

Grassroots literacy in educational context of the Moldavian Csángó and a local Romani vernacular in Hungary

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Bringing contested languages to education

- We deal with literacy in special educational contexts, where multilingual speakers produce writings in contested languages.
- We examine two contested languages or “ways of speaking”
 - 1) Csángó (Hungarian in Moldavia, Romania)
 - 2) (local) Romani (in Hungarian dominant environment) , both of which
 - i) have no extended literacy tradition
 - ii) no(widely accepted) standardized register
 - iii) do not serve as languages of instruction at school
 - iv) they are usually not treated as (literary) languages by their speakers.
- Current sociolinguistic theory distances itself from named, “pure”, standardized languages with clearly defined boundaries.
- In (language) education named languages and their elite registers remain hard currency in most cultures and regions.

Grassroots literacy

According to Blommaert (2008:7):

Grassroots literacy is a label I use for a wide variety of 'non-elite' forms of writing, of writing performed by people who are not fully inserted into elite economies of information, language and literacy.

1. Heterography (including visualizations)
2. A "way of speaking" used in writing
3. Distant genres
4. Partial inclusion into knowledge economies
5. Constrained mobility of the texts

Grassroots literacies and education?

- Even though grassroots literacy is practiced typically outside educational contexts, local literacies serve as potential resources in education as well.
- A focus of contemporary research is to investigate:
how the in-and-out of school literacies can be bridged and how the mainstream education system can draw on the insights provided by various community literacy practices”.

(Abdelhay, Asfaha and Juffermans 2014: 21)

Our research

Research question: how can promoting multilingual students grassroots literacy in education contribute to the development of literacy skills (including those in a named elite language)

Research site 1: The Moldavian Csángó

Research site 2: Bilingual Romani community in Hungary

Csangos

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



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- This article's **factual accuracy is disputed**. (*October 2008*)
- Some of this article's [listed sources may not be reliable](#). (*April 2014*)

The **Csango people** (Hungarian: *Csángók*, Romanian: *Ceangăi*) are a Hungarian ethnographic group of Roman Catholic faith living mostly in the Romanian region of [Moldavia](#), especially in [Bacău County](#). Their traditional language, Csango, an old Hungarian dialect, is currently used by only a minority of the Csango population group.^[5]

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 - 3.1 Hungarian sources

Ceangăi / Csángó



Who are the Moldavian Csángós?

- From the Medieval period, Hungarian Roman Catholics have settled in Moldavia. In 18th century many Szeklers (Hungarians) moved to Moldavia.
- The Hungarians in Moldavia have become detached from Hungarians in Transylvania (Szeklerland) and Hungary, and there have been no institutions using Hungarian in Moldavia.
- Identity: Roman Catholic, village, agriculture, Moldavia
- No Hungarian language reform.
- (Almost) no Hungarian literacy. No Hungarian speaking intellectuals.
- No ties to the Hungarian Imagined Community (Anderson 1991).
- Language shift to Romanian almost complete (1/4 of Catholics in Moldavia have at least passive knowledge of Hungarian, 48 000 persons)
- The Csángó is no longer passed on to children by the parents
- Adults still might use it among themselves, thus the children still might acquire a passive knowledge of the Csángó.

The official version:

- The Association of Roman Catholics in Moldavia states that there are no “Csángós” -> **Roman(ian) Catholics**
- In the end of the 19th century, the emerging Romanian state solved the problem of integrating the Catholic Csángós to the Orthodox Romanian nation in making the Catholic Church “Romanian”. The Vatican supported the idea of constructing a Romanian Catholic Church in return for state recognition and material support.

Villages and towns with a significant Catholic population in Moldavia



Szeklerland:

600 000

Hungarian
dominant
bilinguals,
80% of the
population.



Magyarfalu (Arini)	155 km
Szabófalva (Săbăoani)	145 km
Rekecsin (F. Răcăciuni)	125 km
Klézse (Cleja)	110 km
Lészped (Lespezi)	100 km
Pusztina (Pustiana)	70 km

In Moldavia,
the public space is
Romanian



The Moldavian Csángó literacy since 1990

- Since 1990, Hungarian activists have attempted to produce (standard and local) Hungarian texts on topics locally relevant in Moldavia, such as folklore, religious songs etc.
- Among the activists there has been a growing need for writing and reading Hungarian due to the now frequent contact with Hungarians and Hungarian institutions in Hungary and Transylvania, who also constitute the main source of funding for Hungarian teaching and cultural activities in Moldavia.

The Moldavian Csángó Educational Program

- Csángó social activism has centred around the teaching of Hungarian language in Moldavia since 1990
- In the 1990's the argument of Csángó being previously Magyarized Catholic Romanians was used to deny the practice of any linguistic rights by the Csángó by the local administration and the Catholic Church.
- This caused the Council of Europe to intervene (2001), which enabled the teaching of Hungarian as a mother tongue in schools (3 hours a week).

On the emerging public Hungarian language use in Moldavia

- The local vernacular appears seldom in the public, indicating that it is restricted to the private sphere
- The standard Hungarian displayed and performed in public space constructs, and indexes (discourses of), an imagined Hungarian national community, there are also often Transylvanian Hungarians or literary works from Hungary involved when Hungarian is used in public in Moldavia

The "Hungarian" associations organizing the teaching of the language have brought bilingual and Hungarian texts to their spaces and events, sometimes on public display. The public textual Linguistic Landscape has however remained monolingual and Romanian in general in the villages.

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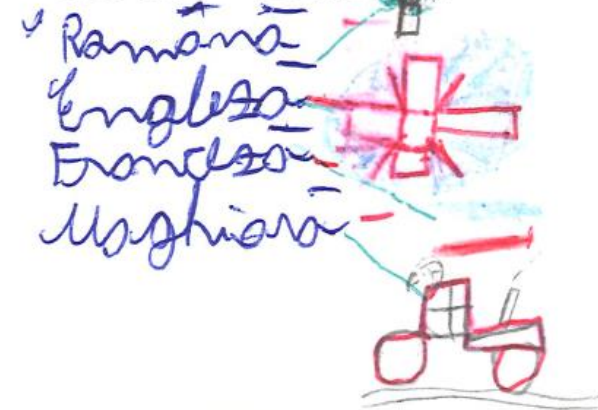
The Csángó way of speaking and literacy

- Its speakers define their language as the “Csángó way of speaking”
- The Csángó vernacular/dialect(s) are usually described (in romantic and negative terms) as archaic Hungarian with a lot of borrowing from Romanian. “A relic from the Middle Ages” (Council of Europe).
- This way of speaking, with c. 50 000 speakers, has almost no documented written culture or (elite) literacy tradition.
- The Csángós have had few Hungarian speaking priests since Moldavian Catholic Church was separated from the Church administration in the Hungarian Kingdom and Transylvania. Since the establishment of Romanian rule in the 19th century liturgical texts in Hungarian have almost altogether disappeared from Moldavia. There are still some old crosses with texts in Hungarian, but all the church spaces have only Romanian texts.

Data, Moldavian Csángó

- As our data, we use texts, both traditional and digital, produced by c. 100 participants of the program from 8 villages.

SZÍNEK – NYELVEK:



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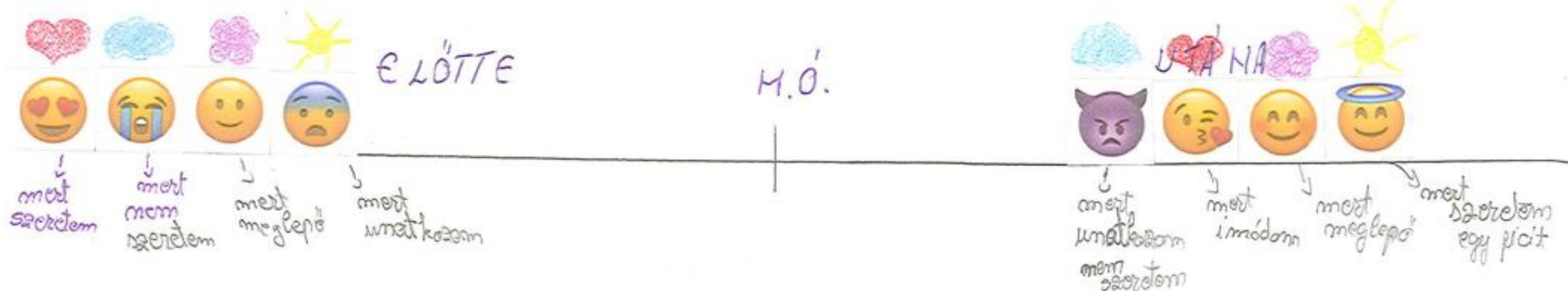
egy tractur

ésb egy stegat frontui

si egy stegat englezli

ÉHŐTÍKON

Név: Sándor Flórentino - Gabriella (Gabi)



VALTOZÁS:



mert én mikor hozzá jöttem Magyarországra mertamultam beszélni magyarul.

Színek - nyelvek: Román, Magyar, Francia, Angol



Balint Antonina Deni

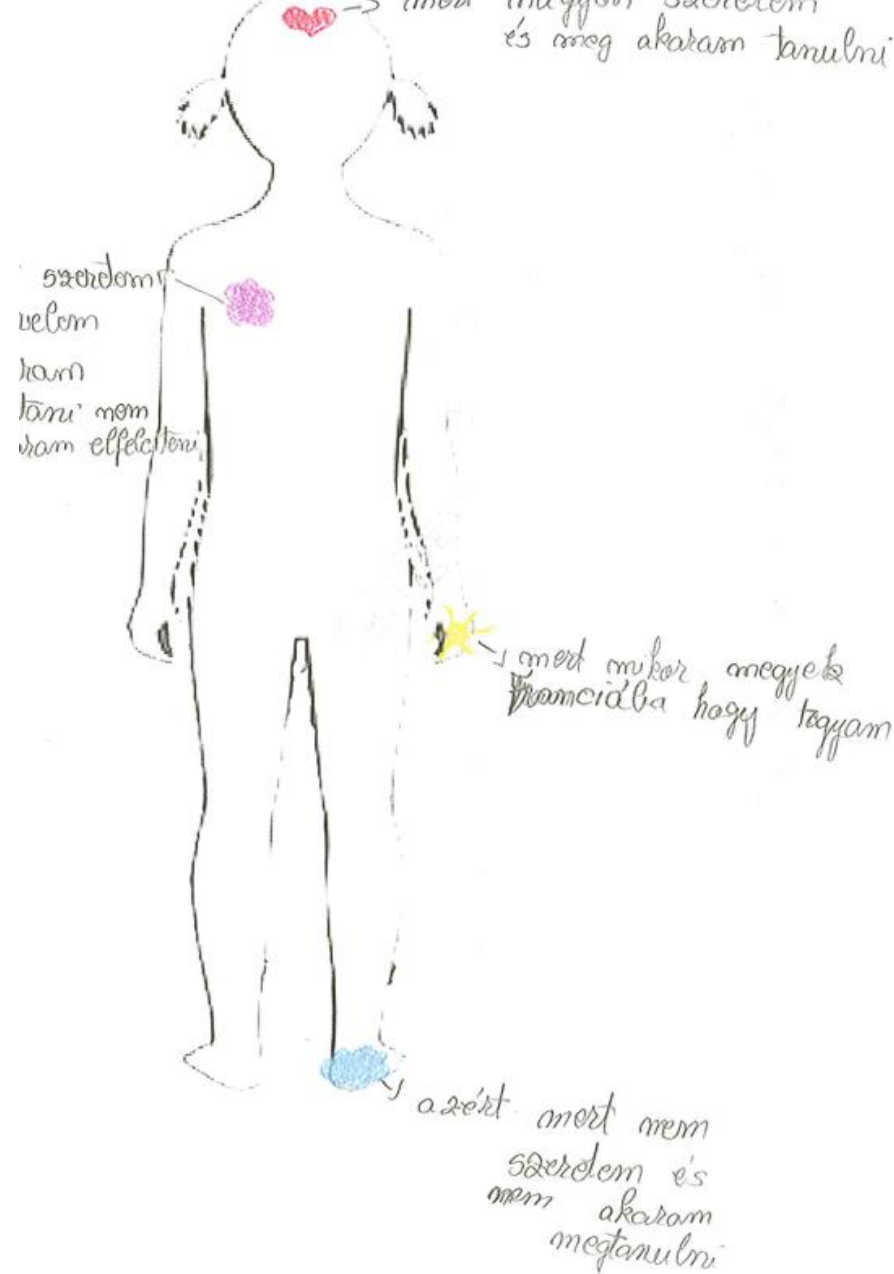
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- Románá  
- Magyará  
- Latin  
- Angliá  








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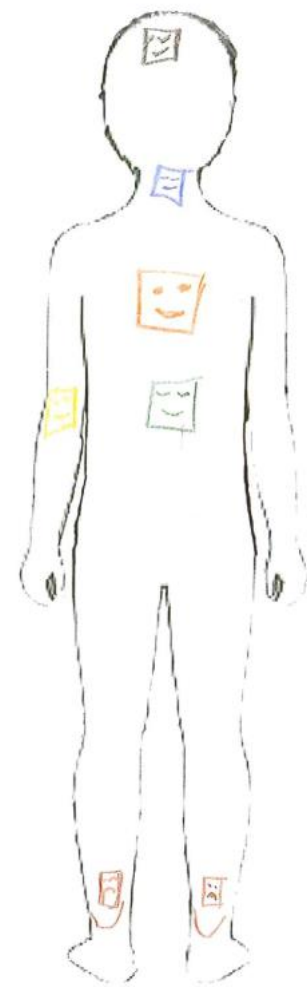
- Ciangăiasei  
- Românei  



Ferő Stefan Gabriel

- Ruman 
- Englis 
- Mosiolis 
- Francioli 
- latins 

L'NB, Ciangăiasei 

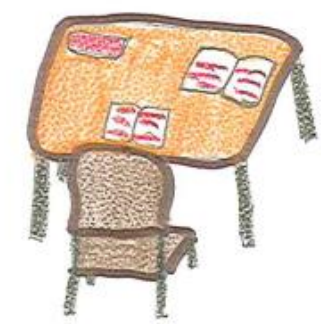
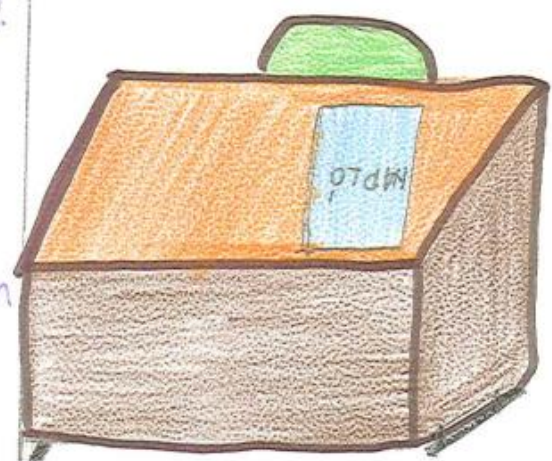


Sándor Flórentina
Gabriella

Én mikor nagy leszek én
magyar tanór akarok lenni. Mert
én nem akarom hogy elveissen a
magyar nyelvet. Én akarom hogy a
gyerekek és tanárok a magyar nyelvet.

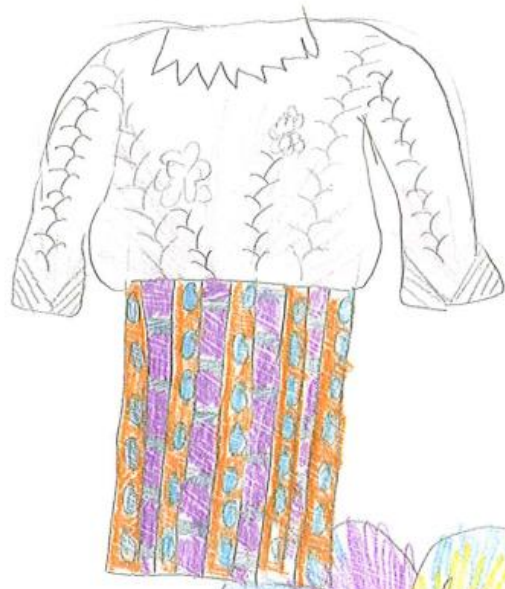
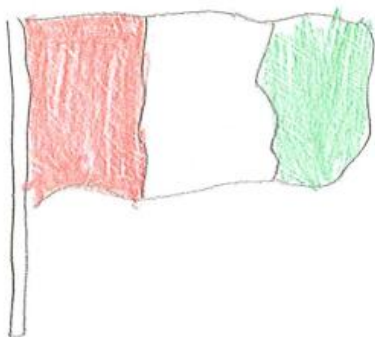
És mikor megyek Magyarországra
hogy tanítsak beszélni magyarul.

Én nagyon szeretem a magyar
nyelvet és akarom hogy tanítsa minden
gyerek.



Scripcaru Emanuela (Orsiu)

Magyar nyelv rajzom !!



Bece Denissa

Pusztina

A Pusztina nagyon szép, mert az emberek
dolgosak, valóságosak és szépek.
Pusztinába vannak állatok például: ló, tehén, malac és minden
féle állatok.
Reggel és este az emberek mennek a misére hogy imádkozzanak,
az Istennek hogy minden menjen jól az életben.

Pusztina a legjobb falu!





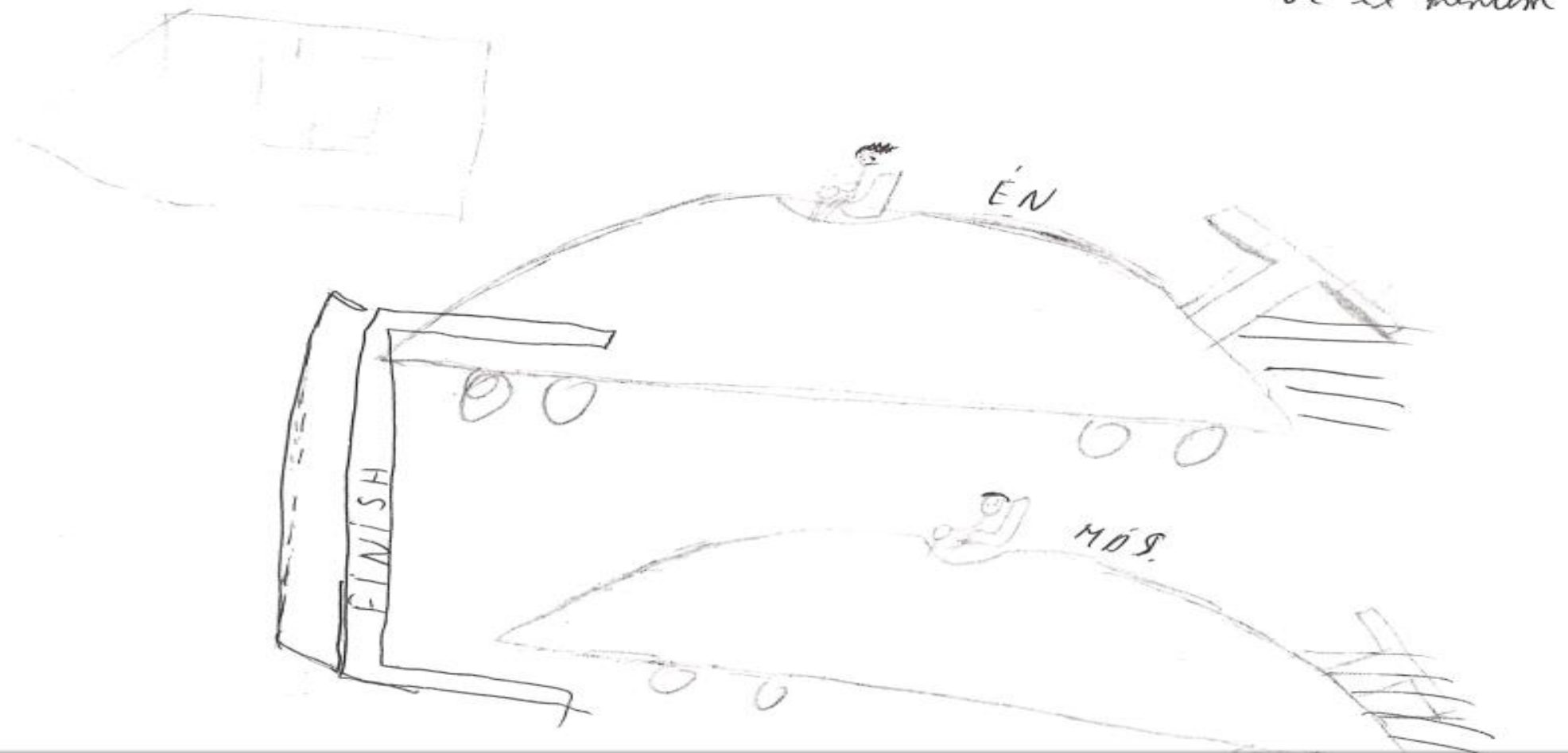


Kik vagyunkünk münk?

Structural inventory of grassroots literacy

	Hungarian Standard	Csángó
Marking of phonetic differences	kell tegyen megeskettek	kel tejen (must do) Megeskötlek (
Effects of the standardized orthography in the school language (letters)	most cigány tanulunk	mașt cigani tanulunc
Effects of Romanian orthography (lack of marking long phonemes)	csillagok pálinkával	csilagok palinkaval
Translanguaging	(Én) akartam rajzolni egy fát / egy traktort / aztán egy francia zászlót / és egy angol zászlót	In acartam raizolni edi fot / egy tracturt / osto egy steagot franței / și egy steagot englezei
Idiosyncrasies	titeket	tóktököt
Frequent variability	keresztapa éneklés	kerestapa – keresztapa eneklés – éneklés

Én mikor nagy leszek hamikor akarok lenni és forma 1
pilot. Én a magyar és fútbolist. Én a magyar nyelvét fogom
használni legtovább itond és lehetne hogy vissza
és itten a busztivóba mert vissza fogok jönni hogy lássam
meg mit csinálnak az emberek meg lehet itt halom mikor el mentem
dolgozni.



A structured, multimodal narrative, literacy genres practiced.

Én mikor nagy leszek kamionos akarok lenni és formula 1 pilóta. ~~Én a magyar és fodbaliszt. Én a magyar nyelvet fogom használni legtöbbször itthon és lehetne hogy vissza és itten a Csillárba mert vissza fogok jönni hogy lássam meg mit csinálnak az emberek megint itt haitam mikor elmentem dolgozni.~~

When I will grow up, I want to be a truck driver and a formula 1 pilot. ~~I the Hungarian and a football player. I will use mostly Hungarian at home and it could be that I come back and here in Csillár because I will come back to see what the men do that I left here when I came back.~~

Research site 2: Bilingual Romani
community in Hungary

Conclusions

- Grassroots literacy can constitute a resource not only for the local ways of speaking, but also for the development of literacy skills in the elite language in the long run through developing non-language bound skills.
- We argue that grassroots literacy can contribute to the performance of complex genres such as narratives in a normative framework, students do not get that far, because they make too many "mistakes" (in orthography etc.).
- We propose a focus on functional meaning not on normativity. The voluntary participation in multimodal projects can help the students to practice such complex literacy genres, because they are meaningful for their life, and socioculturally relevant for them, too.

Sources

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