

# **Historical dialectological and historical sociolinguistic analysis in the witchcraft trials of Szeged**

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The source of my doctoral thesis is the witchcraft trials of Szeged, Hungary. These documents were created from 1726 to 1744, and as official court proceedings, they are particularly suitable for historical dialectological and sociolinguistic analysis. In my research I examine linguistic phenomena that are typical across the whole Hungarian-speaking area, and in addition, those that are only used in a dialectal region.

In my paper, I have four aims:

1. to separate the clerks who made the documents
2. to determine the dialect of clerks
3. to separate the data of witnesses
4. to characterize the use of written language

The thesis presents that I could differentiate 14 clerks by paleographic and linguistic characteristics, and also I could specify the dialect of clerks by linguistic phenomena, with one exception. However, it is nearly impossible to isolate the language usage of scribes or witnesses, so further linguistic analyzes are needed to solve the problem. The study points out that the different variants characteristic of the spoken language can be found in the official documents from the middle Hungarian era. Besides, spontaneous standardization efforts also appeared at that time and affected the writing practice of clerks. Of course, it is also worth remembering that even then the written language is much more conservative, more normative and more formal than the spoken language, and this limits the probability of variability. So, we need to deal with different variables in order to get an idea of their position in the standardization process.