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# The Ancient Genres of Verbal Art

Simple Forms  
and Instinctive Manifestations

## Abstract

According to fundamental scientific principles, simple forms develop into complex ones, with the rare exception of regression. In metaphysics, however, evolution and involution are seen as being in unity, with complex forms developing into simple ones. At any rate (as far as we can see into the past), we might presume basic elementary, primary, simple, artistic, and linguistic typological forms that can be linked with basic cognitive forms. According to art theory, in the beginning there was ancient syncretism, which was dominated by undivided liquid ancient forms. Psychoanalysts and myth researchers speak of ancient language, ancient picture language. Folklorists list blessings, curses, and oaths, as well as work songs, among the primary genres. I present three basic genres as an example: cradle songs, dance words and laments. Their common characteristics are sung lyrics and speech-like melodies (*parlando*). Further instinctive behaviours that receive little attention include: outbursts, impulsive shouting, cursing, mumbling, sighing, pleading, and prayer, as well as sexual intercourse, giving birth, euphoric speech (under the influence of alcohol or narcotics), aphasia, and speech degraded by old age. Instinctiveness is clearly reflected by rhythmic counting or scribbling.

**Key words:** simple forms, ancient syncretism, ancient language, ancient picture language, formulae, cradle songs, dance words, lamentations, instinctive behaviours

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## Simple forms

To discern the origins of these ancient forms, we should dig far back in the abyss of the past in which records are available, and then proceed by deduction. It is widely held that complex forms have evolved from simple ones. A variety of theories in cultural history, literary theory and folklore studies are aimed at defining and reconstructing simple (perhaps undifferentiated) forms or basic forms. It was in response to the idea of Jakob Grimm that Andre Jolles (1930/2006) elaborated his theory of simple forms, which he considered as sociocultural universal elements under which the forms (genres, text types) of folk poetry and literature can be derived from the specific operations of cognition and language, which came into being and developed instinctively and spontaneously "by themselves". Jolles identified nine "simple forms": the legend, the saga, the myth, the riddle, the proverb, the memorable, the fairy tale and the joke. These simple forms are therefore basic linguistic structures in which knowledge of the world, social experiences and value judgements are stored and passed down. They are not identical with literary forms, yet they have certain aesthetic attributes.

The theory of simple forms gained popularity primarily among folklorists, while it later also came to influence literature-semiotic research. In Hungary, one such example is Zoltán Kanyó (1985, 10-11), who argued that simple forms play a role in the shaping of social tradition, facilitating recollection and the preserving of memory. He also believes that the simple forms logically and pragmatically appear before all other literary forms. Although the examples put forth by Jolles received criticism, Erzsébet Fehér (2006, 39) came to his defence, referring to the tradition of rhetoric: "there are internal relationships between them: a) with the exception of the proverb each form is (or may be) a narrative structure; b) each one of them is related to the community's value perspectives. Accordingly, from Jolles's regarding simple forms as manifestations of the structuring capability of human cognition and tracing them back to the 'mental disposition', we can conclude that he assigns a special role in this to the narrative forms and the evaluating attitude [...]" Genre theories exploring the linguistic foundations of genres trace back the presumed basic genre forms partly to the elementary forms of language use and partly to mental structures. Still fertile texts that have been passed down for thousands of years

are linked to some basic cognitive forms. Several authors have made reference to the basic forms:<sup>1</sup>

- simple forms (Jolles),
- primary, simple genre, speech genre (Bakhtin),
- architext (Genette),
- generic structure (Skwarczynska),
- genotext (Zoltán Kanyó).

Text linguistics' recommendations for typological basic forms (Fehér 2006: 40):

- storytelling, narrative patterns (Pléh),
- description, narration, argument (Beaugrande–Dressler),
- superstructure: narration, argument (van Dijk),
- shared invariants of superstructures: narration, argument, description, evaluation (János Balázs),
- text type: description, narration, information, argument instruction (Werlich),
- text pattern (Piroska Kocsány).

Hungarian scholarly literature has been influenced by the theory of simple forms, and Hungarian authors have studied two "simple" forms, namely, the proverb (Kocsány 2002) and storytelling (Pléh 1986, Andó 2006) in greater detail. Besides the proverb and storytelling, mention may be made of a number of other short and long genres, such as the drafting of short inscriptions and, in general, labelling, on which there is a growing body of Hungarian scholarly literature, including a summary (for example, Balázs 2000) for instance.

The issue of simple forms has come to be considerably more complicated by now. There clearly must be a simple → complicated direction of "progress", but there also is an opposite, complicated → simple, direction at the same time, involving the changing, perhaps disintegration, of texts (in folklore: "devolution", a degressive, destructive process, Zersingen, that is, singing to pieces<sup>2</sup>), and later perhaps even fragmentation, or replacement, of genres, or regression of genres. "Vague, disturbed and unartistic variants emerge at the time of the demise of folklore resembling for a while, even in their dishevelled state, certain genres of days gone by but as time passes they stop being

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1 Fehér (2006, 38–41) provides an overview of the basic genre forms; further sources can also be found there.

2 Zersingen = singing apart (Ortutay 1981, 32).

the last reminders of a long gone folklore genre. At that moment they also cease to exist as works of art" (Voigt 1972, 42). Besides the changes stemming from genres' systemic functioning, Miko also refers to a "devolution" (2000, 87), which might, for example, be a result of the "aggressiveness" of another genre.

Hamvas provides the basic premise of the metaphysical approach, thus: "Development is, of course, out of the question" (1995, I/189). Involution is the same as evolution (1995, I/225). "That thinking which historic man, particularly modern man, calls science, tried to understand the big facts of existence with the individual Ego's intellect, instead of direct intuition of the universal man. Having started off in reverse, it was bound to reach a reverse result. This is how the concept that the origin of existence is down came into being; this is how the idea of progress or development from bottom up, evolved" (1995, I/343).

## Undivided, liquid forms, ancient language, picture language

As to the origins of folk poetry, folklorists generally agree that in the world of ancient and rudimentary societies cognition was not separated from consciousness, that is, there was no distinction between science, art and practical activities (ancient syncretism), and consequently the boundaries between rite, myth and poetry are diffuse. Accordingly, I believe that ancient (initial) language must have been closely connected to the ancient forms of consciousness, including art. Dance, music, tune and text, being indivisible from one another, all exist as elements of community activity. This was undivided, initially not permanently fixed, total art, in the liquid state from all perspectives, which then continued to live on in well-solidified forms, providing yet another proof of the ancient connection between art and language.

The folklore of certain primitive peoples (today there are still isolated ethnic groups continuing to live in practically stone age conditions) and children has continued to resemble, for the most part, the primal condition, and uncontrolled, instinctive manifestations point back to the primal condition, and puns, plays, and poetry display the gesture of "creation". Hamvas states that "Picture language is the prehistoric language" (1995, II/159); "The power of the ancient

language has survived not in the folk language but in poetic language" (1995, II/160); "Poetry is the mother tongue of man" (1995, II/157).

## Primary texts

The most elementary text types are considered to include blessing, cursing and the swearing of oaths, as well as magic spells (in the form of charms or incantations), followed by already passive but still ancient prayers referring to behaviour. The latter were almost entirely integrated into Christianity.

Hungarian incantations are of a listing and repetitive structure, being divided into parts, and some of them are characterised by sense-rhythm and alliteration. Some of the Hungarian curse formulas involve listings of an enhancing nature and live on in ballads and lyrical songs. Several Hungarian researchers believe that they have discovered remnants of ancient shamanic songs in some of our nursery rhymes or in the "*haj regö rejtem*" refrain of the carolling tradition of *regölés*, which represents the oldest Hungarian folk custom. Derisive songs, mocking rhymes, love songs of a personal nature, drinking and wine or festive songs, however, would not be so easily traced back to the primal condition.

An anthropologically typical and exclusively female genre, known all over the world, is that of lullaby. A lullaby is a softly-spoken, rhythmic text, emanating calm, evolved to drive a movement pattern (rocking and lulling) with the aim of calming down and helping a baby fall asleep. Earlier lullabies used to contain natural themes, while later ones, closer to our age, cover social ones. Child-rocking words appearing in Hungarian lullabies, such as the child language word "*csicsija*" and the word "*tente*", which are of onomatopoeic origins, can be regarded as ancient (after Katona 1992, 207–210).

Work songs, in which movement patterns regulated the rhythm of tune and text, may be considered as old and elementary. Péter Veres writes about beaters in his novel *Pályamunkások* (*Track workers*). (By way of explanation, a beater pick is a blunt headed pick axe that is used to beat and compact the crushed stone lying under railway sleepers.) This novel was adapted in a film of the same name, which was directed by István Gaál as a student work, and which depicts the hard physical work of rail laying (ballast compacting) that used to be performed by rail track workers.

Dirges, or mourning songs, also go back to the obscurity of the earliest times. Their improvised lyrics and melody demonstrate the most primitive signs of

organisation. They are characterised by solo singing without musical accompaniment, although on rare occasions they may be accompanied by a chorus. They comprise loosely structured and variable parts. The Hungarian dirge, which is fully subordinated to the text, is reminiscent of the moment of the separation of the tune from text.

In the linguistic description of primary texts, we may make reference to Walter Ong's concept of the relationship between orality and literacy (1982). He distinguishes three eras, namely, those of primary orality, literacy, and secondary orality.

By primary orality he means orality predating, and thus unaffected by, literacy, which of course lives on during the era of printing and that of electronic literacy. The description of primary orality gives us an insight into initial language use, which is close to the lifeworld, being emphatic, direct, situation dependent, competitive yet striving to achieve homeostasis, predominantly coordinative (not subordinative), accumulative (not analytical), and traditional (conservative), and which is also characterised by redundancy ("abundance") for mnemonics and the use of formulas (for example, meter and rhyming) (see Adamikné 2021, 218–219).

## Art and the ancient genres of speech

In retrospect, we can see various genres in which we can explore the ancient connection between art and language. These should include archaic folk prayer, incantation and all types of magic spells. Child folklore is rich with archaic elements. At first, it may seem surprising that it is the very culture of the newborn, the new generation, which shows most saliently the most ancient human implications: elementary forms, playing, and re-creation (creativity), just in the way that a child progresses through the stages of the birth and development of a language, from impulsive sounds to structured speech. I will never forget the shocking discovery revealed to me by one of my college students in Eger: their child's first words and sentences sounded to them very similar to the Old Hungarian that they learned about at college. I believe that my student made a great discovery: as it develops, the child's language traverses the entire history

of the native language; in the case of a Hungarian child's language, the history of the Hungarian language. Yet this has escaped the attention of science.<sup>3</sup>

The deep evolutionary connection between language and folklore is indicated by the parallelism of the rhythm phenomena between intonation (that is, sentence melody) and creation. According to Lajos Vargyas: "All rhythm phenomena and all variants of the beats are closely related to the evolution and structuring of live speech. All Hungarian rhythm phenomena can be derived from the characteristics of Hungarian speech" (1966, 52). Illustrative examples include:

*Magos a torony teteje*  
*Magos a / torony / teteje*

Sentence emphasis (that is, melody) is followed by literary work, including, for instance, folklore tales.

It was from studying folk poetry verse rhythm that Lajos Vargyas concluded that the dirge is our oldest genre of folk poetry: "not only its Old European tune, which has survived in archaic patches, in marginal areas at great distances from each other and not only the very traditionalist custom relating to death into which it is embedded but also its loose, improvised – though full of formulas – prosaic text which is the only representative of the pre-verse song test type in our folk poetry." Moreover, as Vargyas explains, "our child play and minstrel melodies, loosely repeating motives, beat pairs without closed forms." He continues: "many types of our rubato songs were still alive, in free performance, before the Hungarian conquest of the Carpathian basin, and the same applies to the pigman dance form." In conclusion: it is also in accordance with the primitive → advanced line of development that Vargyas claims that "there was a development which led, from loose prose and free syllable number to fixed verse formulas. [...] Accordingly, the outlines of a regulation

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<sup>3</sup> Proof-reader's note: That a child passes through the stages of language development (as a side-note to the small child uttering Old Hungarian forms), let me present a few examples from my daughter when she was learning to speak: her first words were: *kunku*, meaning *könyv* (book), with the stem-end vowel shrinking, though without compensatory extension, and *paa*, meaning *fa* (tree), that is, she uttered the basic form first and achieved the pronunciation of *fa* passing through the regular course of sound development. Additionally, she uttered: *Bajó*, meaning *Balázs* (a Hungarian male name), and *Elek bátyám*, meaning *Elek bátyom* (my brother Elek), as well as *szájom*, meaning *szájam* (my mouth), and *hátom*, meaning *hátam* (my back).

process appear from a musical overview of the folk song in which less developed and unregulated forms are gradually replaced by increasingly regulated ones" (Vargyas 1966, 40–42).

In relation to three basic Hungarian folk poetry genres, which may well be regarded as ancient and archaic, I wish to prove that melody and text were born, developed, varied, and recited together, and that the genres are "above peoples", that is, that they are anthropological. The three basic genres are, indeed, elementary forms: the lullaby, the dance word, and the dirge. Little wonder that these genres are related to the three most significant events of a person's life, namely, birth, finding a partner, and death.

## Lullaby

Based on a thorough analysis of lullabies and by comparing other peoples' lullabies, Imre Katona presents authentic examples for the interactive evolution of art and language: "Lullabies are, in fact, lyrical pre-forms, the beginnings of poetry, maternal instruments of instinctive-conscious (lyrical) influence, evidence of the unbroken continuity of successive generations and the perpetuation of tradition. Poetic illustrations of the connections between the greater and the smaller society, home and the outside world, present and future, which however, even go beyond poetry itself" (Katona 1992, 110). Lullabies were only sung when helping small children fall asleep, so a plot was indispensable for the song to work. The soothing rock-a-bye sounds, words, and expressions, were to help the baby become calm, rest, and finally fall asleep. A lullaby essentially comprises rock-a-bye sounds, repeating them in regular triplets: *a-a-a, ei-ei-ei, na-na-na*.

Most lullaby words imitate either movements or sounds, and are in most cases doubled. Words that have a soothing effect include: *csicsis, csicsija* (Hungarian), *csucsuj* (Carpatho-Ukrainian), *Bisch* (German), and *hush* (English). Movement detecting (movement imitating) words include: *tente* (Hungarian), *ninna-nanne* (Italian), *lilaj-lulaj* (Polish), *baj-baj* (Russian), and *sulla-rulla* (Norwegian). Notably distant similarities may be identified in the use of words in lullabies, rendering their ancient and universal nature even more evident (Imre Katona's examples, 1992, 101–102):



Examples in which the relationship among languages belonging to the same language families is self-evident.	Dutch ~ Norwegian: <i>suja, sulla</i>
Examples in which area-based relationships may be assumed in the case of neighbouring peoples.	Slovakian ~ Polish: <i>lilaj, lulaj</i> Hungarian ~ Slovakian: <i>beli</i> Hungarian ~ Slovakian: <i>buva(j)</i>
Examples of words spread across large geographical areas: the Mediterranean region, the Middle East, Caucasia, and India.	Spanish: <i>nana</i> ~ Italian: <i>ninna-nanne</i> , Slovenian: <i>nina-nana</i> , Serbian: <i>ninaj-nanaj</i> , Albanian-Bulgarian-Greek-Romanian: <i>nani</i> , Turkish: <i>nenni-ninni</i> , Arabic: <i>ninna</i> , Caucasian: <i>nana</i> , Indian: <i>nanna</i> , and Hungarian: <i>nánikálni</i> .
Examples of words spread across large geographical areas: the northern region.	Carpatho-Ukrainian: <i>lulaj</i> , Slovakian, Polish: <i>lulaj</i> , Norwegian: <i>lulla</i> , English: <i>lullaby</i>
Examples of words spread among peoples that are neither neighbouring nor related, in which similarities are explained, for now, by "coincidence".	Hungarian ~ French: <i>tente</i> ~ <i>tintoux</i> Hungarian ~ Mongolian: <i>buvey</i>

*Table 1. Words used in lullabies*

The movement imitating word "*tente*" is generally used in Hungarian speaking areas, "*csicsija*" in Transdanubia and "*beli*" in Transylvania.

Calling the child pet names and making references to natural phenomena are general features of lullabies. "Nearly all European peoples use the identification of children (and loved ones) with stars, the Sun, the Moon and other celestial bodies. Sardinian lullabies even sing about the Sun and the Moon having been the baby's godparents and animals coming to worship it like the magi do in the Bible" (Katona 1992, 105).

In children's folklore, including several lullabies, animals are much more humane; "one might talk of a nearly fabular coexistence, [...] there is hardly any difference between wild and domestic animals; perhaps the latter are mentioned more often. [...] Distinction of good ones from bad ones is prob-

ably a later stage of development” (Katona 1992, 106). The animals’ role lies in showing examples: examples to follow include the kitty cat who is a good sleeper, the bird settling on its nest, the sleeping bunny, the lamb who comes home. We can all observe the elementary influence of animals’ behaviour on small children, and its reflections in language illustrate this ancient relationship.

As well as soothing and helping the baby fall asleep, lullabies also serve an educational purpose: they show the child their direct natural and social environment and set their place in it. “Lullabies are mostly archaic but are capable of continuous renewal, they are international and to some extent national; they are a good example of how profound similarities can evolve in identical circumstances in spite of a presumably very small external impact” (Katona 1992, 110).

## Dance words

Dance words are exclamations, which are often shrieked, to some degree spontaneously but in fixed forms, while dancing. The words used to describe them clearly reflect their functions: *kurjantás, rikkantás, ujjogató, csujogató (csujjogató), modzsikálás, verselés, and rikoltozás (exclaiming, shrieking, versing, shouting etc.)*. Dance words comprise seven or eight syllables, in mostly two but sometimes three or four lines, they are varied and they vary, and they are isorhythmic, that is, they are composed of the same rhythmic order. “During a dance, or a ball, everybody shouts out simultaneously, while in a wedding party the women and girls also assemble in groups to shout to the rhythm of the music and dance. Crying out always follows the rhythm of the music. In some villages in the Mezőség special melodies are reserved specifically for exclamations during wedding parties” (Kallós 1973, 107).

Marián Réthei Prikkel (1906, 14–15) categorised them in three groups:

- interjections: words (by now) without their own specific meaning,
- outcries: partly meaningful but elliptic (with omissions),
- dance exclamations: thoughts expressed in a full and correct form (with rhyme and verse).

Accordingly, the first category comprises interjections expressing encouragement and/or joy, (by today) without any specific meanings of their own, such as *uccu, iccu* (“words naturally expressing joy”), *hajrá, nosza, hopp, rajta; ejhaj, hejhaj, sejhaj, hajhahaj, hejehuja, hajaha, hej dinom-dánom, ihaj, tyuhaj,*

*ihaja, tyuhaja, ihajla, tyuhajla, ijjuju, ujjuju, tyuhaj (csuhaj), tyuhaja, and tyuhajla.* One characteristic feature of these forms is repetition or twinning (hejhaj) front-back pairs (*iccu ~ uccu, hejehuja*) and variant generation (*ejhaj, hejhaj, and sejhaj*). The second group comprises partly meaningful but still usually elliptic exclamations (with omissions): *uccu neki, uccu rajta; iccu neki, ne hadd magad; uccu lábam, ne hibázz; csak szivessen; ne kedvem, ne; édes eszem, ne hagyj el; ez az élet gyöngyélet; nyakamba, karomra; szorídd no; ne engedd, csülökre; hopp Sári sarokra; szembe szívem; busújjon a ló; tyuhaj, sohse halunk meg; ejhaj, táncra táncz; három a tánc; and kivilágos virradatig (kivirradtig).* The third groups of dance exclamations express feelings and thoughts in a full, proper form, rhyme, or verse: *lhaja, tyuhaja – libeg-lobog a haja; Haj cic tralárom, most élem világom; Haja haj, semmi baj; Haja hess, de feszes; ljuju, jujuju, a nadrágom kétágú; and Dinom-dánom nadrágom – a komámnak testálom.* This text-like composition comprises mostly two-line, seven- or eight-syllable rhyming exclamations. As Réthei Prikkel explains: “In terms of language shape they are highly varied: exclamatory, imperative, conditional, comparative, contrasting, concluding and other forms of expression appear among them, in surprising diversity. And they can also be enjoyed sometimes for the witty brevity, sometimes for the dramatic fragmentation and sometimes the proverbial completeness, of expression. They please the scrutiniser at times by amassing meaningful attributes and epithets, at other times with their ingenious similes and metaphors” (Réthei Prikkel 1906, 15).

These exclamations are concise: *Szembe szívem, ha szeretsz, ha nem szeretsz, elmehetsz; and Úgy szeretlek, majd megeszlek, megbecsüllek, ha elveszlek.*

Verses in the imperative, with a punch line, include: *Járd ki lábam, járd ki most, nem parancsol senki most; Féltre tőlem búbanat, búzát vágok, nem nádat; Szorítsd hozzád, nem anyád, ha szorítod, csókot ád; Járjad, járjad hajnallig, míg a szoknyád langallik; and Adj egy csókot holdvilágom, úgy sem adsz a másvilágon.*

Exclamatory forms with apt attributes include: *Óh de ügyes, óh de jó, óh de kedvemre való; and Ez a leány sokat ér, se fekete, se fejtér, se kövér, se ösztövé.*

Prikkel Réthei (1906, 16) also drew attention to oriental picture language: “Hungarians are known for their special liking for metaphorical speech, a trait indicative of an oriental origin. Nowhere else is it more eloquently proven than in our dance rhymes.” Examples include: *Édes a szád, mint a méz, perg a nyelved, mint a réz; Egyenes vagy, mint a nád, hozzám szabott az apád; Hugom asszony, kend csak úgy, én a kakas, kend a tyúk; A menyecske jámbor fecske, nem rúc, nem*

*dőf, mint a kecske; Kiszáradt a füge fástul, elválunk rózsám egymástul; Levendula ágastul, ugorj egyet párostul; Száraz kóró, nem nedves, a vén asszony nem kedves; Kicsiny csupor hamar forr, a vén asszony puska, Keresztúri szitakéreg, ne futkározz, mint a féreg; Sárga rigó, köménymag, jaj be kevély legény vagy, Vékony cérna, kendermag, jaj be kevély leány vagy; and Szűrő, szita, tejeslábas, álljon félre, aki házas.*

Besides being metaphorical, they are also powerful in expressing contrast: *Kicsiny legény, nagy puska, nagy a hágó, nem bírja;* and *Csöngő-böngő sarkantyú, nincs a pajtába bornyú.*

Dance words expressing conclusions include: *A házasság kaloda: ne tedd a lábad oda; Kicsiny nekem ez a ház, kirúgom az oldalát; and Kapud előtt mély árok: hozzád többet nem járok* (1906, 16).

Finally, Prikkel Réthei (1906, 17) notes how ancient dance exclamations are: “The unity and antiquity of our national dance is proven by the same dance exclamations being used in regions far apart from each other, whose populations are prevented from communicating with each other by great distances, and were even more completely separated from each other in the past. [...] The majority of dance exclamations are the same across the whole of the country, [...] these similarities can be detected in sources dating back to the days of yore.”

Dance words exude the joy of life: people going out of control, or unleashing pent-up erotic desires, sometimes in the form of undisguised obscene allusions. To the extent that a feeling of joy keeps one going, dance words represent an eternal genre of vitality and the joy of life, so it is no mere coincidence that from spontaneous vocal outbursts to an eruption of suppressed allusions to lyrical phrasing, they represent virtually the whole range of art and poetry.

## Dirges

Particular attention is paid to dirges in both folk musicology and folklore studies alike. Zoltán Kodály describes the genre thus: “The importance of dirge as a musical genre in the Hungarian culture: the only example of prosaic recitative and the nearly only venue of improvising [...] musical prose, on the borderline between music and speech” (Kodály and Vargyas 1952, 38–39). Dirges ease tensions by displaying the pain and bitterness caused by loss, enkindling sympathy. The melody and text of a dirge should be studied together. The musical performance is characterised by cry-like pitches, with choking voices, uncer-

tain intonation turning into weeping, recitative and singing being interrupted by crying while the text is characterised by rhetorical questions, exclamations, and imperatives, as well as interjections. To a very great extent, dirges are characterised by syncretism, which is so typical of folklore songs. The mourners (usually women) claim that they do not prepare for the mourning. The most profound characteristics of a dirge are improvisation and variation, following a basic model. There are ready-made formulas, which the mourners vary. These formulas are used as a mnemonic instrument. Szenik states: "The collective term reciting (recitative) comprises all of the melodies that create a speech-like effect with the special means of music. [...] In an unfathomably distant past the recitative may have sprung from the intonation and rhythm of speech but then, transformed into music, it evolved on its own. Its decoupling from a specific language is proven by the evolution of various mostly 'supranational' styles within it" (1996, 26). Melody and text vary together in dirges, as Szenik explains: "the text gives an explanation in the music and vice versa. One proof of the relative autonomy is that both concordant and discordant relationships can be found in every single dirge [...] The melody is, by all means, more plastic than the text" (1996, 27).

melody	text
cry-like pitches, voices choking up, uncertain intonation turning into weeping, recitative and singing broken by crying	rhetoric questions, exclamations and imperatives, interjections
melody line	syntactic unit/verse line
musical phrase, rhythm formula (= prosody)	order of linguistic/metric emphases
musical phase	sentence sequences/verse
varies	varies
more plastic	more solid (more like formulas)

*Table 2. Relationships between melody and text in a dirge (after Szenik 1996, 27)*

As Ilona Szenik (1996, 37) maintains, "in the speech-like performance [of mourners] the basic pulse of the rhythm more or less follows the speed of

speech”, which means that music and text live and evolve in parallel. Our dirges are akin to the Lamentations of Mary, including the Old Hungarian Lamentation of Mary (circa 1300), which scholars consider to be the first one.

## Instinctive linguistic manifestations

In addition to the existing, widely-known, and well-researched folklore genres, we can see the initial elementary forms being studied in further, contemporary phenomena. Sigmund Freud drew attention to slips of the tongue and jokes, to name but one example. I will now discuss the instinctive, spontaneous, unconscious, or barely conscious language functions that I have observed.

## Spontaneous linguistic manifestations

The first ones to mention are the slips of the tongue that were studied so thoroughly by Freud. The psychoanalyst believed that they were not accidental. He claimed that they reflect and show something. As Móricz mentions: “There is a reason for a person’s uttering an unnecessary word. There’s something they do not wish to say” (1976, 34).

As a linguist, I would give first place to sudden impulsive exclamations and shouts. In terms of parts of speech, they are categorised as interjections, and in terms of genre they are, for instance, shouts, and more precisely dance words, as previously mentioned. Involuntary manifestations expressing state of mind or mood may belong to the category of impulsive manifestations, for example, mumbling (hm, uhm). Móricz illustrates this with an example: “Hm [...] This small sound frightened him; his wife sounded exactly like the girl... Men usually express this in a completely different way: Hm [...]” (1976, 49).

Furthermore, a low level of consciousness is also reflected by sighs, pleading, and, at a basic level, prayers. Vilmos Tánzos reports that Hungarians in Moldavia would spend their day in prayer. Prayer is an anthropological characteristic of mankind, and is common to all peoples. Prayer, as well as forms of mantra (for Christians, the rosary), is also observed in all societies. I have seen people praying in everyday situations all over the world. Father József Holczer writes in one of his memoirs that he saw a man on a crowded bus mumbling something back in the 1950s. The other passengers questioned him provokingly: What are you mumbling about? Is there any problem with the system? The man answered

them calmly: I am praying. The last sighs of people dying (for example, mortally wounded soldiers) have been observed by many. In *A farewell to arms*, Hemingway notes that dying soldiers call out to their mothers (*mamma mia*). Similar sentiments appear in a poetic form in Géza Gyóni's poem *Csak egy éjszakára...* (*For just one night*):

*Mikor a pokolnak égő torka tárul,  
S vér csurog a földön, vér csurog a fáról  
Mikor a rongy sátor nyöszörög a szélben  
S haló honvéd sóhajt: fiam... feleségem...*

Their child's first words live on, in an almost magical way, in every parent. Linguists also study them but man's last words appear to be less interesting, despite the fact that the degradation of the language of people dying of old age, and their last words, are shockingly similar to baby talk. Examples for this include simplified (or rather, re-simplified) semantics and grammar. We were made from dust and to dust we shall return – as we also say in our language. The last words of the dying linger on in relatives' and nurses' memories as do a child's first words in the memories of parents. A hospice nurse claimed that the patients' last words are mostly the same; nearly all call for their mothers.<sup>4</sup>

There are also less conscious, indeed, rather unconscious linguistic manifestations. In addition to utterances such as "I want you" and the like, this kind of manifestation, with a limited vocabulary, focuses on encouragement. Milán Füst, inspired by psychoanalysis, writes about how frequently obscenities and desires burst out. It is in such situations that one calls out the name of their previous (or parallel) lover, in terms of endearments, which may be a potential source of serious conflict.

"[...] many a woman for instance, wants to hear the grossest terms for the act in which she is being engaged, what she is doing and what is being done to them, and also for the genitals, by which they are aroused to extreme measures, filled with luscious frenzy. (Indeed, even men like to insult their ladies in this way, finding joy in whispering, in intimate moments, in their ears which would have been scandalous before they came to be on intimate terms with each other.)" (Füst 1986, 110).

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.filter.hu/cikkek/1022/mit-mondanak-a-halaluk-elott>

Uncontrolled speech uttered under the influence of alcohol or narcotics bears comparison to talking during sexual intercourse. It is widely recognised that certain language barriers are removed by the consumption of alcohol. Alcohol loosens articulation and makes communication more casual and relaxed.

It may even make speaking in foreign languages more fluent, which is why the habit of drinking a shot of hard alcohol before taking examinations has become commonplace among university students. Two different characteristics of the impact of alcohol on speech have been observed: some people become more garrulous and communicative, while others become more reticent. In other words, some become more assertive (violent), while others become gentler. These different states are influenced by basic personality traits. Words and text spoken in hypnosis (ecstasy) are somewhat different from those spoken when drunk. Similar phenomena may occur in the uncontrolled manifestations of women giving birth. This is also a popular topic on the World Wide Web.<sup>5</sup> Midwives are reported as saying: "They keep shouting at us, they even threaten us. Mothers curse, scream during childbirth, keep calling us for trifles, demand a lot, but that's not the worst of it. It is even worse when women, indeed, their partners too, become aggressive, which happens more frequently than you might think."<sup>6</sup>

A similar phenomenon is that of impulsive manifestations, curses, and sayings, illustrated by the saying "It just slipped out."

The linguistic manifestations of people with aphasia, dementia, and other mental health issues may also be involuntary vocalisations. Linguistic manifestations in dreams, ranging from inarticulate sounds to meaningful sentences, which people cannot recall on being awakened or after waking up, are also fully uncontrolled. Some are even afraid that they might "blurt out" something when dreaming. My hypothesis is that a variety of languages come into play when people dream, one of which is without doubt an ancient one, a proto-language. For example, the *a-o-ú* outcry that is emitted in a state of panic reflects the most ancient sounds of fear, and perhaps even the very genesis of language.

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5 pl. Szülés-ordítás. <https://nlc.hu/forum/?id=1057&fid=441&topicid=181736&step=1&page=5>

6 21 titok szülésznőktől (21 secrets from midwives). <https://www.szeretlekmagyarorszag.hu/eletstilus/21-titok-szuloszno-anyaszules-baba-gyerek-szuloszoba/>



Some archaic instinct may also be inherent in counting. Counting represents a kind of rhythm, an iteration. Who knows why people tend to count light poles along the railway, or people dressed in white, or just time, the minutes as they tick by? Béla Hamvas refers to the archaic nature of numbers: "The science of numbers, the number theory, the mysticism of numbers, or the metaphysics of numbers, were known to all prehistoric peoples" (1995, I/1939). We have lost this knowledge but some remnants linger on. "The archaic number relates to the number of historic man in the same way as does the prehistoric picture language to the conceptual or common language of historic man" (1995, I/194), that is, he traces the archaic number back to prehistoric picture language. "Sound was considered to have been the first material appearance of the number. The harmony and disharmony of sounds is based on numbers. Music – says Saint-Martin – is none other than counting and when the human soul is enjoying music, it does none other than follow the progressions of numbers. [...] [The] soul dances at such times on numbers because the basis of dance is number, as it is that of music, or of sculpture, architecture or poetry; or that of crystals, of the leaves of plants, of flowers and of colours. When dancing, the human body is making movements corresponding the ratios; it experiences and utters numbers" (1995, I/222). Rhyming is somewhat similar to counting. One involuntarily picks up a rhyme and keeps repeating and humming it without control. It is very common for people to find that a song (part of a melody, a musical motive) that was heard and imprinted in the past, or some rhythm occurring to them in any incomprehensible and inexplicable way, involuntarily appears in their minds and they continue to hum it. I heard the following anecdote in relation to Christmas in a village in the Érmellék area: "Everyone used to be singing at Christmas time in the old days."

Finally, the most frequently encountered form of involuntary language use is when people talk to themselves (out loud), which is, together with murmuring and the uttering of unusual sounds, an internalising behaviour problem.<sup>7</sup> This includes humming, improvising tunes, making involuntary jokes, and muttering or chattering while working.

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7 Dr. Homoki Andrea–Cs. Ferenczi Szilvia–Dr. Csákvári Judit: Konstruktív agresszió- és bullyingkezelés a gyermekvédelmi szakellátásban (Constructive aggression and bullying management in child protection). [http://prekogalfa.hu/documents/efop/TF\\_KAB\\_Hallgatoi.pdf](http://prekogalfa.hu/documents/efop/TF_KAB_Hallgatoi.pdf)

What is the common element in involuntary linguistic manifestations? The common element is that they are linked to specific occasions or situations (as triggers), they are instinctive and they occur spontaneously, involuntarily. Nonetheless, they are often fixed, iterative, sometimes phraseme-like, likely archaic, or at least linked to a profound experience (in the life of the individual and in a way not even evident to them).

## Involuntary doodling

Involuntary manifestations may include spontaneous unconscious doodling; in notebooks, or on page margins. Some of them may be linguistic manifestations. The communicative (expression carrying) role of movement is manifested not only in gestures, but also in movement pictures that are fixed in writing. It is of particular interest to examine the doodles of pre-literate children, as they have not yet been influenced by literacy and the skill of writing (unless indirectly, when the parent's drawing or writing is noticed by the child who then tries to imitate it). Reoccurring features have been observed in children's doodles, which then remained unchanged later in life. Some people doodle, while others do not. An early psychological study found that doodling is caused by unused energy and is one of the twiddling movements referred to by Szászi (1943, 3–4). The study of spontaneous doodles also opens a secret world: they often conceal general symbolic contents that are stored in mankind's collective subconscious. Individuals themselves do not specifically store their doodles; as they "flow through" the individual they undergo certain "distortion and modification" (Feuer 2002, 9). Bühler (1930) observed the following development path in children's drawings (cited by, Szászi 1943, 46): a jumble of lines, schematic ornamentation, layout drawing (with the presence of a system in the drawing), and realistic pictures.

In terms of form, spontaneous doodles, as described by Éva Szászi (1943, 5–6), may be of a drawing type and a writing type.

The drawing type includes: concrete representations (a person, a human head, a body part, an animal, a plant, clothes, food, a caricature, a transport vehicle, a symbolic drawing, a celestial body, a scene, a map); geographical forms (regular or distorted, a simple drawing or a technical drawing relating to a profession); framing (thickening, simple, ornamented, illustrative framing, crossing, shading); ornamenting (user instruction signs, combined in ornament-

ing forms, ornamenting motives, components of repetitive drawing); a system of lines (a maze, doodles showing irregular patterns when combined, straight or regularly curved lines); and irregular ut qua Steif doodles.

The writing type includes: names (initials); other words (such as addresses or dates), letters, and characters; digits, special signs (square roots, musical notes, shorthand, or chemical symbols); and formed ornamented signs and words (words in decorative letters: "calligraphy", words written in distorted letters, ornate letters, digits, or characters).

Szászi (1943, 8) identifies the circumstances (and motivation) in which doodles are produced: external association, a liking for drawing, a drawing situation, a wish to ornament, fulfilment of desires, emotional release, motional release, disguising, and repetition. She explains: "involuntary doodling is none other than fulfilling certain primitive artistic aspirations" (1943, 46). Feuer (2002, 26–27) additionally mentions dispelling boredom and releasing tension as well as escaping from the given situation.

Perhaps not surprisingly, most of these motivations are present in creative human activities, in everyday life and in the arts, and so their impressions are present in our primary spoken and secondary written language use alike. A profound analysis of the phenomena leads us to realise, and this conclusion has not yet been drawn by anyone else, that literacy is not necessarily a secondary form of language use, since motivation appears in doodling (at the age of about two) long before the individual masters the skill of writing, and it is only joined by literacy at a later stage (resulting in the adoption or transformation of conventional characters).

The semantics of doodling examines the meaning of doodles, including the symbols they comprise, the elements and components of which include: lines, combinations of lines, geometric forms, and figures (plants and animals, objects, or other forms). The frequently drawn tulip symbol, for instance, represents "A symbol of womanhood and love. The doodler is a noteworthy, impressive phenomenon. They like being in the focus of attention but will not go out of their way to achieve it. They mature their thoughts and ideas inside and share only the outcome with others. They like colours, brilliant, flashy things. They have good taste, aesthetic flair and artistic talents" (Feuer 2020, 172).

Szászi (1943, 45–46) sees playful and artistic imagination reflected by doodling; the playful side is aimed at the environment and existing (finished) things,

while the artistic side is driven by creative imagination. Artistic shaping and the stylising of things is illustrated by simplification and variation.

I have introduced my own evolutionary typology for a drawn or written doodle. Its underlying aspect is one of progress from simple to complex, from concrete to abstract (the development idea can be identified here too):

#### Drawing doodles

- simple (irregular) lines, curves, shading,
- formations, geometric figures,
- concrete representations (humans, animals, objects in their environment, along the concrete-abstract line),
- individual, creative ornamental motives,
- drawing, painting.

#### Written doodles

- letters, words,
- signatures (as self-representation),
- numbers, special symbols,
- ornamental symbols, calligraphy,
- writing: taking notes, drafting texts.

I have treated folklore studies-based and linguistic investigations of doodles in previous studies (for example, Balázs 1983, 1987, 1994).

## Perception at the bottom of consciousness

Perceptual, artistic, and linguistic phenomena shed light on further exciting subconscious operations. A number of people possess the ability to associate other concepts, colours and numbers with letters, names, days, and months. I aim to explore this subject in another study, which is currently in progress.

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