

RomIdent Working Papers

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Working papers

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Romani identity in Romani language teaching materials: Visual and linguistic aspects

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Romani identity in Romani language teaching materials: visual and linguistic aspects *

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Abstract

The collection and cataloguing of educational materials in Romani in the framework of the Romident project (HERA) on the role of language and identity among Roma has made it possible to make a number of observations with regard to the depiction of a Romani identity through the use of imagery – an essential part of schoolbooks – and language use. It appears that ideological choices with regard to the role of the school and attitudes towards Romani

culture are typically reflected in visual images as well as the choice of language varieties. Compilers of educational materials have made a range of different choices for images and language varieties, which reflect a diversity of views on Romani education. These views range from a romantic view of an idealized past to adjustment to wider society, to a view where Roma do not come into the picture as a different group at all, in a modern world probably close to the actual experience of the Romani children. The choice of language to be taught in the classes for Roma children range from the state language, but adjusted to a Roma world, to the simultaneous use of several varieties, a standardized language or a local variety only. The images and language varieties reveal the ideologies of the compilers, but these choices do not always point in the same direction.

1. Introduction

This study deals with the interaction of visual images in Romani language schoolbooks, and the choice of Romani variety. We compare a number of Romani primers and readers with regards to the pictures and the choice of the language in the book. First we will give some background information. In section 2 we will deal briefly with the question of separate or non-separate schools. In section 3 we provide background information on schoolbooks in the Romani language, and in section 4 we will describe some of the options that are available for depicting Roma. In section 5 an analysis follows of a selection of schoolbooks. Section 6 concludes the paper.

1.1. Language of educational materials for Romani children

When developing educational materials for Romani children, the first question to be solved is, what language to choose? This choice has to be taken at two levels: should the language be Romani, or the official language of the state or region? If one opts for the state language, or the majority language, there is only one possibility, the standard language. All states have a standardized form of their language, and non-state regions such as Catalonia and Wales also have a centrally codified language in the school system.

If the developers of learning materials opt for Romani, when that is the mother tongue of children, the choice is more complex. Do the authors use the local variety, a regional variety, or an international variety – to the extent that such a variety can be identified. Even though several authors have claimed to use some form of international Romani, it is a reality that there is no universally accepted standard Romani (Matras 1999), and none of the different competing forms for an international standard have gained wide acceptance (Matras 2005a, b). Below we will discuss among others a Romani textbook in the state language (in Greek, from Greece), and two where a self-acclaimed standard form of Romani has been chosen (Rumania, Denmark), as well as a range of other options in between, such as local varieties or several varieties.

1.2. State language or Romani

Probably the vast majority of Romani children in the different school systems throughout Europe receive schooling in the state language. This is true for all children who take part in the regular school system, and also for those who attend segregated schools. Segregated schools are often set up for disable children, but often Roma are routinely sent there.

In many countries, segregated schools for Romani children have been established, often with the argument that Romani children are mentally behind the others. Such schools existed, or still exist, in countries like Hungary, Bulgaria and Slovakia, but also formerly in Denmark.

When teachers opt for the state language as the instruction language, they can choose existing schoolbooks, developed for the general population. In the vast majority of schools, such regular schoolbooks are used, without special considerations for children of ethnic minorities. All teachers and educational specialists agree that it is important for all citizens of a country, including national minority children, to have a good grasp of the state language in its oral and written forms. Just learning the minority language Romani is not sufficient in any society. On the other hand, most specialists in language education agree that it is best when children receive schooling in their mother tongue, at the least in the early years of schooling. Offering classes in languages other than the mother tongue is not optimal, but is a potentially convenient solution when other options are difficult to realize. Clearly, the vast majority of Romani children are in this situation: they have classes in a language which is not their home language.

When teachers decide to develop special materials for teaching the state language, or for teaching Romani, they have a special goal in mind. They are apparently dissatisfied with the existing materials, perhaps because the depiction of life styles is alien to the Romani children, and culturally inappropriate (see Hancock 2012 for some examples).

And choosing Romani as a language of instruction can help to facilitate the acquisition of literacy. That is often an important reason for the development of teaching materials in the mother tongue. Ideally their variety would be as close as possible to what is spoken at home.

2. Segregation or inclusion

Increasing pressure from the EU is geared towards the cessation of these schools, under the argumentation that people who differ from the mainstream ought to be included. It has also been shown that such separate schools, nominally for children with mental disabilities, routinely received a disproportionate number of Romani pupils. The curriculum is usually far below the national standards, and the teachers were not always of appreciable quality. There have in fact been cases of Romani pupils from these schools who have been able to shift to a better quality school in time, and several have subsequently entered university. This shows that the supposed “mental disability” was automatically applied to many Romani children. Some court cases have forced governmental agencies to pay compensation to families for substandard education, after Romani parents had sued the schools or school boards (see Bakker 2006 for a brief discussion of separate schools; see also Halwachs et al. 2013 for a recent overview of different models of segregation and inclusion, based on UNICEF’s 2011 report). A survey conducted in 2001 shows how widespread this practice was (and there is no reason to believe that it was limited to this country): “A specific feature of the Hungarian situation is a high degree of segregation in schools and its knock-on effects for Roma children: according to a survey carried out in 4000 primary schools in 2001, Roma children were segregated in 700 classes mainly by means of remedial classes. In addition, a disproportionate number of Roma children are still enrolled in schools for the disabled” (Committee of Experts for “Charter”, 2nd Report on Hungary, 2004). Some 17 % of Hungarian schools had special classes for Romani pupils, on the basis of the assumption that the pupils were unable to follow

regular schooling because of mental or linguistic shortcomings (quoted in Halwachs et al. 2013: 33-34).

3. Romani books and language materials

Most Romani language learning materials are schoolbooks, i.e. printed materials intended for use in classroom situations. In addition to those, there are also publications for language learning and language use for different audiences.

Before treating those, we will have to briefly describe Romani book production and distribution, which have to face special challenges, quite unique to the Romani situation.

3.1. Romani book production

Until around 1990, the production of books in Romani was very limited, taking the number of Romani speakers into consideration – probably close to 4 millions. Except for a boom in the Soviet Union in the 1920s-1930s, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia from the 1970s, and occasional publications elsewhere, the number of printed materials in Romani was quite restricted. An exponential increase followed from the 1990s on. The biggest impetus for publications in Romani was probably the different publication programs initiated by the Open Society Institute, operating out of Budapest, Hungary, which sponsored the production and printing of many books in Romani, including educational materials. The subsidiary organization Next Page Foundation sponsored the printing of some thirty books in Romani between 2002 and 2007 in twelve countries, mainly in Central and Eastern Europe. Also other Open Society organizations sponsored publications.

The hundreds of books produced in the past two decades, however, are often not available through the distribution channels of regular booksellers. Rather, they are only distributed locally, often by the author or a sponsor. This means that even this increase in book production has not led to a wider availability of said publications. Even those produced by the Open Society are difficult to obtain and hard to find in libraries. Romani books are rarely for sale in bookstores, and are only seldom found in book catalogues available to bookstores and libraries. Some organizations have opted for an online distribution of materials, but that still represents a minority.

Husic (2012) has described some of the headaches for librarians when they attempt to add Romani books to their library collections. For instance, over a 1000 titles in the central book catalogue were marked as being in Romani, with the ISO-code **rom**. However, many of these appeared to be in Rumanian (or Romanian, in modern spelling in English) or in Romansh, the Rhaeto-Roman language of Switzerland. Also, publications in Latin, publications from Rome in Italy, and even publications in the Latin script, were catalogued under the code for Romani.

These factors make it extremely difficult to establish the number of printed works in Romani. A rough estimation would be several thousands monographs. In addition, perhaps up to a 100 periodicals, have been initiated, but many of them were only short-lived. These publications cover a wide range of fields, but in this study, we focus only on illustrated language learning materials for children.

3.2 Language learning materials for adults

First, there are a number of language courses for adults, aimed at either speakers of the language or at adult non-speakers who want to learn the language, be they Roma who did not grow up with Romani, or outsiders with a desire or need to learn the language, including potential teachers in Romani communities, aid workers or human rights activists. Some examples of such language courses are Barthélémy (no year), Franzese (1980) and Lee (2005).

There are also very few conversation guides of the kind “how to say it in...”. The best example here is Heinschink & Krasa (2004, 2009), intended for German speakers and including both a book and a CD. A French adaptation was prepared by Medo Gurbetovski and published in France in 2010 (Heinschink & Krasa 2010). Other examples are Jovanović (2000, Serbian and English), Grigore (2000, Rumanian), Sarău (2000, Rumanian) and Cioabă (2001, Rumanian). These are also intended for adults, either tourists who visit Romani settlements or households. Others are language courses for people who want to learn the language for social or professional reasons, or to add a linguistic aspect to their Romani identity.

The vast majority of language-learning materials are intended for children, and for use in school situations.

3.3. Catalogues of Romani educational materials

Several lists of Romani educational materials have been compiled and made available. Bakker (2001) listed mostly ABC books. Bakker & Kyuchukov (2003) included also other types of materials such as dictionaries, text collections and grammars. Their collection covers all materials that could be profitable to teachers. Proctor (2008) is a compilation of sources and resources for people who want to learn Romani. It covers a wide selection of materials from a wide range of dialects, focusing on materials that are relatively easy to obtain and that are of relatively good quality. Valentin (2009/2011) compiled a list for the Swedish Language Council, which contained ABC books, biographical texts, nonfiction texts, ethnographic materials, grammars, teaching materials, mathematics books, dictionaries, religious texts, collections of texts, including fiction and oral traditions, poetry and songs, and materials for learning to read. His materials are comprehensive for Scandinavian countries, but not limited to those: the list covers especially Finnish Romani, Lovari, Kalderash, Traveller language (Scandoromani), but also other varieties. Audio and video productions from Scandinavia are also listed.

On the basis of these catalogues, we estimate that the number of educational titles intended for children of early school age is over a hundred.

3.4. Schoolbooks and other printed materials in Romani

In recent decades, the number of educational materials available in Romani has increased dramatically. Bakker (2001a) listed around 30 schoolbooks for teaching Romani available at the time in the European Union. In 2013, the number is estimated to be over 100. The real number is certainly higher, because many materials are produced locally and are thus not readily available outside the school context or local community.

Schoolbooks are not the only types of materials produced in Romani. We estimated that over 1000 books have been produced in Romani during the past decade - this number does not take into account scholarly books about Romani (see Bakker & Matras 2003 for a bibliography of scholarly work on Romani, both monographs and articles). Publications

in Romani include books on medicine and hygiene, including dental care (Pavlović 1995), collections of proverbs, legends and folktales (e.g. Heinschink et al 2006), cookbooks (e.g. Horváthová et al. 1998, Oláhová 2000), books on nutrition, on dealing with drugs and alcohol, biographies (e.g. Kovacheva 2001), children's books, poetry, local history books, songbooks and theatre plays (e.g. Kruezi 2009).

While some of the oral text collections were made by and for academics for language study, sometimes as part of a grammar, the vast majority of these publications were geared towards a readership in the Romani community. In many cases, several goals were sought. Apart from the goal of the spread of information contained in the books, some of the materials were no doubt intended to enhance the prestige of Romani, and the stimulation of Romani as a written language. The readership may have been limited to very small groups. Some publications in Romani have even been called 'emblematic' (Matras 1999) in the sense that the mere existence of printed books (including religious Christian and Islamic materials such as Bible translations and Qur'an publications in Romani) had a tremendous impact, and enhances feelings of pride of the language. Nevertheless, many readers opted for the other language in a bilingual edition. Roma who have been schooled in a language other than Romani, often prefer to read the text in the other language, not Romani, as they are more used to the state language when dealing with written languages.

The materials have also been used by Roma to learn written Romani, and especially young Roma have familiarized themselves with written forms of the Romani language, and in some cases it stimulated them to write in the language themselves. The more spontaneous use of written Romani, for instance in Romani chatrooms, comments on Youtube videos and the like, as studied by Viktor Leggio, also suggest that some of the writers are familiar with other forms of written Romani. The use of letter symbols not present in their mother tongue, or letters with special sound values (for instance <x> for a velar fricative, rather than a /ks/ sequence), could be indicative of this.

3.4.1 Schoolbooks

Many states have directly supported the production of schoolbooks in Romani, sometimes covering costs for the development, sometimes the printing costs. Examples of state-supported school books can be found in Bulgaria (books produced by Hristo Kyuchukov 1993, 1995), Denmark (Kruezi's school books, 2003a, b), Finland (e.g. Vuolasranta 1995), Rumania (books produced by Gheorghe Sarău and his team (e.g. 2002) and Michaela Zătreanu, 2003), Sweden (several books published by Skolverket, the Swedish National School Board). In other cases, local support was given.

3.4.2 Dictionaries

The production of wordlists for Romani goes back to the 16th century, when curious Europeans such as Johannes ex Grafing (Knauer 2010), Van Ewsum and Vulcanius collected word lists from Roma in Western Europe (Moorman 2002). In later periods, it was mostly scholars with a more academic interest who produced Romani dictionaries.

Romani dictionaries for a Romani audience are fairly uncommon yet. For instance, no monolingual Romani dictionary exists. Existing printed Romani dictionaries are all bilingual, i.e. Romani to the state language (sometimes including other important languages), or the other way around, or both directions.

The Internet opened up for infinite possibilities, and a number of dictionaries and word lists have been produced and made available online. In this respect the collection of

electronic dictionaries produced under the auspices of Romlex (<http://romani.uni-graz.at/romlex/>) based in Graz (Austria) with input from Manchester and Aarhus, should be mentioned. More than 25 varieties of Romani are included, with more than 15 source (or target) languages. The words from all Romani varieties can be translated into English and German, and the other way around, and for almost all varieties additional target or source languages are available. This resource thus generates a potential number of 80 bilingual dictionaries. All Romani varieties included have translation possibilities into the major state languages in which they are spoken. A fuzzy search system enables users to find forms spelled in different ways in Romani, and another option allows a search for parts of words, including word-medial ones.

When we limit our discussion to dictionaries produced for educational purposes, we can distinguish several types. Some have been produced to assist Romani teachers, both in an effort to provide standard spellings of words, and to provide words they may not be familiar with. Teachers may or may not be native speakers of Romani, and native speakers are never familiar with all the words in the language. Some dictionaries also contain neologisms, especially when they were compiled on the basis of existing word lists, and the compilers wanted to avoid loanwords. A few Romani dictionaries have been produced especially for children, including picture dictionaries, and also several primers contain word lists.

3.5. Central production of teaching frame

The Council of Europe developed a *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* in order to have standards of reference for foreign language teaching in Europe. This framework was a basis for a number of projects that sought to develop language-teaching materials. Based on earlier experiences with language teaching, the Council of Europe and the European Roma and Travellers Forum developed a *Curriculum Framework for Romani* (CFR), which is a general model that allows curriculum developers to devise graded teaching materials. Following their guidelines, curriculum materials were developed by teachers from a number of European countries for schools for six varieties spoken in different parts of Europe. Academic specialists in the Romani language and education cooperated with Romani teachers to develop *European Language Portfolio Models* (ELPs) for Romani, with different levels for different stages, according to EU norms of level of achievement. This was an important step into the professionalization of Romani language education at the European level – the most appropriate level because the Roma are a minority residing in all countries of Europe.

(see http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Rom_CuFrRomani2008_EN.pdf)

The project *Quality Education in Romani for Europe* (QUALIROM) pilots the corresponding *European Language Portfolio Models* (ELPs) and develops learning materials for several levels, in a Europe-wide cooperation project. The end result will likely be a new generation of educational materials for Romani for European schools.

In the next section we will deal with the possibilities that compilers of textbooks have with regards to language choice and choice of pictures. After that, a sample of schoolbooks will be investigated in order to find out to which extent the choices of the compilers correspond to the child's own world.

4. Schoolbooks and Romani reality

Before embarking on the themes described in Romani schoolbooks, we need to provide a brief overview of the contents of schoolbooks in the non-Romani world.

Schoolbooks intended for language learning have generally been written in such a way that they reflect some form of reality. The background may refer to the home situation, the school situation and children's activities, with their school, their family or with other children.

The description of the home situation in schoolbooks has undergone changes in recent decades. Especially in the 20th century, they may depict core families in which father goes to work, reads the newspaper when he comes home, and mother is at home for household tasks such as providing food and taking care of the children, painting a world that is perhaps more ideological than realistic. For many non-Western cultures, for instance, the extended family with several generations interacting, is more realistic than a core family. This is also true for many Roma. Already in the latter part of the 20th century, more diversity was introduced into many textbooks. Children with other skin colors, different distributions of household tasks and out-of-house jobs for the different genders, other family constellations, etc., have entered the scene, in an attempt to create an openness for household forms that do not consist of core families.

Apart from the external world, schoolbooks may refer to life at school, where classrooms and school activities are depicted, buildings and surroundings, travelling from home to school, playground activities in the school breaks and the like. Activities in free time may include everyday activities such as visits to the stores or markets, transportation, sports, entertainment (including television), handling of pets and more special activities such as visits to the zoo, swimming pools, visits to farms and meeting farm animals, consults with a physician, visit to grandparents and other members of the extended families, birthday parties etc. Also the physical environment may be depicted, including the home, a village-like or city-like environment and the streets, parks, playgrounds and stores.

The questions that come to mind in this connection when we think of Roma, is to what extent such a depiction reflects the world of most Romani children. Is their life also depicted in Romani schoolbooks, or rather a different reality? Do children really like to read about their day-to-day reality, or rather about fantastic events? If schoolbooks describe a reality that is closer to Roma experiences, one can also wonder whether such books describe the reality of the children's world, or a more romantic view of a "Gypsy life", as it once was, or was imagined to have been in the past. For instance horse-drawn wagons may be shown for groups where these are not part of reality, or perhaps only in a distant past. One may also wonder whether children in general, and Romani children in particular, rather read about their own reality, or a fantasy world with supernatural humans, aliens, speaking animals, fictional beings and exotic places and peoples. As we will see, some developers of children's books have opted for the latter.

4.1. Romani identity in educational materials: imagery

In connection with the kind of world is depicted in schoolbooks (the children's daily life, or a real-world scenario that is to some extent foreign to the children, or a fantasy world), the question of identity in schoolbooks surfaces. It is of course difficult to generalize here, as the world of these children will be quite different from one community to another.

Most Romani children will have classes together with non-Romani children in mainstream schools. Schoolbooks in Romani or in other languages intended for special

Romani classes (e.g. mother tongue teaching, Sunday schools, home teaching) will most often be used not in full-time schools where all teaching takes place in Romani, but in special classes, within or outside the regular school curriculum. They will also have classes together with non-Roma children.

School materials could depict a Romani world that is romantic and hence unrealistic. Such texts and images would be overwhelmingly or exclusively positive. Ideally school materials for Roma would also be culturally appropriate, and not show taboo subjects, or behavior that would be against cultural values. On the other hand, boundaries can be shifted by showing different values as well. There are many different traditions among Roma groups, and the values in one group can differ from those in other groups. School materials may also depict a non-Roma world, or a world in which Roma and non-Roma coexist and interact. All such choices have an impact on the reception of the educational materials.

4.2. An example of images: depiction of Roma groups on a card set.

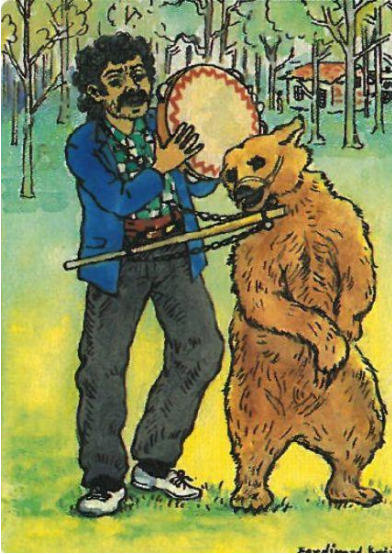
The Albanian Romani Ferdinand Koçi has drawn the images for a card game devised for Romani children (Koçi 2002). If we look at these drawings, we can see a wide range of cultural aspects of different Roma groups. For Roma subgroups (British Romanichels, Spanish Gitanos, Finnish Kaalos, Kalderasha (coppersmiths), Meckari (Balkan handworkers), Ursari (bear leaders) and Xoraxane (Muslims), cards show different family members: mother, father, son, daughter, grandfather, grandmother.

Many Roma and people dealing with Romani history and culture, will be able to associate these pictures with certain groups or regions. We have chosen six pictures to illustrate how the images are limited with certain groups, in order to show that the Roma are not a homogenous group at all. They share a language (although some groups have lost it), a common descent in South Asia and an overall feeling of belonging to a Roma nation – even though Roma feel much more closely connected to their own group than to other groups of Roma. But the many differences are obvious.



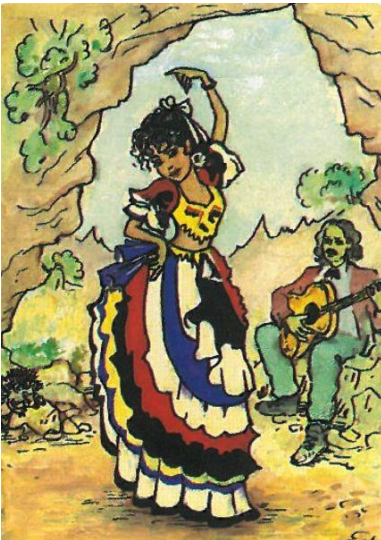
Ill. 1. A Kalderash grandmother with a child

(a) Illustration 1 shows a picture of a Kalderash woman with a child. The adult is dressed in a traditional colorful long skirt and has her hair in braids and her head covered. She follows the traditional dress code for her group. In the background one can see tents, as still used by a minority of peripatetic Kalderash groups in Rumania, but quite rare nowadays.



Ill. 2. Balkan bear leader (Ursari)

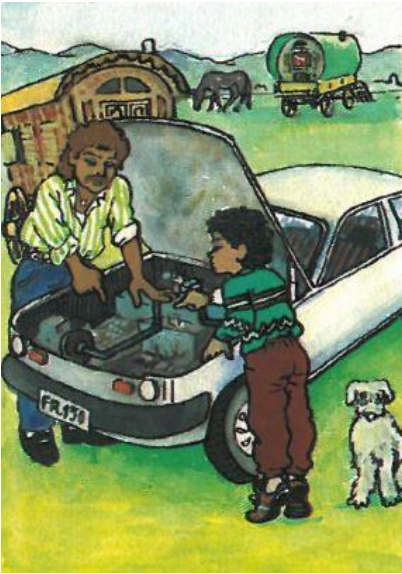
(b) This picture shows a bear leader (Ursari), leading a dancing bear. This was a tradition followed by groups sometimes called Ursari, or bear leaders, in Southeastern Europe and Turkey. In the 1800s and 1900s these groups sometimes ventured into Western Europe as well. However, in the past few decades these practices have disappeared almost completely, mostly because of regulations regarding the treatment of animals. Most former dancing bears are now kept in sanctuaries.



Ill. 3. Gitano woman

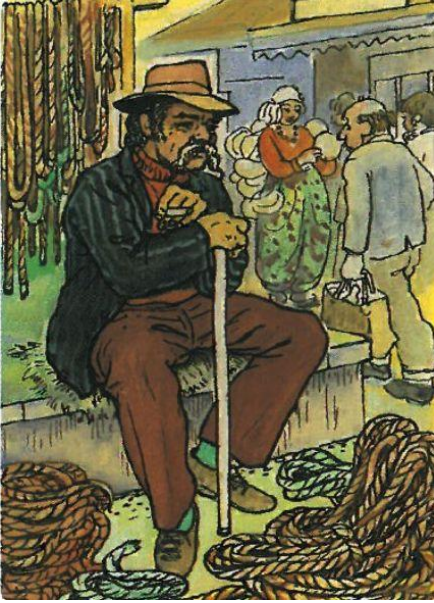
(c) This picture shows a flamenco dancer with a guitar player in the background. The landscape suggests that the scene takes place in the entrance of a cave. There is no doubt that this depicts Spanish Gitanos. The Gypsies in Spain are considered to be the ones who developed the special style of music and dance associated with flamenco. In flamenco texts, occasionally Caló (Romani) words are interspersed in the Andalusian Spanish lyrics. The long dresses for the women can be seen as characteristic, and the style of male clothing of the guitar player as well.

In one or two communities, the Gitanos did live in caves, as in the famous Sacromonte neighbourhood in Granada, but in modern times the caves are almost all hidden by houses and stone structures that cover the entrances. It should also be mentioned that flamenco is not limited to Gitanos, but very much part of the traditional culture of the Spanish in Andalucia, and Andalucians considered flamenco a part of their Spanish heritage as well. A reasonable number of southern Spaniards have inherited some Indian genetic markers from their Gitano ancestors. In other words, the people depicted on the card represent southern Spain rather than specifically Gitanos, and the cave scene is representative only for a small minority of the group.



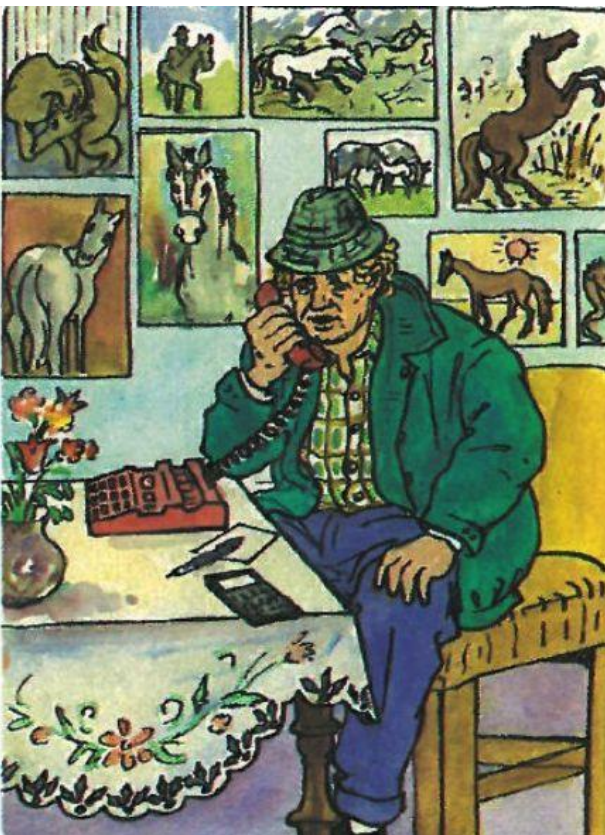
Ill. 4. British Romanichel Gypsies

(d) This picture shows a father and a boy in what one could say are mass-produced clothes from stores. The couple look at the motor of a car. Car trade, repair and demolition is a profession that was quite widespread in Europe among the Roma (and still is in some parts). In the background one can see a horse and some caravans. The horses suggest horse trade, the caravans are reminiscent of old-style caravans in Britain. The different components suggest that British Angloromanies are depicted, which is indeed the case.



Ill. 5. Xoraxane Turkish Romani man, Balkans

(e) The next picture depicts a man, perhaps a seller of ropes at a market. In the background a woman can be seen selling baskets. The dress, including the headscarf, is quite typical for traditional Muslim women in Turkey and the Balkans, nowadays mostly limited to older women.



Ill. 6. Finnish Romani man

(f) The final picture depicts a man in a dwelling or office, with a telephone. The many pictures on the wall suggest a deep interest in horses, perhaps he is a horse trader. He has a calculator and writing materials on his table. This makes it more difficult to associate him with a particular group or region, but a reasonable guess would be Britain. In fact he is a Finnish Kaalo. His dress code, however, is different from what is considered appropriate among traditional Finnish Kaalo, with light shirts and dark jackets. Appropriate clothing or behavior in some groups may be inappropriate for others.

The pictures show that the cards sometimes tend to depict extremely rare examples, even though the image may part of the stereotype (e.g. the Gitano dancers in caves), or overly generalized images, or even culturally inappropriate for some subgroups (Finnish Romani clothing). These pictures not only provide a glimpse in the historical cultural diversity of the Romani people, but they also show that the scenes depicted in the images can often be associated with certain regions or certain subgroups of the Roma, and in some cases with certain groups only.

The same is true for non-material differences, in that musical styles differ strongly between regions and groups, and different varieties of the Romani language are typical for the different groups. Some traditions fare in some groups, and they may directly oppose traditions in other groups. What is taboo one place, is part of the culture elsewhere. The dynamics of the Romani culture, caused in some cases a degree of isolation from other groups, is reflected in the different traditions, which are adjusted to local circumstances.

For a depiction of Roma in a study of Romani identity, one must therefore distinguish between the different groups and subgroups. It would make as little sense to display, say English Romanichals with Kalderash clothing and hair style, as it would be to show Hungarians or Danes in Saami traditional clothing.

4.2. Imagery in educational materials for children

There is quite a deal of variation between the quantity and quality of imagery in schoolbooks. Take for example two ABC books published in Latvia in a four-year interval, and compiled by the same author.

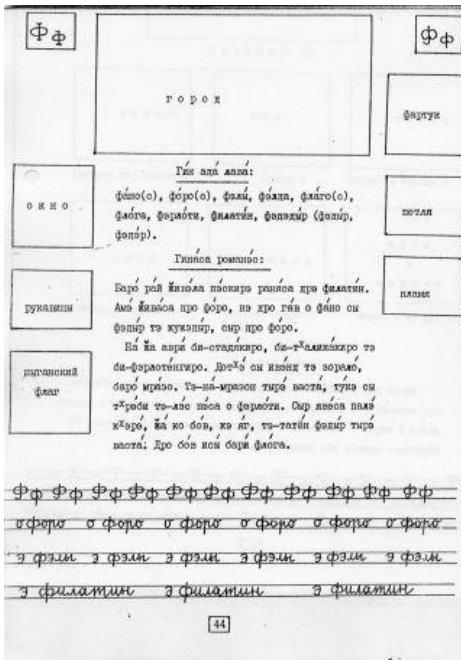
The 1992 ABC book (Mānuš 1992, Ill. 7) was produced in a very simple way. It uses the Russian alphabet, and there is only one page displaying a few simple illustrations, as shown in illustration 8. Russian words are also used, presumably in order to facilitate reading the Romani words, as in the top and sides of the illustration, and on the cover (Ill. 7 and 9).



Ill. 7. Cover of a 1992 ABC book from Latvia

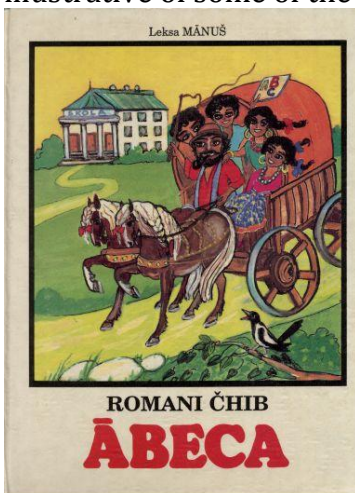


Ill. 8. Illustration in the 1992 ABC book from Latvia (Mānuš 1992)



Ill. 9. Page from the 1992 ABC book from Latvia (Mānuš 1992), with Russian words (in squares) and Romani words in the Cyrillic alphabet

In 1996, an ABC book beautifully illustrated in full-colour was published by the same author (Mānuš 1996). The cover is presented on Ill. 10. This time the Latin alphabet is used. The illustrations in the book depict a rather traditional life, and the absence of non-Roma is conspicuous throughout the book in the visual materials. The cover picture is quite illustrative of some of the rest of the contents.



Ill. 10. Cover of the 1996 ABC book from Latvia compiled by the same author

In contrast to the segregated world in the illustrations in the Latvian book discussed above, a Romani language primer published in Denmark shows a world in which Romani and non-Romani children share their school world. This choice is not mentioned explicitly in the text, but it is clear from the illustrations alone that the Romani learners visit a prototypical school. The illustrations were especially produced for this book, in a somewhat naïve drawing style.

This can be seen on the cover (Ill. 10), and elsewhere in the book. The cover picture shows the Romani flag and the Danish flag.

These pictures show some of the choices that compilers of textbooks make. We will get back to both of these books below in sections 5.2 and 5.4, in a comparison with other, similar textbooks.



Ill. 11. Cover of a Danish ABC book (Kruezi 2003b)

4.3. Romani identity in educational materials: choice of language

The use of the different varieties of Romani in Romani materials has been the subject of several detailed studies, which we will summarize here. With regard to illustrations, we will also analyze the choices made by the compiler.

In almost all cases, educational materials have been produced for a more or less local market, be it the Roma community of a particular town, or a group, or a region or country, or perhaps even an international market. Only rarely have these books been intended to be accessible to all Romani-speaking groups. Perhaps the only ones with that goal are some publications written in a spelling system which was discussed at the Conference of the International Romani Union in Warszawa, and devised by Marcel Courthiade (see Matras 2005a, b and Husic 2011 for different views on the history of this alphabet). This writing system has been used in a few European Union publications (e.g. the children's books by Hill 1994a, 1994b, 1995), a dictionary (Courthiade 2009), a few publications from the Kosovo (e.g. Krasnići 2001), Spain (Gonzalez & Ortega 2011), Macedonia and Albania (mentioned in Matras 2005b) and almost all publications produced in Rumania since the 1990s. In any case all those materials produced under the responsibility of the Rumanian Ministry of Education had to be

published in this alphabet (see Sarău 2009 for an overview of activities; the author was himself the main agent in these activities). There are several levels in which this supra-dialectal writing system is designed to function. Ideally, it would be a writing system adequate for all dialects. For that purpose a few graphemes have been designed to denote one phoneme in some varieties, and another in other varieties, so that all Romani users can read it as in their dialect. Another aspect of the design is the use of a few letters in case endings that are pronounced differently depending on the preceding phoneme. In this area, all Romani dialects behave in the same way, but the letter is a more abstract unit, an “archiphoneme”, pronounced voiced or voiceless depending on its environment. We are aware of no other writing system where such a system exists. But these writing conventions of speech sounds provide no solution for the fact that there are also lexical differences between dialects. In general, different words can be used, depending on the variety of the writer.

The question can thus be asked: is this a mere writing system that can be applied to any Romani variety, or is this a standard variety? In some cases, older Romani texts have been republished following the older texts quite strictly (e.g. Nicolăescu-Plopșor’s texts from the 1930s, republished in 1997), except for the spelling – which would suggest it is just a spelling system. The room left for lexical choice seems to indicate a pluralistic view – although in practice the texts contain quite a few neologisms that are not always transparent. In its ideology, however, it is a standard language.

As this writing system has never really caught on, despite fervent attempts, and as there has been only a few publications using this system in recent years outside Rumania, it needs no detailed discussion. We will analyse one of the ABC books using this spelling below in 5.3.

When a decision is made to write Romani, the first question to ask is, which alphabet is appropriate? It may sound obvious to use the Latin alphabet, but as the Romani language is also used in Greece (Greek alphabet) and in countries where the Cyrillic alphabet (e.g. Serbia, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Ukraine, Russia) is used, this is not obvious. In practice, however, the Latin alphabet appears to be preferred. In no countries in which the Latin alphabet prevails have Romani writers chosen to use the Cyrillic or Greek alphabet, but the opposite has happened. Some educational materials published in Bulgaria, for instance, use the Latin alphabet for Romani (e.g. the material for Romani children produced by Kyuchukov between 1993 and 2001, even though he started with Cyrillic script).

Once an alphabet is chosen, the choice is open whether one adopts the alphabet of one of the local languages and uses it as it is, or whether one adjusts the writing system to the sound system of Romani. Romani has a number of distinctive phonemes that are not found in European languages, notably the aspirated stops (*ker* “do”, *kher* “house”, *pen* “speak”, *phen* “sister”). Authors with experience in only one writing system, may not be aware of some of the essential distinctions, and may neglect using different symbols for the different phonemes. We are not aware of writing systems where distinctive aspiration was not indicated, but it is not always used consistently (see Friedman 1995, 1997, 1999 for Macedonia, and Hübschmannová 1995 for the Czech Republic).

In most cases, the existing alphabet will be modified, by using extra letters for phonemic distinctions. These can be digraphs (e.g. <ch> for the phoneme /tʃ/, or a letter modified by a diacritic sign, as in <č>, or a letter which is part of the Latin alphabet but which is not used for the Latin value of the letter, thus <q> is used for /č/, not /kw/. If the phoneme /č/ is written as in the local languages, it may be written <tj> in Denmark and the Netherlands, <ch> in Britain, <tch> in France, <tx> in the Basque Country, <cs> in Hungary, <c> in

Rumanian and Italian (before front vowels), and <tsch> in Germany. That is not a very practical solution for an international orientation of publications. If the same sound is written differently, or if certain letter signs would be pronounced differently in different regions for the same language, is not ideal.

In the next section, we will discuss the choices made by the authors and compilers, and we will discuss possible links between the choice of the language and the selected imagery, as both supposedly reflect a certain identity, for instance a strictly local Romani group, or one which is part of the broader Romani world, as well as a choice for including non-Roma or not.

5. Connections between imagery and language choice.

The choice of imagery is closely connected to the choice of language, or language variety. We will illustrate this on the basis of a number of educational books. In a Romani conversation guide published in Serbia in 2000 (Jovanovič 2000), the Serbian language is not written in Cyrillic but in Latin script, and the images show photographs of attractive young Roma wearing sunglasses with cars and motorcycles in urban settings, suggestive of a modern lifestyle, symbolized by the choice of a non-local alphabet, and the choice of English as an added international language in a trilingual book. The Romani variant used in the book shows mostly traits of Southern Vlax dialects, but with some Arli (Balkan) traits as well, suggesting a choice for more superregional identity rather than a strict personal variant or a variety belonging to one subgroup. In fact, the author thinks and hopes his choice will contribute to a standardized variety, when he writes in his preface:

“Each recorded variant of any of the Roma dialects brings the Romany language closer to the standardisation that is aimed at, which means closer to the forming of a common language of all Romas. This is also the final purpose of this book” (Jovanovič 2000).

This provides a realistic example of what is going on in the Romani community at large. Individual writers feel inspired by other texts they know in Romani, and in other spoken varieties, and they may use a system they think reaches most people. We can expect these varieties to converge, and perhaps eventually to merge, perhaps, but it is impossible to say what the time frame would be.

We will now use a number of children’s books as illustrations for the mutual interaction of the choice of images and the choice of language variety. The choice of books is inspired more by a desire to show examples from the whole spectrum, rather than to attempt and provide a complete list, or a balanced sample.

5.1. Greece

One Romani community in Greece produced a textbook in the Greek language aimed at Romani children (Vasiliadou & Pavli-Korre, 1992. ill. 12). The imagery, however, makes clear that the book is intended for Roma children. Some of the recurring persons have stereotypical traits of Roma. Otherwise, the book is quite typical of the genre of a primer, with examples of the letters, drawing exercises, fill-in tasks, etc. (see ill. 13).



Ill. 12. Cover of a primer in Greek for Romani children



Ill. 13. Sample page from the Greek primer

5.2. Denmark

In 4.2 above, we discussed a language-learning book from Denmark, where the cover (Ill. 11) showed a school building with a Danish flag (red with a white cross) and a Romani flag (green and blue with a red wheel in the middle). The variety used in this book, and other books written by the author shows his intention to use an international variety, maximally

intelligible for as many people as possible (Kruezi, p.c.). The language is clearly influenced by the author's native Arli variety from the Kosovo (Balkan Romani). In short, it is to some extent dialectal but obvious dialectal traits are avoided. The spelling strategy used is, according to the author, a system developed and approved at a meeting in Prizren. It is maximally simple in that no diacritics or unusual symbols are used, but only the 25 letters of the Latin alphabet. Specifically Romani phonemes are indicated by digraphs (ch, sh, dy, ny), and the letter <q> is used for the phoneme /tʃ/. Thus it can be produced on any typewriter or computer, without the hassle of special actions needed for typing letters with diacritics. The writing system is clearly international, not only because of the choice of the Latin alphabet, but also the clear European, international orientation. The author explains: "Akaya pustik garantinela may uqe Evropako standardi ano sikloviqe kote e Romengo sikloviqe anela yekh e yaver themyenge siklenca", or "This book guarantees a higher European standard in teaching, and teaching of the Roma will bring Romani teaching to pupils from a range of countries with pupils", clearly motivating the international intentions of his orientation.



ill. 14. A page from the primer from Denmark (Kruezi 2003b)

From a visual point of view, the illustrations are clearly recognizable for Roma and non-Roma. Both groups of pupils can identify with the illustrations, which include outdoor family activities, a range of hair colors (i.e. mixed classes), a visit to the hospital (ill. 14) and fairy tales such as Little Red Riding Hood. Likewise, the choice of the Latin alphabet is intended to make it accessible as broadly as possible. Thus the language has an international orientation, with some local flavor. In the preface and on the website (no longer accessible in 2013) alternative words are sometimes given in order to make the text accessible to speakers of different dialects, or to provide explanations for neologisms and other unusual words, as in this quote: "Akaya pustik si hramimi e 25 hramardenca (harfi, slovo, bukva, germa) kolenca hraminyola e Romani qhib" ("This book is written with the 25 letters [four equivalents of the same meaning are given, including Slavonic-derived *slovo*] with which the Romani language can be written"). Linguistically, the author clearly has international ambitions. With the use of

a spelling system that is reportedly collectively approved, the goals of the book are clearly beyond the local circles who discussed and approved it. Visually, a social world is depicted which is recognizable for different ethnic groups, and which is inspired by a non-segregationist attitude.

5.3. Rumania

A large number of educational materials have been produced in Rumania. Zătreanu (2000, cover on ill. 15) is an example of a primer in the special alphabet discussed in 4.3. The illustrations blend school life, everyday activities, special events such as a visit to the zoo, and a blend of Roma and non-Roma on the images, some with traditional trades, others showing the modern world (ill. 16), or a fantasy world with anthropomorphic animals.


The choice for what is meant to be an international variety is reflected in the images, which shows a non-segregated world.



Ill. 15. Cover of a primer from Rumania

• Sar phenen kana arakhen tumen varekaça?
 • Kana o manus del tumen vareso, sar phenen?
 • Kana yan tumenqe, sar phenen!

I Roza akharel pesqe siklärnä



R: Alo, siklärnie!
 S: Va, laçho dives! Kon si?
 R: Me som! Phen manqe so si amen te xramosaras, ke bisterdem?
 S: Si tumen te xramosaren jekh paramisi.
 R: A, akana ganav!
 S: Laçho dives!
 R: Mišto!

Sar trebalas te del дума I Roza? Alosaren andur il duj:

Alo, siklärnie!
 Laçho dives, siklärnie!
 Me som.
 Me som I Roza.
 Phen manqe so si amen te xramosaras!
 But mangav tut te phenes manqe so si amen te xramosaras.
 Mišto!
 Nais tuqe! Laçho dives!

Ill. 16. Page from the Rumanian primer.

5.4. Latvia

We already mentioned above in 4.2 two textbooks from Latvia, where a picture of the cover was shown (ill. 10). The images used in the 1996 primer from Latvia (Mānuš 1996) show quite a few images with Roma, and the images are rather stereotypical with horse-drawn carts strolling along rural roads and through forests, with happy Roma dancing around a fire, and the like. It is as if a disappeared world is shown, strongly romanticized as an idyllic and ideal world, without the presence of urban centers, non-Roma, motorized vehicles and other amenities of modern life. Such an image may have an effect on children that their own situation has worsened since the days described in the book, or that they are not “real” Roma if they do not live such a life. Other pictures in the same book, however, also show other aspects of the world. Thus, the same page may show a Roma woman in a traditional dress, and a couple of bottles of medicine (see ill. 17).



Ill. 17. A page from the Latvian textbook (Mānuš 1996)

The language used is the specific main dialect of Latvia. One specifically Latvian letter <ļ> is used. The linguistic identity is quite clearly local, and this is also mentioned in the book: "amé sam Lotfítka Romá" (p. 58), "we are Latvian Roma". Cultural information is also given, e.g. the Roma flag is discussed, and poems from local poets are included in the textbook, as well as historical information.

In short, the cultural and linguistic choice in the book is regional, mostly but not exclusively Romani-specific in the verbal information. Some of the pictures hardly depict a life close to the realities of the children, whereas others show objects and situations familiar to the children.

5.5. Lithuania

The number of Roma in Lithuania is quite small, both proportionally and absolutely - around 2000 Roma live in Lithuania, which represents less than 1% of the total population, even though the real number may be twice or three times as high (Šukevičiūtė & Bakker forthc.).



Ill. 18. The cover of a primer from Lithuania

In 2006, Romani teachers produced the first schoolbook in Romani (ill. 18), mostly for the small community of Roma living in a neighborhood of the capital city, Vilnius. The contents of the book clearly depict Roma content, for instance women following the local dress code, a picture of the Roma flag, etc. Further we can see wagons, family activities, and the like, beside pictures of family life. In 2006, Roma were living mostly in shantytowns on the outskirts of Vilnius. There is no clear presence of non-Roma in the imagery, except perhaps for some of the school children.

Linguistically, the spelling used is based on international conventions, which are close to the set of letters in use for Lithuanian, where the hacek is used as a diacritical sign. Some modifications are inspired by Lithuanian, such as the indication of vowel length by a bar on top of long vowels. When words are used in the textbook, they are given in both Romani and Lithuanian, facilitating language learning in both directions.

In short, the authors of this primer have an "internal" orientation, focusing on the Roma only, and the life depicted is influenced by more or less romantic images of Romani life, combining the past with the present.

5.6. Sweden

In Sweden, an impressive number of schoolbooks and different types of literature has been published in several Romani varieties, including both translations and original work. Romani has been a recognized minority language there since 1999.

The first Romani teaching book appeared in 1979, and was reprinted in 1982 (Scherp 1982), as one of the first of its kind. The Swedish state has recognized “Romani Chib” in all its varieties as one of its minority languages, and provided the possibility for some television and radio programs. In addition, *Skolverket*, the National Board of Education, has facilitated, produced and/or published several dozens of books in a handful of varieties of Romani. Other Swedish publishing houses, such as *Podium*, have also published books in Romani over the years.

An early example of a Romani primer from Sweden is *Amare Anglune Betivura* (“Our first letters”), published in 1996 (Berta & Kuzhikov 1996). The cover shows the interior of a building, presumably a school, with a young Romani woman. Five wheels are placed in the top of the picture as a symbol of the Roma and in order to decorate the cover. The images in the book consist exclusively of drawings. The drawings show a variety of objects, ranging from school-related objects to pictures of Royalty and food. Both modern and traditional objects are shown (see Ill. 20). There are also drawings of events, such as family gatherings. It also shows a map of Sweden indicating where significant numbers of Roma have settled. One goal is stated in the book as “te na bistren pengo romanipe”, or “in order not to forget their own language”. The book was made for a specific group, namely Swedish Lovari children, and is to be used in connection with mother tongue education.

In short, the book shows both Romani and non-Romani content, and a mixture of Romani-specific and more general texts, including traditional Romani stories, and a brief history. No “Swedish” letters like <å, ö> are used, and a more international spelling is used, with diacritics as used elsewhere. The language used is the Lovari dialect, with little or no adjustments.



Ill. 19. The cover of a Swedish primer



Ill. 20. A page from the Swedish primer

5.7. Finland

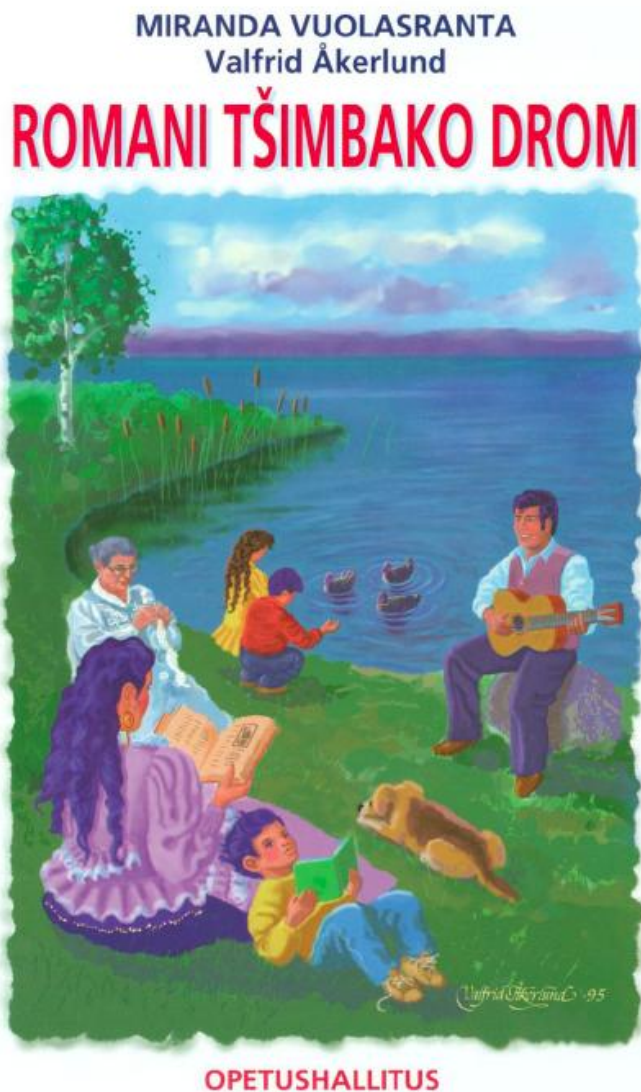
In Finland, Romani (locally called Kaalo, from the Romani word for “dark, black”), is a constitutionally recognized minority language. Government agencies have assisted in the publication of dictionaries, educational materials, songbooks, and more. Already in the 1980s, the first learning materials were produced (Koivisto 1982, 1987), and in the 1990s, many more materials were published. Among them, an ABC book (Vuolasranta 1995), which will be discussed in more detail here.

The cover shows a Romani extended family enjoying free time (ill. 21). The women are dressed in the traditional long skirts typical of Finnish Romani women. The men have a less conspicuous dress code, but recognizable for the close observer, with usually white shirts, impeccable shoes and a certain hairstyle. Even though non-Roma are also depicted in the book, the Finnish Roma dominate the visual material, as can be expected.

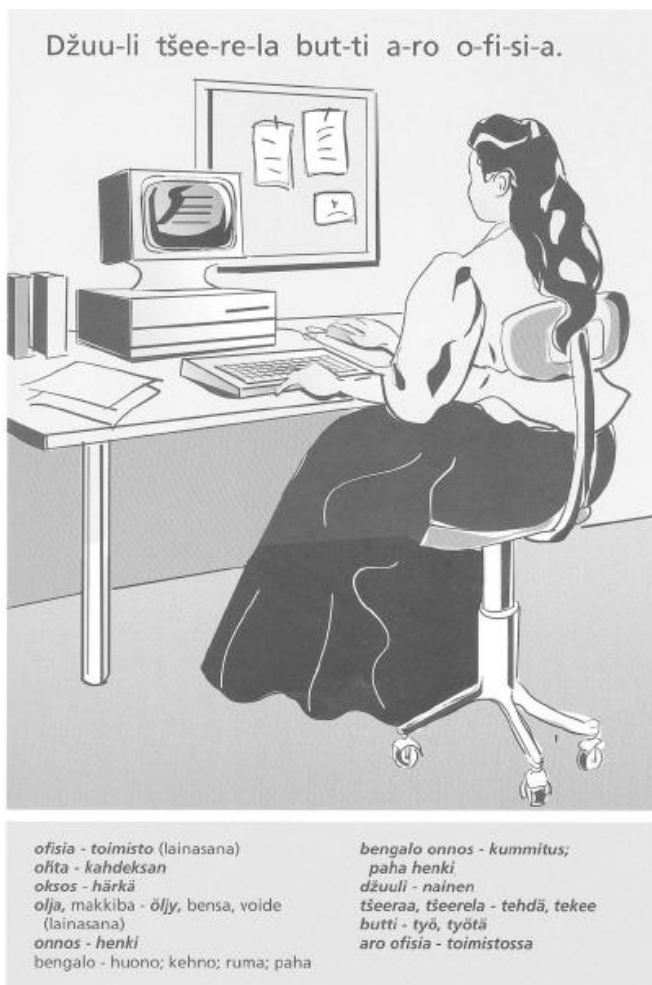
The environment is close to the reality of Finnish Romani children: modern buildings, cars, houses, schools, offices, nature, family members, including a woman working in an office (ill. 22). In rare cases a more romantic picture is shown, with a horse and a wagon. Clearly, the author and illustrator have opted for a visual imagery with which the Finnish Romani children can easily identify.

The Finnish Romani language is influenced by Finnish, especially in the phonology (see e.g. Granqvist 1999a, 1999b), after many centuries of bilingualism. Therefore, there is considerable overlap between the sound systems of the two languages, and in this book (like in other publications in the same variety), the spelling system used is close to that of Finnish,

with some adjustments to the <c, h, j, s, z> to which a hajek is added. Like in Finnish (and some other Romani varieties), vowel length is distinctive in Finnish Romani, and long vowels are written with two consecutive vowels (e.g. <ee>, <ii>), like in Finnish. As the Finnish Roma have been fairly isolated from other groups, except from those in Scandinavia, the language has undergone some developments that, though clearly Romani, make it a quite distinctive variety of Romani. Also, almost all Finnish Roma reside either in Finland or in Sweden; they are not spread through a wide geographical area. Therefore, the Finnish-based spelling that the author has opted for is perfectly justifiable.



Ill. 21. The cover of a textbook for Finnish Romani (Vuolasranta 1995)

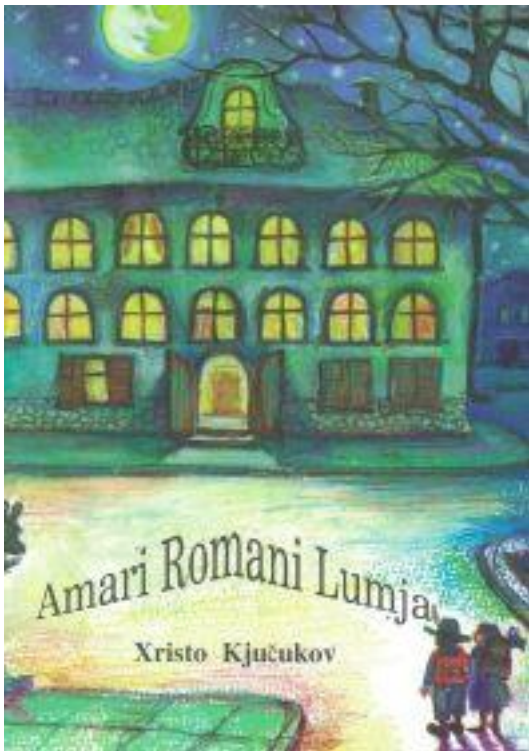


Ill. 22. A page from a primer for Finnish Romani (Vuolasranta 1995), showing a Kaalo woman in an office environment

5.8. Bulgaria

In the 1990s, when it became possible to teach Romani in the public school system, a number of schoolbooks were produced, some through the Ministry of Education, others through private foundations. Hristo Kyuchukov was instrumental in the production of most of these.

A small series of schoolbooks were produced under the title *Amari Romani Lumja* "Our Romani World" (Kyuchukov 1997, 2000, 2001a, b). The booklets are quite diverse, and we take the first book in this series as an example. These are not ABC books, but readers, providing texts of a different kind. Kyuchukov (1997) presents a number of very simple poems or short songs, usually with the name of the author, and if the name is not known, the country of provenience is given. The alphabet chosen is not the Cyrillic alphabet, the only alphabet used for the Bulgarian language, but the Latin alphabet. This is a conscious choice for an international orientation. The spelling used is uniform, in that the same diacritics are used as in international conventions for the special characters, but they are not used consistently.



Ill. 23. The cover a reader from Bulgaria (Kyuchukov 1997)

The picture of the cover (ill. 23) shows two children watching a building, presumably a school. The boy's hat and the girl's long skirt suggest that they are Roma children. The back covers shows a horse-drawn cart and a dancing bear, with Roma musicians and dancers. The pictures in this richly illustrated book show a completely rural life, with children playing happily in green fields, surrounded by friendly farm animals. Non-Roma are absent in the book. The only reference to non-Roma is made in a short story from the Czech Republic, where a child confesses to a family member that he does not want to go to school because he is bullied by the non-Roma children.

The book shows a diversity of writing styles. In some texts, the phoneme /x/ is written as <ch>, as is done in Czech, but in other texts, the letter /x/ is used for the same speech sound. Similarly, different dialectal variants can be spotted. The word for "flowers" is written *lulugja* in some texts, and *lulud'a* and *luludža* in others, reflecting dialectal variants or local spelling conventions from Czechia and elsewhere.

The author does not specify his goal or motives for these choices. In a later book in the series, he writes: "Adava lil (kliška) si e romane čhavorengje – te sikljon o barvalipe romane čhibaki. But Roma ladžan e romane čhibatar, thaj bistren, či vorbisaren i romani čhib." "This book is for Romani children – so that they learn the richness of the Romani language. Many Roma are ashamed of their language, and they forget it, they do not speak Romani". Obviously, Kyuchukov's motive is language maintenance through written media.

The preface is written in a non-specific variety, in which elements from different dialects are used, mainly forms from the Balkan and Vlach dialects. Presumably the chosen forms are estimated to be more widely understood.

In short, this book series has a rather romantic imagery, removed from the reality of most Bulgarian Romani children. The language choice shows a diverse range of texts in

different dialects, maintaining much of the original spelling, whereas metatexts are written in a somewhat artificial variety apparently aimed at maximal understandability. The use of different spellings for the same words in the same book is not in line with standardization efforts and normative codification, but it creates an awareness of different varieties and teaches the children acceptance of wider sets of norms.

5.9. Germany

In Germany, not many educational materials have been produced. This may have to do with the fact that the numerically dominant group, the Sinti, who also constitute the traditional group with a centuries-long presence in Germany, oppose written forms of their language – especially after many German Sinti and Roma perished under the Nazi regime. Many Sinti still associate the German race-hygienic researchers with outside interest in their language. Other Roma groups in Germany are more relaxed about their language.

In 1996, under the auspices of the Roma National Congress, a German publisher produced a box containing 12 simple reading books of 20 pages each with illustrations (N.N. 1996). They provide texts in three different dialects, a Polish Romani dialect, a Kalderas-Lovari variety and a Southern Vlach variety from former Yugoslavia. The texts in the different varieties on the illustrated pages are invariably short, and they are presented in the same order throughout each book. They are marked with a distinct symbol for each variety (a sun for Kalderash/Lovari, a moon for Southern Vlach and stars for the Romani variety from Poland). A page from one of the booklets can be seen in Ill. 24. The chosen page is from a story about baking, and the sentence means: “I add raisins (grapes) to it”.

The booklets have been translated from German, and neither in the imagery, nor in the stories, is a specifically Romani world depicted. No attempt has been made to adjust the original pictures or texts to a more specific or traditional Romani life. The booklets deal with a range of subjects, from feeling lonely in the home at night, dinosaur bones, optical illusions, numerals, acrobatics and gymnastics, the planets and an Inuit child. Clearly these subjects are chosen in that some are recognizable for the child in his or her own environment, and others are intended to arouse the children’s curiosity.

The choice of three varieties can be related to the need and availability of a market in Germany, more precisely Hamburg, at the time. The linguistic coordinator was Yaron Matras, who has pleaded for linguistic and dialectal diversity in other contexts (Matras 2005a, b), and this pluralism is clear in that each of the three Roma groups can use their own varieties when using the book, rather than a single one imposed on all, or a unified form not well intelligible to any of them. Other groups can presumably use the variety that is closest to their own. In the meantime, the children cannot avoid noticing that there are also other varieties of Romani, on a par with their own. The writing systems are all similar, in that the same symbols are used for the same phonemes in all three varieties, enabling the children to know to a large extent how the other varieties must be pronounced (except when one of the varieties uses a unique phoneme, as the vowel written <y> (/i/) in Polish Romani).

In short, the imagery is taken over without adjustments from existing German materials, whereas the choice of language combines an ideology of pluralism with an element of unification in that the same symbols are used for the same phonemes for all three varieties.



Ill. 24. A page from a German reader in three Romani varieties

5.10. Austria, Burgenland


In Austria, the main variety for which written norms have been developed from scratch is the rather marginal variety of the Burgenland, called Roman. A number of publications have seen the light, among others a book with texts in Burgenland Romani (Halwachs et al, 2000), a grammar (Halwachs 1998) and a bilingual information journal, *Romano Patrin*. During a number of years even a children's magazine was published in the Roman variety. Further, text collections have been published in other varieties of Romani in Austria: Arli (Cech et al 2009), Gurbet (Heinschink et al 2006), Kalderash (Fennesz-Juhasz et al. 2012) and Lovari (Cech et al 2001). In addition, audio materials have also been produced (Fennesz-Juhasz et al. 2002a, b, 2003). More information about the educational experience in Burgenland can be found in Halwachs (1996), Deman & Glaeser (1999), Halwachs (2012a) and Halwachs et al. (2013).

Two Austrian learning materials for Burgenland Romani should be mentioned here. The first book, *Amen Roman Pisin* (Halwachs et al. 1996), is a primer, more or less like those discussed above. The writing system was developed especially for this variety, following the wishes of the community who wanted. The writing system is based on German, for instance in using <tsch> for the phoneme /tʃ/, as can be seen on Illustration 25. The imagery is modern

and includes houses, cars and the like, and here and there also traditional implements such as a cart are shown. German and Hungarian loans are not avoided.

au au au au au au au au au au au au

i schauspülekija	Schauspielerin	
i kaunlina	Kanne	
o auteri	Auto	
	o tschau	
	Sohn, Bub	



i tichaj


Le schandari parno auteri hi.
Der Gendarm hat ein weißes Auto.

O schauspüleri latscho hi.
Der Schauspieler ist gut.

Amaro nipo taha aun an.
Unsere Verwandten kommen morgen an.

I kaunlina pherdi hi.
Die Kanne ist voll.

O tschau asal.
Der Bub lacht.



i auteri

Ill. 25. A page from the Austrian primer in Burgenland Roman

The second book, *Amen Roman Siklojas* (Glaeser et al 1998), is different in that a fictional world is introduced, but integrated as part of the reality of the school environment. Two aliens, resembling speaking animals, have been delivered into a classroom of earthlings by the postman, as can be seen in Ill. 26. Elsewhere in the book, polar bears and igloos are depicted, as well as an alien with different looks. This is all quite unusual in the genre, not only for Romani, but also for such textbooks in general. It combines word-learning with techniques from comic books. This was done on purpose, at the request of the children, who wanted to read about events different from their everyday-life.

Duj diline ...



Ill. 26. A page from a reader in Burgenland reader with aliens

5.11. General remarks

The choice of schoolbooks in this section is neither exhaustive nor a representative sample. However, they do represent some of the diversity of choice that textbook compilers have made in different communities. From the point of view of imagery, we have seen examples of a completely Roma-oriented world, idyllic and romantic, but also depictions of a more realistic world in which Romani and non-Romani are present. There are also textbooks totally devoid of Romani content, as they were translated from other languages without any adjustment, and finally books in which, literally, an alien world is shown, with limited links to the daily experiences of the children. Both extremes – the romantic past and a science fiction world – may stimulate the children’s fantasy more than a realistic painting of the children’s everyday life.

Some aspects of Romani culture recur in the imagery. Especially clothing of Roma women seems to be prevalent in the images, and that is true not only in these schoolbooks, but in general. As Tremlett (2013: 1707) remarked: “Whether evoking Gypsy communities in fashion, media or literature, ‘Gypsy’ becomes akin to a fancy-dress costume.” Other recurrent elements are carts and horses and the Romani flag. These aspects of cultural inheritance are central for the identity of the Roma.

There is a potential danger, however, in the romantic view of a rural Romani life referring to a situation that these children quite likely have never experienced, in that a world with cars, houses, mobile phones may not be seen as truly Romani. Alaina Lemon (2000: 3) remarked that “it remains commonplace to define ‘Gypsy culture’ only by features or practices

that seem to isolate Gypsies from a majority". In other words, the Roma are made more exotic than they are by stressing the differences from the non-Roma.

The choices of the Romani varieties in the textbooks are generally closely connected to the chosen imagery. Romantic images, however, appear to connect both to quite local varieties of Romani (e.g. Latvia), and to international orientations, e.g. the Bulgarian textbooks with texts by authors from many countries.

When Roma communities are aware of the special nature of their variety compared to other varieties, there seems to be a stronger tendency to use the spelling conventions of the local majority language (Finland, Burgenland), whereas speakers of dialects that are more widely used, tend to opt for a more international system (Danish Arli, Swedish Lovari).

Recent migrations also play a role in deciding against using a spelling based on the local majority language. Awareness of the possibilities of other writing system will have played a role here as well, in that the choice is influenced by knowledge of several writings systems.

6. Discussion and conclusions

A number of international conventions stress the right for minority language children to receive education in their own language. For instance, article 30 of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* stresses the right of children to use their own language, and Unesco's *Convention against discrimination in education* protects the rights of national minorities. These rights should also include the right for minorities to use, or be taught in, their own language, of course beside and not instead of the state language.

The concern for teaching Romani in schools goes back to at least the 1930s in the Soviet Union, when probably the first Romani ABC book was produced (Dudarovea et al. 1928). Activist and academic reflections on Romani in class go back to at least 1975 in Britain (Acton 1975), the USA (Hancock 2002, referring mostly to the 1970s), 1988 in Italy (Casile 1988, Zatta 2000), the 1990s in Rumania (Sarău 1997, Zătreanu 2003) and Hungary (Szali 1999), to mention just some of them. Educational specialists have also discussed teaching materials, but rarely from a linguistic point of view (e.g. N.N. 1997, see also Csaba et al 1999-2001). A recent overview of discussion of Romani education can be found in Halwachs (2012b).

A variety of strategies can be observed in the choice made by the compilers of illustrated schoolbooks for Romani children. In some cases, a clearly anachronistic picture of Romani life was painted, idealized and idyllic (Latvia, Bulgaria). The colorful images of a Roma way of life are equally found in materials produced by Roma and non-Roma. The anthropologist Michael Stewart (1997: 31-32) has described the bright and lavish colors of a so-called 'Gypsy taste', which is part of the stereotype for both Roma and non-Roma.

This has parallels in other minority societies, for instance textbook on Native Americans often depict these people on horseback and in older periods. In fact, this depiction also affects the self-image of young Native children, in that they draw similar stereotypes in their drawings. Native children tend to draw teepees and forests, even though they have lived in houses all their lives (Fulford 1997). Also in Western societies, certain themes have been conventionalized.

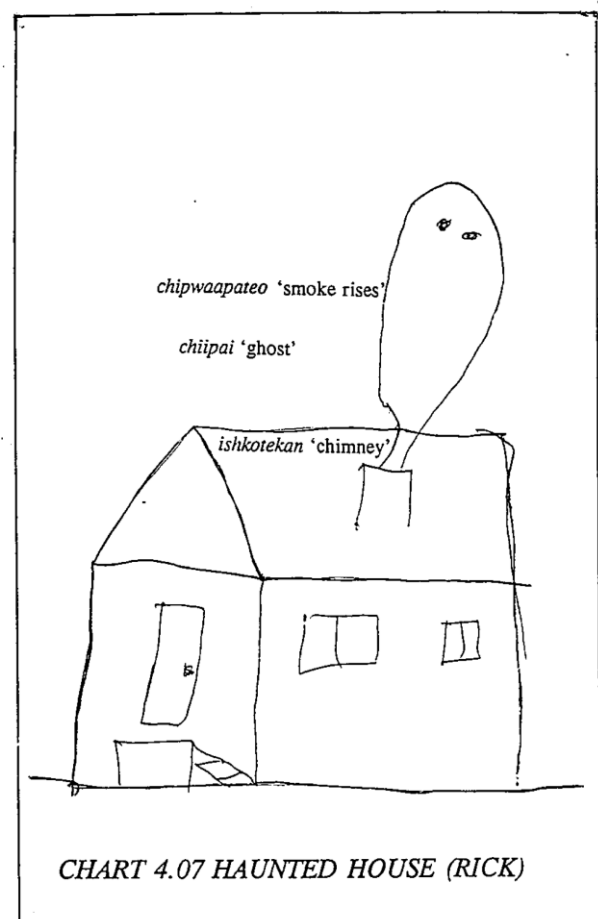
A train drawn by a child is often a steam train, even though they are vanishingly rare in the world. Apparently such images are quite persistent. A house will almost always be a single house, with a door and windows, and a chimney with smoke (Ill. 27). Even Native children who have grown up on reservations tend to produce such images (Ill. 28, from Fulford 1994). This suggests that children internalize such imagery and consider it a reality, perhaps an ideal one.

In the decade of Romani inclusion, international organizations have contributed to the discussion of the role of language (UNICEF 2011). Overwhelmingly, governmental and non-governmental agencies stress the importance of language for minorities, sometimes as a barrier, and sometimes as an asset in connection with the education system.

Romani identity balances between a local identity, influenced by both geographical and family group constraints (Budilová & Jakoubek 2009), and an international identity, being part of an international community of Roma. The situation of the Roma is quite unique in this respect, with regard to the geographical spread, and the cultural and linguistic diversity of the group, and the interaction with the outside world. The primers discussed here reflect these tensions, in that the compilers have to balance between Roma and non-Roma, between local and non-local identities, and a past, present and future, both in linguistic terms and in terms of visual images.



Ill. 27. Drawing of houses by children



Ill. 28: Cree (Amerindian) drawing

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