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# Attitudes to Romani among English Gypsies

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# Attitudes To Romani Among English Gypsies


# 1. ABSTRACT

In this paper, our intention is to ascertain the attitudes of English (and Welsh) Gypsies towards Romani. Although inflected Romani (found in fully fledged dialects across Europe) has, for most intents and purposes, been lost in Britain, the English Gypsy community continue to use Romani-derived lexical items in their speech. Dubbed 'Angloromani' by scholars, this in-group lexicon is the prevailing connection that English Gypsies have with Romani – the language spoken by their ancestors – and will be the focal point of our study.

Our interest in the usage of Angloromani in the modern-day English Gypsy community is more than just a linguistic exploration therefore: we believe that there is significant social and cultural meaning to be found in the employment of Angloromani. We hope that in attempting to find out how and when English Gypsies use Angloromani, we will also discover why lexical tokens derived from the ancestral language continue to exist in the speech of this minority community. In answering this question, we feel it is important to first analyse the nature of Angloromani and consider how it emerged from the inflected version of the language. This leads us to a consideration of the purposes of language in general – specifically in minority communities, such as the English Gypsy community. We postulate that for such communities, the communicative and symbolic functions of language are equally important, and intend to support this with a discussion on the importance of language as a symbol of identity.

Finally, we hope to arrive at an idea of what the future holds for Romani in Britain. In the majority of English and Welsh Travelling communities, Romani-derived forms are being passed on to younger generations by parents who are Angloromani-speakers, but it is important to find out whether this process will continue and the speech variety preserved, or, as with inflected Romani in Britain, whether the speech form will undergo a process akin to language death. In recent years, some members of the community of English Gypsies have expressed an interest in learning a dialect of European Romani. Additionally, therefore, in the final part of this paper we will investigate the motivations and reasons behind the apparent revival of inflected Romani forms in Britain, positing that this renewed interest stems from a desire to strengthen the link between the community and their cultural roots, in the

process attempting to overturn a trend that sees English mainstream society eradicating many of the salient aspects of Gypsy culture.

The evidence we use in support of our investigation will be acquired from archival transcripts and recordings of interviews from the *Romani Project* at the University of Manchester. Above and beyond this, we will also conduct our own interviews with members of the English Gypsy community, one of which will take place on a Gypsy site. Through the undertaking of our own primary research, we hope not only to elicit germane spoken data, but we also aim to gain a firsthand insight into Gypsy life and culture that will invaluably inform and educate both ourselves and our paper. We are especially interested in speaking to those who have expressed an interest in learning a European dialect of Romani and those who have young children, as we feel this will be especially beneficial to our investigation into the future of Romani and Angloromani in Britain. We expect to face some methodological issues in gathering the data we wish to acquire. Firstly, since we are using a purposive sampling technique, we expect that we will need to enlist the resources of the *Romani Project* to find members of the English Gypsy community who would be willing to speak to us and have their interview recorded. In order to elicit the qualitative data on the opinions and attitudes of Angloromani speakers which we require, we intend to conduct semi-structured interviews, and we will consider the success of this technique and the problems we encountered during our data collection later in the essay.

## 2. TRAVELLERS IN BRITAIN

In Britain there is a tendency to refer to any nomadic group as 'Travellers' or 'Gypsies', however not all travelling communities are of the same base and ethnicity. Ostensibly, all Gypsy lifestyles are very much the same: they stereotypically live in caravans on sites, coexisting alongside settled, sedentary communities, and they specialise in itinerant service-providing labour (Matras 2010:1). Nonetheless, there are sub-groups of Gypsies, and it is necessary to differentiate between them. Conveniently, these sub-groups can roughly be divided into areas of geographical origin: the English (and Welsh) Gypsies, the Irish Gypsies, and the Scottish Travellers.

The first of the aforementioned groups – the English Gypsies – will be the focal point of this essay. Over the years, these nomadic Travellers have adopted the name 'Gypsies', however, they differ in many ways from other travelling groups in Britain who fall under the same appellation. Firstly, they are of continental 'Romani' stock (stock that – admittedly – has been much diluted), whilst their culture, values and traditions (known as 'Romany'), and their community ('Romanichal') are all quite disparate to those of the indigenous British travelling groups (Matras 2010:1) .

Additionally – and perhaps most noticeably – the three groups differ in the everyday language that they use. All three have their own in-group lexicons. The English Gypsies speak Angloromani (or, as it is known amongst themselves, 'Romanes'), deriving from European Romani, which itself takes origin in the Indo-Aryan languages of the Indian Subcontinent; the Irish Gypsies speak 'Shelta' or 'Gammon' (as it is known within academia) or 'Cant' (as it is known within the community); and the Scottish Travellers' language is somewhat of an amalgam of old English Cant (a speech variety that has not

been fully preserved to the present day), Irish Traveller Cant, and Angloromani (Matras 2010:2). Save the name, Irish Traveller Cant bears no relation to the aforementioned English Traveller Cant. Nonetheless, the fact that Irish and English Cant both fall under the same appellation indicates that, despite their contrasting forms, their function is very much similar; both are group-internal varieties that use linguistic strategies to disguise sensitive information from unwanted listeners (Matras 2010:2).

## 3. DISCUSSION OF ANGLOROMANI

As previously stated, this paper will be centred on the speech and culture of the English Gypsies, and it will, therefore, largely be focussed on Angloromani. So as to offer an overview of Angloromani, below are two excerpts taken from *Romani in Britain: The Afterlife of a Language* (Matras 2010:6-7). Romani-derived words are italicised and emboldened, whilst an English translation is provided below.

**(1)**    Me dad used to say, ooh ***dik*** at that, that's for/ ooh loves ***livvinda***. That would    sell    its ***wudrus*** to buy ***livvinda***. You know, they don't ***kom*** these ***fowkis***.        You know what I mean? They didn't like that way of going on. And/ er/ me        dad used to say, low life ***fowkis***, oh, don't want ***chichi***, never will have any        ***kuvva***.    Be ***waffadi*** all their lives.

    Me dad used to say, ooh look at that, that's for/ ooh loves beer. That would sell    its bed to buy beer. You know, they don't like these people. You know what I            mean? They didn't like that way of going on. And/ er/ me dad used to say, low    life people, oh, don't want nothing, never will have any things. Be bad all their lives.

**(2)**    And I was saying to our Jim: ***Kushi, dordi, dordi, dik*** at the ***luvva*** we've ***lelled*** today, our Jim. How ***kushti***, I'll never ***sutti torati*** with excitement. You know, all this (...) And me mam used to say: Mmm, my dear, ***dik*** at ***lesti***, hmm, mm, ***vater***, mmm, how ever did that come to ***lel*** such a ***mush***. Oh what a ***kushti chor, dik***, and it's got a ***moi***, like a ***jukkel*** (...) And ooh he's a ***chikla mush*** he's a ***luvni gaera***, mmm, and would/ mmm ***dik*** here, hmm showbusiness, hmm, I know where that should be – ***sterriben***. He had more ***monnishins*** than what he had hot dinners, you know, me mam's ***penning*** to/ mmm oh, more than I've had to ***ol*** he's had.

    And I was saying to our Jim: Good, my, my, look at the money we've earned today, our Jim. How good, I'll never sleep tonight with excitement. You know, all this (...) And me mam used to say: Mmm, my dear, look at him, hmm, mm, pay attention, mmm, how ever did that come to get such a man. Oh what a good boy, look, and it's got a mouth like a dog. (...) And ooh he's a dirty man he's a whore's man, mmm, and would/ mmm look here, hmm, showbusiness, hmm, I know where that should be – prison. He had more women than what he had hot dinners, you know, me mam's saying to/ mmm oh, more than I've had to eat he's had.

### 3.1 Angloromani as a dialect of English

Under scrutiny, the extracts highlight that the only Romani-derived components of Angloromani are content words ('look', 'women', 'prison' etc.). In spite of this, the vast majority of content words are still English ('dinners', 'showbusiness', 'excitement' etc.). Furthermore, all grammatical inflection and structure is English-based, too. Angloromani, then, would be incomprehensible to a continental Romani-speaker due to the fact that it leans so heavily on the structures of English: this speech variety appears to be a form of English with Romani-derived insertions, rather than a form of Romani with English insertions.

As a result of this, it is conceivable that Angloromani could be considered a dialect of English: just as innovations occur in other dialects, so do they in Romani; just as a speaker of Cockney may say 'in the nick' or 'dosh', an Angloromani-speaker may equally say *sterriben* or *luvva*.

However, in other ways, Angloromani is incomparable to any English dialect. Most obviously, the sheer density of Romani words in the narrative masks the meaning, making it impenetrable to any other speaker of English. In other dialects, however, the density of novel words is much lower, meaning that all British dialects are – to a certain extent, and with a small amount of effort on the parts of both speaker and listener – mutually intelligible.

Furthermore, differences between dialects of English manifest themselves due to an accumulation of small changes over an extended period of time. In the case of Angloromani, its innovations bear no resemblance to any other variety of spoken English, and it can therefore be inferred that this variety did not grow out of a coherent, packaged, conventionalised form of English as with other dialects, but out of a different process (Matras 2010:4).

### 3.2 Angloromani as a form of 'bilingual codeswitching'

The fact that it is not a dialect of English naturally raises uncertainties as to what to class this speech variety as. Extracts (1) and (2) intimate that – as stated above – Angloromani involves the insertion of Romani words within an English framework. This, then, could quite feasibly lead linguists to believe that the structure of Angloromani resembles the conversational behaviour of bilinguals known as 'insertional codeswitching' whereby speech is typified by the occasional insertion of content words from one language into another (Muysken 2000).

Taking examples from Redouane's (2005) study of bilingual Moroccan Arabic-French speakers, codeswitching can be applied to potentially any word in the lexicon and even the overall structure of sentences. Furthermore, inflection is derived from either language. French words are emboldened.

**(3)**  Wajjet **diplôme en relations internationales**

'I prepared a diploma in international relations'


**(4)**  Nqalt **recette** dyal lħalwa

'I copied recipe of a cake'


**(5)**  Liʕayshin **au Maroc** huma naːs lʁaniyyiin

'Who is living in Morocco are the rich'


**(6)**  Kunt **au café** gaʕda

'I was in the cafe sitting'  (Redouane 2005:1927)


In Angloromani, however, the choice of interchangeable words is only applicable to a small subset of the vocabulary, not to the overarching structure of phrases and sentences (Matras 2010:8). Applying the term 'codeswitching' to Angloromani would therefore be a misappropriation as this term captures speakers who are monolingual in either language: in the examples above, for instance, speakers could converse fluently in either French or Arabic. Contrariwise, whilst Angloromani-speakers are English-speakers, they are not Romani-speakers: they rely heavily on English to provide the scaffolding for any Romani-derived utterance. In fact, Angloromani utterances that contain minimal English-based structure are extremely rare:


**(7)**  *Pen chichi, muskra akai!*

'Say nothing, [the] police [are] here!'


**(8)**  *Muk mandi rokker* the *mush*.

'Let me speak [to] the man.' (Matras 2010:8)


These kind of utterances are infrequent: they tend only to be used in situations that require the greatest degree of group solidarity, and thus the greatest degree of lexical camouflage.

Consequently – except for a handful of utterances – without the framework and grammar of the English language, English Gypsies would not be able to communicate. As a result, this speech variety is not an example of 'codeswitching' as the overwhelming majority of Angloromani-speakers are not bilingual.

### 3.3 Para-Romani

Angloromani is not the only speech variety to embed Romani-derived lexical items into the majority language. The umbrella term for the use of a Romani-derived vocabulary in group-internal communication in indigenous languages is 'Para-Romani', as coined by Cortiade (1991). In peripheral, fringe areas of western Europe, other forms of Para-Romani exist: for instance, Spanish-Romani or *Caló*, Basque-Romani or *errumantxela*, Scandinavian-Romani, and *Romnisch* in Denmark (Matras 2010:9).

It is of note that the Basque *errumantxela* is a cognate of the English *Romanichal*, and the Spanish *Caló* draws parallels with the self-appellation of the Welsh Gypsies (*Kååle*) as well as the self-appellation of earlier German Gypsies (*Kaale*), meaning 'black, dark-skinned' (Matras 2010:10). Clearly, Romani self-designations seek not only to play heavily on an emotional sense of heritage, ethnicity and history, but they also look to distinguish their communities from the indigenous masses in order to create a stronger sense of group identity.

In all well-attested varieties of Para-Romani, the majority of Romani derivations are resigned to non-grammatical content words. In spite of this, there is some survival of the grammatical lexicon. It is no coincidence that in Caló, Angloromani, and Scandoromani, personal pronouns are Romani-derived. Non-nominative forms are selected and generalised for all functions. In Angloromani, the locative *mande* is used; in Caló, the sociative *mansa* or the dative *mange* is used; and in Scandoromani, the genitive *miro* is selected (Matras 2010:11).

However, in Para-Romani varieties, it is only singular forms that are retained, whilst possessive pronouns take inflection from the host language: *mandi's* 'mine', *tuti's* 'yours' (Angloromani); *miros* 'mine' (Sandoromani) (Matras 2010:11). Para-Romani varieties wholly abandon morphosyntax and almost all of the grammatical lexicon. Up to this point, then, whilst we have established what characterises Para-Romani forms, it is still necessary to explain why only the lexicon survived the decline of the Romani language in peripheral areas of western Europe.

### 3.4 Angloromani as a pidgin

One explanation is that Angloromani is a pidgin – and it is certainly true that there are parallels to be drawn between Angloromani and pidgin varieties.

Firstly, pidgins go through a process whereby the lexifier language is simplified leading to the loss of grammatical inflection and morphosyntax, leaving lexical content words intact (Bakker 1994). This, then, is most definitely comparable with Para-Romani varieties in which morphosyntax is lost alongside much of the grammatical lexicon, leaving a lexical-reservoir of content words.

Secondly, in the case of pidgins, the process of learning a separate target language is driven by the need for inter-group communication. Polemicist Hancock (1970; 1984) argues that Angloromani emerged through population admixture when Romani-speakers absorbed a population of indigenous Travellers. This would therefore render Angloromani as a pidgin, borne out of simplification and imperfect learning of the target language, resulting in lexical items being used as improvised communication.

However, Hancock's explanation leans far too heavily on the assumption that Romani was even ever needed as a common language between groups. Pidgins traditionally arise out of situations where there is no common language, whereas, in this case, English was already in place as a unifying language, making Romani – in essence – redundant (Matras 2010:13). Further to this, in response to Hancock's claims, Coughlan (2001:6-51) raises the rather fundamental point that there is no empirical evidence that Romani ever served as common ground between Romani and non-Romani speakers, and, thus, this entails that there is no evidence for Angloromani as a pidgin.

Moreover, considering any of the aforementioned examples, or the examples below, it is starkly apparent that Angloromani – though not rich in Romani-derived inflection – is inflected.

**(9)**     *Mandi pester*ed *dusta luvva.*

'I paid a lot of money.'

**(10)**     *Mandi pukker*ed the *rakli.*

'I told the woman'

**(11)**     *Vater duvva*'s *yoks!*

'Look at this one's eyes!'

**(12)**     Don't *pukker* your *nav, mong* the *gaera* how much *luvva duvya* is.

'Don't say your name, ask the man how much money this is.'

**(13)**     *Lesti's savv*ing

'He's laughing'

**(14)**     The *mush juns* the *rokkerpen*

'The man knows the language/understands the conversation.' (Matras 2010:14)

In examples (9)-(14), there are English-derived definite articles, tense markers, possessives, plurals, gerundial suffixes, present-tense inflection, as well as function words (Matras 2010:14). Consequently, this differs hugely to the stereotype of pidgin forms, which generally lack grammatical inflections.

As a result, although Angloromani, and indeed other forms of Para-Romani, may seem to resemble pidgins, they differ hugely both in the original need for communication, and in the fact Angloromani is heavily inflected relative to other pidgin varieties.

### 3.5 Angloromani as a mixed language

 In opposition to the many outstanding ideas, Thomason and Kaufman (1988:103-4) view Angloromani as a mixed language in which 'borrowing [has been] so extensive as to constitute complete grammatical replacement'.

Bakker (1997) suggests that mixed languages arise from two types of circumstances.

The first involves mixed households in which the men and women have different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. Resultantly, the subsequent generations of these mixed households create a new identity and a new language with the linguistic material that is available to them. The Cree-French language of Michif is perhaps a paradigmatic example of this: the men in the community were French-speaking colonial settlers, and the women were indigenous and Cree-speaking. The second situation is when minority communities undergo change in their sociocultural environment and therefore re-invent their group identity. In both situations, the younger generation are the innovators in re-assembling both parental languages.

General theory and empirical evidence on mixed languages (Bakker 1997; Bakker & Mous 1994b; Bakker & Muysken 1995) suggest that this re-assembly is typologically predetermined and predictable. Research intimates that the grammar will typically derive from one language (usually the mother-tongue or the language of the surrounding area), and the lexicon will derive from another language (the father or that of the minority group; Matras 2010:17). Grammatical function words are drawn from one, or both. In this manner, therefore, the processes behind the formation of mixed languages are seen to be fairly formulaic and predictable: languages like Media Lengua (Muysken 1997), Ma'a (Mous 2003a),

and many others all follow the fairly regular split between grammar and lexicon. As a result, it would not seem ridiculous to place Angloromani within this framework: it has a split lexicon-grammar and the motivations behind the speech variety's inception seem to coincide with Bakker's aforementioned ideas.

However, once again, there are differences. Considering the below examples:

**(15)**     *Del* it to him

'Give it to him'

**(16)**     I've *chinger*ed *lesti*

'I've annoyed him'

**(17)**     *Mandi* doesn't *kom lesti*

'I don't like him'

**(18)**     I'll do some *hobben*

'I'll make some food'

**(19)**     He's not a bad *chor*

'He's not a bad guy'

**(20)**     *Lesti*'s *savv*ing at *mandi*

'He's laughing at me' (Matras 2010:20)

**(21)**     Don't tell 'em ya *nav*/ *kek* tell 'em ya *nav*
'Don't tell them your name'

Mixed languages tend to be conventionalised and structurally fixed: the pronoun system, for example, would derive from one of the parent languages, not both (Matras 2010:20). Examples (15)-(20) in Angloromani highlight the varying, interchangeable use of personal pronouns. Furthermore, negation – as seen in example (21)[1] – is variable, too (either *kek* or 'don't'). Consequently, there seems to be a degree of speaker volition at the utterance level. As a result, Angloromani cannot be regarded as structurally fixed or conventionalised, and, likewise, it cannot be considered a mixed language either.

### 3.6 Angloromani as an in-group lexicon

Thus far, Angloromani has evaded definition. However, rather than functioning as a form of inter-group communication (as Hancock earlier claimed), Para- and Angloromani do seem to be captured by the definition of an in-group lexicon. These in-group lexicons are typically used by minority, nomadic or peripatetic communities (communities that specialise in service-providing trades that require mobility to reach the settled population of customers; Matras 2010: 20-1). These trades generally involve manufacturing and selling household items; performing traditional rituals in fields such as dance, music, healing, and fortune-telling; or labour-intensive work in agriculture, for example.

The varying, peripatetic nature of Gypsy trades became very apparent during our interviews, and is captured by one of our interviewees, below:

**(22)** My wife's family[...] they still do the fortune telling.

**(23)** On the old records it says professions – it says *bizzen*, broom-makers, pot-        makers, basket-makers.

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[1] Authors' note: We recognise that – up to this point – all Romani-derived examples have been quoted from *Romani in Britain: The Afterlife of a Language* (Matras 2010). Having discussed a great deal of theory, the quotations we have needed to exemplify said theories have been very particularised and, therefore, Matras' book has been the best source for this – better, we concede, than the elicitations from the data we recorded. Henceforth, the vast majority of our paper will be informed by our own primary research, observations and interviews; similarly, then, the preponderance of quotations will now be taken from our own research, too.

In modern times, these communities have adapted to work in building repairs, scrap metal, car dealership, to name but a few. The following quotations highlight this adaptation, also underlining – as seen in (25) – that Gypsies tend to work in families:

**(24)**     Painting, house painting, but anything really.

**(25)**     The two younger sons work together – they roof, do tree work. Me, I buy vans    and    wagons and stuff like that.

The fact that in-group lexicons are typical of these kind of communities does a lot to explain their function: the occasional insertion of word forms that are not understandable to an outsider are needed in order to keep trade secrets and keep the upper-hand in the marketplace. Consequently, Rijkhoff (1998) argues that in-group lexicons are 'bystander oriented' (though we will do our best to combat this assertion later).

Besides the advantage of in-group lexicons in economic situations, they are also used to convey warnings, coordinate behaviour, talk euphemistically or on taboo subjects, give directives and – in the face of outside prejudices and discrimination – they stand as symbol of group attitudes and togetherness (Matras 2010:21). Later in this paper, we shall give examples of each of these from interviews carried out on Angloromani-speakers.

Over the course of this past section, we have established Angloromani as an in-group lexicon, ruling out previous misconceptions of it: it differs vastly in both form and function from both conventionalised mixed languages and comparatively uninflected pidgins. Lastly, Matras (2010:30) summarises by labelling Angloromani as an 'emotive' conversational mode; by drawing Romani-derived words from a lexical reservoir and placing them within an English framework, Angloromani-speakers trigger associations with a set of values, a sense of loyalty, of heritage, and of interdependency. This speech variety, then, stands as both an exemplification of and a contributor to group solidarity and identity, whilst also as a way of excluding outsiders.

## 4. ANGLOROMANI IN LIGHT OF THEORIES ON LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

Thesen in 'Voices, Discourse and Tradition: In Search of New Categories in EAP' (1997:488), describes identity as:

'the dynamic interaction between the fixed identity categories that are applied to social groupings (such as race, gender, ethnicity, language, and other more subtle representations that are activated in certain discourse settings) and the way individuals think of themselves as they move through the different discourses in which they are salient.'

Language is therefore an integral part of identity and is used – especially in situations where there is a minority group with their own inflected language – to maintain separateness from the majority group. As seen in the previous chapter on the origins of Angloromani, the inflected form of Romani has been lost in England, but the development or retaining of the ethnolect, Angloromani, has been passed down through generations and serves – as Joshua Fishman writes of in-group lexicons – as an 'identificational dimension of culture' (1997:329).

Mary Bucholtz and Kira Hall (2004:369) argue that 'among the many symbolic resources available for the cultural production of identity, language is the most flexible and pervasive,' and we propose that this is true for speakers of Angloromani. Bucholtz and Hall (2004:371) use the two key concepts of sameness and difference to describe their perspective on language and identity. Identity is based on sameness, the acknowledgement of common ground between people who form a group based on this shared cultural experience. However, integral to the perception of shared identity is also the concept of difference; a significant 'Other' is required to be positioned against those socially constituted as the same in order to confirm their similarity. Hence, the most significant examples of the formation of separate social identities are found in circumstances of perceived heterogeneity, and a powerful way of displaying social difference is by using a language which is different to that of the national language.

Semiotics is the study of systems of meaning: it examines the connection created between social or natural entities and the meanings they bear. Semiotics can therefore offer us an interesting frame of reference through which to view identity, and language – the prototypical semiotic system – provides an especially salient perspective as it conveys meaning at two levels. At one level, it provides semantic or referential meaning whilst simultaneously supplying us with pragmatic or contextual information. Hence, language is such an important source in semiotic production and supports the formation and promotion of a separate group identity within the nation-state. As identity usually emerges through contact between cultural groups, it can be a way either of substantiating differences between these groups who live in juxtaposition to each other, or as a way of retaining separateness from the homogenous identity of the nation-state.

Our research shows that speakers of Angloromani use the in-group lexicon for both these purposes. In 'Angloromani: A Different Kind of Language,' Matras et al. (2007:146) describe how 'economically endogamous groups display a tendency to cultivate vocabulary through lexical camouflaging strategies of various kinds, among them figurative semantic analogies and phonological distortion.' The resulting argots, or 'Sondersprachen' meaning 'special languages' (Matras 2007:146) – of which Angloromani is one – are not intended as complete languages to be used in the community or home, but are special

communicative codes which, as described in the previous chapter, provide a symbol of group affiliation and are a way of camouflaging conversation.

Using Bucholtz and Hall's (2004:371) theory on the importance of sameness and difference in the formation of identity, we can therefore see how this concept is integral in the use of an in-group lexicon such as Angloromani. When a speaker uses tokens from the Angloromani lexical reservoir, it grounds the proposition in a particular domain of shared cultural knowledge between the speaker and the hearer. It is an acknowledgement of, and an invitation to, participate in shared attitudes and values, which the speaker and the hearer both hold. Angloromani is often used, therefore, for propositions which require a degree of background knowledge, hence the description in the previous chapter of the use of Angloromani in trade and economic situations. At the same time as providing a sense of 'sameness,' of a shared, special bond between speaker and hearer, Angloromani can simultaneously be used as a signifier of difference. The description of the ethnolect as a 'secret language' (Kenrick 1979; Binchy 1973) refers to the tendency for speakers to use the lexicon as a camouflage strategy when in the presence of outsiders. The use of Angloromani in such situations serves as a signal both to the intended recipient and to the outsider. It has the double meaning, therefore, of reiterating the bond between speaker and hearer and placing both participants in antinomy to the outside community.

The use of Angloromani is, therefore, a communicative or discourse act. This can be seen due to the fact that the lexical content of the proposition remains the same whichever linguistic code is chosen to express it, so the utterance's pragmatic meaning must be analysed at the level of the speech act itself as opposed to at the internal level of the proposition. Erikson (1997:292) notes that 'our social identity of the moment is situated in the interaction at hand; we perform it as we go along and we do so conjointly with other interactional partners.' It is not significant which words within the utterance are taken from the Angloromani lexical reservoir as the use of this specialised lexicon grounds the whole proposition in a specific cultural context, also described as the 'emotive mode' (Matras 2007,2010). Hancock (1984) argues that the emotive mode is triggered through the use of Angloromani because speakers of the in-group lexicon are aware that it evolved from a 'deep' or basilectal form of the language which has been lost to them. Matras (2007:49) describes how 'a longing for the old language supports the maintenance of a core vocabulary.' This suggests that the use of Romani-derived lexical tokens offer a link to the lost inflected form of the language which was spoken in the family and minority community, and still is spoken – in the form of multifarious dialects – by Romani communities outside of Britain.

Consequently, the emotive mode describes and embodies the bond created between users of Angloromani, and between each individual speaker and their cultural heritage. The emotive mode tends not to be used arbitrarily, but instead for specific functions, such as 'euphemistic/dysphemistic' (Burridge & Allen 1998) language when concepts that might be considered cultural taboo are being discussed; for affectionate or intimate language use (Binchy 1993) as it activates a sense of solidarity and mutual interest between the speaker and hearer (Matras 2007); or, as discussed previously, as a method of concealing meaning from bystanders (though this, we later argue, is a by-product of creating a sense of solidarity). The evidence we gathered from our interviews with Angloromani-speakers from

the Travelling community supports this analysis of the functions of an in-group lexicon and confirms the importance of the language as a symbol of identity for members of this minority community.

John Edwards' *Language and Identity* (2009) illustrates the connection between language and identity by arguing that language has two distinct aspects: the symbolic or 'marking' function and the communicative function. Edwards describes how these two functions are generally indivisible in the majority-group culture as the language used during everyday life to communicate is also the ancestral language and so carries the embedded cultural connotations in every interaction. Therefore, in such majority-group environments, more emphasis is put on the paralinguistic features of speech, such as body language and intonation, in order to convey certain meaning through language. Hence the 'complicated interweaving of language and culture that rests upon a fusion of pragmatic linguistic skills and the more intangible associations carried by language' is not immediately apparent, especially to native speakers of the national, majority language (Edwards 2009:55). He argues that the two aspects of language – communicative and symbolic – are, in fact, separable, and states that this is most clearly observable when examining language use in minority communities, such as that of the English Gypsies. Edwards cites a study by Eastman (1984), who uses the term 'associated' language to describe a language that is no longer in use in a community but which continues to be imbibed as part of their cultural heritage and identity.

We believe that this term could certainly be used to describe the situation found in the English Gypsy community. The inflected form of the Romani language is no used by group members, however, Angloromani has survived as a link to the community's heritage and a symbol of in-group identity. You can see here how Edwards' proposal on the dual purpose of language is useful in describing the movement from an inflected version of the Romani language to a lexicon of Romani-derived verbs, nouns and adjectives which are inserted into English speech. The communicative function of the ancestral language is not required as every member of the Gypsy community is bilingual so gradually the majority language – English – replaced Romani for instrumental function. The symbolic function of the language, on the other hand, has endured, Edwards describes how 'symbolic aspects can long outlast communicative language shift' (Edwards 2009:56), hence the use of Romani derived lexical tokens in the speech of present day English Gypsies. As noted above, it is often not relevant which words in an utterance are taken from the lexical-reservoir of Romani words, the lexical content will remain the same as it is the symbolic association of using Angloromani which is significant. Edwards notes, however, that 'the implication is that the loss of the language in its ordinary communicative role must eventually lead to the dilution or, indeed, the disappearance of its symbolic or 'associational' capacity' (Edwards 2009:57). This postulation is something we will investigate when we consider the future of Romani in Britain later in this essay.

# 5. METHODOLOGY

We are at a point in our paper at which we are going to begin displaying and evaluating our primary and secondary research. In order to collect our primary data we followed a number of procedures and faced a number of hindrances, which are all outlined below.

In an attempt to gather as much information as possible in this subject we decided to combine information from current literature (1) and archived recordings (2) with our own first hand data (3), as we thought this would give us a wide range of perspectives and information to work with.

(1) The first stage of our investigation was analysis into Romani literature, before looking further into what was available regarding attitudes, identity and preservation; vital points of our study.

(2) Secondly, we consulted recordings archived by the *Romani Project*, Manchester. Previously recorded and transcribed interviews between project researchers and English Gypsies were listened to and reported on wherever relevant. We were looking for anything of interest to our research objective: for instance, linguistic features; examples of vocabulary; recordings regarding attitudinal views towards the speech variety; the speech variety's usages and purposes; its relevance to identity; and, finally, any evidence on the preservation, teaching and learning of Angloromani and European Romani.

The first issue regarding this method of data analysis was that it was exceedingly time consuming. A great number of hours were spent listening to the sound files for relevant information to our topic, sieving and sifting through large amounts of data that was irrelevant and unhelpful to us. So as to ensure this task was undertaken as efficaciously as possible, group members took turns to listen to the recordings and take notes (rather than sitting together), increasing the total amount of hours we had to analyse data, and consequently increasing the amount of information we could retrieve, too. Further to this, another obstacle in obtaining adequate information was that many of the archived recordings did not have the same interests as our project: a lot of the information was fairly unhelpful to this particular investigation, with some recordings having no relevance at all. This was not too much of a problem however as once we extracted everything useful from these, we proceeded to the succeeding step in our inquiry of carrying out our own interviews with English Gypsies, during which we could target our own questions specifically to our own design and elicit only helpful information.

(3) To begin this part of the investigation we needed to gain access to English, Angloromani and Romani-speaking Gypsies. To do this, due to the nature of the requirements of the participants needed, we used a purposive sampling technique. Gaining access to our participants was the first hurdle we had to overcome, although we had anticipated this and allowed enough time to overcome it. Predominantly due to their culture, Gypsies are particularly difficult people to get into contact with: even once we had managed many telephone conversations in which they seemed enthusiastic and ebullient at the prospect of meeting, they were consistently vague and resistant as to a specific time, date, or even week. On numerous occasions meetings were cancelled at the very last minute, or we would receive a call to

meet at very short notice, however – through sheer perseverance and persistence – we eventually managed to meet the first Gypsy who would assist us with our study.

In order to investigate attitudes to Romani among English Gypsies, we needed to obtain as much information surrounding current opinions and perspectives as possible. For this reason and due to its ability to elicit the qualitative data required, we chose to conduct semi-structured interviews as our method for data collection. Furthermore, the choice of using semi-structured interviews over completely structured or open interviews was to ensure that we elicited enough information in order to analyse our research criteria in depth, whilst avoiding restricting interviewees from adding other relevant information that we may have, perhaps, otherwise overlooked. In using this method we were able to obtain descriptive, naturalistic and rich data about the opinions and attitudes of Angloromani-speakers (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight 2001).

Creating an air of bonhomie is a crucial part of interview technique as it makes the participant feel comfortable, allowing the interviewers to elicit the maximum amount of data as possible. In this respect, we anticipated issues in establishing a rapport and a sense of camaraderie between ourselves and the interviewee: from our research, we understood that the relationship between Gypsies and non-Gypsies is delicate and often strained, though we did our best to overcome this. Firstly, when arranging to meet the Gypsies, we began contact using a friendly and informal approach, making sure to explain our genuine interest in the language and culture, as well as showing our links with the *Romani Project*, which they may already have prior knowledge about. Following this, the interview itself was carried out in an informal, quiet setting, beginning with a few minutes of familiarising with one another so as to build up this valuable rapport.

Following this opportunity of speaking with a member of the Travelling community, we were keen to try to arrange a second meeting. The first had been incredibly edifying, and not only had it helped in exploring our research objectives, it had also brought other aspects of the language and culture to our attention which we had not previously addressed. Once again we encountered problems arranging a meeting with the Travellers, so, in this instance, we decided that we would travel to their site due to the fact that we only had a short time scale left to garner the necessary data for our project. This, too, had its complications but we were finally able to arrange to meet a Gypsy man and his wife at their home. Similar research questions were asked to the couple as in the previous interview, although tailored slightly to suit points that still needed examining and clarifying within our study. The conversation was recorded, then later transcribed. Through this meeting, we managed to acquire some invaluable information about Gypsy attitudes and views towards Romani, as well as getting a firsthand insight into their way of life.

During both the interviews we used a *Digital Voice Recorder* to record the conversations. We decided to do this rather than taking notes or transcribing straight from the interview to allow us to be as minimally invasive as possible and maintain a comfortable environment for the interviewee. It also meant no vital information would be missed. The recordings were then transcribed and analysed,

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looking closely at relevant information, particularly in regards to culture, to help us in our investigation. The time consuming challenge of transcription caused a slight difficulty in getting the information ready for analysis, however, we had accounted for this in our scheduling and therefore managed to overcome this strain without negatively affecting our project.

Following our data collection from these different resources we were able to use this vast range of information in addressing our research into the attitudes and uses of Romani-derived speech forms and the Romani language itself, as outlined over the next sections.

# 6. ROMANI DERIVATIONS IN THE SPEECH OF ENGLISH GYPSIES

## 6.1 Situations in which Romani-derived words are used

Overwhelmingly, theories in the literature posit that in-group lexicons serve the primary purpose of excluding outsiders; for instance, Rijkhoff states that they are 'bystander oriented'. This phrase, and especially the word 'oriented', implies that Angloromani's predominant focus is to exclude outsiders from their conversations. This, though, seems slightly counter-intuitive, if not paradoxical: it logically follows that group-internal forms of communication should place emphasis on group belonging and solidarity, not – as other definitions intimate – on an almost paranoid preoccupation with outsiders. In other words they focus on group inclusion, not exclusion.

Matras (2010) substantiates this, writing of a scenario in which one Gypsy woman remarks to another: 'Yeah that was really *kushti*' (Matras 2010:134). In this situation, there is no need, he writes, to disguise meaning from outsiders – there is nothing remotely secretive or sensitive contained within the comment. Similarly, in our recordings, a speaker commented: '[we use] mush for man [...and] we use *kushti* for good.' The words *kushti* and *mush* are selected from a lexical reservoir and preferred to the more readily available English counterparts 'good' and 'man'. This is also the case in the following example:

**(1)** When I speak to my lot like[...] the phrases what we use now [are] like for everyday stuff like milk and bread y'know, things like that.

Here, too, lexical items such as 'bread' or 'milk' do not need to be camouflaged. Clearly, then, the main purpose of Angloromani is not too exclude outsiders: first and foremost, it serves its role as communication, and, secondly, it emphasises group belonging. Romani insertions signal mutual access to a vocabulary, which thereby signals mutual group membership, and calls upon a sense of solidarity and camaraderie. Furthermore, the act of choosing a Romani-derived word both conjoins the basic meaning ('good', 'man', 'bread', 'milk') with a whole culture of shared attitudes, and this, in turn, builds a sense of solidarity within speakers.

As we mentioned in our section on identity, it is not important which word in the utterance is taken from the lexical reservoir. However, it is noteworthy that the Romani-derived content words used in everyday speech tend to be salient objects, salient verbs, daily routines, body parts, and simple adjectives: these concepts, it appears, are the simplest to pass across the generational gap. Here, then, we see Angloromani serving a basic communicative function, but it also indexes group belonging.

Another way in which Angloromani is used is in giving warnings, or in attempts to direct or co-ordinate behaviour (Matras 2010:138). Primarily, Romani insertions in these situations indicate that the interlocutor is not behaving as the speaker would wish. Nonetheless, the very fact that Angloromani is the vehicle in which the content is packaged allows the speaker to tacitly highlight that the hearer is not conforming to the behavioural expectations of a whole culture, not just personal wishes.

(2)     *Shun* the *mush rokkeren*
        'Listen to the man talking'

(3)     *Dik* at the *mush's bal*
        'Look at the man's hair'

(4)     *Kek rokker* to the *mush, kek rokker* to the *rakli*

        'Don't talk to the man, don't talk to the woman'

(5)     Don't tell 'em ya *nav/ kek* tell 'em ya *nav*
        'Don't tell them your name'

(6)     *Til* ya *chib*
        'Hold your tongue'

In the above examples from our interviews, Angloromani is used to camouflage sensitive information in the face of a potential threat from outsiders. Here, it could quite feasibly fit into the Rijkhoff's 'bystander oriented' model as a means of excluding non-Romani speakers. Nevertheless, this exclusion is a subsidiary effect: the use of Angloromani signals that the speaker has the listener's best interests in mind. Furthermore, recalling our research into identity and difference, speaking a 'foreign language' in a public forum actually demarks the Angloromani-speakers as outsiders, thus reinforcing the bond between speaker and hearer.

(7)     If we're in like say a position with like *gawdja*[2] people[...] we'll use Romani then – if we're in
        a bit of a tight situation, or if we want to communicate without them knowing.

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[2] Gawdjas are people of non-Romani origin. This word is derived from the European equivalent of *Gadžo*.

**(8)**     If ever you got the police come round and you wanted someone to put something out the way they'd turn and tell them to 'go and hide the whatever it was', you know.

When faced by an outside threat, the directive's aim is to remain group-internal and protect the listener; the exclusion of outsiders is a consequential by-product of this. This is embodied by the fact that the English Gypsies have 'got two or three different words [for things]; like police we use the word *muskra*, or *mingra*, or *gava*'. Their vocabulary evolves and innovates so as to protect the best interests of the community, not to exclude outsiders per se.

In giving directives, the exclusion of outsiders almost seems to serve a tertiary effect: primarily, Angloromani is simply used to offer a directive; secondly, it reinforces group solidarity in the face of external pressure; and thirdly, as a natural by-product of this, it eliminates non-Romani-speakers from the conversation.

Furthermore, on the subject of exclusion, Derrington and Kendall in *Gypsy Traveller Students in Secondary Schools: Culture, Identity and Achievement* (2004:102) state that although Gypsy children use Romani to exclude other children, this is very much a subsidiary effect: Romani is used as a 'source of support between Traveller students, an affirmation of shared identity, and also as a form of protection, allowing Traveller students to mark the boundaries between themselves and others.' This most definitely substantiates the theories of sameness and difference, and also that Romani is a group-internal device used to consolidate and augment group belonging.

In other scenarios, Romani-derived insertions serve as euphemism to encode a taboo subject. Here, as Matras (2010:137) writes, the emotive mode 'appeal[s] to the hearer's solidarity and request[s] an exemption from the sanctions that would normally follow the overt use of such expressions.' When talking on taboo subjects, the speaker escapes embarrassment: the Romani words are the marked variants and, whilst the content remains the same as their English counterparts, the fact that the speaker uses the marked form highlights to the interlocutor that the speaker is uncomfortable talking on the subject and is doing his best to save face.

**(9)**     And it wasn't long after that, she *mored*.

'And it wasn't long after that, she died.'

**(10)**     And she used to say: 'Count this *luvva*', you know, and we used to count the *luvva*.

'And she used to say: 'Count this money', you know, and we used to count the money.' (Matras 2010:137)

**(11)**     'e would say *mang mang phral*.

'He would say beg, beg, boy.'

In these examples, the Romani insertions highlight that overt conversation on subjects such as 'death' and 'money' should be avoided. Example (11) shows how the topic of begging – a practice generally frowned upon in Romani culture – is negotiated by using Romani-derived words. The emotive code allows uncomfortable concepts to be talked about almost indirectly and without embarrassment, and calls upon the hearer's solidarity and loyalty, too.

In all the above examples – whether it be emphasising group belonging, talking euphemistically, or giving directives – Angloromani has two major purposes: firstly, it has the communicative effect of packaging semantic content. Secondly, there is a subtext to the utterances: in all the cases, the Romani insertions function as ways of showing solidarity between the speaker and hearer(s), and as an encompassment of a whole culture of attitudes and traditions. Of course, as is the case in all shows of solidarity and togetherness, a supplementary effect of the speech-act is to exclude outsiders, however, this does not make Angloromani 'bystander oriented' as Rijkhoff asserts of in-group lexicons.

### 6.2 Indo-Aryan roots in Angloromani

On a tangential note, from the outset of our interviews, the Indo-Aryan roots in Angloromani became increasingly apparent. Many Romani-derived words in Angloromani are identical to words in present day Indian languages due the Roma people migrating from what is now present-day India, through Europe, finally settling in England. Not only do the Indo-Aryan derivations give linguists a great deal of insight into the beginnings and movements of the Roma people, but – surprisingly – the Gypsies themselves are extremely conscious of their heritage.

**(12)**     If I talk to Indian person I could communicate with him and he'd understand.

**(13)**     *Pani*, we use the word *pani* for water – an Indian would also use that same *pani*.

**(14)**     We say *jukkel* for a dog, and Indians say the same type of word.

**(15)**     Eyes is *yoks*, and Indians – I think – the Indians say, err, yacks or something.

**(16)**     Our hair's *bal*; Indians calls it the same. Our noses are *nok*, mouth are *moi*, our teeth are *dandus*, our ears are *kans* or *shanengros*.

Moreover, it is interesting that the majority of these words are body parts or everyday items. This supports what we stated earlier: these words have been preserved, retained and passed down through Romani and Angloromani varieties because they are the most salient and readily available.

**(17)**     Obviously, we know body parts more than anything 'cause it's a part of us isn't it - ya know.

In these examples, then, Indic-derivations not only serve as a bridge between minority communities in Britain due to a shared ancestry, but they also allow linguists to gain an insight into which words are retained and the reasons behind their retention.

# 7. PRESERVATION OF ANGLOROMANI & THE REVIVAL OF EUROPEAN ROMANI

## *7.1 Preservation*

An endangered language is somewhat nebulously defined as when a language is no longer used a communicative tool, when it is no longer taught to younger generations, whilst factors such as general attitudes towards the language, and the damaging impact of other languages also have an effect (UNESCO; Crystal, 2002). These aspects, then, cannot be quantitatively measured, so, by entailment, language preservation is an inexact, imprecise art. Nonetheless, ongoing research investigates ways in which threatened languages can be preserved: Akira Yamamoto (1998), for example, identifies a number of factors which can both help maintain and promote minority languages. These include changes within education such as the promotion of educational programmes concerning the endangered language and culture; the training of native speakers as teachers; the creation of bilingual/bicultural school programmes; and the development of written literature – both traditional and new. The creation and strengthening of the environments in which the language is used can be employed to consolidate its existence as it involves the speech community and builds a strong sense of ethnic identity within the endangered community (Crystal 2002:143).

Further to this, another factor involved in language preservation is the need for the dominant culture to embrace linguistic diversity and to hold positive attitudes towards the existence and use of minority languages (Yamamoto 1998:114). This attitude can be encouraged through institutional support such as the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages which discusses several implementations for the protection of languages, including the addition of the language into the education curriculum, the provision of study and research on the language, as well as teaching of the language at secondary and tertiary levels. Other strategies mentioned include provision of translation facilities and interpreters for the language in public services and general safeguarding of it by promotion of respect towards the language and encouraging its use in both private and public (Matras 2004).

Research suggests that there are 3.5 millions speakers of Romani in Europe, making it one of the most well-spoken minority languages – second only to Catalan (*Romani Project*). Due to its relatively large speakership on the continent (Romani is spoken in most European countries such as Romania,

Bulgaria, Turkey, Macedonia, Serbia, Greece, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, Germany – the list goes on), Romani holds recognised status in several European countries, as well as being mentioned explicitly as an example of a non-territorial language in the aforementioned European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages (*Romani Project*). Consequently, many dialects of European Romani benefit directly from attempts to preserve languages.

### 7.2 The preservation of Angloromani

Quite contrastingly, the Angloromani of the English Gypsies does not hold the same status as fully-inflected Romani, and it therefore relies on methods of language preservation on a smaller scale to ensure its continued existence. The *Anglo-Romani Project* – launched in 2005 in conjunction with the community of Blackburn and in cooperation with the Lancashire Traveller Education Service – aims to document the Angloromani lexicon in its regional and dialectal variation, and serve as a basis for the creation of teaching materials. The project compiles audio and video documentation of conversations and vocabulary; written documents recording older uses of Angloromani; computer games, cards and other visual aids to aid vocabulary acquisition. These can then be used in schools, by teachers of Romani and Traveller origin, raising awareness amongst Romani children towards this aspect of their culture, assisting in their acquisition of the language and ensuring preservation of the language for another generation (*Romani Project*). In the absence of governmental aid, the *Romani Project* deputises and in turn helps preserve the speech variety.

Nonetheless, the preservation of Angloromani relies most heavily on the individual members of the community themselves. Whilst there is still limited access to (and existence of) professional teaching devices, the continued use of Romani-derived speech forms depends almost exclusively on older generations passing the language down to their children, simply by word-of-mouth – as seen in the example below, elicited from our interviewee.

**(1)** I've taught it to them [the children], yeah. Well we'd use it [Angloromani] and [they'd ask] 'what that mean?', and I'll tell 'em. But I teach 'em just like [my grandparents] taught[...] my aunts, uncles and me mam. I'm passing it on to them – you know what I mean?

Consequently, as discussed earlier, Angloromani used in everyday situations coupled with an innate childish curiosity to learn allows Romani forms to be passed on from generation to generation. Example (2) demonstrates how our interviewee states these day-to-day nouns and phrases are acquired.

**(2)** When I speak to my old lot, like, not the language but the phrases what we use now I learnt off me old aunts and uncles like for everyday stuff like milk and bread y'know, things like that.

The quotation highlights that the passing on of Romani-derived words is a part of the culture itself – not a conscious effort to preserve the language. It demonstrates that the learning of Romani word forms

is a process that is very much family and community orientated, and a process that goes on underneath language-users level of consciousness. Furthermore, the fact that previous generations acquired their knowledge of Romani in entirely the same way signals that the process of acquisition always has been (and will continue to be) this way:

 (3)     Yeah it's just a thing what Gypsies do. It's part of our culture: we learn [teach] the kids what we know best. We [don't do it] to be different or better than anyone else 'cause we're not ya know, er, but it's just to learn that culture and that word.

Clearly, then, the Romani-derived lexicon and its transferral across the generation gap is not endangered as it is a process that happens subconsciously. Our interviews did, however, highlight that aspects of the Gypsy life that are a conscious choice – for instance, dress, dwelling etc. – are, in fact, the endangered features of their culture. Modernisation, and a change in interests and priorities are causing many salient aspects of the Gypsy culture to disappear:

 (4)     Gypsies seem to have gone too modern. It's just like they've forgot: they only    seem  to  be interested in the here and now which sometimes I understand, but they're just not really interested in the past, they're just caught up with everything today – do you know what I mean? Like television and music and        all this MTV culture.

(5)     Gypsies are very materialistic.

This 'MTV culture' is perhaps more alluring to younger generations than the fairly traditional lifestyle that Gypsy culture imposes on them. Furthermore, as is the general case with society as a whole, Gypsies are becoming more 'thing-centric' and are thus beginning to abandon aspects of there culture – as seen below:

(6)     There is some Gypsies what I've seen that've cut themselves off from the Gypsy community, integrated with the *gawdja* community. You wouldn't tell if they were Gypsies or not.


(7)     A lot of Gypsies are moving into houses – off the sites, y'know.


Besides this, parts of their culture are being eradicated by outside threats:


(8)     In the olden times a Gypsy could stay anywhere – side of a road, never got bothered. Now authorities come and move you on.

**(9)**     This is the longest I've settled for four years.

**(10)**     I'm a bit of a summer Gypsy.

In the above examples we can see that some of the most salient, identifiable aspects of Gypsy life are becoming endangered. A lot of Gypsies see the appeal in moving into fixed accommodation, whilst stringent laws prohibit Gypsies setting up camp wherever they wish, and this, in turn, results in many seeking asylum in houses. Moreover, due to these laws, Gypsies who remain on sites cannot travel around as much and, subsequently, they live a more sedentary lifestyle, residing on one site for many years. A by-product of this is that their itinerant, service-providing occupations are threatened due to the fact that they cannot travel around seeking work: consequently, as aforementioned, traditional professions – basket-making, fortune-telling etc. – are starting to be replaced by more modern jobs – painting and decorating, for example. Additionally, when we travelled to visit a site, it became apparent that the dress was akin to the English majority, veering away from the stereotype of hats and long flowing skirts. Be it conscious or imposed upon them, many features of Gypsy culture are being razed and replaced by new ones which are much more in line with mainstream societal norms.

In the face of these changes to Gypsy lifestyle, Angloromani remains relatively unharmed. Whilst society seems to be subsuming many of the tangible aspects of Gypsy life, language is something that is more abstract and harder to impinge on. In situations when societal institutions have attempted to impose on their language, Gypsies resist. Our interviewee spoke of police in the south of England being required to learn Romani words as part of their training:

**(11)**     Police have to learn aspects of Romani language[...]: they have to know what     we're   saying – they know *kek* and they know *rokker*[...] So now y'know Romani *mangav*? It means 'demand' – now we might say *mang* instead of *rokker*.

The preceding quotation highlights that in the face of society's attempt to claim some features of the Romani language, Gypsies respond and negotiate around this. It is notable that the innovations – using *mang* (from Romani *mangav*) instead of *rokker,* for example – are still Romani-derived, so the heritage and culture persists. This is not just an isolated example – Angloromani innovations for police also exhibit Romani roots: *gava* derives from the European stem *garav-* 'to hide'; *muskra* is formed from Older Welsh Romani *moskero* 'policeman'; and *mingra* also takes root from Older Welsh Romani *prastimengero* 'runner|policeman' (The Angloromani Dictionary). Whilst, then, we can see that the majority, dominant culture negatively impacts on Gypsy lifestyle, when it attempts to impact and intrude on Romani speech forms, Gypsy reaction is characterised by defiance, and the Romani lexicon perseveres.

As a result, while a scenario exists in which children remain eager to learn, adults continue pass on the lexical reservoir, and outside institutions (the *Romani Project*, for example) offer structure to the process, Angloromani as a speech form – although in a minority – will be preserved.

### 7.3 The revival of European Romani

As we have mentioned over the past section, Angloromani is being preserved and passed across the generation gap. Above and beyond this, in many cases, English Gypsies are attempting to learn variations of European Romani.

These attempts to learn inflected Romani varieties coincide with the simple fact that the resources and infrastructure have been put in place for them to do so: the *Romani Project*, for example, has created a DVD that allows Gypsies to learn a form of continental inflected Romani. Anecdotally, we were told that the *Romani Project* created this DVD and gave it to one English Gypsy and, such was the interest in it, 4000 copies were subsequently made and disseminated amongst Gypsy communities.

**(12)**     I think now the Romanes language is more common now. All through the country a lot of people [are] interested. Everyone's got his [Matras and the      *Romani Project*] tape!

Clearly, then, the *Romani Project* is aiding the revival of inflected Romani varieties in Britain. However, what is starkly apparent is that the project only succeeds because there is an explicit desire within Traveller communities to learn European Romani. The motivations behind this desire to learn are multifarious, and it is these motivations that we wish to outline over the next section.

Firstly, as we stated in the past section on the preservation of Angloromani, Gypsy culture is starting to converge with that of mainstream society. However, that is a very macro-analytical, sweeping stance, and – as we saw in example (11) in 7.2 – some Gypsies are seen to be using Romani derivations to combat and overturn this trend. Consequently, one reason why Romani is showing a resurgence in Britain is because a significant minority of Gypsies are trying to reclaim and preserve their heritage and past.

**(13)**     Our culture – it's changing so really it [language], it's the only thing we've got to hold on to.

Whether this defiance in the face of the dominant society is conscious or subconscious, both Romani-derived words and indeed Romanes as a language are being used by English Gypsies to get closer to the culture of their ancestors and, in turn, diverge from that of modern society.

Whilst some Gypsies are aiming to differentiate themselves from 'gawdjas' by using inflected Romani, others use it to mark themselves out as different to other Travellers. As we mentioned at the outset of our paper, one of the most perceptible differences between groups of Travellers is in their language use: Irish Travellers speak Shelta, for instance, whilst English Travellers use Angloromani. However, consider the quotations below:

**(14)**     Its common for Irish and English to marry.

**(15)**     You'll find Irish Travellers learning a lot of Romani words now, not by force     but     'cause they've just got familiar with it.

As the quotations show, communities are starting to become more mixed, and Irish Travellers are beginning to use Romani-derived words.

**(16)**     Irish ones leave a bad taste in people's mouth – the good'uns a bad name[...],

leaving rubbish on sites.

Here we see that whilst Travelling communities are starting to become more alike, there is a degree of ill-feeling between the groups of Travellers. Consequently, we posit that, either consciously or not, there is a sense that some English Gypsies are learning inflected Romani so that the wider English population can differentiate them from Irish Travellers.

**(17)**     They [*gawdjas*] think every Gypsy[...], every Traveller is a Gypsy from                Ireland.   The *gawdjas* think everybody's Irish – they hear you talk no matter what accent you've got they think you're Irish.

English Gypsies then are extremely conscious of the attitudes that the wider English-speaking population hold towards them. Irish Travellers in Britain tend to invite a certain amount of criticism from the general public (Holloway 2005), and it is important for English Gypsies to distinguish themselves from them. Due to the fact that their cultures and speech varieties are slowly converging – our interviewee states that Angloromani-speakers are forever mistaken for Irish Gypsies – speaking European Romani can be seen as a resistive attempt to stop this occurring.

From our interviews, another pertinent point is that English Gypsies are learning inflected Romani forms so as to be able to communicate with Romani groups from the continent.

**(18)**    [Sometimes] there's me brother[...] and there's a foreign Gypsy and we'll just speak it there. He [the brother] made the effort when he was travelling and when European Gypsies came into England.

The very fact that English Gypsies are meeting and mixing with European Romani-speakers intimates that, firstly, they are very conscious of their heritage, and, secondly, that inflected Romani is serving a very real communicative purpose for them.

Furthermore, following the development of a movement of Pentecostal Christianity within Gypsy communities in Europe, a significant number of English Gypsies have also converted to this faith, and this appears to play a part in the motivation to learn a European dialect of Romani:

**(19)**    I get the chance to speak to the foreign boys about God.

**(20)**    To learn Romani – to learn the language, to learn the old language – really, as I says earlier, it's just to take the gospel to the ones who's coming in this country.

Clearly these interviewees are examples of speakers who have learnt a European dialect of Romani purely for its communicative function. There is little to suggest that they discern a symbolic or emotive purpose from learning the language and this could suggest why it is only a very small subset of the community, most commonly those that are involved in the church, who show an interest in learning it. In those members of the community who have no communicative need to learn European Romani as a method to communicate with and to 'take the gospel' to European Romani gypsies, we found little interest in the prospect of learning an inflected version of the language.

Over the past paragraphs we have taken a rather micro-analytical stance, underlining the motivations behind learning European Romani of a small subset of Gypsy communities. This is a significant minority, however, and the majority of English Gypsies are not learning inflected forms of the language. Many Gypsies, as we discovered during our research, are against learning inflected Romani – not in fierce opposition, we must add – but they see learning a language that they are rarely going to communicate in, as a largely pointless and fruitless endeavour.

**(21)**    They're not really too fussed [his family, the wider community] – like me    wife's    not really interested. She says 'people's people, I am what I am'. Me wife will pass the language [Romani-derived words] on [to the kids], what she    knows, but she's not really interested in learning more 'cause she'll say 'what    do I need to learn?' If she went and spoke Romani no one is really going to understand her.

This viewpoint is shared by many Gypsies who are indubitably in the majority. However, despite this, there is a significant proportion who are reviving European Romani: be it to re-engage with their heritage in a society that seems to be wiping out inter-group cultural differences, to spread the gospel, or to differentiate themselves from other Travellers.

## 8. DISCUSSION

Over the course of this report, we have outlined and subsequently deconstructed theorists' classifications of Angloromani, finally arriving at a stance that categorises Angloromani as an in-group lexicon, as typically used by minority, nomadic, peripatetic communities. Moreover, in line with Matras' (2010) viewpoint, we concluded that Angloromani serves the function as an 'emotive mode' of conversation that calls upon shared attitudes, and acts as both an exemplification of and a contributor to group solidarity and identity.

Besides this, we paid particular attention to the intricate relationship between language and identity, and analysed how this relationship manifested itself in the speech of English Gypsies. Using a framework of sameness and difference, we were able to explain the uses of Angloromani: it either substantiates likenesses and shared attitudes within a community, or sets the minority group apart from the dominant majority. Using this approach of 'difference', we take a nuanced viewpoint: Angloromani-speakers do not exclude society from their speech, rather they set themselves apart from society. This, in turn, allowed us to counter Rijkhoff's assertion that in-group lexicons are 'bystander oriented': we staunchly believe that Angloromani works primarily as a communicative process, secondly as a process of inclusion, and thirdly – a by-product of inclusion – as a process of exclusion (though, we stress, the exclusion of bystanders should not be considered a major part of Angloromani's purpose). In terms of 'sameness', as aforementioned, the use of a Romani-derived lexical item draws on shared cultural knowledge between the speaker and interlocutor, therefore augmenting group togetherness.

We made use of our own primary data to substantiate the claims: we scrutinised situations in which English Gypsies inserted Romani-derived words into the scaffolding of the English language and found that – as the literature theorised – Romani insertions were being used to call upon a sense of heritage, group belonging and identity. Semantically, through analysing which words were being retained and used, we discovered that Romani-derived words tended to be extremely salient concepts (everyday

objects and actions, body parts, simple adjectives etc.). Further to this, we discerned that Angloromani's Indo-Aryan roots are very much apparent in the language of English Gypsies and that the Gypsies themselves are very aware of their Indic heritage: we found that many Angloromani lexical items are identical to items in Indian languages, and this also gave us an insight into saliency, and the retention of concepts and words.

In terms of preservation, we found that there are huge efforts being made by governmental decrees and laws to preserve minority languages, and varieties of European Romani certainly benefit from these. Conversely, Angloromani, as we extensively established in the third chapter, suffers from the fact that it evades definition as a speech form and cannot be considered a language. Therefore, it evades such institutional aid, too, remaining a little known speech variety. Due to this, Angloromani relies on smaller scale methods of preservation – as proffered by the *Romani Project*, for example. Although extensive efforts are being made by these smaller organisations, the preservation of a speech form relies most heavily on the Gypsies themselves. In this respect, Angloromani is being passed down across the generational gap: our interviews showed that children exhibit an innate curiosity to learn and the adult speakers show equal enthusiasm in their wont of teaching younger generations. Due to the basis given by organisations such as the *Romani Project* and the enthusiasm of Angloromani-speakers, too, we deduced that Angloromani as a speech variety was not massively under threat.

Contrastingly, a fundamental point that featured prominently throughout our interviews was that many modern aspects of occidental culture are changing – if not negatively affecting – Gypsy culture and the way in which the community acts. We posited that there is an increasingly apparent trend that Gypsies are making conscious choices to change their lifestyles – for instance, moving into fixed accommodation, changing the way they dress – and are converging on an 'MTV culture' as one of our interviewees succinctly stated. Furthermore, rather than preserving Gypsy culture, governmental laws are directly harming it: for example, inhibiting where Travellers can live. This also has a knock-on, domino effect, curtailing their movement and restricting their itinerant service-providing professions. Nevertheless, in the face of this, Romani-derived speech forms prevail and even thrive. This is, we posited, because language is an abstract concept that cannot be impinged on in the same way as other aspects of Gypsy culture. Furthering this, we made use of the idea that language is inextricably linked to identity: resistance of the harmful majority culture surfaces through the Gypsies' language, leaving linguistic traces in the form of Romani-derived innovations.

To combat the loss of other aspects of their culture, we discovered that a sizeable number of Gypsies have tried – and in many cases succeeded – to learn varieties of inflected Romani with the backing of the *Romani Project's* dispersal of DVDs, and the increased access to web pages and other educational resources. It certainly must be stressed that those who wish to learn European Romani are in a minority in Gypsy communities, but we must equally stress that they are enthusiastic, driven and wholeheartedly behind preserving Gypsy traditions and culture.

**(1)** I'd love for our language to come back. A lot of people say, 'well it's only a language for when you want to be crafty and sneaky.' But it isn't: it's a language which we need and I still believe we should learn it. It's good for the culture, isn't it? It's the most important part of our culture.

With attitudes to Angloromani and inflected Romani like the example above, we posit that, alongside the continued prosperity of Angloromani, there may even be a revival of European Romani in Britain, too.

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