

Integrating Authentic Heritage Language Culture in the Teaching of Romanian Mixed Distance Classes

Preliminary Activities and History of the Project

- ❖ 2005- first HLL in mixed classes
- ❖ 2005-2007 documented learning problems and language particularities; reflected upon published scholarship
- ❖ 2010-onward- further documented HLL identities, encouraged projects based on personal and family narratives
- ❖ 2014-2015- further interviews in the mixed intermediated and advanced classes; created tailored teaching materials
- ❖ 2015-presented findings at the NCOLCTL Conference
- ❖ 2016-2017- video interview with HLLs; research on the history of teaching Romanian at CU, as well as on identities of historic heritage speakers communities
- ❖ 2018-2019- project

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Romanian Communities in the U.S- brief history

- ❖ Dual self-defined cultural and linguistic identity
- ❖ Tense relation with *the country*
- ❖ Regional, religious affiliations that define the relation to the language and culture (the power of *difference*)
- ❖ The Jewish-Romanian community (further contact zones with the Yiddish program welcome)

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Romanian heritage speakers and their attitudes towards the HL and culture

- ❖ Predictable, comparable to findings in other HLs research;
- ❖ Proneness to stereotype what is *Romanianness*, while struggling for uniqueness;
- ❖ Attitudes “handed on” by immediate family, changed after interaction with other HL and L2 learners;
- ❖ From family stories to “profiling the country”;
- ❖ Self-effacing attitude, based on heritage identity

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What is a HL and how can we serve the mixed class?

- ❖ “arrested development” idiom (Rothman, 2009; Cabo and Rothman, 2012; Rothman and Tsimpli, 2016)
- ❖ Creolization of the language (Polinsky, 2008, Canagaraj and Silberstein, 2012, Moro and Suchtelen, 2017)
- ❖ A distinct dialect (for Romanian see Hartular, 1971, published 1982, Roceric, 1982 for phonetics)

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Guiding Principles

- ❖ The instructor deals with a *multilayered linguistic and cultural heritage*, as well as with *multilayered linguistic behaviors*;
- ❖ Explore, create, encourage *contact zones* (in our case, the double definition applies- see Van Deusen-Scholl, 2018)

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Contact zones and teaching materials

“The practice of **pooling linguistic repertoires observed in contact zones conceive of reciprocal learning in diverse classes**. Contact zones frequently exhibit what is known as **distributed competence**, where communication results from the collective capacities of groups (...) This view contrasts with **individual competence**, where capacity is seen as residing primarily in the individual learner and knowledge is viewed as something that is transferred or traded between individuals during the learning process. (...) Reciprocal learning, of course, is just one piece of the larger puzzle of how to conceive of teaching and learning in multilingual and/or multidialectal classes. (...) More broadly, the development of a pedagogy for linguistically diverse classes based on the model of the contact zones will require an openness to language learning approaches that are significantly different from those of today. (Carreira & Kagan, 2018)

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Teaching materials based on HL speakers

1.Challenges:

- ❖ Reluctance to provide longer samples (complex relation with the country of origin, lived or based on “transferred stories”);
- ❖ A tendency to engage in a discourse ‘in extremes’- personal identification/reflection on what Romanianness/Romanian culture and politics should be;
- ❖ A tendency to avoid “content-discourse” in Romanian, due to attitudes on HL

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Teaching materials based on HL speakers

2. Benefits:

- ❖ HL learners feel integrated in a mixed class;
- ❖ HL learners act as facilitators, which can modify their attitude towards the HL (including the array of topics approached in the HL)
- ❖ L2 learners feel included in a reachable community of the target language and culture
- ❖ Feedback can be used in further research on the HL and or teaching the HL

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Selected Readings:

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- Lynch, A- “Key concepts for theorizing Spanish as a heritage language in the United States”, in S.Beaudrie, M. Fairclough (Eds.)- *Spanish as a Heritage Language in the United States*, Georgetown University Press, 2012
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