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Towards linguistic Romanianness

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Abstract. Particularly in societies built on ethnic foundations and where nationalism has been decisive for social cohesion, language is one of the strongest traits of identity. One of the most important traits of Romanianness – nationality – with its functional counterpart, i.e. Romanian as a national language, represents the core value around which other identity components gravitate. In this study I will show in general and in essential terms how it has come to linguistic Romanianness.

Keywords: identity, nationalism, Romanianness, sociolinguistics, minorities.

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Romanianness is a cultural and political construct that emerged in the 19th century and is based on the selection of certain cultural (and linguistic), historical and social requisites that are useful in the conception and construction of the Romanian[1] nation. Among these requisites, language is of obvious constitutive importance to us; however, this is not always the case from the start. The selection of some salient features to the detriment of others in the creation of the Romanian identity, the prevalence of some myths of identity to the detriment of others, were motivated in the mid-nineteenth century by political needs that led to the creation of the Romanian unitary state. Due to their founding role, the identity traits of Romanianness – and among them, language – continue to play their central role in terms of national cohesion design.

Generally, the formation of national identity is conditioned by certain types of factors, summarized in the models by Deutsch (1953) and de Ventos (1994) in primary factors (ethnicity, territory, language, religion and the like), generative factors (the development of the mass-media and technolo-

[1] A useful definition of nation is given by Smith (2010: 13): "I proposed to define the concept of nation as 'a named human community residing in a perceived homeland, and having common myths and a shared history, a distinct public culture, and common laws and customs for all members'."

gies, the formation of urban agglomerations, the emergence of modern armies), induced factors (linguistic standardization, bureaucracy, public education) and reactive factors (the creation of ideologies and mythologies in defense of– possibly – oppressed identity). Romanianness is a well-founded construction that continues to express itself on the centrality of the national language, Romanian, an essential element of Herder's well-known triad "Ein Volk, ein Land, eine Sprache", i.e. (one) nation – (one) language – (one) territory. Another founding identity trait of Romanianness is religion[2], which, before Communism, accepted other Christian faiths alongside Orthodoxy, while during Communism it was strongly put into question by Marxist ideology.

After the fall of Communism "nationalism helped the Romanian Orthodox Church restore the prestige it lost under Communism by claiming the unique position of depositary of genuine traditional Romanian values. In our time (...) national identity seems to be closely linked to religion" (Spohn *et alii* 2015: 131, 141-142), with countries such as Cyprus, Greece and Romania at the forefront, followed by Poland and other Catholic countries, while "the Orthodox Church appears to be the most reliable institution in the eyes of Romanians at the expense of democratically elected bodies, such as the Parliament" (Stan and Turcescu 2007: 201). However, the role of the (Romanian) language exceeds that of religion in the expression of Romanianness, if we look at the way in which the censuses of the Romanian population are made, with the language question in the foreground, as a type of operation that represents the product of an epistemological tradition which is typical of East-European nationalisms (Arel 2002: 96-97) that prefer the language variable to the detriment of state of birth, citizenship or religion as more often occurs in countries with consolidated democracies.

This paper aims to present some considerations on how Romanian has become the official language of Romania at the expense of other linguistic varieties spoken in the territories where Romanians lived – and consequently within the borders of Romania in 1859 and within its current borders – from which the important role of the Romanian language in the composition of Romanianness derives.

LINGUISTIC IDEOLOGY

At the heart of the national scaffolding of Romanianness lies the linguistic dimension, for various reasons that stem from the essence of the nationalism to which we refer, in which language was already the pivot of narration, but also from the centrality of language in human manifestations of all kinds.

The Romanian language is in fact not only a fundamental trait of the identity of Romanianness but is also a "primary" component – in the sense of easy access by all members of the community to the language of ethnocentric ideology. An obvious paradox between "language" and "nation" is the change in weight that the linguistic component undergoes over time with reference to its accessibility. At the beginning of a national project, it can be very difficult to select a linguistic variety and impose it as a common (i.e., national) language for many communities, which are characterized by a strong dialect fragmentation (as, for example, in the case of Italy), but which at the same time may be motivated by other needs in order to stay together. With the passage of time, once the nation has been consolidated and therefore once the official language has become a fundamental trait of identity, the national language becomes a heritage to which access is much more immediate and at ease than access to other components of identity, such as, for example, (common) history, civic sense and cultural orientation in general, which require specific interventions by the school, the press, the politics.

Linguistic unity is complemented, in a natural way, by an alleged cultural homogeneity, so that in the composition of Romanianness the role of other people's cultures (minorities, border neighbors or further afield, migrants of the more or less recent past) is to be underestimated or even erased (Livezeanu 2000: 300). In addition to the decisive element of the national language and literature in the national language (Drace-Francis 2006), other identity elements have been added to Romanianness, derived from the nineteenth century-type nationalism (Seton-Watson

[2] Romania has one of the highest levels of religiosity (81%) in Europe, surpassed in its vicinity only by Poland (86%) and Turkey (83%) (WVS6, 2010-2014).

1977: 175-185).

Romanian has a famous heritage (popular Latin as the founding principle of the present idiom), a mythological lineage (associated with the little-known languages of the Dacians or even the Thracians) and a dramatic destiny (a neo-Latin "island" in a sea of Slavic languages, in far-east Romania), as concepts that have been repeated continuously in order not to establish precise linguistic classifications in the conscience of the public but, above all, for political purposes, to affirm the rights of speakers of this idiom and their predominance to the detriment of speakers of other languages. This is, as in the case of the Basque language, the coincidence – in the Romance languages field – of the linguistic-political boundary, and paradoxically, it would not even be necessary to create an ideology to underline it (Dahmen 2018). On the other hand, the ideology of the extraordinary nature of the Romanian language insists on giving secondary and even less importance to the different traits that the Romanian language shares with all the neighbouring languages, not to mention the key role of Slavic languages (Bulgarian, for example), in the formation of the Romanian language and in the cultural history of Romanian; this image is perfectly reflected in the ethnonational ideology specific to many states of Europe and in particular of the Balkans[3] (Barbour, Carmichael 2001), an ideology in which the nation defines itself above all through the opposing position with others, almost always around the size of the language.

Paradoxically, the linguistic dimension – the one that seems easier to challenge because it is more immediate – and also the one that most betrays ethnonationalist discourse, where one of the central claims of this ideology, that of "linguistic purity"[4] (Langer and Davies 2005) – in relation to some kind of ethnic purity – is largely contradicted by this scientific study. However, in the 19th century and even after, the common language was the decisive argument in favor of the affirmation of the Romanian national state. In Wright's words (2000: 48):

> The national movement was based negatively – on a rejection both of Turkish suzerainty and of links with Slav and Hungarian neighbors – and positively – on awareness of group singularity defined most precisely by language. None of the other organizing principles of nationalism could be coopted to allow the Romanians to constitute themselves as collectivity with precisely the boundaries dictated by language criteria, separate from the surrounding Slavs and Hungarians. There was no internal cohesion from a single, separate tradition, no common past from which to draw: Wallachia, Moldova and Transylvania had each experienced a distinct history. There were no high boundary fences in terms of religious allegiance; the Romanians had no reason to differentiate themselves from their Slav neighbors for them were all members of the Orthodox Church.

To build a nation state, 19th century Romanian nationalism had placed Romanian ethnicity at the center of all things, and in opposition to minority ethnic groups (Iordachi 2019), around the idea of a sort of compactness and ethnic and language purity on which to consolidate a national consciousness[5] (Wexler 1974, Cavalli-Sforza 2001). From then on, Romania will consolidate on the model of the French Jacobin-like state, until it gradually became an almost uni-ethnic, highly centralized state, in which the contributions of others, i.e., foreigners, neighbors or minorities, (which play an important role for the history, for the history of the language, for explaining traditions, the birth of arts and sciences) were reported to a limited extent, and as long as these contributions could not be avoided, their importance was minimized (Sibii 2012). Around the year 1918, in the process of Romanianization that the state implemented in regions such as Bukovina, Transylvania and Bessarabia,

> (t)he minorities did not speak with one voice, for ethnic group, religion, maternal language, politics divided them, and province, but most of them came to regret the reversal of fate, which relegated them to subordinate status. (Livezeanu 2000: 11)

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[3] Autonomy and independence arrive for Greeks (1820), and then for the Serbs (1830), Romanians (1859), Bulgarians (1878) and Albanians (1912).

[4] A rare case of non-overlapping between the demand for statehood and linguistic affirmation is that of North Macedonia (FYROM – Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) which had gained independence in 1992 if not with the help, at least with the indulgence of Bulgaria, which was in fact among the first to recognize the new state Macedonia, although it was complaining that the language of the Macedonians was a Bulgarian dialect.

[5] Among Romanians, the pride they take in their nationality has very high values (WVS6 (2010-2014)).

LANGUAGE STANDARDIZATION

The imposition of Romanian as the language of the nation is therefore connected with the historical period and the type of nationalism underlying the national project of the 19th century. Romanian linguistic ideology is still a consequence of the epistemology of "standard" national cultures and languages that was developed in the 18th and 19th centuries in Europe. In general, language policies in most countries of the world have been guided by the principle of "a language for social homogeneity". However, starting from the Enlightenment – Romanticism dichotomy, as currents of thought pertaining to two different ways in which peoples organize themselves into nations, two different perspectives on the standardization of languages can be extracted, during at least the last three centuries (Geeraerts 2003), that is, that of "rational" standardization vs. "romantic" standardization of the language (or languages) of the nation.

The "rational" vision (Enlightenment thought) on language and the standardization of language conceives language above all as a means of communication. The linguistic community does not load the language that it speaks with an additional identity connotation depending on the space where it is spoken or the social classes that use it, and, moreover, one language is no better than other languages based on strictly linguistic characteristics or its history; language is expected to be used to challenge any argument. In summary, language is simply the ideal medium for social emancipation, just as it began to be considered in premodern age (as standard French in revolutionary and post-revolutionary France) and as it continues to be considered as such in modern liberal societies, albeit with differences.

In the "romantic" approach, besides being a tool for communication, language is above all a means of speakers' aggregation, and consequently also of exclusion or oppression of non-speakers; dialects are the "real" and authentic expression of local culture and individual and local identity. This vision can be easily linked not only to the romantic vision of "indigenous" and "authentic" local languages, but also to more modern sociological perspectives, as a symbolic capital or power that, according to Bourdieu, associate certain linguistic varieties with the dominant social strata of society.

However, empirical analysis does not place the various countries at absolute extremes of "rational-romantic" continuum but distributes them within the two ideal poles in many intermediary points. According to this model, the imposition of Romanian as a national or "standard" language seems to draw closer to the Romantic model, in which nationalist ideology of the 19th century aims to defend the purity of culture and identity by blocking foreign influences (such as loans especially from French and Italian) and avoiding multilingual practices.

Another theoretical model from which this demonstration can benefit is that of "closed" vs. "open nationalism" (Kohn 1968: 66), which defines "open nationalism" as a more modern form, based on belonging to a territory (and therefore has a "geographical" nature), consisting of a nation of fellow citizens, regardless of their ethnic origin. The so-called large immigration countries such as Canada, Australia and the United States are good examples. In "ethnic" or "closed" nationalism, the ethnic group is the mirror of the nation-state. The emphasis is on the indigenous character of the nation, the common origin and ancestral roots. In "ethnic" or "closed" nationalism, language can reach an enormous importance in defining identity, far beyond its communication functions. According to this model, Italy, France, Spain and Romania were built on the model of "closed", "ethnic" nationalism (Kohn 1968); the situation is different in Belgium, where there is an accepted, majority-based culture of a federal and regional national state (which may fall within the scope of Kohn's open or geographical nationalism model) dealing with a nationalism similar to that of Italy, which places at the center of its ideology the unifying and centralizing role of the language, this time as a linguistic trinity (German, French and Dutch – official languages in Belgium).

Like all languages that have become standard on the model of the centralist state (see the case of France – Giordan 1992), standard Romanian prefers to maintain a substantial distance from local dialects (rom. *graiuri*), although between the two levels, i.e. standard and dialects, there is a clear filiation relationship in favor of the dialects: regarding its dialectal base, standard Romanian is built on the phonetics of the southern speakers of the country and the grammar of the northern speakers (Tratat 1984). Moreover, in a sociolinguistic way, it can be

noted that the prestige of the dialectal varieties spoken in the historical regions of Moldavia or Transylvania is insignificant compared to the that of dialectal varieties spoken in the center of political power, that is, Bucharest, the capital of Romania. In other words, Romania's local vernaculars, as it is always the case in centralist countries, are given different socio-cultural prestige, depending on the distance from the Capital, where the local dialect has the higher sociolinguistic status. In this sense, for example, the inhabitants of Moldavia region who spoke local dialects are generally associated with a lower economic and socio-cultural level, and this increases proportionally as one moves north of this region.

LANGUAGE POLICY

The handbooks of primary schools in the 19th century build an image of the "good Romanian" based on Roman descent and Christian membership, which, together with other "natural" skills of the Romanian, demonstrate the uniqueness of the mother-land (Murgescu 1999). The Romanian language manuals and history handbooks of the 20th century (up to the high school level) represent the historical apotheosis of a nation without residues, without contradictions and without doubt, a unique, timeless nation designed to survive despite everything and everyone (Sibii 2012). The results of an ideology of exclusion, based on opposition to "others", whoever they may be, continue to this day. To give one of the best-known examples in linguistics, most Romanian scholars continue to have a hard time recognizing the role of Slavic languages in the history of the Romanian language. Romanian has not established itself in a "normal" way as the official language of the state, but rather this has been done through planned political actions. In 1859, Romania was in urgent need of consolidation and for this purpose the centralist – nationalist model was the most suitable. For example, one of the (achieved) aims of the Romanian Academy (founded in 1866) was the linguistic unification of the country, by imposing a rule of literary language of Romanian, even if the Constitution of 1866 does not expressly indicate the Romanian language as the state language. Transylvania's language policies were dictated at that time by the "Law of Nationalities (1868)" which placed language policies at the center of the functionality in an ethnic and multi-federal state, based on the idea that any possible conflicts between nationalities would be prevented by regulating the use of languages spoken in Hungary, in administration, education and in the public domain (Gidó *et alii* 2010).

Half a century later, the Romanian Constitution (1923) will clearly state that (Art. 126) "The Romanian language is the official language of the Romanian State" and, while admitting the presence of other languages spoken on its territory, it gives no definition of these languages, as well as of the other religions other than the Orthodox one. Romania's capital law between the two World Wars did not define the internal "others" and therefore gave no indication of how to relate to them, in a young Romanian country where ethnicities and languages other than Romanian were well represented numerically, especially in urban hubs (Ioncioaia 2011). The Constitution of the Romanian People's Republic (1948) takes note of the existence of minorities, a reality expressed by the phrase "co-inhabitants nationality" (Art. 24), who have "the right to use [their] mother tongue and [to benefit from of] teaching at all levels in their mother tongue". Art. 24 continues: "The administration and justice, in jurisdictions inhabited by populations of different nationalities, shall use the language of their nationality orally and in writing and designate officials from among that nationality or other nationalities who speak the language of the local population. The teaching of Romanian language and literature is compulsory in schools of any degree." As it can be seen, the Constitution avoids precise terms such as minority or minority language. In the first case we speak of "co-resident nationality" or "local population", while in the second case we speak of "mother tongue", a term which – in applied linguistics studies – represents a precise reality (the first spoken language learnt from the mother) but which in political-administrative context is almost defective, because of its ambiguity (for example, which is the mother tongue of speakers born in mixed couples? Which is the mother tongue in so-called second or third generations of migrant individuals?). Of course, the Romanian Communist state was completely asynchronous as compared with various Western democratic countries that openly addressed the issues of bilingualism and multiculturalism. Minorities are finally recognized in the subsequent Constitution of 1952 as "nationals", (in its

preamble: "The national minorities of the Romanian People's Republic benefit from full equality of rights with the Romanian people.") and that occurs at the end of a process in which the centralist – nationalist ideology had fulfilled its role of validating Romanianness, with its corollary of the assimilation of minorities, in which the almost exclusive use of Romanian language in the public sphere applies[6].

The national policies in Romania at that time are overtly inspired by the French revolutionary state model of 1789 that proclaimed the political need to impose a (single) official language at the expense of dialectal varieties as well as at the expense of minority languages in order to achieve the homogeneity of the nation. As with the other nation states of central and south-east Europe of the same period, the elites designed and implemented the political construction of modern Romania with the firm conviction of the need for administrative and linguistic centralism, to the detriment of the cultural and historical reasons of the various regional Community components, to which less importance was given. Over the centuries, this type of "linguistic unification of a territory" (Baggioni 1997) through the imposition of a language on all its citizens has been driven, on a case-by-case basis, by philosophical, cultural, political means; however, experience taught us that both for France and for the countries it inspired, the linguistic constraint has been the elite's way of exercising political power (Kremnitz 2013).

During Communism, the centralist – nationalist model was continued and expanded. The Romanians represented themselves, especially through school curricula, as an even more homogeneous linguistic and cultural bloc that knows little and relates less to minorities and foreigners (Sibii 2012), if not in antithetical discourses, in which Romanian identity gains different or opposite traits by opposition to "others" or in assimilation discourses, when Romanianness ends up to include ethnic and linguistic minorities of Romania (Hungarians, Roma, Germans, Poles etc.) up to the point of their uptake.

A second wave of nationalism, which emerged around 1964, reinstated the concepts of the romantic model of national unity (language-ethnicity-history and, with some variations, religion), which were intended to motivate, through a new strategy of Romanianization, by downgrading cultural expressions containing diversity of thought (the "Cultural Revolution" of 1971), proclaiming the independence of the Romanian nation (which was actually Romanians' élites independence with respect to the USSR) and validating, through messianic references of Romanian uniqueness and linguistic unity as well as temporal immobility of the Romanian ethos, the perpetuation of the dictatorial regime.

These traits of Romanianness have been elevated to myths in communist ethno-nationalism of Ceaușescu's regime (Roth 1995), that is, the belief in the existence of a unique and idealized version of history, of a unique and indivisible territory where Romanians have always lived without interruption and without having arrived from somewhere else. The ethnic side of Romanianness – actually glued to the linguistic side – is expressed by the mythological narrative of Dacian-Roman synthesis that stress its Latinity or its Dacian or even Thracian component (Marinov 2015), essentially to reaffirm the theory of the immobility of the ancestors of Romanians, inside the present-day Romanian territories and beyond.

Like Albania in the same period, Romania looks with suspicion at everything that comes from abroad, rejects otherness in any of its expressions and exalts the common elements of Romaniannness against the different ones within its own body. Therefore, diverse areas of scientific research such as ethnography, sociolinguistics, socio-anthropology, focus more on the study of typologies in the sense of capturing the traits that unite the subjects studied at the expense of the traits that differentiate them, in addition of course to the narratives accepted by the cultural policies of Communism itself (Verdery 1991). The ideology that drove the research was in the age of Communism the affirmation of the homogeneity of Romanianness, in all aspects that could be studied, and, although researchers were aware of the role of diversity in identity building, the narrative offered to the general public, espe-

[6] "Whereas in the school year 1955 - 1956 there were 1,022 primary schools in which education was offered solely in Hungarian, by 1958 - 1959 this number had dropped to 915. In that same period the number of primary schools giving instruction in both Romanian and Hungarian increased from 38 to 124. In the sphere of secondary education, a parallel decrease in Hungarian language provision took place: in the same interval of time, the number of 493 schools had fallen to 469, whereas the number of dual language ones had risen from 10 to 77." (King 1973: 153)

cially in compulsory school, focused on the dominant similarity of the Romanian people, in all its identity traits (language and culture in the broadest sense, traditions, religion and history), at the center of which Romanian ethnicity reigns uncontested.

Since the specific nature of nationalist ideology consists not only in finding "the enemy" outside the nation, but also by minimizing otherness within its body, in the process of consolidating the modern Romanian state little emphasis was placed on the study of minority communities and their linguistic registers, and textbooks showed no interest in the assimilation of (linguistic) widely dispersed communities (such as Roma), border communities (Romanian – Hungarian limes), regional communities (Hungarians and Szekler, Saxons in Transylvania) or ethnic island communities (the *Csango* population in Bacău county). Beginning with the 20th century and until the 1970s of the Communist regime, Romania's official history was nothing more than a narrative of events leading to a single outcome: the timeless perpetuation of a monolingual and monocultural people, without social classes and without substantial cultural differences from north to south and east to west, in which the role of the various minorities was taken into account only to the extent that their presence dissolved in a single entity (rom. *popor*). At this point, Romanianness is a cultural and political construct which avoids any kind of substantial variance, which denies any form of social conflict, and which apparently does not know the contradictions that most often define liberal countries.

However, Romanian nationalism alone should not be blamed for its lack of openness towards multiculturalism. It is most likely European nationalism and its role in the common history of Europe that provide the general causes of the continent's current linguistic approach. Not only in Romania but also in other countries of Romance languages (Italy, France etc.), this ideology tends to be associated with levels of multilingualism below the general level of the EU (Extra and Yagmur 2012, Eurobarometer 2006 and following).

Only with the democratic Constitution (1991) could Romania establish the right to identity for national minorities, guaranteeing the protection of their "ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious" expression (Art. 6). The same article proclaims the equality of all Romanian citizens without distinction according to their mother tongue, while Romanian continues to be the official language without naming any regional or minority language. The expected substantial improvements arrived with the newest Constitution (2003), which sets out in Art. 120 a new principle, according to which "The public administration of the territories is based on the principles of decentralization, local autonomy and devolution of public services"; in the second paragraph the capital low specifies that "in the places where citizens belonging to a national minority have a significant share, the use of the language of the national minority is ensured both in writing and in speech, in relations with local public authorities and public services etc." and paragraph three of Art. 32 stresses "the right of citizens belonging to national minorities to learn their mother tongue and the right to be trained in this language etc.".

Thirty years after the fall of Communism, far from *annus mirabilis* 1989, education policies in Romania are formally aligned to the European standards (Romania signed the Council of Europe's "Convention for the Protection of National Minorities" in 1995 and in 2007 ratified the "European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages") but the country still struggles to replace the centralist – nationalist stage with a more inclusive model of other people's cultures, in which variety and contradictions are accepted and capitalized. "Today, references are commonly made to European guidelines, although these are rather vaguely formulated and rather serve a legitimizing purpose than for a substantive one." (Szakács 2018: 120)

Romania's language policies aim to regulate and protect the 14 national minorities by giving them the right to use their minority language in the local public administration (Resolution 1.206 of 27.11.2001 on Law 215/2001) and in the courts, while the right to receive education in minority languages can also be exercised outside the area of residence. These changes are of particular benefit to Hungarians in Transylvania[7], the largest national mino-

[7] "Approximately 11% of the pre-university educational institutions in Romania have a minority language as medium of instruction in at least one section, 90% of these being in the Hungarian language." (Extra, Yagmur 2012: 187) In nowadays Romania the Hungarian minority of about 7% of the total Romanian population, which amounts to about 17 million inhabitants, while about 5 million people live in western countries (the recent Romanian economic migration).

rity, while in the case of other minorities (Roma, Ukrainians, Germans, Russians, etc.) they hardly bring about any significant improvement. In schools, the official language prevails, while teaching minority languages, such as Romanì languages (the Roma account for about 3% of Romania's total population) is "considerably minimized, if not [...] even invisible, in minority language schools or in those with large proportions of ethnically diverse students." (Szakács 2018: 225).

"It is also noteworthy that, legally, all children from a recognized minority have the right to education in their language [of origin]. Although faced with a positive aspect, there are still differences in the implementation of this law for other minorities". (Extra, Yagmur 2012, p. 188) Therefore, in practice, in areas of Romania with many Hungarian inhabitants, the effect of Romanian language policies and of cultural policies *tout court* is rather a mutual exclusion, since, according to Horváth (2010: 25), "the population that assumes the Romanian ethnic ties follows a form of education [that occurs] in Hungarian language only in exceptional cases (it happens in kindergarten and primary school)". An indicator of the possible failure of multilingual language policies is, in the case of the Hungarian minority, the fact that Hungarians of Transylvania still send their children to Hungarian-language schools, while Romanian children study in their own language (Romanian). Both the laws and the administrative measures governing this very early stage of multilingualism can be greatly improved to promote social and linguistic inclusion. Until reaching that stage, we rely on the words of Horváth and Toró (2018):

> The majority tend to view linguistic rights as a set of assistive measures for those having an improper command of Romanian. Thus, minority language use in these fields is seen as an exceptional measure meant to promote fairness of administrative and judicial procedures and a non-discriminative access to public services. (201)

As the founding part of Romanianness, Romanian linguistic centralism – nationalism, with its rationale, consistent historical merits and its exaggerations, has played an important political role in recent centuries; however, today some of its effects represent real obstacles when trying to understand complicate dynamics in linguistic repertoires of various communities of Romania. Likewise, some ideological limits of centralist – nationalist model deny an accurate understanding of linguistic repertoires in various Romanian communities who now live outside the borders. If we look at Haarmann's ecological model (1986), a lack of knowledge of the languages of the communities that are in contact with each other, in relation to people's lack of recognizing their multiple identities, can lead to ethnopolitical conflicts as long as other levers to increase both the frequency of use and prestige of the languages at stake are not found.

Nowadays Romania needs more cultural studies on its minorities, focusing on sociolinguistics, while also requiring more awareness about multiculturalism and multilingualism, at regional and at national level. Information published by the Institute for the Study of National Minority Issues (http://ispmn.gov.ro) fail to put forward such an agenda at the level of the whole country, and what could become a change towards national multilingualism remains a dialogue confined at local level, often to the political advantage of party leaders who exploit Romanian nationalism, Hungarian nationalism or both. For example, more research is expected to investigate Hungarian's and Roma's ethnolinguistic repertoires as well as ethnolinguistic repertoires of minority communities of Romanians in Covasna, Mureş and Harghita counties.

This approach could shed light on the active role of linguistic varieties other than Romanian in the structural coherence of sociocultural bodies of communities, enriching the Romanianness itself. At the same time, such a process might better uphold the role of the Romanian language varieties that are part of complex linguistic repertoires outside the borders of Romania, namely the varieties of Romanian spoken by Romanians who "remained outside" the current borders of Romania (historical Romanian minorities in Hungary, Serbia, Republic of Moldova etc.), and finally – the Romanian language varieties spoken by Romanians who left Romania after 1990, in the recent economic migration to the West.

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