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Romani, Language Planning and the Media

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Romani, Language Planning, and the Media

Romani media and language planning gained importance as a consequence of the political emancipation of the Roma, which is mainly based upon the idea of a European Roma nation with its own culture and language. Concurrently the study of Romani has developed from an exotic into a more or less established scientific field. However, with respect to media there are only a few descriptions of the situation (i.a. Galjus 1999) and besides Gross (2006) Romani media have not really received serious academic attention. This paper does not offer an exhaustive analysis of Romani media either, but only aims to provide an overview of the background of language planning. Beyond this it tries to outline the linguistic aspects of the expansion of Romani into formal, media-related domains by analysing example text excerpts from bilingual journals. The linguistic strategies used in this expansion process are rooted in the sociolinguistic situation of Romani which is discussed in the introductory chapter of this paper and the resulting implications for language planning initiatives. The presentation and discussion of Romani language planning draws to some extent on the analysis of Matras (1999, 2002: 239-259, 2005) and uses, among others, Friedman's (1995, 1999, 2005) descriptions of the Macedonian case of Romani standardisation as an example of a national language planning approach. The concluding chapter deals with Inter-Romani on the basis of the concept of "linguistic pluralism in Romani" formulated by Matras (2005).

1. THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC SITUATION OF ROMANI

The sociolinguistic situation of Romani reflects the socio-political and socio-cultural status of its speakers. Until recently Romani has not existed in a written form and has exclusively been passed on orally. It has not developed a generally accepted written standard and, as a consequence, no prescriptive norms. This linguistic situation corresponds with the socio-political situation of the Roma: politically, economically and culturally marginalised, ethnically stigmatised, discriminated against and persecuted, the Roma could only survive in small groups that led to the geographical and social heterogeneity that still exists today. Consequently, Roma

1 Matras (2005) is the printed version of an electronically published paper from 2004. This original paper is available on the Manchester Romani Project website:
http://romani.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/downloads/2/Matras_Pluralism.pdf

never have been in a position to establish political structures or to get their share of political and economic power. Considering the fact that the development of standard varieties generally follows the development of political and economic power structures, it is obvious why Romani has not developed such a variety. For most Roma their respective Romani variety is reduced to intra-group communication. In some cases it also functions in the social macrocosm, in inter-group contact with speakers of other varieties. This is particularly true for speakers of *Vlax* varieties² with an international distribution. Romani is also used in the public sphere primarily by individuals involved in the emancipation process on the international level. Generally, however, the functions of Romani as inter-group variety in everyday life and as formal variety of public life are limited. In many cases even in private domains majority languages are more frequently used. Adult Romani speakers always are bi- or multilingual and use the language of the respective majority population for inter-group communication.

Consequently, Romani has to be described as a primarily oral, functionally restricted, dominated, stateless diaspora language with no monolingual speakers.

This asymmetrical relationship between Romani and majority languages results not only in functional restrictions but also in strong influence or rather pressure of dominant languages on Romani. This influence results in lexical loans as well as in replication of patterns of the majority languages in Romani varieties which, among other things, cause the differences between the single varieties. These lexical and structural differences are often perceived as obstacles in inter-group communication and sometimes even lead speakers of a particular Romani variety to value other varieties as different languages. Basically, problems in the inter-group communication are caused by the functional restriction of Romani to intra-group communication in the private sphere. If there was a constant need by a majority of speakers to use Romani in inter-group communication and in public life, Romani – as each vital language – provides for the necessary structural resources to adapt to these new situations. Although Romani has been written for some decades now, the communicative need to functionally expand it into all domains of everyday and public life is not given until now. This is first of all due to the fact that Romani is a dominated language and its speakers are always bilingual. This is one of the reasons why formal written Romani has mainly symbolic functions with only marginal communicative ones.³ The vast majority of texts are translations from majority languages into Romani. Their main purpose is to

2 *Vlax* derives from Romanian *Valahia*, indicating that *Vlax* Roma originate from Walachia and adjacent Moldavia.

3 For a detailed discussion of the functions of Romani see Matras (1999). An overview of the functions and the status of Romani is outlined in Halwachs (2003).

highlight the ability of Romani to function in these contexts, to support the struggle for sociocultural equality of the Roma, to symbolise the will or need or demand for the socio-political integration of the Roma, etc.

The functional restrictions of Romani are reflected by its socio-political status. Romani is neglected in administration, it is irrelevant in public life, and marginalised in education and in the media. As public life as well as administration are always connected with dominant standardised languages it is evident that Romani as a dominated language does not function in these formal public domains.

Although marginalised, Romani is present in almost all types of media. Apart from daily and weekly newspapers, it is used in journals, brochures and books. There are radio as well as television broadcasts on public and private channels and there are even a few private radio and television stations broadcasting almost exclusively in Romani. Radio and television are also present on the internet just as are websites, mailing lists and chat rooms. Print publications and radio and television broadcasts are often bilingual, thus reflecting both the linguistic repertoires of Romani speakers and the sociolinguistic situation of Romani as a dominated language. But despite its presence in the media, compared to dominant languages, the impact of Romani media on Romani speakers is insignificant and often negligible. Romani speakers are first of all exposed to mainstream media of dominant languages and Romani media products and broadcasts are mostly symbolic, as is written Romani.

The demand to use Romani in education is first of all part of the political agenda of the Roma's struggle for equal rights and equal opportunities. Resulting activities range from grass root level actions via national and regional measures to European-wide initiatives. The latter are recommendations of supranational organisations or an integral part of international treaties like the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* of the *Council of Europe*. Both recommendations and treaties are top down instruments that often are accompanied by national or regional measures which – at least legally – make Romani teaching possible. In most cases such measures are embedded into the legal framework for the protection of (national) minorities of a particular country or region and are formulated in the accompanying regulations for minority language teaching. In the case of Romani these top down measures are, almost as a rule, not actively implemented by the authorities. They are the majority reactions to the demands of

minority speakers' representatives and only provide the possibility for Romani teaching but leave the implementation to NGOs.⁴

For both authorities and NGOs, the use of Romani in the formal domains of media and education is first of all politically motivated. Therefore, written Romani and media broadcasts as well as the teaching of Romani have primarily symbolic functions. Practical aspects or rather communicative and pedagogical functions are secondary.⁵ This also holds true for language planning.

2. ROMANI LANGUAGE PLANNING

On the background of the sociolinguistic situation outlined so far it is evident that Romani language planning does not conform to the "traditional" pattern described in Haugen (1983): selection, codification, implementation, elaboration. In practice this pattern is more or less reduced to codification and elaboration. In his widely read policy paper, Matras gets to the very heart of this problem:

In order to protect and promote Romani language rights as human rights, there is a need to develop educational materials and media in the language, and to train teachers and writers. In the absence of an existing standard written language, this cannot be done without language planning. However, there is no uniform concept on which to base language planning, and no obvious accredited authorised body that could draft and implement such a concept. (Matras 2005: 33)

There is neither a "uniform concept" to guide the selection process nor an "authorised body" which would be able to take generally accepted decisions and to carry out the implementation. This shortcoming is rooted in the aforementioned lack of power structures. A centre of power with administrative and educational institutions is a precondition for the implementation, or rather imposition, of a codified variety as the standard of a large, widespread, and heterogeneous linguistic community.

4 This has, among other things, to be seen in connection with the plurality of Romani: Educational authorities are used to dealing with "homogeneous" languages which dispose of a standard that serves as a teaching norm.

5 To the author's knowledge there is no single case of Romani teaching that complies with the main pedagogical reason for its use in education; to teach literacy to children who have been socialised with Romani. This would be in line with a recommendation by UNESCO (1953).

Contrary to the reality that Romani lacks the necessary prerequisites to develop a generally accepted standard language, planning activities are among the priorities of Roma representatives on international and national levels.

2.1 Romani Standardisation

On an international level the declaration of a standard at the *Fourth World Romani Congress* in Poland in 1990 by the *International Romani Union* (IRU) has been repeated almost regularly from then on.⁶ On the background of the integrative framework of language planning and policy (Hornberger 2006: 29) this initiative more or less concentrates on form, on the policy planning approach with a focus on status planning. In corpus planning it highlights graphisation; the writing system is the highly discussed symbol of this standard. Although of minor importance, the cultivation planning approach also focuses on status. The main functional goal is the use of the standard in international communication. Consequently, corpus planning functionally highlights modernisation. Acquisition planning, the third planning type of the integrative framework, is more or less neglected in this context. The only known example of acquisition planning in connection with this standard is the Romani teaching initiative of Romania which is based on a centralist approach on the national level.⁷ Apart from its use in education in Romania, this standard is also used in IRU declarations and publications written, edited or supported by IRU activists who – as indicated above – have been propagating and lobbying for this standard since its proclamation in 1990. However, its main function is not a communicative but a symbolic one. Matras (1999: 496) labels this symbolic function "mobilising-rallying" and defines it as "the shaping of a text in such a way that would demonstrate ideological commitment and political allegiance and identification" with the IRU.

Due to the heterogeneity of the Roma population of each country Romani language planning on the national level is, as a rule, quite challenging too. The heterogeneity, first of all, results from migration caused by changes in the socio-economic situation. If the political, and as

6 For more information on this approach see Courthiade (1989), the declaration *I Alfabèta e Standardone Rromane Čhibaqiri* was published as *Resolucia N. 7/1990* on pages seven and eight of the *Informaciaqo Lil e Rromane Uniaqoro' N° 1-2, Žulaj – Augùsto 1991*.

7 The slightly modified standard variety generally used in Romani classes is often criticised as artificial by local Roma activists and teachers; first of all, because neither pupils nor their parents are able to identify with this variety. In these accounts the standard is described as distant to local varieties and – as it has almost no functions outside the classrooms – it is also valued as useless for the future life of the pupils. But there is no reliable evaluation of Romani teaching in Romania which proves these impressions as generally valid.

a consequence the economic, situation deteriorates in a region, population groups with a weak economy and a low social status are affected first. Therefore Roma often have been, and still are, forced to migrate which demographically results in complex and heterogeneous Roma populations in all regions and countries of Europe. On the background of the on-going east-west migrations from the second half of the 20th century onwards, the Roma populations in countries of western Europe show a higher grade of heterogeneity than many of the countries of emigration.⁸ As different groups of Roma not only speak different Romani varieties but also compete on the political level there is, almost as a rule, no possibility for language planning activities which aim at a unified variety in such heterogeneous, diverse situations.

An exception to this rule is the harmonisation process in Macedonia. This process is well documented by Friedman (1995, 1999, 2005) who describes its emergence as follows:

Although Romani has functioned in written use with state support in public in the Republic of Macedonia at least as early as the 1960s [...], the emergence into the public sphere of a movement for a Romani standard language in Macedonia dates from the publication of Jusuf's (1978) translation and Jusuf / Kepeski's (1980) grammar, [...]. The 1980s saw a very slow increase in the use of Romani in print [...], but the 1990s produced a significant upsurge in activity. This can arguably be related to the political independence of the Republic of Macedonia and the official recognition of Romani on a par with other minority languages in the Macedonian constitution. (Friedman 2005: 164)

The "Romani standard language of Macedonia" follows a majority approach. With the exception of the town of Tetovo, where *Bugurdži* hold the majority,⁹ speakers of *Arlije* varieties dominate, and not only numerically, in all other cities and larger Roma settlements of the country.¹⁰ Consequently, their Romani varieties serve as the basis of the harmonisation process which has produced a generalised *Arlije* Romani with "certain grammatical, phonological, and especially lexical additions (and modifications) from all the Romani dialects of the Republic of

8 Sweden's Roma population consists of at least five different groups: The *Resande* 'travellers' (< Swedish *resande*) immigrated to Scandinavia in the early 16th century, shortly after the *Kaale* 'blacks' (< Romani *kalo* 'black') reached northern Europe. At the end of the 19th century Vlach Roma, mainly *Kalderaš* 'kettle smiths' (< Romanian *căldăre* 'kettle') came via Russia. From the 1960s Roma from eastern and south-eastern Europe migrated to Sweden. Due to their active participation in the emancipation process, *Lovara*, 'horse dealers' (< Hungarian *lo* 'horse') mainly from Slovakia, and *Arlije* (< Turkish *yerli* 'local') from the southern Balkans are the most prominent among these "late" migrants.

9 *Bugurdži* 'drill makers' < Turkish *burgu* 'drill'.

10 For a detailed description of Romani dialectology see Matras (2005, 2002: 214-237).

Macedonia such as *Džambazi*, *Bugurdži*, *Gurbet*,¹¹ and others" (Friedman 1995: 181). This approach is in line with an on-going "natural" process, namely the use of Romani in the municipality of *Šuto Orizari*, a district of Skopje almost entirely inhabited by Roma of different dialectal backgrounds with *Arlije* speakers in the vast majority and in other parts of Macedonia inhabited by Roma of similar ethnic composition. The on-going koinesation of the various Romani dialects on the basis of *Arlije* varieties in these settlements in everyday life communication is more or less reflected by the proposed standard variety. On the background of the integrative framework mentioned above, both form and function or rather policy and cultivation planning approaches are taken into consideration. With respect to form, status planning aims at nationalisation and acquisition planning for the media and education. Concerning function, status planning targets intra-national communication with corpus planning centred on modernisation. The product of this national language planning initiative is used in various formal domains. The following list is based on Friedman (2005):

- 1991: Romani begins to be used in state sponsored television programmes;
- 1993: first attempt at a Romani language newspaper in Macedonia;
- 1994: Romani listed as an official language in the Macedonian census;
- 1996: first attempt at a textbook for use in elementary schools;
- 1997: the municipality of *Šuto Orizari* begins publishing its official gazette bilingually in Macedonian and Romani;
- 1998: first Macedonian-Romani / Romani-Macedonian dictionary;
- 1999: several bilingual youth-oriented monthlies begin publication;
- 2001: the trilingual (Romani, Macedonian, English), tri-weekly newspaper *Roma Times* appears for the first time on January 17.

Throughout this period, original and translated poetry and prose for both adults and children have been published in this regional standard. During the last ten years more pedagogical materials as well as books of poetry and prose followed. Funding of translations and original publications by international NGOs, e.g. the *Open Society Institute* sponsored the *Next Page Foundation*, has increased the production of Romani print media. Another supporting factor Friedman mentions is "the development of a private economy" which has enabled Roma to fund Romani media themselves.

11 *Džambazi* 'horse dealers' < Turkish *cambaz* 'dealer, horse dealer', *Gurbet* 'strangers' < Turkish *gurbet* 'stranger'.

Roma Times, which is part of an individual's (...) media enterprise, is an example of this last type. Its language thus represents independent Romani usage in the context of a society in which Romani standardization has also received state support. (Friedman 2005: 165)

Compared to the predominant symbolic functions of the standard propagated by the IRU, the Macedonian standard variety has also communicative functions. This is first of all due to its connection with the communicative reality of its target group. The harmonisation process the standard is based on is paralleled by the communicative reality of the vast majority of Romani speakers in everyday life.

2.2 Romani Codification

In contrast to international and national language planning initiatives that try to create a standard variety, which covers all Romani varieties or the ones spoken on the territory of a particular state, local and regional initiatives mostly aim at the codification and officialisation of a single dialect. Corpus planning goals, according to the policy planning approach, are a codified variety with a consistent writing system, a grammar and a dictionary. Status planning claims an official or rather formal status which allows the use of the codified variety in public domains, first of all in the media and in education. Functionally such initiatives target language revival, maintenance, and/or reacquisition and – with respect to corpus planning – they primarily aim at modernisation. A regional cross-border initiative of this kind is the codification of *East Slovak Romani*, which is spoken in the Czech Republic and in Slovakia, by a group of researchers led by the late Milena Hübschmannová.¹² Another example of a local initiative with regional consequences is the codification of *Burgenland Romani* during the 1990s.¹³

Burgenland Romani is an isolated south central variety with only a few hundred speakers whose command of Romani ranges from full competence of a few mostly old but rusty speakers to passive part competence among young speakers. The primary language of Burgenland Roma is German and there are no children growing up with Romani as the primary language of socialisation. This situation results from the socio-history of the group: In the 1930s Burgenland

12 The codification process is described in Hübschmannová / Neustupný (1996), the codification product is presented i.a. in Hübschmannová / Šebková / Žigová (1991).

13 Burgenland – a region which was part of Hungary until 1921 – is the easternmost federal state of Austria.

Romani was the intimate form for approximately 6-7,000 speakers of whom only some hundred survived the holocaust. After World War II the survivors suffered prolonged discrimination worsened by the destroyed social structure. The resulting traumatisation led to a self imposed assimilation with exogamy, language denial, and migration into urban anonymity. Most of those Burgenland Roma who stayed in the villages and small towns of Burgenland entered a phase of transition from a marginalised ethnic minority to a socially disadvantaged fringe group. In the second half of the 1980s social workers and young Roma became aware of this situation and an informal organisational process started which was supported by the overall political climate of the time. On this background, activities during the Commemorative Year 1988 (50 years after Austria had become part of Nazi Germany) triggered the foundation of the first Austrian Roma NGO in the south of Burgenland, in *Oberwart / Felsőőr / Erba* on 15 July 1989.¹⁴ Young Roma, with the help of committed social workers, artists, and intellectuals of the region, carried out these first formal steps toward self-organisation for emancipation. Soon, aside from social and political topics and initiatives, culture became important. Due to this cultural awareness, the continuous decline in the use of Burgenland Romani was perceived, for the first time, as language loss and was consequently interpreted as a symptom of cultural assimilation. To counteract language loss and assimilation, an initiative to codify and subsequently teach Burgenland Romani was started.

Parallel to this, the socio-political situation had not only changed on the legal level, but also in the public consciousness. In December 1993, the Roma were recognised as a national minority. In 1994, the school administration of Burgenland extended the law on minority language education to Romani. In February 1995, after four Roma were killed by a politically-motivated assassin using a pipe bomb placed in front of the Roma settlement in Oberwart, the situation of the Burgenland Roma became known to the general public. The following list gives an overview of the language planning initiative in the framework of the outlined socio-political conditions:

1993: begin of the project *Codification and Didactisation of Roman*¹⁵ initiated by young Burgenland Roma, carried out in co-operation with a group of linguists from the University of Graz;

14 Because the region is a Hungarian enclave, toponyms are trilingual: *Felsőőr*, Hungarian / *Erba*, Romani. On topographical signs in the region, only the Hungarian name accompanies the German one.

15 *Roman* is the self-designation of the Burgenland Roma for their Romani variety.

- 1995: first publication in *Roman*: primer *Amen Roman Pisin*as;
- 1996: grammar, glossary, texts and teaching materials;¹⁶
- 1997: first extracurricular lessons in *Roman*;
- 1998: *Roman* begins to be used in bilingual journals and a monolingual children's journal;
- 1999: *Roman* begins to be used in radio broadcasts; *Roman* begins to be taught in non-compulsory lessons in the primary school of Oberwart;¹⁷
- 2000: publication of a monolingual illustrated fairy tale collection and a bilingual collection of stories and songs with an accompanying CD.

Within one decade both the internal and the official status of Burgenland Romani changed dramatically: from an almost unknown isolated oral intra-group variety disowned by its speakers to the group's primary identity marker and the most prominent variety of an officially recognised Austrian minority language used in the media and taught in schools.

Although the prerequisites, the legal framework, and the political will are present, Burgenland Romani teaching at school is declining. Since 2007, no courses have been offered at schools in Oberwart, only the optional classes in *Unterwart / Alsöör / Tenu Erba* are currently offered. First of all, this decline is due to the small number of potential pupils. However, school administrations have taken no active measures to promote Burgenland Romani teaching among Roma and non-Roma pupils and to support the activities of the NGO *RomaService*, the prime mover in the field.

Because Burgenland Romani teaching is a bottom-up initiative, the decline of teaching in schools has partially been compensated by extracurricular activities. In 2005, the NGO *RomaService* introduced the *RomBus* as a mobile service centre and a rolling classroom.¹⁸ This bus regularly visits Roma settlements in towns and villages between Vienna and the Slovenian border covering the whole of Burgenland and adjacent counties. Aside from information about Roma-related issues and assistance in social and political matters, the *RomBus* is a rolling library which offers journals, books, films, and music, mostly in Romani, as well as courses in Burgenland Romani. Such courses bring together families and their neighbours. Working with language competent elders, the teachers use Romani like a living language and thereby pass it on

16 The codification grammar is summarised in Halwachs / Wogg (2002).

17 In the succeeding years, this model has only been expanded to the lower secondary school in Oberwart and to the primary school in the neighbouring village of Unterwart.

18 The *RomBus* is presented in the journal *dROMa* (6/2006: 16-19). Back issues of the journal are offered for download on the website of *RomaService*: <http://www.roma-service.at>

to partly competent speakers as well as children and adults without any competence in Romani. It is an open question as to what extent these courses counteract language loss. Their most important effect is their contribution to a positive image of being *Rom* or *Romni*, especially among children and teenagers. Ethnocultural awareness and pride raises self-consciousness and self-esteem, thus supporting the social integration of young Roma.

The formal goals of the policy planning approach have been fully achieved: Corpus planning has resulted in a codified variety with a consistent writing system, a grammar and a dictionary. Burgenland Romani has become an official national minority language of Austria which fully complies with the status planning objectives. It is used in education and in the media which fulfils the ambitions of acquisition planning. The functional goals of the cultivation planning approach have only been met with respect to corpus planning: Although primarily on the lexical level, Burgenland Romani has been expanded into formal domains thus achieving the objective of modernisation. Concerning status planning as well as acquisition planning, the aims have not been achieved: Neither revival nor reacquisition and maintenance of Burgenland Romani are guaranteed by the language planning efforts. Therefore the symbolic functions of codified Burgenland Romani prevail over the communicative ones which are fulfilled by German varieties on all levels of the collective repertoire of the speech community. This has to be seen in connection with the fact that language shift was at a rather advanced stage and de facto irreversible when the language planning initiative started. On the other hand the indirect returns – self-consciousness and self-esteem that support the social integration of young Roma – out value these shortcomings by far.

Similar language planning initiatives involving only one dialect have been carried out in various regions of Europe, with the background of language loss among others with regard to the Finnish Romani variety of the *Kaale* and to Prekmurje Romani in the north-east of Slovenia which is the neighbouring south central variety to Burgenland Romani. The quality of corpus planning – appropriateness and consistency of the writing system, usefulness of the grammar and a lexicon that documents both the oral use of the language and the modernisation connected with the written variety – is very much dependent on the involvement of professional linguists. Formal status and acquisition planning objectives, the official use of a Romani variety in education, the media, and other public domains are subject to political conditions or rather to the attitude of the majority towards minorities, in particular Roma. The functional goals of the cultivation planning approach are dependent on the vitality as well as the number of speakers of the respective Romani variety. The larger the speech community and the higher the frequency of Romani use in private and everyday life the higher is the probability that the codified variety not

only has symbolic but also communicative functions. This is, inter alia, guaranteed, at least to some extent, for the use of *East Slovak Romani* in Slovakia, *Gurbet Romani* in Serbia, and *Lovara Romani* in Hungary.

2.3 Standardisation, Codification, Harmonisation

Although the three language planning efforts outlined in the preceding chapter have at least one common goal: the modernisation of Romani in line with the overall political goal of emancipation, they differ with respect to their efficiency. Compared to the international standardisation initiative of the IRU the national Macedonian and the local Burgenland Romani approaches have been more successful: on the one hand, because they are based on on-going developments in the respective speech community; on the other hand, because they cater to the needs and wishes of both the speakers and their representatives.¹⁹ This suggests that the more an initiative for a codified or unified Romani variety is rooted in the respective speech community the more the lack of an "authorised body" to implement or to impose language planning efforts is compensated. This does not hold for the second shortcoming noted by Matras (2005: 33) and cited above. Due to big differences in the sociolinguistic situation of Romani speech communities a "uniform concept" in language planning is – at least currently – an impossibility. This is the main reason why a generally accepted standard still is an unrealistic desideratum.

Due to their more or less structured approach the three initiatives discussed differ from most other undertakings in Romani language planning. At least the codification of Burgenland Romani, which is a corpus-based empirical approach, stands in contrast to Matras's (1999: 499) essentially accurate conclusion that the "choice of the immediate spoken variety of the author" is a general characteristic of Romani codification. This holds particularly true for written Romani. Authors, translators and editors of "one man journals" base their texts on their idiolects of Romani. In some cases these idiolects are not only the individual realisation of a certain dialect but fusions of various dialects mixed with ideas about a unified Romani. These rather idiosyncratic language planning products also contribute to the complexity and plurality of Romani language planning in general.

19 A further precondition for the acceptance and consequently success and usability of a codified variety has become obvious in the codification of Burgenland Romani. Only the principle of plurality on all linguistic levels – from lexicon via phonology, morphology and syntax to pragmatics – guarantees the highest possible number of speakers' identification with the codified variety.

Matras (2002: 257) describes the standardization of Romani as diffuse and pluralistic. One could also describe the situation as incipiently polycentric. (Friedman 2005: 163)

Most of the individuals involved in Romani language planning – from corpus based to idiosyncratic approaches – are also political activists. They not only use their Romani in meetings from local to international level but also distribute and promote their written variety at these occasions and beyond. In this way they become part of an on-going harmonisation process which is gradually resulting in an international Romani variety that is primarily based on internationally spread *Vlax* dialects; *Vlax* speakers, especially *Kalderaš*, but also *Gurbet* and *Lovara*, dominate international Roma politics. Although this international variety is used only by a relatively small group of speakers as a means of communication in the political sphere and beyond, Romani functionally is expanding into formal domains. This expansion results in lexical enrichment as well as in structural changes. Romani is developing the vocabulary needed to discuss political, legal, administrative, scientific, etc. topics as well as structures that enable its users to reflect, write and publicly talk about any relevant topic. Due to the use in formal domains for communicative purposes among Roma representatives, Romani has entered the stage of development from a vernacular to a standard language. As already mentioned, this development in no case follows the traditional standardisation pattern – i.e. the imposition of a codified variety by law through education – but has to be described as harmonisation by trial and error in actual communication processes using all linguistic resources at hand.²⁰ Therefore, translations and standardisation products with primarily symbolic functions, codification products of all kind, as well as the communicative experience and the repertoire resources of all speakers involved contribute to this harmonisation process. The higher the number of Romani speakers participating in this process the more this international variety will spread and contribute to overcoming the communicative obstacles between speakers of different Romani varieties in formal domains. A precondition for the further development of this international variety are further improvements in the socio-political situation of the Roma. Current conditions not only limit the development of Romani

but first of all hamper the integration of Roma as equal citizens of their native countries and, consequently, as European citizens.

²⁰ For "trial and error in written Romani" see Hübschmannová (1995).

3 ROMANI IN THE MEDIA

Although marginalised and irrelevant in comparison with the use of national languages, Romani is used in all types of media: from print media via radio and television to online media. The Romani varieties used in the media show the whole variation described so far. Only the international standard declared by the IRU is more used in books published or edited by its advocates than in print media.²¹ The following example – the text of a plaque commemorating the victims of Nazism at the Birkenau (Brzeżinka) concentration camp – gives an impression of the public use of this standard.

21 To the author's knowledge only the few issues of the *Informaciao Lil* 'information bulletin' of the IRU have been published according to the norm set up by the declaration cited in footnote 5.

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| <p>22. <i>Savore manušenqe te ovel and-e šeliberša than dukhade roipnasqe thaj daraqe akaja phuv kaj mudard-ile, e hitleritkone vastencar, jekh milioni ta- jekhpaš murša, džuvla, čhavorre, maškar savende buterdene sas žutar e evropaqe themenqere. Auschwitz-Birkenau 1940-1945</i></p> | <p>Forever let this place be a cry of despair and a warning to humanity where the Nazis murdered about one and a half million men, women, and children, mainly Jews, from various countries of Europe. Auschwitz-Birkenau 1940-1945</p> |
|--|---|

The letters <ć, ś, ź> stand for /tʃ, ʃ, ʒ/, <q> is one of the post-positional graphemes to indicate Sandhis and stands for /k, g/: in lines 2f. of the preceding example <q> in *roipn-a-qe thaj dar-a-qe* 'crying.OBL.DAT.SG and fear.OBL.DAT.SG' represents /k/ *roipnake thaj darake*. In the corresponding plural forms *roipn-en-qe thaj dar-en-qe* 'crying.OBL.DAT.PL and fear.OBL.DAT.PL' it stands for /g/ *roipnenge thaj darenge*.²²

Functionally this text is mainly symbolic and thus fully in line with the general primary function of this standard. Many Roma who see this plaque identify the language as Romani but do not understand the exact meaning which they get by the English translation or by interpretation. This is first of all related to the fact that Romani speakers are not used to written Romani and to writing systems differing from the one of their respective majority language. Therefore, graphisation is one of the most diverse, or rather polycentric, features of Romani language planning, which is fully in line with the socio-political situation of the Roma: Because of long lasting marginalisation Roma have only started recently to develop a consciousness for social structures going beyond the extended family or clan and, therefore, are trying to emancipate themselves first of all as equally treated citizens of the countries they live in. This is particularly true for the first example presented in the next paragraph, the journal *Yekhipe* published in Prizren / Kosovo.

The beginning of the use of Romani in print media dates back almost one century. A first structured approach started in the inter-war period of the 20th century in Soviet Russia; an extremely productive time with respect to the use of a written variety of the *North Russian Romani* dialect(s) which was stopped due to internally and externally caused changes in Soviet

22 Functionally <q> also can be described as an "archigrapheme". Another one of these is <θ> which represents /t, d/.

politics. In contrast to this centralist approach, intensified use of written Romani in the media in the second half of the 20th century, which was initiated by beginning self-organisation in Communist Yugoslavia, has been unstructured and thus decentralised from the very beginning on. In print media this polycentricity in Romani language planning, which – as outlined above – is mainly based on idiolectal dialect fusion and/or idiosyncratic ideas about a common language, becomes obvious. One example – among many others that could serve the same purpose – is the journal *Yekhipe* 'unity' which is published by a Roma NGO in Prizren / Kosovo. There is one editor in chief, an academic with a high reputation, who governs and dominates the production of the bilingual Romani and Albanian – journal. The Romani variety used is based on the local dialect which is part of the wider *Arlije* cluster of the South Balkan dialect group.

Glancing at the Romani text below one realises that there are no diacritics used. The alveolar fricative /ʃ/ is realised as <sh> which is in line with the Albanian use in e.g. *Shqiptar* 'Albanian'. The use of the letter <q> differs from Albanian. It is used for /tʃ/ e.g. in *qhib* 'tongue, language' which is usually realised in the Western Balkans according to South Slavic Latin writing conventions as *čhib*.²³ The avoidance of Slavic diacritics, which have been used for Romani writing during the time Kosovo was part of Yugoslavia, is politically motivated and a symptom of the socio-political goal of the emancipation movement. To emancipate as equal citizens into Kosovar society Roma activists try to avoid identification with the former dominant language Serbo-Croatian. This is almost explicitly stated on the inner cover of the journal where the writing system is presented: ... *amaro hramipe sito ordinaruno, loko ... na sile o hrami ž hrvatyuno*. '... our writing is common, easy ... it does not have the Croatian letter ž' (*Yekhipe* 11/2006: 2).²⁴ Two other letters with – at least for the region – unusual functions are <y> which stands for /j/ and <j> which represents /d/. Some of these characterise the text below which is an excerpt of an article about the situation of the Roma from Mitrovica whose settlement was burnt down at the end of the Kosovar war.

23 The letter <h> following the affricate /tʃ/ – *čhib/qhib* 'tongue, language' – and voiceless stops – *phanglo* 'bound', *thay* 'and', *khera* 'houses' – generally marks aspiration in Romani writing conventions.

24 As in Croatian, the Latin writing conventions of Serbo-Croatian are used. The Cyrillic ones are used in Serbian. The author refers only to Croatian in this context.

| Yekhipe 11 (2006: 12) | Yekhipe 11 (2006: 18) | Translation |
|---|--|---|
| <p><i>O Roma kotar e diaspora thay kotar o kampi dena suportu e procesi e krisesko kova shay anla e decizia phangli olenge kherenca vay e kompenzacia vash olenge thare khera.</i></p> <p><i>O Roma kotar e diaspora mangena te oven transpa-rentune o kriteriumya vash o konstruibe e mahalako thay te oven ano koncenzusi e romencar.</i></p> | <p><i>Romet nga diaspora dhe nga kampet e kundershtojne procesin e ligjshmerise i cili kishte per tu sjellur vendimet lidhur me shtepiat e tyre dhe kompenzimin per gjegejen e shtepiat e tyre.</i></p> <p><i>Romet nga diaspora deshirojne te jene transparent kriteret per rikonstruimin e lagjes dhe te jene ne koncenzus me romet.</i></p> | <p>The Roma from the diaspora and from the camp receive support in the law case that might bring a decision in connection with their houses or the compensation for their burnt down houses.</p> <p>The Roma from the diaspora insist that there are transparent criteria regarding the construction of the quarter and that this is done in consensus with the Roma.</p> |

The current political situation of Kosovo is also reflected by the integration of new vocabulary; i.e. words for concepts which are mainly used in formal public domains and therefore are not present in the lexicon of oral Romani which is functionally reduced to private and informal public domains of everyday life. The short text passage presented so far indicates that the primary source for integrating new vocabulary into "Prizren *Yekhipe* Romani" is English: *ordinaruno* < eng. *ordinary* in the statement about the writing system cited above; *suportu* < eng. *support* in line three of the text; *humanitaruno koncerti* < eng. *humanitarian concert* (*Yekhipe 11/2006: 5*) and *armyuno konflikti* < eng. *armed conflict* are only a few of the numerous examples which are used in this journal. The use of English as lexical source for the use of Romani in prestigious domains is fully in line with both the role of English as international lingua franca in general and the role of English as the language of administrative communication

in Kosovo in particular. Since its de facto independence from Serbia, Kosovo has been administered by the United Nations and the European Union and English is, though not officially, but practically, the primary language of administration.

The majority of the English-derived adjectives in the texts are replicated and morphologically integrated with the common Romani adjective suffix *-uno*, e.g. *humanitar-uno*.²⁵ Replicated nouns are integrated with the suffix *-i* – *koncert-i* – which is a general Romani marker for the integration of masculine nouns of European origin.²⁶ Another suffix often used with an English stem is *-ipe*, e.g. in *perfid-ipe* < eng. *perfidiousness* (*Yekhipe* 11/2006: 31). Basically *-ipe* is a suffix deriving abstract nouns from adjectives and verbs: *parn-o* 'white' > *parn-ipe* 'whiteness', *mar-el* '(s)he beats' > *mar-ipe* 'beating, fight'. The use of the derivational suffix *-ipe* for the integration of nouns with abstract meanings can be described as a contact induced idiosyncratic usage. Most of the nouns integrated with *-ipe* are part of the classical, i.e. Latin and Greek derived, European lexicon and therefore also lexemes of the languages dominating Kosovo, English and Albanian. The corresponding Albanian forms of the Romani nouns all show a suffix with an initial *-i* which most probably triggers the use of *-ipe* together with the semantic aspect: alb. *ri-konstru-imin* > rom. *konstru-ipe* 'construction' alb. *integr-im* > *integr-ipe* 'integration' (*Yekhipe* 11/2006: 30f.) That this integration pattern is only a tendency and no rule is demonstrated by the following example: Although the Albanian model shows the *i*-suffix *kompens-inim* and the noun has an abstract meaning, 'compensation', the Romani noun is not integrated with *-ipe* but as *kompens-acia*. This might be connected with gender – *-ipe* is always masculine, *kompensacia* is feminine – but it also shows an integration pattern in line with the previously dominant language, Serbo-Croatian – *kompensacia*. There are more examples of the previously common integration pattern in the journals but they are fewer compared to the generalisation of *-ipe* for all new lexemes with an abstract meaning. Furthermore, as the noun *centro* in the next example – a headline of an article – indicates, it is not always possible to exactly trace the source of a common European lexeme. The use of the masculine noun suffix *-o* conforms with the general integration pattern for masculine nouns but the question for the exact source remains open: rom. *centr-o*, scr. *centar*, eng. *centre*, alb. *qendra*. Because the word is used in exactly the same form in other Romani varieties spoken in or by citizens of the former Yugoslavia, the source language of rom. *centro* is most probably Serbo-Croatian. But there are

25 For the concept of replication in contact linguistics see Matras (2009).

26 As most other integration morphemes this suffix is derived from (Byzantine) Greek. For details see Bakker (1997).

no real arguments to refuse the interpretation that English is the model language; an argumentation which, again, matches the current sociolinguistic situation of Romani in Kosovo.

| <i>Yekhipe</i> 11 (2006: 30) | <i>Yekhipe</i> 11 (2006: 31) | translation |
|---|--|---|
| <i>Phravgyola centro vash integripe e etnikune komunitetyengo</i> | <i>Hapet qendra per integrim e komuniteteve etnike</i> | Opening of the centre for the integration of ethnic communities |

Although based on an idiolectal approach with some special concepts for functional expansion into formal domains – e.g. the arbitrary use of integration patterns – "Prizren *Yekhipe* Romani" is not only an artificial, idiosyncratic language planning product but also reflects recent and on-going socio-political and socio-cultural changes in Kosovo. The avoidance of diacritics and the use of typical Albanian features in writing as well as English and Albanian as sources of new vocabulary reflect and symbolise changes in situation as well as in attitude. Avoiding linguistic features of the former dominant language and to base written Romani on the new dominant language(s) indicates both the will and demand to integrate as equal citizens. However, these symbolic functions most probably prevail over the communicative ones. It has to be doubted that these articles in Romani are used by a majority of Romani speakers in Prizren to inform themselves about news. If the journal is a source of information at all, the Albanian texts are much more in line with the communicative habits of the majority of readers. Apart from the fact that the majority of speakers is not used to written Romani the understanding of the texts is hampered by the writing system, which needs getting used to, and by the numerous items of new vocabulary the readers are unfamiliar with, but also by typos and grammatical mistakes. That is why value and effect of the journal are mainly or even only symbolic.

3.1. Strategies of Romani Expansion

Romani journals such as *Yekhipe* contain a mixture of formal and informal texts: formal political texts as well as formal literary texts – translations and original works such as poems and stories – and transcriptions of oral informal texts like fairy tales, stories and (auto)biographies.

As the average Romani reader is familiar with such texts these are more easily accessible; no new vocabulary, no complex grammar, and no unknown and unusual topics.

As there is no tradition of written Romani usage in print media, formal texts are – at least up to a certain point – experimental. The authors or editors always have to decide on form and function of new structural items; from lexemes and their graphical representation via morphosyntactic form and function to the syntactic level. As literary texts are mainly based on individual creativity, the further discussion of formal texts concentrates on political texts which are in most cases translations from the respective dominant language(s), or at least are based on such texts. On this background the production of formal political Romani texts can be described on the basis of their relation to the model texts. This relation ranges from code mapping to code creation. Code mapping is defined as the copying or, metaphorically expressed, "gluing" of Romani material on the structure of a given text of the dominant model language. Code creation is used for the transfer or rather transformation of the content of a text from the dominant language into written Romani. As in most texts produced in written Romani both strategies are used and these have to be seen as the two extreme points of a spectrum. To give an impression of both code mapping and code creation two texts of Austrian Romani journals have been chosen. In the case of the journal *Romano Centro*, published in Vienna, which is mainly based on Kalderaš Romani, code creation is predominant, whereas in the journal *dROMa*, which uses Burgenland Romani, mainly the code mapping strategy is used.

3.1.1 Code Mapping

The use of Burgenland Romani in the media is another example of the role of Romani in the context of an emancipation process on the regional or national level. This becomes obvious or rather is symbolised by the German-based writing system which was, among other things, chosen to avoid Slavic and Hungarian writing conventions.²⁷ Besides the lack of diacritics, a superficial analysis of the text presented below shows the main features of Burgenland Romani writing: The alveolar fricatives /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ are represented by a tri-graph <sch>²⁸ as for example in line 5, *brischind*, 'rain'. Consequently the corresponding affricates /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ are realised by

27 Hungarian and Croatian are the two other minority languages of Burgenland. For details about the graphisation of Burgenland Romani see Halwachs (1996).

28 There is only a single graphemic representation of both sounds because due to contact with the German varieties of Eastern Austria the opposition [± voiced] is neutralised in initial a final position.

the four letter graphs <tsch> and <dsch>: *dschal* '(s)he goes' in line 12; *fatschuvtscha* 'children'. Other contact related features are German-derived diphthongs in loans like /eɪ/ in *gejng* in lines 7 and 11 – *gejng* < dial.ger. /geɪnk/ = ger. *gegen* 'against'. The two German versions in the description of this example show another characteristic of Burgenland Romani codification. German-derived lexemes which have been integrated into oral Burgenland Romani and/or are elements of informal registers of German are integrated in their regional or dialectal form. Another example for this strategy is *fabot* 'ban' in line 3 with the High German equivalent *Verbot* which is realised as /fabot/ in both the regional and dialectal varieties of German. In comparison to that, lexical elements of formal registers are replicated according to their German standard form as for example *protestir-in-el* < ger. *protestier-en* 'to protest' in line 10 of the following text:²⁹

29 This differentiation in writing with respect to the registers of German reflects the sociolinguistic change Burgenland Romani has undergone as a consequence of the political self-organisation of its speakers. This change has triggered the expansion of Romani into formal domains which has been paralleled by an expansion of contact varieties from informal dialectal and regiolectal varieties of German to formal standard varieties.

| dROMa 29 (2011: 18) | dROMa 29 (2011: 10) | translation |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Austrija</p> <p>Schtacko: Kudulinipeskero fabot ar phendo</p> <p>Subota</p> <p>12.02.2011, 11.00</p> <p>oreng, o brischind del.</p> <p>Buteder sar 1000</p> <p>manuscha andi</p> <p>Gereciskeri Herrengasse</p> <p>hi, gejng o planimo</p> <p>kudulinipeskero fabot</p> <p>ando Schtacko te</p> <p>protestirinel. Taj te</p> <p>odola, gejng save o</p> <p>kudulinipeskero fabot</p> <p>dschal, o Roma andar i</p> <p>Slovakija, "pumare"</p> <p>raschaja ... ale.</p> | <p>Österreich</p> <p>Steiermark: Bettelverbot</p> <p>ausgesprochen</p> <p>Samstag,</p> <p>12.02.2011, 11 Uhr, bei</p> <p>Regen. Mehr als 1000</p> <p>Menschen bevölkern die</p> <p>Grazer Herrengasse, um</p> <p>gegen das geplante</p> <p>Bettelverbot in der</p> <p>Steiermark zu protestieren.</p> <p>Auch diejenigen, gegen die</p> <p>sich das Bettelverbot in</p> <p>erster Linie richtet, die</p> <p>Roma aus der Slowakei,</p> <p>sind mit ihrem Pfarrer ...</p> <p>gekommen.</p> | <p>Austria</p> <p>Styria: Decision</p> <p>on Begging Ban</p> <p>Saturday, 2 Feb</p> <p>2011, 11.00 o'clock, it is</p> <p>raining. More than 1000</p> <p>people are crowding the</p> <p>Herrengasse of Graz, to</p> <p>protest against the</p> <p>planned begging ban in</p> <p>Styria. Also those</p> <p>primarily targeted by</p> <p>this begging ban, the</p> <p>Roma from Slovakia,</p> <p>have come with "their"</p> <p>priest</p> |

The code mapping approach in the use of Burgenland Romani becomes obvious if sentences of the model text are presented in parallel with the accompanying translation:

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|--------|-----|--------|------------|----------|-------|---------|----------|---------|
| hr | me | | | Mens | bevölke | | | Grazer | Herreng |
| | ls | 000 | chen | rn | | ie | | asse | |
| eder | but | | | manu | | a | Gerecis | Herreng | i |
| | ar | 000 | scha | | nd-i | keri | asse | | |
| re | mo | | | peopl | are | | of Graz | Herrenga | |
| | han | 000 | e | | crowding | n | he | sse | re |
| m | egen | as | plante | Bettel- | erbot | n der | ermark | u | ieren |
| | | | pl | kudulinipe | f | | Sch | | protest |
| | ejng | | animo | skero | abot | ndo | tacko | e | irinel |
| or | gainst | he | anned | pl | begging | an | n the | Sty | protest |
| | | | | | | | ria | o | |

There are only two slots in the German model sentence which are not filled with their Romani equivalent. The German verb *bevölkern* which basically means 'to inhabit' but in this special metaphorical usage 'to fill something' cannot be replicated in Burgenland Romani: The German prefix *be-* as well as the verbal component {*völker*}, which is a "cranberry" morpheme that only occurs in combinations, have neither an appropriate counterpart nor is there any easily practicable operation to replicate such a verb in Romani. Therefore the author of the text reduced the Romani version to the verb *hi* 'to be (3PL)' and changed the syntactic value of the preceding noun phrase from an accusative in the function of a direct object to a prepositional phrase with local adverbial function. The second missing German morpheme *um* is part of the specific German infinitive construction and therefore obsolete for the replication of an infinitive in Romani. All the other Romani lexemes are isomorphic with their German counterparts.

This short example demonstrates that there are three hierarchical principles guiding the translation of German model texts into Burgenland Romani:

1. If Burgenland Romani lexemes are available they are used to fill the syntactic slots provided by the German model. Most of the corresponding lexemes in the preceding example are isomorphic.

2. If an adequate Burgenland Romani lexeme is missing, the German lexeme or rather its stem is replicated and integrated with the help of the necessary isomorphic grammatical morphemes of Burgenland Romani, as for example in the cases of *protestirinel* '(s)he protest' and *planimo*:

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| PPP-plan-PPP-NEUTER ³⁰ | GE-plan-T-E | 'planned' |
| plan-PPP-MASC | plan-IM-O | |

3. If operations 1 and 2 are not applicable because of "complexity restrictions" the German model is substituted in most cases by a simpler Romani construction; e.g. the substitution of *bevölkern*.

Code mapping as the main strategy of written text production for translations into Romani is a widespread phenomenon and generally characterises the use of written Romani in informal domains. To which degree this strategy is used depends on various factors. Besides individual preferences, the Romani competence of the author and the role of Romani in his or her speech group's repertoire plays a crucial role. Speakers of endangered Romani varieties like Burgenland Romani whose repertoire is dominated by the majority language are more prone to primarily use the code mapping strategy than speakers of vital varieties with Romani predominating in private domains. But this is only a tendency and by no means a rule.

The code mapping strategy is certainly not a special Romani feature. It is a general strategy which characterises the functional expansion process of many, if not of most languages of the world.³¹ The same applies for code creation, which is the other end or rather the antithesis to code mapping on this gradual scale of strategies.

30 As a rule, neuter gender of a model or source language is always replicated as masculine in Romani which has a two gender system, masculine and feminine.

31 In the European history of the first millennium literate monks started to map lexemes and grammatical morphemes of Celtic, Germanic, Slavic and other European languages on Latin and/or Greek models and triggered the development of those into today's European national standard languages.

3.1.2 Code Creation

Code creation is demonstrated in this chapter on the basis of analyses of an excerpt of an article published in volume 69 of *Romano Centro* which is the journal of a Viennese NGO of the same name. This organisation is one of the few NGOs in Europe that represent more than one group of Roma. It unites representatives of so called autochthonous groups with a traditional presence on Austrian territory as Lovara, Burgenland Roma as well as representatives of so called allochthonous groups or rather recent migrants, first of all Gurbet, Kalderaš and East Slovak Roma.³² As *Romano Centro* is not only a player on the national level but also very active on the international level it is easy to see that the internationally dominant Kalderaš Romani has been chosen as the primary variety used in the journal.³³ This is also reflected by the writing system which is fully in line with the international convention of using diacritics that has developed over the last decades and is also used in academia. Typical Kalderaš Romani features are the two graphemes <ê> and <î> for centralised vowels³⁴, the letter <ř> for /r/ – e.g. in *řomani šib* 'Roma language' – indicating the distinction between an uvular and an apical <ɾ> /r/ as in *bar* 'garden' opposed to *bař* 'stone' – as well as <ś>, <ź>, and <ć> representing the alveo-palatal fricatives /ç/, /z/ and the palatal fricative /ç/.

The article the following example is taken from summarises an interview with the mayor of Sâncel about the expulsion of Romanian Roma from France.³⁵

32 For the situation of Roma and Romani in Austria see Halwachs (2005).

33 The journal also regularly presents stories, fairy tales and poems in other Romani varieties.

34 These centralised vowels are Romanian or Walachian-derived; Kalderaš Romani is a Northern Vlax variety.

35 Sâncel is a municipality in Transylvania of approximately 2,800 inhabitants, approximately 10% of whom are Roma.

| <i>Romano Centro 69</i> (2011: 21) | <i>Romano Centro 69</i> (2011: 20) | Translation |
|---|--|---|
| <i>E pozicija kata l' Rumunur?</i> | <i>Die Haltung der RumänInnen?</i> | The position of Romanians? |
| <i>Butivar šaj šunel pe, kê la Rumunjakê gaže naj baxtale pa kodja, kaj e pačiv la Rumunjaki ando zapado, vorta anda l' Ŗom naj prja bari. O raj Frățilă malavel, kê kodja sî e generalno atmosfera ande Rumunija. E kvota le Ŗomen-gi pe sama kata antrego populacija ande Rumunija sî vuči.</i> | <i>Man hört oft, dass die Rumänen unzufrieden darüber seien, dass das Image, das "ihr" Rumä- nien im Westen hat, ihrer Roma-Landsleute wegen angeschlagen sei. Herr Frățilă bestätigt, dass dies der allgemeinen Stimmung in Rumänien entspricht. Rumänien habe nun einmal einen großen Bevölkerungsanteil von Roma/Romania.</i> | <p>It is often heard that Romanians are disgruntled with the fact that the image of "their" Romania in the West is weakened because of their Roma fellow countrymen. Mr Frățilă confirms that this is in accordance with public opinion in Romania. It is the case that Romania has a huge proportion of Roma among its population.</p> |

The creative aspect in the translation from the German model code into Kalderaš Romani becomes clear by the use of Romani concepts to reproduce German items with no lexical counterparts in Romani. For example the German word *Image* in line 4 – a replication of eng. *image* – is reproduced with the Romani concept of *pačiv* 'honour' which semantically also contains the meaning of the German lexeme in this context. Also the first phrase or sentence of the text *man hört oft* 'it is often heard' is in no case a word by word translation but an idiomatic reproduction. The corresponding Romani idiom *butivar šaj šunel pe* literally translates as 'many times can (it) hear itself'.³⁶ Another example is *e kvota le Romengi pe antrego populacija* in lines 9-11 which literally translates as 'the amount of Roma in the whole population' for the German compound *Bevölkerungsanteil* 'proportion of Roma among population'. Although the

³⁶ The particle *pe* is a reflexive pronoun which is used to form an analytic passive in Kalderaš Romani. As the verb *šunel* '(s)he hears' is functionally impersonal it is translated in its neuter form in English.

main translation strategy of this text has to be described as code creation there are also some cases of code mapping. The reproduction of the subordinate clause starting in line 7 *kê kodja ...* corresponds to the code mapping operation 3 described above:

| | | | | | | | | |
|------------|-------------|----------|-----------|---------------|----------------|------------|---------------|---------------|
| | | | | <i>allge</i> | <i>Stim</i> | | <i>Ru</i> | <i>ents</i> |
| <i>ass</i> | <i>as</i> | | <i>er</i> | <i>meinen</i> | <i>mung</i> | <i>n</i> | <i>mänien</i> | <i>pricht</i> |
| | | | | <i>gene</i> | <i>atm</i> | | <i>Ru</i> | |
| <i>ê</i> | <i>odja</i> | <i>î</i> | | <i>ralno</i> | <i>osfera</i> | <i>nde</i> | <i>munija</i> | |
| | | | | <i>gener</i> | <i>atm</i> | | <i>Ro</i> | <i>corre</i> |
| <i>hat</i> | <i>his</i> | <i>s</i> | <i>he</i> | <i>al</i> | <i>osphere</i> | <i>n</i> | <i>mania</i> | <i>sponds</i> |

In this Romani sentence the German model is substituted by a simpler construction because there is no Romani verbal concept which corresponds to the German verb *entsprechen*. The substitution with *sî* 'is' also changes the case of the noun phrase from dative in German to nominative in Romani. Another strategy which has already been discussed in this paper – the integration of items of the international lingua franca English, instead of the replication of items of the national language into Romani – can also be found in this text: The reproduction of ger. *allgemeine Stimmung* with the English-derived *generalno atmosfera*, 'general atmosphere', instead of replicating the German model code is fully in line with the international orientation of both the organisation and the journal *Romano Centro*.³⁷

3.2 Romani Media

The mixture of strategies outlined in the preceding chapter is typical of most of the written media production in Romani with the majority of products or rather texts being more on the code mapping end of the gradual scale than on the code creation side of it.

Although there are no daily or weekly newspapers,³⁸ Romani is well represented in print media. Journals are published in almost all European countries and beyond. The frequency of publication of these journals varies from bi-weekly via monthly or bi-monthly to quarterly or bi-

³⁷ The texts of the journal *Romano Centro* are part of the sample used in one of the sub-projects of ROMIDENT / *The Role of Language in the Transnational Formation of Romani Identity*; a project funded in the framework of HERA / *Humanities in the European Research Area*. The sub-project investigates inter alia the strategies used in expanding Romani into formal written domains.

³⁸ At least to the author's knowledge.

annually. The numbers of copies published average some hundreds. Some of the journals have a tradition of up to two decades of uninterrupted publication. Orientation and aims of these journals resemble the three examples presented in the previous chapters.

The use of Romani in electronic media does not significantly differ from its usage in print media. It is a mixture of formal and informal styles in the oral mode on the radio and television as well as in the oral and written modes on the internet.³⁹

Radio programmes in Romani on a regular basis started more than three decades ago in the former Yugoslavia and still are, compared to western European countries, more frequent in the countries of south-eastern Europe. Only there some regional and local radio stations broadcast their whole programme exclusively in Romani; e.g. *Radio Roma* broadcasting from Gostivar in Macedonia. In western Europe regular broadcasts in Romani on public radio are guaranteed at least by those countries that have ratified the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*. However, such broadcasts are mainly placed in side-lined stations or programmes as for example in Sweden: There is a daily 30-minute radio news programme in Kalderaš Romani but the broadcast takes place within the framework of international radio programmes and not as one of the national minority languages. Such broadcasts often are additionally presented on the internet. This is inter alia also the case for the weekly Romani radio broadcasts in Austria.⁴⁰ There is a growing tendency not only for Romani but also for the broadcasting in minority languages in general to use the internet. This becomes obvious with the growing number of internet Romani radio stations, e.g. *Radio Rota* which can be accessed via the website of the Czech based Roma NGO *Dženo*. A substantial part of the texts presented on this website were translated from Czech or Slovak into Roman. These translations show the same features as described above: The strategies used range from code creation to code mapping with the majority of cases corresponding to the latter strategy. Informal style of Romani use on the internet mainly happens in chat rooms. In this context a spontaneous application of mostly unguided individual strategies in both graphisation and modernisation of Romani happens.⁴¹

39 It would lead too far to demonstrate that the Romani use in electronic media structurally corresponds to its use in print media. Regarding Burgenland Romani the website of the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation ORF gives an impression of this phenomenon; see: <<http://volksgruppen.orf.at/romani/aktujeli/>>. Written texts as well as the written versions of oral news texts fully resemble the strategies demonstrated in chapter 3.1.1.

40 See in this context <<http://volksgruppen.orf.at/romani/aktujeli/>> for *Radio Kaktus* and <<http://sverigesradio.se/>> for *Radio Romano* in Sweden which could serve as another example to demonstrate that the Romani use in electronic media more or less follows the same structural rules as its use in print media.

41 This widely unresearched field of spontaneous use of written Romani is currently also under investigation in one of the sub-projects of ROMIDENT (see footnote 35).

Romani on TV is rather marginalised in most European countries. As with radio, only private local TV stations in south-eastern Europe are broadcasting mainly in Romani; e.g. *Šutel* in the municipality of *Šuto Orizari* in Skopje / Macedonia. Whereas programmes on public radio show a regularity ranging from daily via weekly news broadcasts to bi-weekly and monthly magazines, programmes on public TV, as a rule, do not offer a general news service but mainly weekly, bi-weekly or monthly magazines which frequently only use Romani in combination with the respective dominant language. In many countries of Western Europe there are no regular TV broadcasts in Romani offered or no usage of Romani on TV at all. In exceptional cases TV stations, whether private or public, produce documentaries using Romani together with the respective dominant language. An outstanding example in connection with this is *Mundi Romani – the World through Roma Eyes*, an award-winning documentary series co-produced by the Hungarian based *Romedia* foundation and *Duna TV*.⁴² The internet is increasingly becoming the primary medium for print media, radio and also for individual and NGO video production.

But, as mentioned initially, despite its usage in print, radio, TV and on the internet the impact of Romani media on most Romani speakers is insignificant, often negligible. Romani speakers are primarily exposed to mainstream media of the dominant languages.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Romani is a language in transition. It is developing from an exclusively oral language only used in informal domains of private and everyday life to an oral and written language with the whole range of registers. These cover the entire spectrum of communication from the private sphere via the informal public area of everyday life to formal language use in the media, administration, education, and other public formal domains

Although envisaged by the IRU to functionally expand Romani into formal domains by using the language planning patterns of modern European national languages, a general accepted standard remains a desideratum. This is first of all due to the lack of an authorised body with the necessary power that is needed for the imposition of any codified variety by law through education. Thus Romani language planning is intrinsically polycentric. Language planning approaches range from idiosyncratic activities based on the idiolects of influential speakers via the corpus-based codification of single dialects and dialect groups to national and regional

42 These broadcasts are also accessible on the internet: <<http://www.mundiromani.com/>>

attempts to create a common Romani variety and the international standardisation initiative of the IRU. However, all these attempts have at least three goals in common:

- improvement of status,
- expansion into formal domains,
- modernisation of Romani.

Furthermore, the political movement for emancipation – although currently more concentrated on the emancipation of Roma as equal citizens of the countries they live in – is becoming more and more international with the number of activists participating in this process permanently rising. This organisational expansion intensifies regular communication between speakers of diverse dialectal background. These speakers use their communicative experience and the appropriate resources of their plurilingual repertoires to reach the communicative goals in inter-group contacts. Among these resources individual as well as collective language planning products aiming for modernisation, among others also new vocabulary and new structures developed by editors, publishers and journalists of Romani media, play an important role in contributing to an on-going harmonisation process towards an international variety or "Inter-Romani".⁴³

Inter-Romani is by no means a standard but a pool of writing conventions, new vocabulary and grammatical structures for use in written as well as oral formal domains. The origin of new vocabulary is diverse. It ranges from the replication of lexemes originating from different national languages and international lingua francas, first of all English, via the semantic expansion of existing Romani lexemes by using them in new contexts to the creation of new lexical items on the basis of the derivational and compositional possibilities of Romani. In parallel new structural resources also range from code creation to code mapping. Inter-Romani is, at least currently, an unstable, permanently expanding resource of lexical and structural items. Almost as a rule, it offers more than one possibility for a lexical or structural item thus giving users the opportunity to choose between various options and pick the one appropriate for their dialect. Most probably Inter-Romani will not develop into a standard but it might turn into a

43 The concept of "Inter-Romani" was first introduced in Sept. 2008 by the author's presentation *The Sociolinguistics of "Inter-Romani"* at the 8th International Conference on Romani Linguistics in St. Petersburg.

relatively stable bundle of registers which offers Romani speakers a common resource for the use of their variety in formal domains without excluding speakers of other dialects.⁴⁴

Inter-Romani is a product of polycentric language planning based on linguistic pluralism. Matras (2005: 38) lists the following three principles of linguistic pluralism for written Romani which easily can be employed for both the oral and written use of Romani in formal domains:

- Regional pluralism: Different forms of formal Romani are used in different regions without making trans-national communication impossible.
- Contextual pluralism: Individual users of Romani are able and willing to choose between different forms of formal Romani in different contexts.
- Functional pluralism: Efficiency of communication is the only criterion for the choice of linguistic variants; of phonological forms, morphemes, lexemes and their spelling as well as of syntactic structures and pragmatic patterns.

Linguistic pluralism in the use of Romani in formal domains results not only from polycentric language planning but is first of all rooted in the communicative flexibility and adaptability of Romani speakers. Multilingualism as inter-lingual flexibility always has been the tool to easily adapt to varying communicative contexts with mostly monolingual *Gadže* 'Non-Roma' of different linguistic background. Intra-lingual adaptability is the primary communicative strategy in contacts with speakers of different Romani varieties. In such contacts Roma are used to accepting linguistic forms that differ from those of their own variety and are able to avoid loanwords from languages their interlocutors are not familiar with. Thus the principles of linguistic pluralism in Romani are rooted in the communicative behaviour of Romani speakers in informal inter-group contacts. Furthermore, linguistic pluralism reflects the main common social feature of the Roma, socio-cultural plurality. Consequently Inter-Romani as a harmonisation product in the context of linguistic pluralism is based on the communicative behaviour of Romani speakers and also rooted in socio-cultural plurality. Therefore, the development of Inter-Romani most probably demonstrates how a dominated language like Romani is adequately and "naturally" expanding into formal domains, improving its status, and undergoing modernisation.

44 A first tentative description of written Inter-Romani is planned in one of the part projects of the ROMIDENT project mentioned in footnote 35.

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