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Abstract

**DIFFERENCE vs. HOMOGENEITY, AND ORALITY vs. LITERACY
WITHIN THE LANGUAGE OF ROMANIAN PEOPLE**

Standardization and linguistic variation are processes that require a complex linguistic and cultural analysis, often carried out under the framework of linguistic anthropology. This research project concentrates upon the relationship between standard literary Romanian and the Moldavian dialect spoken in the eastern part of Romania, in an effort to reveal the ideological premises and the social circumstances surrounding these two modes of expression. I plan to investigate alternative perspectives on Romanian language as they are expressed by regional speakers who operate constantly between their local linguistic practices (oral, historical varieties) and the standard variety (the vehicle of literacy, mass-media and administration), and to research the impact of standard Romanian on both regional speech styles and on the speakers' sense of identity. I will carry out this pilot project in the Moldavian city of Iași and in two near-by rural locations, aiming to engage children under ten years of age and their families in a discussion about the children's transition to literacy, which is the main step of their immersion into the standard language. Also, I will use participant observation, archival dialectal material and semi-structured interviews in order to identify circumstances in which regional speakers are constrained to adopt the literary language, and to elicit meta-linguistic discourses that might illuminate some indexical relations between linguistic varieties and social practices that are particular for the speakers of Romanian.