

*Tackling colloquiality: some issues in the definition of colloquial language*

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ABSTRACT

The present work addresses the seemingly uncontroversial, but in fact largely unexplicated, concept of colloquiality. The first part of the work is concerned with underlining the complex nature of colloquiality, focussing on such issues as the risk of explanatory circularity (i.e. circularly stating that colloquial language is the variety of language used in colloquial contexts), the problem posed by the overlap of colloquiality with other dimensions of sociolinguistic variation, as well as the elusiveness resulting from the continuous nature of stylistic variation. The second part of the work is dedicated to outlining a definition of colloquiality. In particular, this work argues for a view of colloquiality as the language of immediacy and closeness in non-binding contexts. Derived from previous literature (Koch and Oesterreicher, 1985, 1990, 2007; Koch, 1999, 2001; Sabatini, 1999), the explanatory parameters chosen for such definition – immediacy, closeness, non-bindingness – are revisited here from the specific point of view of colloquiality, also considering how they may contribute to tackle the theoretical intricacies discussed in the first part of the work.