manner to *g*.

*ɣ* is a voiced velar spirant: like *g* but touch only very lightly the back of palate.

*ə* is almost like *ö* but lips are more relaxed and less round.

*k<sup>o</sup>* is like *k* but pronounced with rounded lips.

*ɛ* is a "back-e", pronounced with lips like in *e* but tongue pulled more back.

*l*, *ń* are palatalized consonants (hungarian *ly*, *ny*): there is a *y*-like ending in them.

(Pronouncing of the Hungarian sounds is easy to find out and already familiar to Hungarians, who are the main target audience for this presentation.)

Some of the corresponding sounds are similar, but here are some which are different yet still regular:

Hu. *b* ~ Mn. *mp*

Hu. *d* ~ Mn. *nt*

Hu. *g* ~ Mn. *ŋk*

Hu. *f* ~ Mn. *p* (word-initially)

Hu. *t* ~ Mn. *t* (word-initially)

Hu. *z* ~ Mn. *t* (between vowels)

Hu. *h* ~ Mn. *k* (before a back vowel)

Hu. *k* ~ Mn. *k* (before a front vowel)

Hu. *Ø* ~ Mn. *t* (loss in Hungarian)

Hu. *sz* ~ Mn. *s*

*eb* ~ *öämp* 'dog'

*had* ~ *koont* 'warband' | *lud* ~ *lont* 'goose'

*egér* ~ *täŋkər* 'mouse' | *jég* ~ *jöäŋk* 'ice'

*fél* ~ *pəl* 'to fear' | *fő* ~ *pöäj* 'to boil'

*tél* ~ *töäl* 'winter' | *torok* ~ *tor* 'throat; voice'

*kéz* ~ *köät* 'hand' | *száz* ~ *seget* '100'

*hal* ~ *kuul* 'fish' | *had* ~ *koont* 'warband'

*két* ~ *kət* '2' | *kéz* ~ *köät* 'hand'

*egér* ~ *täŋkər* 'mouse' | *ev* ~ *teey* 'to eat' | *ő* ~ *täw* '(s)he'

*száz* ~ *seget* '100' | *szem* ~ *säm* 'eye'

Hu. *e/é* ~ Mn. *öä*

Hu. *e/é* ~ Mn. *ä*

Hu. *e/é* ~ Mn. *ee*

Hu. *e/é* ~ Mn. *ə*

Hu. *u/ú* ~ Mn. *o*

Hu. *a/á* ~ Mn. *uu*

Hu. *a/á* ~ Mn. *oo*

*tél* ~ *töäl* 'winter' | *kéz* ~ *köät* 'hand' | *eb* ~ *öämp* 'dog'

*szem* ~ *säm* 'eye' | *egér* ~ *täŋkər* 'mouse'

*ev* ~ *teey* 'to eat' | *el* ~ *eel* 'front'

*fél* ~ *pəl* 'to fear' | *két* ~ *kət* '2'

*húsz* ~ *k<sup>o</sup>os* '20' | *lud* ~ *lont* 'goose'

*hal* ~ *kuul* 'fish' | *három* ~ *kuurəm* '3'

*had* ~ *koont* 'warband' | *hal* ~ *kool* 'to die'

Hu. *a/á* ~ Mn. *eĕ* (\**a*-stems)  
 Hu. *i/í* ~ Mn. *eĕ* (\**i*-stems)

*száz* ~ *sęęet* '100' | *falu* ~ *pęęwəl* 'village'  
*ín* ~ *tęęn* 'vein, sinew' | *nyíl* ~ *ńęęł* 'arrow'

By comparing to the other Uralic languages we can see that Hu. *Ø* ~ Mn. *t* goes back to Proto-Uralic \**s*, while Hu. *t* ~ Mn. *t* and Hu. *z* ~ Mn. *t* go back to Proto-Uralic \**t*. We also see that Hu. *e/é* ~ Mn. *öä* goes back to Proto-Uralic \**ä*, but Hu. *e/é* ~ Mn. *ä* goes back to Proto-Uralic \**i* and Hu. *e/é* ~ Mn. *ee* goes back to Proto-Uralic \**e*. For example Finnish agrees with the Mansi vowels, thus showing that in Hungarian there has occurred the coalescence of original \**ä*, \**e* and \**i* to *e/é*:

- \**ä*: Fi. *käsi* ~ Mn. *köät* 'hand'
- \**e*: Fi. *ete-* ~ Mn. *eel-* 'front'
- \**i*: Fi. *hiiri* ~ Mn. *tänkər* 'mouse'

***The evidence claimed to support the relatedness of Hungarian to any other language family than Uralic is much weaker: it is utterly ridiculous by quality, a mere joke for every serious linguist. I challenge anybody who supports some other than Uralic status for Hungarian to publicly present evidence for his/her claim. It is time for the misled Hungarians to return to the sanity.***

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## Literature

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