Excerpts 1-3: Aymmetries

[1]: An elderly Hungarian woman described her neighbors as "very nice… There's a doctor, a lawyer, a Romanian family, and a teacher."

[2] Twenty-year old Ági lives and works in a largely Romanian-speaking world, but she speaks Hungarian at home with her grandparents. In one discussion at home, she happened to use the word "Romanians" in a way that clearly included herself and her family. This provoked an immediate correction from her grandfather: "We're not Romanians, we're Hungarians."

[3] From a group discussion of young Hungarians

  Zoli: The four athletes were invited to the TV studio. Szabo Gabriela, Jenei Imre, Boloni Laszlo and [Feri: all of them great Romanian athletes, hah!] and Gyongyosi Zsolt, the coach of Szabo Gabriela. …And the host says, "how much time has passed since four such important Romanian athletes were gathered in the studio at the same time." And all four were Hungarian.

  Laci: "well, Romanian in the sense of citizenship, if you take it that way."

Doing things with categories

Excerpts 4-5: invoking ethnicity to hold others accountable for an action or stance

[4] Seventeen year old Veronika grew up in a mixed Hungarian-Romanian family, and spoke both languages, but considered herself Romanian, and attended a Romanian school. Her last name was spelled in an identifiably Hungarian manner, but she pronounced it in a Romanian manner. Veronika complained that her Romanian high school classmates asked her "all the time" "why the Hungarians want Transylvania back."

[5] In a group discussion, Mia, a Romanian factory worker, re-enacted a conversation she had had with a Hungarian co-worker Ildi, who had complained that Hungarians had been discriminated against under communism. Mia, who felt strongly that things had been just as bad for Romanians, objected to what she saw as an unwarranted complaint: "How can you claim that you were oppressed ?" she asked, using the singular form of “you,” meaning, “you, Ildi.” Then, a few seconds later, she asked again: “How can you claim such things?” this time using the plural form of “you,” i.e. “you Hungarians.”

Excerpt 6: invoking ethnicity to establish one’s “standing” to criticize a fellow category member as an insider
[6A] Retired lawyer, Romanian: “Both what he says and what he does bother me. As a Romanian, mind you, as a Romanian. And as a citizen of Cluj."

[6B] Retired engineer, Romanian: "Now, the fact that Funar does everything in his power to ruin relations between Romanians and Hungarians, that's something that I, as a Romanian, cannot agree with."

**Excerpt 7: preemptively invoking ethnicity to secure a license to adopt a controversial view.**

Taxi driver, Romanian: "I consider myself Romanian-Romanian [i.e. purely Romanian]. As far as I know, my ancestors are Romanian all the way back. But I think it would be better for Transylvania to be autonomous from Bucharest. That would be better."

**Excerpt 8: Policing category membership**

A university student who grew up in a Hungarian family recalled that some Hungarian children had treated her as an outsider because she attended a Romanian elementary school; they called her a "Romanian" and told her to "go back to the Romanians."

**Excerpts 9-11: marking or qualifying category membership**

[9] a sampling of marked forms

- a true Hungarian (*igazi magyar*)
- a real Romanian (*român adevârat*)
- a pure Hungarian (*tiszta magyar*)
- a Romanian Romanian (*român - român*)
- "very" Hungarian (*nagyon magyar*)
- a genuine Romanian (*român get-beget*)
- a "big" Hungarian (*nagy magyar*)
- a passionate Romanian (*român inflăcărât*)

[10] Young worker at the Hungarian theater, critical of DAHR [the main Hungarian political party], lamenting the reciprocal dependence of Hungarian and Romanian nationalists on one another: "the Hungarians who are [really] Hungarian – they're the ones who make it out to be our national obligation to join the DAHR."


- Marcel, a 21 year old student: The mayor’s Romanian. [dismissively] Well we’re also Romanians, but this guy's too Romanian.
- Liviu, a worker in his mid-20s: I'm also Romanian, but this guy's way too Romanian. I think he's gone mad. [laughter]