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**IDENTITY AND LANGUAGE USAGE IN UPPER-  
HÁROMSZÉK**

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## **Identity and language usage in Upper-Háromszék**

### **I. The aim, topic, material and method of the dissertation**

1. The dissertation deals with the identity of the Hungarian people in Upper-Háromszék. It depicts the characteristics of the Hungarians' identity in Upper-Háromszék according to various social variables (age, sex, social status, education, type of strata), respectively the importance of several identity-components related to each other. On one hand it tries to reveal the factors that help the minorities keep their self-identity; on the other hand it searches those factors which influence the minority's awareness of their identity in a negative way, and might cause its instability, despite living in a community.

National identity goes through a significant change in the informational society: on the one part self-identity-variants, which were believed to be lost, still exist; on the other part radically new forms appear. Besides the organizations of nations (union, federation) regional organizations come into existence, which revive the local and regional identity (cf. CSEPELI 2002: 11; CSEPELI-PRAZSÁK 2010: 173), the condition of the formation and subsistence of identity changes radically. We also have to deal with those historical traumas, stereotypes, prejudices, which are present in the collective consciousness of the Hungarians (cf. ZELLIGER 2008: 79-80), thus influence the adaptation to new situations and contingencies (cf. HUNYADI 1996: 107, HÓDI 2006). This is why it is topical to take into account the chances of the Hungarians beyond the borders to "stay alive", and to make a survey in this era of the integration and globalization (cf. ALABÁN 2008: 76; KELEMEN 2006: 28; KÖTŐ 2003: 6-9). By right of the results of this survey we can see the trends within the minority self-identity, and based on these we can formulate our tasks, assignments.

The identity of the Hungarians living in minority is related to the mother-tongue. Thus the main and most emphatic part of the dissertation focuses on the systematization and analysis of the attitude of the community to its mother-tongue and the linguistic attitudes, furthermore, the community's opinion and value judgment of its spoken language. In this way we gain a complex picture of the capability of the maintenance of the identity of a community living in a small region.

### **2. The test community**

The easternmost county of Háromszék was Székelyföld (Land of the Szeklers), in the Romanian administrative system it has been replaced with the name of county Covasna. The northern and eastern region of the county was called *Upper-Háromszék*, because of its geographical position. Historically, Upper-Háromszék can be divided in two parts, still remembered by the population as Kézdi- and Orbaiszék. The first has Kézdivásárhely as an intellectual- and market centre, the latter Kovászna. As the Upper-

Háromszék-basin overlaps geographically with the Kézdivásárhely-basin, the name Upper-Háromszék is used for Kézdiszék, that is Kézdivásárhely and its surroundings, and for Kézdi- and Orbaiszék together as well.

In my paper I use this name as the synonym of Kézdiszék, and the following strata belong to it: Albis, Bereck, Bélafalva, Csernáton, Csomortán, Dálnok, Esztelnek, Futásfalva, Gelence, Haraly, Hatolyka, Hilib, Ikafalva, Imecsfalva, Kézdiálmás, Kézdimartonos, Kézdisárflva, Kézdiszárzypatak, Kézdiszentkereszt (Polyán), Kézdiszentlélek, Kézdivásárhely, Kiskászon. Kővár, Kurtapatak, Lemhény, Márkosfalva, Martonfalva, Ozsdola, Szentkatolna and Torja.

The presence of Hungarian people is proved by artifacts from the 12<sup>th</sup> century in Csernáton, Torja, and Gelence. The deployment of the szekler population to east began in the middle third of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, but the people who lived in the southern part of Transylvania, Szászkezd, moved to the eastern parts only at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, so they retained the memory of the place where they used to live in the name they gave to this new settlement: Kézdiszék.

In the first memoirs we can find the names “Syculus de Kezdy” (in 1307), or “Siculi de Kezdy” (in 1320), in Hungarian it first occurs in 1466, as “Kyzdy szék”. 2.579 gates were counted in this area in 1614, 2919 gates in 1703. In the year of 1850 the number of people living her was 38.151, and according to Orbán Balázs the number of people living in the aforementioned strata was 45.579 in 1866 (cf. ORBÁN 1869/III: 7).

On the grounds of the statistics of Varga E. Árpád (1998) the ethnical and religious division and changing of the people living in Erdély can be drawn. The renewed version of this statistics (2008) contains the census data from 2002, too. According to this, out of 55.925 people living in the area of Upper-Háromszék (from which 52.783 are Hungarians) 27.594 are men, 28.332 women. The four settlements where the presence of the Romanian ethnic group is above 5% are Kézdimartonos, Bereck, Kézdivásárhely and Ozsdola. 25,48% of the population of the first two settlements have Romanian mother-tongue, while there are 5,19% in Ozsdola and 8,40% in Kézdivásárhely (cf. RECENSĂMÂNTUL POPULAȚIEI ȘI AL LOCUINȚELOR 2002).

The number of Romanian ethnic groups is small in the other strata (1-2%).

In the studied region more men (3,34%) than women (2,42%) have higher education; almost a quarter of the latter graduated high school, only 10,46% graduated a professional school, and 35,34% finished only lower secondary school. As for the men, 22,29% graduated professional school, 30,5% finished the lower secondary, and 17,5% of them graduated high school. Regarding primary school, they finished this in almost the same proportion (19,28% men, 19,38% women). Almost 5% of the informants either did not attend school at all, or they did not make a statement about it; 2,47% of the women and 2,67% of the men have postgraduate or technical studies.

During the questionnaire study, when selecting the informants, I gave a more favourable account of the percentage of the post- and high school-graduates, that is, I “raised” the education indicators a bit in the favour of those who received higher education. The reason for this is that several changes have occurred since the census in 2002, which lead to the “improvement” of the education indicators, namely: during the last five years the public employees (in finance, health, tax office etc.) were forced to undertake higher education studies; nursery- and primary-school teachers had to complete their studies at the teacher-training school with college studies. Meanwhile, two university courses have been established (the local branch of the Babes-Bolyai University from Kolozsvár, and the Lucian Blaga University from Szeben) where a lot of people study. On the other hand, the low education indicators are characteristic primarily of the elderly generation and the gypsy ethnic group who dispose of a Hungarian self-identity. The change of generations since the census has much improved the situation. Overall the amendment of the educational ratio of the informants in favour of the higher educated is between 1,4-5%. Since my aim was to realize the assay of the identity of the people who live in this area, to map their language usage by considering the current census, I took this change into consideration. The basis of the amendment of the higher education indicators was a local census, made in the spring of 2009, done by myself with the help of the local government.

The dissertation makes use of results gathered in thirty places of the research. I intended to do the survey with 16 informants per settlement because of the proportional distribution of sex and age groups. As for the education and social qualification, I planned a stratified sampling. But the circumstances did not always make it possible to realize my plan. As I have observed in various strata, the data of the census and the reality do not always overlap: the actual number of the population is less than it is in the public records. I managed to make the survey with 446 informants.

In 80% of the settlements ( $n = 24$ ) I worked with 16 informants, both men and women (8-8), 4-4 informants regarding age groups; in case of 6,7% ( $n = 2$ ) I worked with 12 informants (half men, half women, 2-2 from young people, 4-4 in the case of elderly informants). In case of 10% ( $n = 3$ ) I worked with 10 informants (in this case 4 informants from the oldest age group, 2-2 from the other age groups, equal number of men and women); in the event of 3,3% ( $n = 1$ ) I had the questionnaire completed with 8 informants (2-2 informants from each age group, equal number of men and women).

Out of the 446 informants 26,5% ( $n = 118$ ) is over 65 years, 25,1% ( $n = 112$ ) is between 40 and 65, 24,2% ( $n = 108$ ) between 25-39, and the same percentage between 16-24. From the female informants 15,7% ( $n = 35$ ) graduated primary school, 26,5% ( $n = 59$ ) lower secondary, 20,2% ( $n = 45$ ) professional school, 29,1% ( $n = 65$ ) graduated high school. From the male informants 15,2% ( $n = 34$ ) graduated primary school, 25,6% ( $n =$

57) lower secondary, 29,6% (n = 66) professional school, and 21,1% (n = 47) is a high school graduate. 4% (n = 9) of both men and women has postgraduate studies, 4,5% (n = 10) graduated a higher education institution (college or university).

**3.** The national minorities' identity is derived from the minority's national identity (the Hungarian in our case) most of the times, but the righteousness of this statement is questioned both by Bindorffer Györgyi and Veres Valér identity-analysts (BINDORFFER 2001: 31; VERES 2005: 50), because the minority's national identity is also significantly determined by another nation, with which it is mixed and influenced by. Since the mother-tongue significantly determines the national identity, is a symbol of it in the circumstances of being a minority, the linguistic analysis, the analysis of the opinions about their own dialect is of utmost importance when determining the viability and characteristics of a minority's self-identity. According to Péntek János the Hungarian identity of the Carpathian-basin beyond the borders cannot be related to citizenship, because minorities have a subordinate legal status in the state where they live, its members being second-class citizens. Then again tradition is also substantial to this identity, at the same time Hungarians are more divided by denomination than by citizenship, thus this tradition is related to mother-tongue, too. In this division the Hungarian language is the common denominator, and it can assume the role of identifier, inasmuch as it although territorially entrenched in the Middle-European region, it preserved its basic characteristics (PÉNTÉK 2009). The language or dialect spoken by the community is, on one hand, the expression of the regional (Transylvanian, or Szekler, in our case) and local (defined by the strata) identity; on the other hand it is a possibility, a medium in the cognition of the self-identity and group-identification (cf. GEREBEN 1998: 113–27).

Veres Valér had been dealing with the question of the identity of the Hungarian people living in Transylvania (2005, 2008), but we can hardly encounter surveys (analyzing local, regional identity) related to this area (cf. VERES 1997). The situation is more encouraging from the point of view of linguistic, dialectical papers. The first writings about dialects in Háromszék were made by Erdélyi Lajos (1906, 1907), and Horger Antal (1908). Gállfy Mózes dealt with the variants of this dialect thoroughly (1956), and he was the one to delineate the characteristics of this language variant (1971). Lately the linguistic works that rely on and analyze the linguistic material of Háromszék and Upper-Háromszék are papers on onomastics, collections or studies (BAKK 1990, 1992; GAZDA 1994; HINTS 1997; MURÁDIN 1998; PÉTER 2008; RANCZ 2009; SÁNTHA T. 1997; VIZSULY 2002; ZSIGMOND 2002). Since the 'Torjai szójegyzék' (MÁRTON–Nemes 1971) very few dialect dictionaries have been edited (SÁNTHA A. 2004; RANCZ 2007b), at the same time there are not many sociologic, socio-linguistic studies either, and they cover

only a part of Upper-Háromszék. Pleth Rita dealt with the comparative study of high school students' spelling accuracy in the small regions (1997), Lukács Csilla (2007, 2008, 2009) and Papp Anna Maria (2008 – only in Szentgyörgy) made surveys about linguistic/dialectic attitudes among students.

This dissertation is aimed at eliminating this hiatus, at the same time its actuality is confirmed by the fact that the studied area is one of Transylvania's perimeters, and it can give essential information about the situation of the people living there, because the dissipation of the self-identity of these people is stronger than of those living in central areas.

**4.** The dissertation makes use of several research results, and it is based upon a questionnaire.

**4.1.** Between 2008 and 2010 I made a questionnaire survey in order to analyze the identity and language usage of those who live in a small region from sociologic and socio-linguistic point of view. The questionnaire, which is the base of my empirical research, has three bigger units. The first one contains the data of the informants who filled in the questionnaire, the second deals with identity, and the third consists of the questions related to language. When assembling the questionnaire, I relied on earlier sociologic and socio-linguistic surveys. In analyzing the identity I chose from Csepeli György's questions, from the questionnaire he used when analyzing Hungarian and minority identities; I also formed my questions taking into consideration Veres Valér's research results about identity in Transylvania and Kovászna, and Kapitány Ágnes and Kapitány Gábor's research results about the national symbols. When assembling the questionnaire about language usage, I made use of the sociolinguistic questionnaire in the New Hungarian Dialectic Atlas (UMNYA), nevertheless I relied upon those recent sociolinguistic researches, which aimed at studying the language usage, linguistic attitude of the Hungarian minority, the relation between language and identity (cf. the sociolinguistic questionnaire from the Carpathian-basin made by Kontra Miklós, the questionnaires used by Göncz Lajos in Vajdaság, Csernicskó Istvan in Kárpátalja, Lanstyák István in Slovakia, and part of the questions used by Lukács Csilla in Transylvania for eg.). I also took into account the questionnaire patterns of the research summaries, the ways to collect material (cf. KISS 2002, 2003).

**4.2.** Besides the survey data my paper also makes use of personal experiences and the results of earlier dialectological researches. As a member of the ELTE Geolinguistical Research Group I made a collection of dialects at four research points in Upper-Háromszék between 2007-10, based on the questionnaires of the UMNYA. On the other hand I am also a member of the studied community, so I had opportunities to monitor it

constantly and to gain experience. I have been dealing with the analysis of the language usage of my native village for more than fifteen years (RANCZ 2003, 2007a); being a Hungarian teacher in the renowned high school of the only town in the area I have a constant contact with students not only from Kézdivásárhely, but also from the surrounding villages, and their parents, which is a great opportunity to monitor the community living in this area.

5. The analysis of the research is made in two phases. I undertake the analysis of the identity of the people in Upper-Háromszék from the point of view of how the identity components are related to each other. I follow the evolution rates of these components considering sex, generation, education, social qualification and type of strata, paying particular attention to trends in the subsamples. The general delineation of self-identity, its characteristics are followed by the most significant component of the minority identification, the mother-tongue. After naming, positioning, assessing the individual and common characteristics of the language usage, mapping the linguistic attitudes related to it, the dissertation deals with the purity of the own language variant, the perceptions regarding its competitiveness related to the second language. Finally, I undertake the attitudes, prejudices towards the mother-tongue, the inhabitants' self-identification, those strong and weak points which help on one hand; obstruct, influence the viability of the minority's identity in a negative way on the other hand.

## **II. The structure of the dissertation**

The dissertation consists of four main chapters.

1. In the first chapter I present the survey that constitutes the basis of the dissertation. Then the methods, which formed the basis of my work during the preparation and implementation of the field-work, and the data-processing, finally the experiences of the field-work are related.

2. The second chapter deals with the localization of the Hungarians in Upper-Háromszék, the depiction of its demographic characteristics. The community in this small region is presented in a way that we can gain insight in the studied group's internal division, its situation in the perimeters.

3. The following two chapters are constituted of the actual analysis of the data and the conclusions. Firstly I analyze the characteristics of the target group's identity, which is followed by the analysis of the factors that determine the minority identity in terms of different social variables. Thus beyond the complex, multi-study of the identity of the

language community, the characteristics of the collective self-identity of individuals of different age, sex, education, qualification are outlined. Beyond the strata-specific, peculiar marks we can see the trends within generations and those “gaps”, which reveal the move, the amplitude in the minority and cultural identification of the studied group.

4. A separate chapter consists of the judgment of the mother tongue from the point of view of the speaking community. Although the basis of the research was a comprehensive, extensive questionnaire, the fact that the first language usage is separated from the chapter dealing with identity is due to the fact that in minority groups the mother tongue is the most emphatic form all the identity components, and it is beyond the general specifications owing to its special ponderousness. The relation to it, illustrated from different perspectives, serves the cognition of the minority speaking community’s identification, at the same time the modification of this relation is a proof of the change of the collective identity. This chapter, besides defining the minority language variant and its characteristics, contains a short summary of the phonological and morphological characteristics of the dialect in Upper-Háromszék. It also presents the common and the individual language usage from the point of view of the speaking community in this region. It firstly presents the idiomatic characteristics of this language variant, then it analyzes where the speakers put their own- and their common/ local language usage in the continuum of the standard dialect, the typical characteristics related to which they can define, separate from the others their own dialect, the position, prestige of their dialect and their attitudes towards it. Secondly it relates the attitude of the speaking community towards the standard, the unwritten expectations of language usage within the community, the inner reception of the standardization efforts. In the end the question of the linguistic purity and competitiveness as well as the attitudes related to the second language are presented.

5. The final part of the paper sums up the results of the survey, trying to fulfill Labov’s principle of debt with regard to the tested community.

### **III. Results**

1. In the dissertation I make use of the expressions used in Upper-Háromszék, in some cases in Kézdiszék to name the members of the studied community. When talking about these concepts I mean a relatively uniform region, a region at least showing the tendency to be uniform in terms of language usage, in terms of economy Kézdivásárhely and its surroundings.

The studied target group is defined in the first place as a community which deserves attention not only because it lies in a perimeter, but also because of the local and regional sense of identity.

Despite the fact that the general and comparative analysis of the Hungarians' identity in Transylvania goes back several decades, the mapping of the regional and local self-identity of people who live in certain areas needs to be done, although the Transylvanian Hungarian population's self-identification is not uniform within Székelyföld either. Péntek Janos draws the attention to the dissipation of the eastern ends. So the collective identity, opinion about the mother tongue, the attitudes related to it, respectively the changes in the speaking community's language usage are of utmost importance.

**2.1.** My identity-analysis is aimed at the survey of the power relations of the civic, cultural and minority self-identity in the first place, its delineation, at the same time it aimed to reveal the manifestations of the ingenious national identity. Since the area is rural, it is untutored to a certain extent; I did not really touch the ways in which conscious identification manifests. The analysis is of descriptive-revealing type, because it tries to depict the identity of people living in a region that was hardly mapped, at the same time I have to emphasize the local (regional) nature of the analyzed identity.

**2.2.** On the evidence of the target group's results the national identification characteristic to the inhabitants of this region is outlined, in its basis lies the individual identity. The community's cultural and minority self-identity is strong, healthy and viable in Háromszék, in contrast to the minorities in Hungary (cf. HOMISINOVA 2008: 74–5). This is due to factors like the inhabitation, the ethnical homogeneousness of the milieu, the prestige of the mother tongue, dialect, and the opportunities to use it in that region, the sense of “us”, rooted in the past, and last but not least the positive feelings, attitude, being proud of one's identification. The local-regional (minority) identity is linked to the national cultural identity, at the same time it is detached from it on the level of behavior, manner, and attitude. In preserving the archaic features the following may help: myths, discourses rooted in historical traditions, on which the inhabitants can relay against the civic and national ideologies; the rural environment; the dominance of the natural, spontaneous identification; the low education rate of the inhabitants.

The characteristics of this collective identity are the following:

- The civic and cultural identification coexist with each other – but only in the case of low education, as more educated people and those having higher social status hold aloof from this;

- From the cultural national identity components the self-classification is determining, the mother tongue and the Hungarian ancestry of one parent, nevertheless the factors, which proved to be secondary during other surveys in Transylvania (the common-fate commitment to the nation, family, school, religion and national pride) are of high account, or rather stricter conditions are in force (Hungarian ancestry of both parents), due to the fact that the area is ethnically more or less homogeneous;
- The components of the natural cultural national identity show the characteristics present in the specialized literature: social identity impregnated with national pride, the national symbols and celebrations associated with positive feelings;
- The more or less favourable political situation, the majority territory, the “inert” rural area allows the intensification of those characteristics, on the basis of which the minority can be differentiated from the cultural nation, can be delimited from it, furthermore, it can be placed above the latter in terms of ancestry and certain endowments (rights, presence in the territory), in one word the regional identity generally seems to be appraised instead of seclusion beyond the national borders;
- Although the Hungarians in Upper-Háromszék – according to their self-classification – see themselves as belonging to the Hungarian nation, their minority identity preserving a prior sense of Hungarian identity, in other words “it is not synchronized with the Hungarian nation-consciousness of today” (VERES 1997: 24), as it contains more archaic elements than this one (eg. the symbols: the traditional costume, the mythical bird of folk tales, the so-called “turul”), respectively the myths and discourses it relies on when defining oneself (eg. the Hun ancestry, the double conquest), which ensure the subsistence of the sense of “we”, rooted in the traditions, and it also makes it possible to look at their minority status positively;
- The relatively strong local identity also helps the detachment, though the emphatic formulation of the otherness does not mean an independent group-identity (the Szeklers are not viewed as an independent ethnicity), but certain characteristics, distinguishing marks, which have an effect of strengthening the self-consciousness;
- The men are the more consistent representatives of the detachment, the otherness, in their minority group-identity, while the women integrate their minority self-consciousness more in the cultural national identity, subordinating it to the latter;
- The eldest, just like the untutored ones, impersonate the local identity, at the same time they hardly observe the contradictions between their standpoint, attitude and value judgment;

- It is characteristic to almost any age group – although in different extents – a positive vision of the future and the national pride, which affects both their cultural and minority identifications;
- The intellectuals, who acquire the attitudes of the conscious national identification, are the social class which have a very high account of national pride as compared to the average;
- The pride, respectively the positive social identity makes the community viable in the long-term (cf. VERES 1997: 12), but it can impede the critical self-analysis, noticing the problems and rationally solving them;
- The alteration of the ethnical composition of the population gives the individual a lead on rational identification, at the same time it induces the person to make certain concessions: to lessen the loyalty to the nation; to loosen the identification based on ancestry, that is abandoning the theory of the homogeneous family (the latter is the “gate” towards assimilation).

**2.3.** Concerning both the national and minority identity – in spite of its viability and strength – the emotive approach of the problems on one hand, the low degree of rationality, the strong bias, on the other hand the break of the ethnical homogeneity and the “concessions” due to this may be a threat. The weakening of the local and/ or regional identity of the youth to the benefit of the cultural national identity is clearly visible. This reveals itself in the concept of the mother country, the preference in the national symbols, the national celebrations, in the low acceptance of the myths and discourses which are the basis of the minority identification. The identification of the youth is characterized by the local “roots” up to a small extent, their minority and national vision of the future is darker than the those of the other age groups. Even though the instability of their identity is more or less a idiosyncratic of their age, the deviation of their identification from the other age groups shows that there is a change in the values. Not only their self-identity, but its components are also changing.

**3.** Since language is of utmost importance in the identification of a minority group, I seek to analyze the inhabitants’ relation to their mother tongue, the attitudes towards it and opinions about it. The main goal is analysis of the first language variant from internal point of view, respectively other topics related to it, such as the analysis of the relation of the first language variant of the minority to the standard and to the dominant language, and the approach of the minority identity of the speaking community through this.

**3.1.** The members of the speaking community in Upper-Háromszék see their own language variant as a dialect; in the first place the register of the younger generation, who

are more educated and qualified, is completed with standard/ regional standard competency; they place their own language usage closer to the one of their speaking community, further from that of the mother country/ the standard. At the same time according to them the difference between the standard (the one spoken in Hungary) and the dialect (the local language variant) is changeable, depending on the view-points according to which the speaker has to compare the own language usage with other language variants. The greatest analogy between the local and the standard language variant is in terms of vocabulary, because the speaker feels that one's language usage is closer to both in this case; the gap is the biggest in terms of pronunciation, not only between the standard (the one in Hungary) and the individual, but also between the local and the standard because in this latter case the speaker places his/her own language usage further from each language usage than in the case of the vocabulary.

Switching from informal language to formal/ the standard in certain situations means the rollback of the dialect and the headway of the regional standard language.

The social status of the speaking partner, his/ her education, and living-space are essential factors in the usage of the regional standard language. Those speakers, who use a dialect in their familiar living-space, environment, are forced to change to standard when in public speech situations. The dialect is more widely used among the low-educated, qualified and those belonging to older age groups than among the educated ones, the ones having a higher social status, or the young people. The previous change the dialect to vernacular in public social spheres, when they leave their home or living space, the latter use it in their private sphere, too – except the very familiar sphere.

The dialect-consciousness of a significant percentage of the speech community connotes with their language consciousness.

The elderly and the low-educated belong to this circle in the first place, as they speak only the dialect of their first language, while most of the students and the intellectuals can be called bilingual. The components of the linguistic consciousness of the different age groups manifest themselves in different proportions. Elderly informants and the low-educated have lower meta-language knowledge than the younger people. The latter can support their opinions, value judgments about their own language variant with precise knowledge, while the oldest ones rely on their instinctive feelings, their attitude towards it is emotional, does not rely on conscious judgments.

**3.2.** Apart from the proportions of the language consciousness, for the majority of the speech community their own language variant has a prestige, although in the standard dialect language usage continuum it stands closer to the dialect than to the regional standard language. In certain language variants the positioning of the own language variant is determined by its extension. The smaller the region where the dialect is used,

the lower the extent to which the speaker likes his/ her own dialect. Thus the language variant in Háromszék is the second most beautiful, but the language usage in Upper-Háromszék or their own strata has a lower prestige according to them (the fourth and fifth in line). On the other hand we can see that the comparisons of the own strata's language usage with other region's language usage influence the judgment of their own dialect in a positive way. The elderly and the low-educated individuals are inclined to over-valorize in the first place, and this is due to their strong local identity, their positive relation to the community, since they consider their own language variant a notable cohesive force, and symbol.

The differences in language usage according to gender did not prove significant in most cases. Nevertheless, it can be stated that mostly the women prefer the language used in Hungary, or they rather use the dialect more restrictedly than the men. Men are less willing to change the language from informal to formal in certain domains than women.

The age proved to be the main determinant in the language usage of the studied speech community. It is obvious that the dialect is losing ground in the private sphere, too, the younger the speaker is, the more he tries to use the regional standard language even in his/ her own strata/ settlement. More than half of the two middle ages change codes when they are in an alien environment, which shows that their speech is more dialectical than the speech of the youth, but it is more conscious, than that of the older generation. The linguistic behavior of the youngest ones differs a lot from the other three age groups' in most of the cases, and this suggests that, compared to the previously existing situations (I mean the period between 1918-1989), we can expect essential changes in the years to come. These changes will manifest themselves firstly in the rollback of the dialect. This is supported also by the fact that the dialect is less widely used among the intellectuals, too.

Even though the differences between the generations cannot be seen as immediate changes, since the language usage of individuals can be shifted towards dialect as time passes, as they grow older, we can expect essential changes in the case of the studied speech community, firstly due to the strong effect of the standard language in the last two decades. We have little knowledge about the way in which the language patterns of Hungary affected the Hungarian regions beyond borders (cf. TOLCSVAI 2004: 96), and we do not know the extent of the linguistic changes in the past decades either, at the same time there is no work presenting the linguistic state of the whole region of Transylvania. Nonetheless, there are several arguments for the change in the studied speech community:

- the inhabitants of the perimeters do not encounter the standard language variant only at school, but also in the media, thus it is available to any age group;
- the internet widened the possibilities of the active language usage removing the spatial and temporal constraints;

- the geographical isolation, confinement ceased;
- there are much more neologisms, schoolboy slang, the slang in the language usage of the younger generations – these changes in the vocabulary are the proof of linguistic changes;
- the dialect loses ground not only in the language usage of the youngest generation, but also in the language usage of the socially active age groups;
- the intellectuals and the youth is trying to use the regional standard language even in familiar domains.

**3.3.** The survey shows that almost half of the studied speech group conceives the language usage of the Szekler region as a pattern to follow because its prestige and they think most of the inhabitants feel the same. Thus we can conclude that to 44,7% of the inhabitants one of the language variants in Székelyföld “replaces” the standard, that is, it represents the language variant that the members of the speech community find worthy to follow. While in certain regions people are not certain which is the linguistic pattern that is followed (they named ten regions only in Transylvania), in Kézdiszék more than 60% of the informants conceive the language variant of this small region a linguistic pattern that is being followed. As opposed to this there are relatively few people (one-fifth of the informants) who conceive the language variant spoken in Hungary as the one which has more prestige and is being followed by the inhabitants of this area.

The prestige of the own language variant, its subsistence is being helped by the unwritten requirements in the language usage existing within the community in the studied region. In spite of the fact that from the Szekler language variants the one from Upper-Háromszék is hardly a linguistic pattern to be followed for other rural speakers, it is a cohesive force for its own speech community, a factor of identification; at the same time the speech community requires being faithful to it up to a certain extent from the members.

There is a relatively strong refusal to consider the innovations brought from outside. The person who, returning from foreign regions does not turn back to the local language variant, is not considered as an integral member of the group any more, they speak ill of him/ her, condemn him/ her. On the other hand it seems that in point of the requirements towards the individual concerning language usage there are different opinions within the studied community: the older generation has the role of preserving the traditions, the language variant; the youth and the middle-aged people have a more positive attitude towards the language “innovators”. These different judgments, attitudes show that we are the witnesses of such a change concerning attitude, which manifests itself not only in the opinions and linguistic behaviour of the young and old age groups, but also of individuals with different qualification, education and marital status. These changes – loosening the

norms of the language usage of the community – rearrange the attitudes towards the own language variant in such a way that they allow the influences coming from outside to take effect, thus the standardization is strengthened. The level of knowledge about the language, the different level of the linguistic consciousness, the rational or emotional basis of the attitude towards the own language variant defines substantially the individual's linguistic attitude, at the same time it influences the opinion about the course and degree of the linguistic change.

As for the linguistic demand – according to the informants – being a minority makes almost half of them stricter, more sensitive than the speakers in Hungary. The reason for this is that the function of the language is revalorized in minority circumstances: it is not defined just as a means of communication, but as a symbol, the denotation and retention of the identity.

**3.4.** In spite of the prestige of the own language variant and the relatively demographic majority within the region, a high percentage of the informants think that in order to succeed in life one must speak the second language as fluently as possible not only in the country, but in their own small region, too. On one hand the instrumental motivation – a better workplace, a higher social status, the eagerness to learn, the tolerance towards otherness – makes the inhabitants learn the official language of the state; on the other hand the civic duty (pragmatic-integrative motivation). The motivations to learn the official language are strong due to its appeal and prestige, the frustration and negative feelings due to the fact that it is compulsory is relatively trifling. Despite the expectations in the case of the second language the lack of the alternative to be able to choose another language resulted in a peculiar linguistic attitude, not in a dismissive one.

While the attitude towards their own language variant is dominated by strong, positive feelings, the official language is approached in a rational-pragmatic way: they acknowledge that in order to succeed they need to know the dominant language. The members of the speech community do not take into consideration the linguistic outcomes of language contact. This is due neither to the fact that they rationally overcome the negative emotions towards the official language of the state, nor to the fact that they need it in order to succeed in life, but to the fact that, being the majority, they do not feel their mother tongue threatened. Furthermore, their positive and emotive attitude towards their mother tongue strengthens the linguistic stereotypes rooted in the traditions (eg. their speech is the purest, the “most Hungarian-like”); they do not have the linguistic knowledge on which to rely in their own, rational values judgments; respectively the knowledge of the second language on an advanced level does not go together with the acknowledgement of the effects of the language contact. The speech community itself is

not receptive to the effect of the language of the state, but they have on their minds the maintenance of their own language variant and its prestige.

Generally the elderly informants are those, who – in spite of their low education and little knowledge of the official language – feel there is the risk of losing the mother tongue and that attention should be paid to the effects of the contact with the official language at every linguistic level. Their standpoint can be explained by the fact that due to their poor knowledge of the official language makes them more sensible to instinctively recognize the effects of the language contact, and that they care more about their own language variant than the others. Students, who receive constant feedback from their language accuracy, have higher level of consciousness, and they constantly face judgments of the contact effects. It is not by chance, that they are aware of the risk of losing the mother tongue. On the other hand the knowledge of the official language appeals to them, mainly because they overvalue its role in succeeding in life, at the same time it is characteristic to them to make contradictory statements.

The individual's opinion is also determined by the environment where he/ she lives. The isolation of the settlement is in favour of the prestige of the mother tongue, more attention is paid to the purity of the language. However, we cannot reckon with stronger linguistic consciousness, the inhabitants' behavior can be more likely explained by the fear for their own language variant, the local identity. This statement can also be supported by the argument that the inhabitants of these settlements maintain extremist standpoints, because they state in the highest percentage either that the official language affects our mother tongue on each linguistic level, or that there is no reason to worry, our mother tongue is not threatened on any linguistic level.

**3.5.** According to the members of the speech community their knowledge of the official language of the state is acceptable. The code-switching of the inhabitants is highly determined by their knowledge of the language. Although there are more Hungarians in the area, thus the usage of the first language is more widespread, the appeal of the official language is strong – due to its role in the individual success. On the other hand a strong repugnance gets into shape from the part of the minority group who live in a block, and there are people who assume openly that being bilingual is a constraint, and it is an integral part of the assimilation politics. The thing that a lot of members of the speech community have the same opinion is due to the demographic denseness.

**4.** On the whole a specific feature of the identity and language usage, linguistic attitudes of the studied community is the ambivalence. This ambience is owing to the fact that on one hand they have a self-identity emerged between former social, economical and political conditions, partially serving to defense, guard and maintain its value;

respectively the positive attitudes, values judgments towards the mother tongue, which is of utmost importance in the formation the identity, are kept – the oldest generation being their outstanding representatives. On the other hand the notable minority identity- or sense of otherness of those generations which grew up in the years of the isolation (the Ceausescu era) are outlined, as well as the pursuit of the ways in which one can harmonize the traditions and the opportunities of the present. We can also state that the identification of the future generation is based on totally different values, which are locally rootless more or less. In this state of transition the contradictions, converse value judgments, attitudes are frequent. On one hand one can notice the strength, viability of the self-identity of the studied community, which can be proved by the following:

- assuming openly that he/ she is a member of the minority;
- the otherness has a strengthening effect on the self-consciousness, there is a sense of “we”, which is rooted in the past;
- the notable expression of the national pride;
- the positive minority- and national vision of the future;
- the positive attitude towards the national symbols, celebrations, which strengthen the local, regional and cultural national identity;
- the prestige of the own language variant, placing it above the standard, thinking of it as a pattern that can be followed, and its usage not only in familiar, private spheres but also in other domains;
- being a member of a speech community, accepting its unwritten rules;
- the adherence to their mother tongue, the strong, positive emotional bondage to it

On the other hand we can observe small gaps in the minority identification of the community – we can witness either the loosening of the local and/ or regional identity, or the changes of attitudes towards the mother tongue. These are the following:

- in the case of 6,7% (n = 30) of the informants the 1<sup>st</sup> of December was integrated between our national celebrations (it is the national celebration of Romania, Transylvania was unified with the Romanian Kingdom on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 1918), and even though celebrating it is due to lack of knowledge (those informants, who claimed the 1<sup>st</sup> of December to be a Hungarian national celebration, could not say what do we celebrate on this day) – leading to the conclusion that the knowledge of the past and national history is not as important as it used to be. This fact is also confirmed by the answers the youngest age group gave related to the Szekler and Hungarian conquest, respectively their passivity towards the national symbols;

- the inhabitants of the settlements with mixed ethnicity have made concessions related to ancestry: it is not necessary for both parents to be Hungarians, it is enough if only one of the is; on the other hand identification role of the loyalty towards the nation diminished;
- in the case of the young generation the local, regional identity weakened as opposed to the national cultural self-identity. This is due to the globalization, the internet, and the values of the new generation, which deviate from the traditional;
- the middle- and older generations cannot always see the reality because of the intensive national pride characteristic to them; on the other hand the weakening of the young people's national pride, parallel to the rational approach of the problems and the strengthening of the emotional passivity;
- the superficial meta-language knowledge, and the language politics that is not elaborated and applied properly by the community, according to who the prestige of the own language variant is threatened by the standard, and not by the effects of the dominant language. The condition for being a member of the community is to follow the local language variant: those people are spoken ill of, whose language usage is closer to the standard or other language variants, and not those ones who do not try to avoid the effects of the linguistic contact;
- the local dialect loses ground as the standard and regional standard is more widely used, thus the local collective identity weakens on the linguistic level;
- the ambivalence of the attitude towards the dominant language: on one hand the repugnance towards learning the second language, on the other hand its acceptance owing to the sense of obligation, the opportunities to use the mother tongue when living in blocks and the overvaluation of the second language in this area;
- hiding behind the myths and linguistic stereotypes from the challenge of the new situation.

This is why the factors, which helped the minority in being intact more or less in the past half century (such as the national pride, the prestige of the own language variant, the sense of "us", etc.) should be taken into consideration, and relying on these should the community strengthen its local, regional identity, and the cultural national self-identity based on this.

The members of the minority community should be helped to perceive, acknowledge the gaps, concessions characteristic to their identity, but finding and working out the resolutions should be up to them. Since they know their own possibilities, potential aptitudes best, they should not build on an exterior model, but instead of the passive standpoint they must become conscious and active members of the community, who are

sensible to the new power relations, and try to find new resolutions based on the experience of their own community.

The intellectuals, the school and the family have an important task, since they have a significant role in developing the values. The results of the empirical research show that the intellectuals will find/ will have to find the golden mean between the national pride and the rational approach of the problems. They will have to transmit the values to the children, those values, on which a stable, healthy, strong minority self-identity can be built. This is why their role in maintaining the self-identity of the minority community is of utmost importance. On the other hand the fate of the Csángó ethnicity shows what consequences the lack of intellectuals has. But their identity also shows: while the bigger percentage of the minority speech community (especially the intellectuals) thinks their mother tongue is important, if certain values are related to it, then they preserve it in spite of its devaluation coming from the world outside; the community uses it in the internal communication, thus strengthening its minority identity through the own language usage, insomuch as it is a general experience in minority/ bilingual situations, that the identity goes together with the inclination to preserve the mother tongue (cf. KISS 2009: 16-8).

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