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Education in Romani and Romani teaching

In memoriam Marcel Courthiade († 04 March 2021) and Arben Kosturi († 15 March 2021)

Abstract

Romani is a transnational dominated language spoken by a people who is a minority everywhere. Romani has many forms and different dialectal groups and was not written until the 20th century. It still has no single codified written form nor generally accepted standard variety. Teaching Romani is a challenge, 1) because Roma have less access to education than non-Roma people, for socio-economic reasons, 2) because Romani is rarely a subject of education and almost never a language of instruction (an inclusive approach to language acquisition is almost nowhere implemented), and 3) because teacher training curricula, qualified teachers and sufficiently adapted teaching material are lacking in many schools. However, it is being taught in some European schools. In these cases, specific questions arise: how is it possible to teach a language with such a wide dialectal variety, what dialect(s) to choose and how to make this choice? Three different strategies are being implemented: teaching one dialect, teaching one group of dialects, and (trying to) teach all dialects, according to the qualification of the teacher, the profile of the audience, their level in Romani, their Romani variety, their literacy, and their age.

Keywords: Romani language, dialectology, education policy, language planning, standardisation.

1) Introduction

Romani is an international language spoken in several dozen countries. It is the language of a minority people without a compact territory, without a state and a common educational policy. We know that Romani has several forms and different groups of dialects. Regarding instruction, several questions arise: how is it possible to teach a language with such a wide variation? Teaching Romani is a challenge because the educational systems are designed for the majority languages, which are often the state languages, rather than for dominated, minority languages. The European (usually monolingual) state school systems are faced with the diversity of Romani in terms of dialects and multilingualism (Halwachs 2012a). Should Romani be a language of instruction or a language of study? What dialects to teach, and how to make this choice? How to take the learners' skills into account? How to implement this from a didactic point of view? In this paper I present Romani and its dialects and give a bird's eye view of its codification. Then I take stock of the education of Roma and the teaching of Romani. Finally, three pedagogical strategies can be distinguished: the single-dialect strategy, the dialect-group strategy, and the multidialectal strategy.

2) Romani language and codification

Probably more than twelve million Roma live in Europe nowadays (between 6.6 and 12 million at the end of the 1990's, according to Bakker 2001) – a number that may rise to circa 20 million when Turkey is included. About half of them (6.6 million people in the 1990's) speak Romani at home as first or second language, a proportion that is heterogenous across countries: 95% in Albania and Belarus, 90% in Poland and Serbia, and 60% to 80% in Slovakia. They know at least one other language, if not several: the language of the neighbourhood, that of school and television, that of their parents' country of origin... Thus, there is no monolingual speaker of Romani, which is a language permanently in contact (Matras 2002). For instance, in Slovakia, Romani is the first home language for two thirds of Roma, Slovak for 18%, Hungarian for 14%. More than 90% of Roma speak more than one language at home (Gažovičová 2015).

Romani is a minority dominated language, i.e., its speakers mainly use another language in formal situations and restrict their use of Romani to private and everyday life, while the dominant language is used in the public domain – so that their repertoire is functionally distributed. Consequently, the dominant language has a wider range of style and vocabulary than the dominated, functionally restricted language (Halwachs 2020): it is a situation of diglossia.

Romani is a diasporic language, both international (it is spoken in many countries around the world) and transnational (as the families maintain strong ties, their dialects are maintained even when the members of the community have migrated abroad and reside in different countries, speaking different contact languages). As Roma are non-territorial, unlike other diasporic people and minorities such as the Kurds, it is not spoken in a single region, state or a limited number of states that could recognise or patronise them: there is therefore no common Romani school, no common education policy; in most countries, there are no Romani schools at all. It makes it also difficult to establish the means to implement a language standardisation and a commonly accepted orthographic codification. Such a codification would have several benefits, according to Matras (1999): making written communication more efficient (communicative function), eliciting emotional identification by the reader with aesthetic symbolism (emblematic function), and demonstrating ideological commitment, political allegiance and identification (mobilising-rallying function). The goals of both codification and standardisation of Romani would be an increased literacy, the development of a better functional literary style for both national and international communication, and the formalisation as a national minority language, helping language acquisition through education and, in the end, language maintenance (Halwachs 2020). Indeed, according to Rizova *et al.* (2020), education, translation, publishing, diplomatic communication, trade and journalism are only possible when a written language exists.

Actually, different language codifications have been adopted in several countries, as and when attempts have been made to introduce Romani into institutional contexts such as school, publishing houses and media.

- The **USSR**, is the first country to have codified Romani during the 1920's and 1930's, on the basis of the Ruska Roma (Moskvan) dialect¹ and the Russian Cyrillic alphabet, resulting in a decree about a "Gypsy alphabet" in 1927 (Marushiakova & Popov 2017; Kalinin 2005a). Prominent figures were Nikolai Pankov, Nina Dudarova and the scholars Maksim Sergievskiy, Tatiana Vencel. The first Romani written literature was

¹ The Ruska Roma was the most numerous group at that time, from which the majority of the Roma intelligentsia and activists came. But there were other dialects on the Sovietic territory: Servi and Vlaxi in Ukraine, Krimurya, Kelderari and Lovari, small communities of Sinti, Kishiniovtsi, Plashchuni, and also non-Roma "Gypsy" groups of Dayfa, Dom, Lom and Mughat (Marushiakova & Popov 2017).

then published in a massive way with hundreds of books (poetry, novels, theatre, comics, periodicals) by Aleksandar Germano, Maksim Bezlyudsko, Olga Pankova, Ivan Rom-Lebedev, Evdokiya Orlova, Mariya Polyakova, Aleksei Svetlovo, Ivan Khrustalyov, Ilynsko, Georgiy Lebedev a.o. Classics of Pushkin, Tolstoy, Merimée or Gorky were translated into Romani. Grammars (Sergievskiy 1931) and dictionaries (Sergievskiy and Barannikov 1938) were edited, as well as teaching aids and educational language textbooks in various disciplines, such as literature, mathematics, geography, natural and social sciences, designed for the teaching of Roma children and promoting Romani literacy by illiterate Roma adults (Matras 2005a; Marushiakova & Popov 2017). The first-ever published education book in Romani is *Nevo drom. Bukvoryo vash bare manushenge* by Nina Dudarova and Nikolai Pankov in 1928. The total number of books issued in Romani language between 1931 and 1938 was around 250. During these years, several hundred of books and periodicals were issued, especially the journals *Romani Zoria* and *Nevo Drom*. "Gypsy" departments were founded in the publishing houses Centrizdat ("the Central Publishing House"), Selkolkhozgiz, Molodaya Gvardia, GIHLO ("State Publishing House for Fiction") and Uchpedgiz; in 1936, eight publishing houses had published books in Romani language (Marushiakova & Popov 2017; Kalinin 2005a). Topics of the publications were soviet and historical propaganda about socio-politics, kolkhozes, agriculture, factory work and other occupations, but also popular science, practical problems in the family daily life, folklore and fiction.

- The **International Romani Union** (IRU) created a "standard" or "common" alphabet at its fourth congress in Warsaw in 1991. It was first presented at a conference in Sarajevo in 1986 (Courthiade 1989b), after Courthiade's (1984/1986) first attempt to formulate a transdialectal orthography as a basis of literary and functional communication – see *infra*. It has since been used in international communication of some Roma political activists with a "mobilising-rallying", symbolic and ideological function (Matras 1999; Halwachs 2011; Halwachs 2020). It has been implemented in the educational system in **Romania** and its extensive teaching material produced since the 1990's under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education (handbooks, dictionaries, media, see *infra*), in a textbook in **Spain** (Gonzalez & Ortega 2011), and at two universities in Romania (Bucharest) and **France** (Inalco, Paris), where educational material (grammars, story books) as well as dictionaries (Courthiade 2009a; Sarău 1998; Sarău 2000; Sarău 2012, etc.) have been produced.² Children books (Hill 1994a; 1994b; 1995) and literature (e.g. Krasnići 1995a; 1995b; 2000; 2001; 2004) have also been issued.
- **Macedonia** created its own standard orthography in 1992 after a harmonisation process involving several varieties (Friedman 1995; 1999; 2005), mainly Arli, with elements from other dialects such as Džambaz, Bugurdži, Gurbet, and using Latin alphabet. The movement for standardisation has begun during the 1970's with Šaip Jusuf's publications and Jusuf's and Kepeski's grammar in 1980 (Bajrami 2010). Since the 1990's, the alphabet is implemented mainly in newspapers and literature; it has communicative functions in public life (Halwachs 2020; Bajrami 2010), and in administration after 1994 (Friedman 1999): Romani is very much in use in the public domain (Bajrami 2010). It has been taught as an elective course in some elementary schools (Petroska-Beška *et al.* 2007; Bajrami 2010; Rizova *et al.* 2020) from 1994 onwards, e.g. in three elementary school in Tetovo (Bajrami 2010), where 120 out of 350 Roma pupils used to study Romani language in Tetovo in 2010. Textbooks for elementary schools and a dictionary have

² At its first founding congress in 1971, the IRU had indeed expressed the wish that all Roma children should receive education about their culture and in the Romani language, and that Roma teachers should be trained and appointed (Marushiakova & Popov 2017).

been produced, like Jusuf (1996), Petrovski & Veličkovski (1998), or Sefgju (2006). The Government made an attempt to implement Romani courses in more schools, planning material and tasks for development of the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills (Rizova *et al.* 2020) – although there is no unification of the course and grammar books, that have not been verified by the Ministry of Education and Science (Rizova *et al.* 2020). But more textbooks and teachers are said to be lacking.

- In the 1970's, a group of **Finnish** linguists designed a writing system for Finnish-Romani Kaalo, the variety of the first Roma immigrants to Finland which was in danger of becoming extinct, and used it for several educational textbooks (Koivisto 1982; Koivisto 1987; Vuolasranta 1995), dictionaries (Koivisto 1994), and information material since the 1980's (Matras 2005a). As Finnish Romani is heavily influenced by Finnish from a phonological point of view (because the Finnish Roma have long been isolated from other, non-Scandinavian Roma groups), there is considerable overlap between both sound systems of the two languages: therefore, the Romani spelling system is close to that of Finnish (Bakker & Daval-Markussen 2013). Kaalo is a constitutionally recognised minority language: the government assists in the publication of dictionaries, educational material, songbooks, etc. (Bakker & Daval-Markussen 2013).
- An artificial, reconstructed form of Standard Romani has been created in **Spain** in the 1990's, called Romanó-Kaló, consisting of a mixture of dialects and Romani lexical roots with Caló word insertions, adapted to Spanish orthography and partially to Spanish grammatical rules. It is mainly used in written form in periodicals and texts with symbolic, more than communicative value (Zătreanu & Halwachs 2003; Matras 2005b). A phrasebook has been edited by Ramírez-Heredia (2001).
- **Austrian** Burgenland created a project called "Codification and Didactisation of Roman"³ between 1993 and 2000, at the initiative of Emmerich Gärtner-Horvath. It was supported by the authorities and focused primarily on the integration of the language into the educational system. The project resulted in a consistent writing system developed especially for this variety (based on German, the dominant language) following the wishes of the community, a grammar and a dictionary (Halwachs 2011; Halwachs 2012a; Halwachs 2020). The written system has been successfully implemented in teaching materials (Halwachs *et al.* 1996; Glaeser *et al.* 1998), a grammar (Halwachs 1998), dictionaries, comic books, story books (Halwachs *et al.* 2000), computer games, periodicals for adults and children (Zătreanu & Halwachs 2003).
- From 2003 onwards, **Slovenia** has financed a project aimed at standardising the two main variants of Romani spoken in the Dolenjska and Prekmurje regions (Amnesty International 2006), that was completed in 2006 (Bešter & Medvešek 2007). The project led to the creation of dictionaries and grammar books (Cech 2006; Baranja 2013) (Amnesty International 2006). In these regions, some teachers and workers employed in education have been educated with the topic of Roma language and culture in 2002-2003 (Bešter & Medvešek 2007). The introduction of an optional subject Roma culture and language into elementary schools, in close consultation with Romani communities and organizations, has been proposed, as well as the further developing of textbooks and other teaching materials.
- **Slovakia** uses a standard codification completed in 2008 for East Slovak Romani (Hübschmannová 1995; Hübschmannová & Neustupný 2009), a writing system based on Czech and Slovak spelling system and the literary codification of Romani initiated in the late 1960's in Czechoslovakia (Halwachs 2020).

3 *Roman* is the name of the Romani variety spoken by the Burgenland Roma (Halwachs 2011).

- During the 2000's, Selahetin Kruezi, a Kosovan activist living in Denmark issued a grammar aiming at standardising Romani (Kruezi s. d.), using the Albanian spelling convention and the Kosovan Arli variety, native to the author, but avoiding obvious dialectal traits (Bakker & Daval-Markussen 2013). The spelling system is based on that of Albanian and, according to the author, it has been developed and approved at a meeting in Prizren, aiming at being broadly accessible at European and international levels and "maximally intelligible for as many people as possible" (Kruezi, quoted by Bakker & Daval-Markussen 2013: 19-20). Indeed, the Latin alphabet is used, with only 25 letters, without any diacritics so that it can be typed on any keyboard. This standardised variant has been implemented in a theatre play (Kruezi 2009) and a few Danish school-books (Kruezi 2003a; Kruezi 2003b) used in schools in **Kosovo**.

As we can see, different countries use different versions of the Latin or Cyrillic alphabets to transcribe and codify Romani. Both alphabets can be used in one and the same country: Malikov (1992) uses Bulgarian Cyrillic to write his Romani-Bulgarian dictionary, while Kyuchukov *et al.* (1993; 1995) use English Latin to write their alphabet book. However, a consensus emerged during the 1990's to use Latin alphabet as the most internationally accessible (Friedman 1999; Bakker & Daval-Markussen 2013). In no countries where Latin alphabet is used, Romani has been written with Cyrillic or Greek alphabets, whereas the opposite has happened.

The spelling convention also depends on whether the writer chooses to use that of their majority language (modified or not), or to use one of the international Romani spellings. In the first case, the adaptation to the Romani sound system actually depends on the writer's awareness and analytical knowledge about Romani – which, in turn, depends on whether they have been educated about Romani language. For instance, most Romani variants has distinctive phonemes that are present only in some European languages (/x/ ~ /h/, /r/ ~ /r/), or even absent from European languages (/p/ ~ /ph/, /k/ ~ /kh/, /t/ ~ /th/, /tj/ ~ /tjh/, /r/ ~ /r/). Roma authors who know, or have been schooled, only with one majority writing convention, may not be aware of such distinctions and neglect them, or not be consistent, when writing Romani. Bakker & Daval-Markussen (2013) observe that the choice also depends on the author's awareness of the nature and extension of their variety: if the variety is strictly local or regional, the tendency is to use the orthography of the local majority language (Kaalo in Finland, Roman in Burgenland), while if the variety is more widely used, or if its community recently migrated abroad, the tendency is to opt for a more international system (e.g. Arli in Denmark and Kosovo, Lovari in Sweden and Austria). Indeed, the author is more likely to be aware about different writings systems of other languages.

Halwachs (2020) distinguishes three levels of language policy and planning resulting in language codification: the international level (all Romani-speaking groups: for example, the International Romani Union), the regional level (the Roma communities of a country or a group of countries: the Soviet, Romanian, Macedonian, Slovakian and Kosovan examples) and the local level (the communities of a particular town, group or region: the Finnish and the Burgenland examples). We may add the individual level, as several individual attempts have been made for a standard based on particular dialects. For example, Kochanowski (1989; 1994; 1995) proposed his own native (Baltic) dialect as a standard, Hancock (1993) proposed his own native (North American adapted Vlax) dialect. Those attempts were not followed up.

Objections are raised against the use of a codified spelling. According to Gažovičová (2015), some experts are sceptical about teaching Romani in Slovakian schools because many children are said not to sufficiently understand codified Romani, which would be like a foreign language to them. The same objections are provided against the alphabet created by the IRU, criticised as artificial even by some local Roma activists and teachers. Some pupils and parents are said not be able to identify with the standard variety, finding it too different and

distant, or even alien, from their own variety, and to consider as useless for the future life of the pupils as it has almost no functions in everyday life, outside the classrooms (Halwachs 2011; Halwachs 2020). Furthermore, the Romanian centralist approach would marginalise local speech communities: consequently, some Roma parents oppose Romani teaching and perceive it as forced imposition (Halwachs *et al.* 2013; Halwachs 2020)⁴.

Therefore, a language planning and policy aiming at creating a single standard variety is unlikely to achieve success for several reasons (Halwachs 2020). No institutional body is currently allowed, responsible, accepted, and strong enough to create and implement a unique codification writing system or a literary standard. Romani literary language exists, but as a plural, not as a single and universal literary language: both education and media are expressed in different ways. As demonstrated by Hübschmannová (2009), a Romani standard language can only be decentralised and polycentric, mixed, selectively elaborated, not binding for participants, a property of all and not only the elites. It means that various codification models can coexist as legitimate in their own contexts. This process is very different from the traditional monocentric standardisation process, where the standard language usually results from the institutionalisation of one dialect, generally the variety spoken by the author(s) and grammarian(s) who elaborate it. This traditional pattern is based on criteria of homogeneity, uniformity and exclusivity. According to Halwachs *et al.* (2013), such a conception is based on formalistic notions of writing, with a prescriptive grammar that is appropriate for the educated high and middle-classes, but that absolutely do not correspond to the sociolinguistic situation of minority languages such as the diverse, plural and flexible Romani, whose speakers are always plurilingual. Besides, Romani societies traditionally lack a rigid hierarchical social structure, a dominant class and a dominant form of speech, unlike the majority societies (Matras 2005b). Its speech communities are sociolinguistically different, so the language planning cannot possibly be uniform, but must be plural on all linguistic levels (phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon, pragmatics) so that most speakers can identify with the codified variety (Halwachs 2011).

Romani literacy is characterised by pluralism in terms of dialect and writing system (Matras 2005b). Linguistic pluralism is rooted in three principles which can be employed for the use of formal written, but also spoken Romani (Matras 2005a):

- **regional** pluralism: different forms of Romani are used in different regions without impeding mutual transnational comprehensibility.
- **contextual** pluralism: individual users can choose to use different forms and codification systems according to the different contexts (educational system, periodicals, imported literature, web sites, informal internet communication...).
- **functional** pluralism: efficiency of communication and transfer of information are the only criterion for the choice of linguistic variants, may it be phonological forms, morphemes, lexemes, syntactic structures, pragmatic patterns and spelling system.

Romani speakers in inter-group contact agree to hear, read, and sometimes to say and write, forms that are not their own; in short, to accommodate their interlocutor and the context. They also agree to avoid loanwords from languages their interlocutors are not familiar with, and to use paraphrases or well-known internationalisms

⁴ However, these authors also consider the use of an international standard as a reasonable decision, given the heterogeneity of Romani in Romania and the ongoing language loss in several communities, resulting in many children learning Romani as a second language (Halwachs *et al.* 2013; Halwachs 2020).

instead (Matras 2005a; Halwachs *et al.* 2013). Flexibility and adaptability is thus a feature of Romani communication patterns and behaviour. We can say that linguistic pluralism reflects a common social feature of the Roma, sociocultural plurality (Halwachs *et al.* 2013).

3) Romani dialects

Romani is an Indo-European language, of the Indo-Iranian branch and the Indian group. For historical reasons, it has been heavily influenced by Greek, particularly in its morphology and syntax, but also its lexicon. Romani has a wide variety of dialects, which does not impede mutual understanding between speakers.

Dialects mainly differ from a phonological and lexical point of view. Taking the example of Macedonia, *buti* 'work' can be pronounced *buti*, *buci*, *buki* or *buči* depending on the treatment of the dental occlusives before a stressed anterior vowel (Friedman 1999). There are important differences in vocabulary: for instance, the inherited word for 'pear' is *ambrol*, which can be pronounced *broi*, *ambrul*, *amrul*, etc. but *kruška*, *fruška*, *gruša*, have also been borrowed from Slavic languages. 'Marriage' is *bijav* and its variants *bjav*, *bjau*, *bijap*, *bijab*, *bivav*, or the derived *bijaviben*, *biiben* with the Romani abstract suffix *-iben*, but also *abjav*, *abijav*, *abav*, *ebev* with a prothetic vowel, or *poroka*, *nunta*, *ženiba*, *krênciben*, *svatuŕa*, *hoxcajta*, *sojharipe*, *sohajaribe*, borrowed from various contact languages, with or without the abstract suffixes *-iba*, *iiben*, *-ibe*, *-ipe*⁵.

Sometimes the lexical differences are due to phonological differences, e.g. 'love' can be *kamlipen* (verbal root *kaml-* or *kam-*, suffix *-ipen*), with variants *kamlipe*, *kamipe*, *kamepe*, *kamipo*, *kamiben*, *kamibe*, *kamliba* (where /i/ > /e/, /p/ > /b/, /e/ > /o/)... Sometimes they are due to a combination of phonological and morphological factors, when the suffix of Indian origin *-ipen* was replaced with the suffix of Greek origin *-imos* (*kamlimos*, *kamimo*). Sometimes they are due to lexical factors: *serelmo*, *dexipe*, *jubiŕa* 'love' (suppletion by lexemes borrowed from contact languages). The old word for 'glass', *taxtaj*, has disappeared in most dialects, giving way to the borrowings *pohari/paxaros* (Romanian *pahar*, from Hungarian *pohár*), *glazo*, *glasos* (German *Glas*), *čaša* (pan-South-Slavic *čaša*), *šklanka* (Polish *szklanka*), *bardako* (Turkish *bardak*), *puturi* (Greek *ποτήρι potiri*), *kupica* (Serbo-Croatian *kupica*). The old word for 'cat', *cicaj/cicajni/cicni* has given way to the borrowings *mačka* (Serbo-Croatian, Macedonian, Slovene and Slovak *mačka*, Hungarian *macska*), *muca/mica* (dialectal Romanian *mîță*), *kotka* (Western Slavic and Bulgarian *kotka*), *pisika* (Romanian *pisică*), etc.

Table 1 gives an example of the phonological, morphological and lexical variation in four varieties from Macedonia – a dialectally very rich country.

Table 1: Examples of Romani dialectal differences in Macedonia (Friedman 1999: 330)

Burgudži	<i>buci</i>	<i>maro</i>	<i>pani</i>	<i>dijom</i>	<i>kidjal</i>	<i>devlesa</i>	<i>on, ol</i>	<i>o, i, o, e</i>
Arlı	<i>buti</i>	<i>maro</i>	<i>pani</i>	<i>dindjum</i>	<i>agjar</i>	<i>devlea</i>	<i>on, ola</i>	<i>o, i, o, e</i>
Džambaz	<i>buki</i>	<i>manro</i>	<i>paj</i>	<i>dijem</i>	<i>gėja</i>	<i>devlesa</i>	<i>von</i>	<i>o, i, e, e</i>
Gurbet	<i>buči</i>	<i>mamo</i>	<i>paj</i>	<i>dijem</i>	<i>gaja</i>	<i>devleha</i>	<i>von</i>	<i>o, e, e, e</i>
gloss	work	bread	water	I gave	thus	with God	they	the: M.SG, F.SG, PL, OBL

⁵ These examples and the followings come from ROMLEX, the online multilingual dictionary of the Romani lexicon, where twenty-seven Romani dialects are accessible with seventeen translation languages.

- 1) Many philologists and linguists have tried to find the most accurate classification of Romani dialects – actually, a classification of groups of dialects, i.e. sets of linguistic varieties that have isoglosses in common, rather than a classification of dialects strictly speaking, the exact number of which is unknown. Miklosich studied the question as early as 1873 and concluded that there were thirteen groups of dialects. Kaufman (1979) spoke of seven groups with twenty subgroups, Vencel' and Čerenkov (1976) spoke of eight groups, Courthiade (1991; 1998; 2003) of four groups, Boretzky and Igla (2004) of seven groups, Boretzky (2007) of six groups, Matras (2002; 2005c; 2010) of five groups, Elšik and Beníšek (2020) of twelve groups...

Table 2 gives a synopsis of the clusters that have been identified by these authors.

- 1) According to Boretzky and Igla (2004), Matras (2002; 2010), Elšik and Beníšek (2020), the dialects of the **Central** group are characterized by a future tense with suffix *-a*; 2SG copula and perfect ending *-al* as in *sal/hal* 'you are'; 3SG copula *hin* 'he/she is' whereby initial /s/ > /h/; third person pronouns *jov* 'he', *joj* 'she', *jon* 'they' with prothetic yod (in the North); loan-verb adaptation marker *-in-* (*šegitinel/pomošinel* 'he/she helps', *volinel* 'he/she votes'), instrumental suffix *-ha* (*leha* 'with him'); modal verb of need *kampel* or *pekal*; loss of final *-s* (*vas(t)* > *va* 'hand', *dives* > *dive* 'day'). Lexical phonological stress can be penultimate: *o bargo šavo* 'the big boy'.
- 2) The dialects of the **Northeastern** group have a characteristic prothetic yod: *javer* 'other', *javel* 'he/she comes' and third person pronouns *jov* 'he', *joj* 'she', *jon/jone* 'they'. Aspirated occlusives /ph/ > /px/ or /pɸ/ (*phral* > *pxral/pšal* 'brother'); /a, e/ > /i/ (*sar* > *syr* 'how', *vaver* > *vavyr* 'other', *dureder* > *duredyr* 'further'); loan-verb adaptation marker *-in-* (*pomožinel/posobinél* 'he/she helps'). The vocabulary contains many Eastern Slavic (Russian, Belarussian), Western Slavic (Polish) and German borrowings.
- 3) The dialects of the **Vlax** group are characterized by the plural suffix *-uri* (variants *ura*, *ora*) borrowed from Romanian; the presence of the verbal negation *či* instead of *na/ni*; the third person pronouns with prothetic /v/ (*vov* 'he', *voj* 'she', *von* 'they'); the palatalisation of the 1SG perfect suffix and the 1SG copula ending /om/ > /em/ (and its phonetic variants); the palatalisation of final nasals (*pani* > *panji* > *paji* > *paj* 'water'); the palatalisation of /d, t/ > /dʒ, tʃ/ (*dives* > *džives* 'day', *buti* > *buči* 'work'); the shift /aj/ > /ej/ (*daj* > *dej* 'mother'); the loan-verb adaptation marker *-isar/-osar-* (*ažutisarel/pomožisarel* 'he/she helps', *alosalarel/glasisarel* 'he/she votes'); the massive presence of vocabulary borrowed from Romanian.
- 4) The dialects of the **Balkan** group are characterised by the future tense with the auxiliary *ka/kam* derived from *kamel* 'he/she wants'; the use of the past participle instead of the perfect tense in the 3SG for verbs of movement and change of state (*gelo/geli* instead of *gelas* 'he/she went', *avilo/avili* instead of *avilas* 'he/she came'); the existence of shortened possessives (*mo* 'my.M', *ti* 'your.F'); the abstract suffix /ipɛv/ > /ipe/; the loan-verb adaptation marker *-in/-on-* (*pomožinel* 'he/she helps', *votinel/glasinel* 'he/she votes'). The subgroup of the *zis*-dialects is characterised by the shift of /d, g/ > /z/ (*zi* > *gi* 'soul'), and /t, k/ > /c/ (*buci* > *buti* 'work').
- 5) The **Northwestern** dialects are characterized by copula forms *hum* 'I am', *hal* 'you are', *hi* 'he/she is' whereby initial /s/ > /h/; the third person pronouns *jov/job* 'he', *joj* 'she', *jon* 'they'; the 2SG perfect ending and copula *-al* as in *sal/hal* 'you are'; the instrumental suffix *-ha* (*leha* 'with him'); the deaspiration of /tʃ/ > /tʃ̣/; the apheresis of initial /a/ (*asva* > *sva* 'teardrop', *avel* > *vel* 'he/she comes'); many degenitival nouns (*grajengro* 'horse dealer'); the loan-verb adaptation marker *-av-* and *-ar-* (*helferel* 'he/she helps'); a massive presence of German vocabulary.

Table 2: Overview of the dialect classifications

Author	Miklosich	Vencel* and Čerenkov	Kaufman	Boretzky, Igla	Matras	Elsik and Benšek	Courthiede
Number of groups	13	8	7 [20]	7	5	12	4
	Greek	Bulgarian Erli + Macedonian + Serbian Romani + Romanian-Moldovan Ursari + Crimean + Bulgarian Drindari Italian Erli, Hungarian	Greek (European Turkey) Balkan: Black Sea, Paspatian, Ironworker, Timmer, zis)	South Balkan (Balkan) Vlax: South North Balkan (Balkan zis)	Balkan (Vlax)	South Balkan (Vlax) North Balkan	stratum 1, stratum 2
	Romanian	Kalderari + Lovari + Yugoslavian Gurbet		Vlax: North	Vlax	Vlax	stratum 3
	Hungarian	Slovakian and Hungarian	Vlax: Ukrainian, Central, Lovari, Southern, Southwestern			Transylvanian	stratum 1; stratum 3
	Bohemian and Moravian			South Central North Central	Central Europe	South Central Europe North Central Europe	
Groups of dialects	German	Ukrainian		Ukrainian			
	Polish and Lithuanian	Northern USSR and Polish		Northern / Northwestern Europe	Northwestern Europe	Northwestern Europe	stratum 1
	Russian		Northern: Central Carpathian,	Northeastern Europe	Northeastern Europe	Northeastern Europe	
	Finnish	Finnish	Sinto, British, Baltic, Nordic Scandinavian		Para-Romani: Finnish Kaalo		
	Scandinavian						
	English and Scottish	Welsh			Para-Romani: Angloromani	Para-Romani: Angloromani	
	South Italian					Italian Apennine	
	Basque		Iberian		Para-Romani: Iberian Caló	Iberian	Para-Romani: Iberian Caló
	Spanish		Zargari (Persian and Azerbaijani)				stratum 1
			Egyptian Ghagari				

Courthiade's theory (1991; 1998; 2003) distinguishes two major supergroups of dialects, depending on whether they are non-Vlax or Vlax, respectively called supergroup O and E. The characteristics of supergroup O are the presence of a vowel /o, u/ in the 1SG copula *som* 'I am' (and variants *sinom/sjum/hom...*) and in the 1SG affix of the perfect tense (*phendom/phendum...* 'I said'). The plural definite article is *o*, identical to the singular masculine definite article; the feminine is *i*. The vowel of the words 'mother' and 'daughter' is not palatalised (*daj, čhaj*), nor is the coda of words like 'sister' or 'water' (*phen, pani*). The abstract suffix is *-ipen/-ipe* (variants *-iben/-ibe/-iba/-ibo*).

The characteristics of supergroup E are the presence of a vowel /e, i, ĩ, ə/ in the 1SG copula *sem* 'I am' (and variants *sim/səm...*) and in the 1SG affix of the perfect tense (*phendem/phendəm...* 'I said'). The plural definite article is *e* (or *le, ĩl...*), so it is different from the form of the masculine definite article; the feminine is *e*. The vowel of the words 'mother' and 'daughter' is palatalised (*dej, čhej*), as is the coda like 'sister' or 'water' (*phej, pajji/paj*). The abstract suffix is *-imos/-imo*. These two groups may be affected by a consonantal mutation: the palatal affricates /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ can be simplified into alveolar fricatives /s/ and /z/ or palatal /j/ and /ʒ/: *čhib* > *šib/šib* 'tongue', *džanel* > *žanel/žanel* 'he/she knows'.

The O super-dialect without mutation is called *stratum 1* and represent the majority of the dialects (Balkan–Carpathian–Baltic dialects, Western Europe), the O super-dialect with mutation *stratum 1'* (a tiny minority of dialects, located in Central Europe), the E super-dialect without mutation *stratum 2* (a minority of E dialects located in the Balkan: the South Vlax dialects Gurbet–Čergar), the E super-dialect with mutation *stratum 3* (the majority of E dialects, actually the North Vlax dialects Kalderaš–Lovari).

4) Education of Roma children

Most Roma pupils and students suffer from poverty⁶, isolation⁷ or even segregation⁸ that represent obstacles to their school education, as well as from the underrepresentation of Roma in educational institutions, early marriages and births, illiteracy⁹ and lack of educational awareness for many parents (Kirilova & Repaire 2003). The average Roma live in much poorer conditions than the average majority people, so that poverty (and the stereotypes that go hand in hand with it: dirtiness, laziness, backwardness, etc.) is often identified with Romani culture, for instance in Slovakia (Gažovičová 2015).

Consequently, non-Roma teachers are less committed to working with Roma children, and the standard of school education they give to their pupils is lower than that given to the majority pupils⁸. Teachers often lack motivation to work with children from another culture: prejudices towards Roma families contribute to the low standard of education of the Roma children (Kirilova & Repaire 2003).

⁶ "For financial reasons, many parents oblige their children to start working at an early age or to stay at home to look after their brothers and sisters. Roma families' greatest concern is finding ways of satisfying their daily needs." "Roma families, who are often very poor, cannot afford basic educational materials, such as books, for their children." (Kirilova & Repaire 2003: 12-13)

⁷ "Many Roma parents do not send their children to school [...] because they live far from a school and prefer to keep their children at home with them." (Kirilova & Repaire 2003: 12)

⁸ Halwachs *et al.* (2013: 31-37) classify the different ways to segregate Roma children into ten types of segregation and two types of non-segregation. "In many countries, the schools attended mainly by Roma are situated in the districts where the Roma live and the standard of education provided is lower than in other schools. In Bulgaria for example, the fact that most Roma live together in ghettos has had a decisive influence in terms of spatial segregation" (Kirilova & Repaire 2003: 13-14).

⁹ "The poor conditions in which the children live make it impossible for them to do their homework and their parents, who are often illiterate, cannot help them with their homework either." (Kirilova & Repaire 2003: 13)

In many countries, Roma schools are or were confused with “remedial schools for children with mental disabilities”: it has been shown that such separate schools, whose curriculum are far below the national standards, received a disproportionate number of Romani pupils, who have or had actually no mental health problems, but often with the argument that Roma children are mentally behind the others (Kirilova & Repaire 2003; Bakker & Daval-Markussen 2013). In the **Czech Republic**, they were called “special schools”, then “practical schools”, and aim at educating children with learning and/or mental disabilities, following an educational programme adjusted to pupils with handicaps (Sadílková 2015). The problem is that a large percentage of Romani children has been discarded from the mainstream education in such schools: in the Czech Republic, only 4% of the total population attended such schools in 1997... but 63% of Roma children. During the communist years, the situation was the same in **Bulgaria** where some Roma children were sent to “special schools” for the mentally retarded, because they allegedly did not speak Bulgarian well enough; schools for Roma children were segregated from other public schools – or segregated classes were created for them (Kyuchukov 2007). Until some years ago, Roma children who did not understand nor speak Bulgarian were still placed in such schools for mentally retarded children (Kyuchukov 2020). In **Hungary**, research studies show that 90% of the pupils in such special schools were Roma (Kirilova & Repaire 2003); according to a report of 2004 issued by a European Committee of Experts quoted by Halwachs *et al.* (2013: 48), “a specific feature of the Hungarian situation is a high degree of segregation in schools and its knock-on effects for Roma children: according to a survey carried out in 4000 primary schools in 2001, Roma children were segregated in 700 classes mainly by means of remedial classes. In addition, a disproportionate number of Roma children are still enrolled in schools for the disabled”. In **Slovenia**, the segregation of Roma in separate classes for children with special needs or special Roma classes has been introduced in primary schools as a “catch-up measure” and was denounced by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights in 2003 (Amnesty International 2006). In **Serbia**, Roma children are overrepresented in such schools where up to 80 percent of the students are Roma (Kovács-Cerović 2007). In 2003, the **Croatian** government adopted a National Programme¹⁰, stating that separate classes or separate groups in the first grade of elementary school should be organised for Roma children who were not included in pre-school programmes or did not have a sufficient command of Croatian¹¹ (Amnesty International 2006) – while the other Romani children were to be integrated to mixed classes in primary schools. In other words, the state planned to organise school segregation based on ethnic affiliation. Fortunately, segregated “Roma only” classes have decreased today.

Studies show that the proportion of children who have less or no access to school is higher for Roma than for the majority children. According to Kirilova & Repaire (2003: 11), “in **Bulgaria**, only 6% of Roma, compared to 40% of the total population of the country, have attended secondary school”¹²; in **Romania**, according to the 1992 population study, 27% of Roma boys and 35% of Roma girls had no primary education; in **Hungary**, only of 33% Roma children finished the secondary school. In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, only 35% of Roma children attend primary and secondary school according to the Ministry of human rights and refugees, and only 4% of the children in preschool are Roma (Žuvela 2021). In **Kosovo**, according to the journalist Kasapolli-Selani (2015), 85% of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian citizens do not finish primary school. In **Croatia**, the govern-

¹⁰ In Croatia, Roma are one of the 22 recognised national minorities that are protected by the Constitution and different laws.

¹¹ In interviews, such a segregation is justified by Croatian authorities and school administrations on the ground that Roma pupils lack skills in Croatian language, in social abilities to interact with their peers, and for reasons of “hygiene” (Amnesty International 2006: 44).

¹² However, statistics diverge: according to UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the secondary school enrolment in Bulgaria has varied between 84% and 89% between 1996 and 2017, and reached 85% in 2003.

ment estimates that around one third of Romani children have never attended any school (Amnesty International 2006)¹³. In **Slovakia**, about 60% of Roma surveyed by the UNDP had lower secondary education as their highest education level, 18% of the respondents did not complete lower secondary education (non-Roma: 2%), only 20% had completed upper-secondary or post-secondary education (non-Roma: 82%) (Gažovičová 2015). Therefore, Roma are factually discriminated against from an educational perspective, and the fact that they are a minority without a “kin-state” makes them a disadvantaged ethnic minority everywhere.

The situation has progressively improved under the pressure of the European Union, and Roma pupils have been better included. In **Bulgaria**, the “special schools” have been closed at the beginning of the 2010's and all Roma children now attend mainstream classes (Kyuchukov 2020). In 2009, the Ministry of Education of **Croatia** declared free preschool for all Roma children, with transportation and food provided. The participation of Roma children in preschool education significantly increased, as did primary school enrolment. Croatia has also made a huge step towards desegregation with the establishment of Romani studies at the University of Zagreb and the contributions of the Rom Member of Parliament Veljko Kajtazi (Lasić 2017). However, dropouts remain high, even in primary schools (Rutigliano 2020). According to this author, the enrolment of Roma children in primary school is high, although lower than that for non-Roma. For Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Portugal, the Slovak Republic and Spain, Roma enrolment rates in compulsory education are above 90%; the rates are high in Hungary (98%) and Spain (99%) – but lower in certain countries such as Greece where only 69% of Roma children were attending school in 2016. The education policy in **Hungary** aimed at reducing the level of school segregation by means of administrative measures. The introduction of integration principles in education, the redrawing of the boundaries of the enrolment districts, and the tightening of the conditions for admission to “special schools” reduced the degree of segregation, but the different demographic processes perceptible in the districts of individual schools partially offset the effects of these measures, according to Cserti Csapó (p.c.). Indeed, the level of secondary education of Roma has been significantly improving since 2006, even if the drop-out rates from secondary education remain high and the gap in the attainment of the baccalaureate is still significant (see Hajdu, Kertesi & Kézdi's thorough analyses, 2015). Differences between Roma and non-Roma also exist in the post-secondary education: more than 90% of non-Roma youth complete upper secondary education, while almost half of Roma complete their education without any qualifications. The graduation rates for those who do graduate are significantly lower than the non-Roma rates, and there are further ethnic differences regarding educational attainment and enrolment rates at university (Hajdu, Kertesi & Kézdi 2015). By the age of 20-21, only one-fifth of young Roma who have completed high school go on to higher education, compared with half of non-Roma. In **Romania**, in 1998, the Ministry of Education recommended to end the segregation of Roma children and pupils from other children in kindergartens and classrooms (Sarău 2013). A special effort has been made to employ Roma staff in the educational system (educators, teachers of Roma language, literature and history, school assistants, mediators and inspectors, headmasters, school advisers, mentors/tutors for educational assistance to Roma high school students...) in order to maintain the children in schools. The aim was to preserve the Roma culture, history and language¹⁴ by teaching it at school and publishing educational materials on Roma language and history, or schooling materials (see *infra*); to encourage the formation of a Roma elite with politics of positive discrimination, by allocating places for Roma in high schools and universities (Sarău

¹³ On the contrary, UNDP estimates that 86% of seven-year-old Romani children attend elementary school and 95-100% of Romani children aged between eight and twelve; at the age of fifteen, only 70% of Romani children attending school (non-Roma between seven and fifteen: around 100%) (Amnesty International 2006).

¹⁴ According to a UNDP study conducted in 2001, 63% of Romanian Roma speak Romani at home (Moisă *et al.* 2007).

2013; Zătreanu 2022). The efforts of the Ministry have resulted in increasing the number of Roma attending pre-school and school, in decreasing the segregation of Roma children from other children (Sarău 2013). Thanks to all these measures, Romanian Roma are said to better assume their Roma identity freely, in a more positive way. The experience of teaching Romani language and culture at school has proved beneficial for everybody: Roma children were motivated by their Roma teachers to attend school, the school succeeded in improving the attendance of Roma children and the image of Roma in the eyes of the community and the administrative bodies.

5) Education in Romani language

5.1. The relevance of teaching Romani

In such a context, teaching Romani and in Romani are not priorities. However, being alphabetised and taught in one's native language is a human right because such an instruction allows the child to draw a positive link between their pre-school cognitive skills and the contents of the school curriculum (Matras 2005a). Many international conventions enhance the right for minority language children to receive education in their own language: the article 30 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child guarantees the right to education, children's own cultural identity, language and values (Rizova *et al.* 2020; Bakker & Daval-Markussen 2013). Roma children whose native language is Romani should have access to literacy *in Romani* (a variety as close as possible to what is spoken in their family), and not only in the (sometimes foreign) majority language (Matras 2005a; Bakker & Daval-Markussen 2013). But as Romani is a dominated language, its teaching is part of the political struggle for equal opportunities and rights: thus, teaching Romani is a political rather than an educational concern¹⁵ (Halwachs 2012a; Halwachs 2020).

Besides, it is a critical pedagogical factor: all the studies in language education agree that the best for children is to receive schooling in their mother tongue. Education in mother tongue has a crucial impact on the child's emotional and cognitive development, cognitive development, identity, communication, social integration, school performance, because the mother tongue is the foundation of connection with family, society, culture, and identity (Zătreanu 2022). Many experts promote the idea of bilingualism and integrated education as the most effective means of ensuring equal educational opportunities in the long term (Moisă *et al.* 2007). Thus, as paradoxical as it may be, teaching the minority language is a useful and powerful tool for a more effective literacy in the majority language, and even a necessary condition for school success (Bešter & Medvešek 2007; Bakker & Daval-Markussen 2013; Kyuchukov 2020).

Romani as a language of instruction would facilitate the acquisition of literacy both in Romani and Gadžika-ni. However, education is almost always conducted in the official (national or regional) majority language. The command of reading and writing in Romani, which is familiar on the phonetic, syntactic and morphological level, facilitates acquisition of understanding, reading and writing in the majority language, as it makes it possible to perceive more distinctly the differences and similarities between the two languages (Bešter & Medvešek 2007). In interviews conducted in **Macedonia** and according to Rizova's *et al.* research (2020), the reason why Roma

¹⁵ Nevertheless, one may object that "a pluralistic and integrative approach for mother tongue and minority language teaching is alien to any national education system" because the latter aims at achieving linguistic unification through the implementation of a standard (within the with nation-state ideology). "To impart, preserve and strengthen ethnic or local group-specific identity through language teaching is, as a rule, far beyond the core areas of responsibility of formal education. Only in countries with a civic nation-state ideology and an awareness of ethno-linguistic plurality, minority language teaching can be perceived as a definite asset for social cohesion" (Halwachs 2020: 446-447). Furthermore, "it is not the obligation of a state to save minority language communities from language shift" (Halwachs 2020: 452).

children drop out of school and their basic literacy acquisition process is affected (extent of the vocabulary, ability for expressing thoughts, verbal communication with other persons, understanding spoken language, printed symbols and other written forms of expression...) is that they cannot acquire literacy in their native language and because their teachers do not speak their language¹⁶.

This is not easy, especially in those areas and schools where different dialects are spoken. Furthermore, as a minority scattered language, Romani has a low symbolic status and prestige. It is not even recognised as a language everywhere and by everyone – nor is it recognised as a written language by many Roma and non-Roma people. In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, Romani is the mother tongue of 86% of the Roma (with regional differences) but Roma students attending public education institutions can only study in the official languages Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian¹⁷ – in higher education, there are no programmes intended for studying the culture, history, language, arts and traditions of the Roma (Bešić & Vantić-Tanjić 2009). In **Croatia**¹⁸, Romani is used by almost 80% of the Roma but books or teaching materials written in the local Romani language, or related to Romani culture, history and traditions, or teaching in Romani, are not offered to Roma pupils (Amnesty International 2006). According to the **Macedonian** Constitution, “members of the communities shall have the right to education in their mother tongue in the primary and secondary schools” (Rizova et al. 2020: 114), so that Romani can be a language of instruction in schools. But most schools do not teach it as an optional subject, because this would require additional space and costs (Petroska-Beška et al. 2007). In other countries like **Slovakia** or the **Czech Republic**, Roma are recognised as an official national minority and have the right to develop and promote Romani language and literature for primary and secondary education but it has not been put into practice in public schools because teachers and pedagogical material is lacking.

The knowledge of Romani as a first language is not appreciated by the teachers and only the knowledge of the majority language is valued. During an interview with Amnesty International (2006: 47), a **Croatian** Rom child said: “The teacher tells me off when I speak my language”. According to Gažovičová (2015), in **Slovakia** most teachers stress only the importance of Slovak: only a few of them appreciate the knowledge of Romani and most of them fear the children would communicate only in Romani. A state administration representative

16 The literacy acquisition of Roma pupils may also be impeded by the poor educational level of their parents, the poor living conditions and poverty, the poor teachers' competences and the lack of didactic materials in Romani language (Rizova et al. 2020).

17 Although the Law on the Protection of Rights of Members of National Minorities (2003) states that “members of national minorities can study language, literature, history and culture also in their language (Article 14). The authorities are obliged to provide education in the language of the national minority in schools where the minority constitutes at least one third of the school population. Where it constitutes a fifth, the authorities must provide additional classes on the language and culture of that minority. The law requires the relevant educational authorities to provide the necessary financial resources for the education of members of national minorities, including for education in their language and the printing of textbooks (Article 14-3)” (Amnesty International 2006: 18). Moreover, BiH is a state party to the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995), that requires to “take measures in the fields of education and research to foster knowledge of the culture, history, language and religion of [the] national minorities”, and to provide access to textbooks and opportunities for teacher training (Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, article 12-1).

18 Although the Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities (2002) contains provisions on the education of national minorities, stating that “members of national minorities shall have the right to education in the language and script which they use” (Article 11-1), including in “pre-school institutions, primary and secondary schools”. Part of the curriculum for national minorities must be related to the minority's culture and history (Article 11-4). The Act protects the right of pupils attending schools to be enabled to learn the language and script of their national minority (Article 11-9). The Law on Use of Languages and Scripts of National Minorities (2000) stipulates that the state budget shall provide the financial means needed for the ordinary activities of state schools, classes and educational groups in the language and script of national minorities (Article 16) (Amnesty International 2006: 36-37). Despite these laws, the actual situation perpetuates the marginalisation of the Croatian Roma communities.

responsible for the education of Roma children declared: "They [the Roma pupils] naturally speak Romani together [...]. I don't think this is a good thing, because the language is some kind of cultural code. Slovak is the language the majority speaks and the majority certainly have higher ambitions. In their culture, where they speak only Romani, it is as if they are stuck in their worldview" (Gažovičová 2012: 519).

We know that Roma teachers have a role model for Roma children and youth in their communities, so the presence of a Roma teacher in the school is a gain for the school (Sarāu 2013). But the presence of Romani speaking teachers does not necessarily change the situation. A Roma teacher assistant in Bratislava declared: "I never openly speak Romani in class. Because it is not a language that should be used in class" (Gažovičová 2012: 518). It can even become a source of conflict within the staff. A teacher in Prešov declared: "I had a [Roma] assistant and I was not satisfied, it didn't suit me. This completely changed the authority of the teacher. They spoke Romani and I couldn't understand. She often had an advantage over me. And I really had a problem with it" (Gažovičová 2012: 518) – in this school, attended solely by Roma students, the teacher's assistant has been replaced by a non-Roma. The situation is the same in the **Czech Republic**, where teachers tend to underestimate or downplay the competence in Romani of their pupils, supposing for example that the children express only vulgarities in Romani (Sadílková 2015). Thus, in **Slovakia**, only education in the majority language is considered to provide the possibility for Romani students to improve their social situation. The knowledge of Romani is considered invaluable, undesirable, even an obstacle: Romani is considered as a barrier to social mobility. The fact that parents pass on the Romani language to their children is even perceived as a sign of the community's backwardness: a precondition of social mobility is supposed to be overcoming the heritage language (Gažovičová 2015). This is why in the **Czech Republic** Romani speakers have been for a long time discouraged from using Romani at home as well as in public, often by schoolteachers themselves, so that Roma have internalised the idea that Romani is useless and a barrier to their children's successful education (Sadílková 2015). A frequent but hardly avoidable consequence is the acceleration of a language shift process, i.e. language loss among Romani children.

Marushiakova & Popov (2017) describe why **Bulgarian** Roma parents and activists rejected a possible school curriculum in Romani language in 1990, and why a great number of Roma are still reluctant to the same idea today, in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe. The reasons are pragmatic: education in Romani would not help overcoming the segregation and the socio-economic underdevelopment of the Roma, nor contribute to the social integration of the children, but rather make them uncompetitive on the educational and professional market. On the contrary, believing in such an opposition between Romani school teaching and desegregation actually strengthens the process of segregation, according to Kyuchukov (2020).

5.2. Teaching Romani at primary and secondary school level

Under these conditions, it is not surprising that Romani is hardly taught in most European countries. But the experience shows that courses in Romani contribute to a positive image of being Rom by the children. In **Austrian** Burgenland, ethnocultural awareness and pride raises self-consciousness and self-esteem (Halwachs 2012b), and experimental courses in the **Czech Republic** have shown similar positive results (Sadílková 2015). In **Romania**, after the measures and the efforts taken by the Ministry of Education with the support of NGOs, including teaching Romani as mother tongue and Roma history and publishing teaching materials, "7-11% of Roma students from the general number of students assumed proudly their identity, had better academic results" and school attendance increased at all levels (Sarāu 2013; 35; Zătoreanu 2022). In **Bulgaria**, various initiatives have been undertaken: international NGOs experimentally taught Romani to children; other trained the

parents to work in Romani with their children in the home environment in order to better prepare their children for schooling; other training sessions were aimed at teachers. “Summer school on Romani language and culture” were organised for Roma university students between 2003 and 2010 at the University in Veliko Tarnovo, preparing elementary school teachers to teach the Romani language, and helping create a new generation of Roma intellectuals (Kyuchukov 2007; Kyuchukov 2018). All these initiatives did have a positive impact on the teachers’ consideration about the importance of Romani and the bilingual cognitive development of the children, but also on the parents, who better understood the importance of writing Romani and using children’s books for developing their children’s literacy (Kyuchukov 2007). In **Macedonia**, Roma parents were delighted that the children who cannot learn Romani at home, can learn it in schools, considering it as a possibility to maintain the Roma language and culture (Rizova *et al.* 2020).

Not enough schools in Europe allow Roma children to study Romani as a subject or in Romani, while this would help the pupils to master their first language at a higher level. Romani-speaking teachers and teachers’ assistants would create a bridge between majority language and Romani, between majority and Roma communities, between schools and Roma communities (Gažovičová 2015), by overcoming linguistic barriers and facilitating contacts. Let us present here in more detail the experiences of teaching Romani or in Romani.

- In the former Republic of Yugoslavia, Romani literary and cultural expressions were encouraged: in 1981, Roma were recognised as a “nationality” (*narodnost*) and radio programmes in Romani were introduced, for instance in **Serbia**. Education in Romani exists as an optional subject in ca. twenty or thirty primary schools, especially in the autonomous province of Vojvodina¹⁹ which has a long tradition of minority education (Milanković *et al.* 2015; Kovács-Cerović 2007), e.g. in Aleksandrovac (Augustinović 2022). The subject is called “The Romani Language with Elements of National Culture”.
- In the former Republic of Yugoslavia, a few hours a week of teaching in Romani language were offered in a primary school in Tetovo, **Macedonia** (Amnesty International 2006). Informal classes in Romani were also organised out of the regular school curriculum in the Roma suburb of Šuto Orizari (Šutka), without any formal pedagogical material (Friedman 1999). Nowadays, elementary education in Romani exists as an optional subject “Roma language and culture” in some Macedonian elementary schools with a majority of Roma children, in the Roma-led municipality of Šuto Orizari: two schools according to Petroska-Beška *et al.* (2007), three schools according to Rizova *et al.* (2020). The government actually attempted to implement such courses at fourth graders in twelve out of seventeen elementary schools in the country, but only a few of them actually delivered it, because the parents were not interested (or not informed enough) about the subject, and because schools were lacking appropriate teaching staff (Rizova *et al.* 2020).
- In Yugoslavia’s **Kosovo** (Amnesty International 2006), classes in Romani were offered in Gnjilane/Gilan and Uroševac/Ferizaj without any formal textbook (Friedman 1999). Romani is still taught today, as stated by Shahini (2019), as a school subject in Prizren’s Albanian²⁰ schools – but the teachers are scarce and face difficulties because they lack textbooks, pedagogical materials... and even students. According to the poet and activist Kujtim Pačaku, the interest in Roma language education has declined significantly after the war: before 1999, one hundred students attended the Romani language, culture and history lessons in

¹⁹ But “there are no official data on kindergarten teachers, primary school teachers and subject teachers who speak Romani and use it in classes. NGOs claim that such teachers, even if they do exist, are rare” (Milanković *et al.* 2015: 126).

²⁰ Paradoxically, it is not offered as an elective subject in Prizren’s Serbian schools (Shahini 2019) nor in other Kosovan Serbian schools, while most Kosovan Roma live in locations where the majority of the population is Serbian (Kasapolli-Selani 2015).

Prizren. Since the last sixteen years, only ca. forty students attend the lessons (quoted by Kasapolli-Selani 2015).

- Until recently, the curriculum and the institutions in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** did not incorporate any aspect of Roma culture and language, although the Roma are the most numerous of the seventeen national minorities (Amnesty International 2006; Augustinović 2022) – yet one of the most prominent and prolific post-war romologists, Rade Uhlik, originated from this Republic (Uhlik's 1947 and 1983 dictionaries). The pioneer canton of Tuzla, where 750 Roma students attend the schools, shall soon offer the subject 'Roma language with elements of national culture' (Augustinović 2022; Megafon.ba 2022). It will be an elective subject, whose teaching programme is currently in preparation, for the new school year 2022 or 2023 – but they lack Romani teachers. But according to Žuvela (2021), there is no strategy for teaching in and about Romani at the level of the whole country.
- During the communist regime in **Bulgaria**, Romani language and culture was not taught, nor was there any curriculum or textbooks about Roma history and culture. During the 1990's, the education of Roma children became an important topic for the authorities and many international NGOs: Bulgaria was one of the very first countries to introduce Romani into schools and to start training teachers (Kyuchukov 2020). Romani as a mother tongue was introduced in Bulgarian schools at the beginning of the 1990's because it was officially recognized as a minority language. The 1994 Decree for education in minority languages in the municipal schools stressed that all the pupils whose native language is other than Bulgarian have the right to study their mother tongue with four lessons per week during their spare time (Kyuchukov 2018; Kyuchukov 2020). Romani was first introduced experimentally in two schools, then in all schools in the year 1993-1994 (Kyuchukov 2018). Some NGOs focused on activities with children at the pre-school and school-age levels. The Ministry of Education (until 1996) and private NGOs have funded the publication of Romani and bilingual textbooks, children books and readers with poems, tales, songs, riddles, and a dictionary (Kyuchukov 1993a; 1993b; Kyuchukov *et al.* 1995; Kyuchukov 1997; 2000; 2001a; 2001b; 2002), but also methodological books for teachers (Kyuchukov 2007; 2020). A non-Roma NGO put the issue of autonomous Romani school with full instruction in Romani, which triggered a heated debate among Roma activists: it turned out that almost all Bulgarian Roma activists preferred to move towards an education in the majority language, categorically rejecting the idea of a comprehensive Romani school instruction for various socio-linguistic reasons (Marushiakova & Popov 2017). According to Kyuchukov (2020), there were other ones: the Romani teachers were not well received by the teachers and directors, were not allowed to meet their students or even to enter the schools. Where the Romani teaching took place, the Roma pupils attending the courses were scared or blackmailed by majority teachers. At that time, some scholars even pretended that Romani is no language.²¹ The educational politics also depended on the more or less nationalist ministers of education. Then, the attitude of the authorities changed at the end of the 1990's: Romani as a subject and education in Romani were not important anymore, despite the ca. 5000 pupils already studying Romani (Kyuchukov 2018). The main obstacle was the lack of qualified teachers about Romani history and culture, since most of the former students who were trained either emigrated abroad after their graduation or had begun to work in different fields. Only few, no more than five throughout Bulgaria, still worked as full-time primary school teachers in 2018 (Kyuchukov 2018). Nowadays, there are

²¹ Such reactions did not happen towards the Armenian and Jewish minorities, but only towards the Roma and Turkish ones. Thus, it was actually a political matter (Kyuchukov 2020).

no governmental nor non-governmental organisation interested about education in Romani, nor is there a Romani expert at the Ministry of Education, while there are experts for other minority languages like Armenian, Jewish and Turkish (Kyuchukov 2020).

- During the communist regime in **Romania**, there were several initiatives dedicated to Roma schooling (e.g. in 1949-1951 in Şiria, county of Arad), most of them individual ones (e.g. in 1974 in Râpile, county of Bacău) (Sarău 2013). The Romanian education system has a long tradition of respecting and supporting the right of the (Hungarian, German, Serbian...) minorities to study their own language and history. In 1990, on its own initiative, the Ministry of Education started a programme on identity reconstruction through the study of the Romani language and history within the school system (Zătreanu 2003; Sarău 2013). Nowadays Romania is unique in the world because it proposes an education system with and in Romani, starting from the very lowest grades up to *bacalaureat* and even the university. It is the only case of Romani teaching based on a national initiative (Halwachs et al. 2013). Romania has become a source of inspiration for other Eastern European countries and beyond. All this has been made possible by the efforts of many Roma and non-Roma activists, notably the linguist and activist Gheorghe Sarău (1956–), a professor who has also been inspector and adviser for the Romani language in the Minorities Directorate – Ministry of National Education since 1990. From pre-school to high school, Romani is either a subject (to learn the language, the history and traditions of the Roma) or a main language of instruction, both in bilingual curriculum (Romani-Romanian or Romani-Hungarian) and in full Romani teaching curricula. Since 2001, Romani can be chosen at school as a language option, along with lessons of Roma literature, history, traditions, music and religion (Kirilova & Repaire 2003; Zătreanu & Halwachs 2003; Halwachs *et al.* 2013; Sarău 2013). Since 2003, Romani-Romanian bilingual classes are available in some kindergarten and schools (Sarău 2013). The Ministry of Education has also appointed volunteer methodologists for the schooling of Roma (Sarău 2013). “Catch-up” programmes have been implemented in kindergartens since 1990 in areas compactly inhabited by Roma (Sarău 2013). Between 1998 and 2007, the Ministry has collaborated with more than 80 governmental, non-governmental and intergovernmental organisations (such as CEDU 2000+, UNICEF, Save the Children, Romani CRISS, Intercultural Institute of Timișoara, Caritas Satu Mare, Amare Romentza, Partida Romilor...) to develop Romani language materials, textbooks, methodologies and guides to enrich the curriculum (Moisă *et al.* 2007; Sarău 2013). It is the only country where the teaching material in Romani has been in constant use and does not depend on short-term projects (Halwachs *et al.* 2013). Sarău has been producing dictionaries (Sarău 1992; 1998; 2000; 2012...) and a large amount of teaching material alone (Sarău 1994; 1995; 2004; 2005a; 2005b; 2005c; 2007; 2008; 2009 a. o.) or in collaboration with others (Sarău, Stănescu & Zătreanu 1998; Sarău & Stănescu 2005; Sarău & Cordovan 2018a/2022a; 2018b/2022b; 2018c/2022c; 2022d, etc.) – among other authors (Zătreanu 2001). The teaching materials has a wide content, including materials on Roma history, folklore, literature, and even mathematics (Ionel & Costin-Ion 1997; 1999). Between 1994 and 2012, more than 80 titles (including school textbooks in language and literature, history and traditions) were published and financed by the Ministry, not to mention the materials funded by NGOs (Sarău 2013). The example of Romania is particularly noticeable, since it has achieved great results within twenty years; the number of students, courses and schools are impressive and have no parallels elsewhere in the world (Halwachs 2020). About 200 children are taught bilingual Romani-Romanian in 10 preschools; about 25.000 pupils are taught in Romani three or four hours per week, by approximately 450 teachers in roughly 250 schools across the whole primary and secondary system. Romani is even the language of instruction in primary education for about 400 students in five schools (with weekly four hours lessons in Romanian). The number of pupils

studying Romani language, history and traditions has increased from 50 in 1990 to more than 25.000 in 2007 (Moisă *et al.* 2007). According to the Ministry of Education, in September 2006, more than 240.000 Roma pupils attended schools in grades I-XIII, among which ten 10% study Romani language, history and traditions every week. Within ten years, approximately 300 Romani teachers graduated at the Universities of Bucharest and Cluj (Halwachs *et al.* 2013, based on data provided in 2009 by Sarău). However, according to Marushiakova & Popov (2017) the number of Roma pupils following the courses remains low, compared to the number of Roma children included into mainstream education system. Since 1998, extracurricular activities are organised by the Ministry for young Roma, like summer camps at the seaside "Roma language and creation camps" (*tabere de limba și creația romă*), intercultural camps for children and youth of different ethnic groups, national parades of traditional Roma costume and dance, various other cultural summer camps, activities in connection with local religious and secular holidays, competitions and sports events at local level (Sarău 2013). Between 2000 and 2007, national school competitions in Romani language and literature have been organised every year under the name of *Olimpiada de Limba și Literatură Rromani*, providing accommodation, meals, school supplies, diplomas and prizes like trips to the seaside (Sarău 2013), in addition to the National School Competition of Roma History and Traditions and the National Competition "Diversity" (*Diversitatea*).

- Until the 1990's, Romani was not taught in **Hungary**. The Act on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities (1993), the Public Education Act (2003) and the Act on the Rights of National Minorities (2011) have changed the situation. During the first half of the 1990's, pedagogical programmes for Roma started to exist in some secondary school institutions like the Gandhi secondary school and college in Pécs. Romani culture (values, history, literature, music, dance, folklore), or Romani language *and* culture could then be taught with one or two lessons per week, or all lessons merged into a block of hours carried out on the occasion of a pedagogical event (e.g. a youth camp) with a guest teacher. The Roma education has thus taken the most varied forms – usually not organised at the request of the Roma parents, but at the initiative of the institutions (Orsós 2020). According to a research carried out by this author in 2015, Romani is taught in about thirty public educational institutions. However, the law is permissive regarding the qualification of the language teachers: they are only required to have "at least an intermediate level state-recognised language examination certificate", and the competency assessment data of the schools are extremely weak (Orsós 2020: 401). The quality of the education provided is very low, both because of the lack of qualified staff and the lack of correct educational material.
- Romani is taught in **Slovakia** since 2008 in two primary and five secondary private schools founded by NGOs (Gažovičová 2015), where Romani is a subject but not a language of schooling. These schools have funded the publication of teaching material since 2003, that is not in use in any public school yet.
- The northern-central dialect is taught in the **Czech Republic**²² in one secondary school and in some adult learning schools for non-Roma studying social work, pedagogy and anthropology (Sadílková 2015). Some Romani textbooks have been edited.
- Romani education exists as voluntary extracurricular classes at primary and secondary levels in some schools in the **Austrian** region of Burgenland since 1997, in an attempt to counteract assimilation and

²² Milena Hübschmannová, one of the founders of Czech Romani studies in the Czechoslovakia, created courses of Romani for adult Roma and non-Roma social workers at the Prague State Language School in the 1980's (Sadílková 2015).

language loss (Halwachs 1996; Halwachs 2012a; Halwachs 2012b; Halwachs 2020; Deman & Glaeser 1999). The textbooks used are written in the Austrian *Roman* dialect, in Arli (Cech *et al.* 2009), Gurbet (Heinschink *et al.* 2006), Kalderaš (Fennesz-Juhász *et al.* 2012) or Lovari (Cech *et al.* 2001).

- It also exists in some **Finnish** schools for a few hundreds of Roma children, as an optional subject (Kaalo variety) at primary and secondary school levels, where Romani language textbooks have been produced (Zătreanu & Halwachs 2003; Matras 2005a),
- and in some **Swedish** schools (Rodell Olgaç 2013). In 2000, Sweden ratified the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages stating that pupils graduating from primary school have the right to learn about their culture, language, religion and history. The five recognised minorities (Jews, Roma, Sami, **Swedish** Finns and Tornedalians) should have the right to study their mother tongue as a language at school. It facilitated the edition of several radio and television programmes, and a great number of school and literary books in several Romani varieties (including both translations and original work) both by the National Board of Education and by private publishing houses (Bakker & Daval-Markussen 2013). Before that time, the available teaching books were in Kalderaš (Scherp 1979) and in Lovari (Berta & Kuzhikov 1996; 1997), whose spelling uses letters with diacritics but avoids the Swedish graphemes. However, Swedish Roma are still considered vulnerable, therefore the Swedish government launched a Strategy for Roma Inclusion for the years 2012-2032 (Rodell Olgaç *et al.* 2021).

Another example or model is the former **USSR**, where Romani used to be taught at school during the 1920's and the 1930's. School-, crèche- and kindergarten-classes for Roma children (or smaller units having the same status, called "Groups of Gypsy Children") with instruction in Romani mother-tongue were created in already existing schools, along with evening classes for illiterate adults (Marushiakova & Popov 2017). In 1932, three "Gypsy" schools existed in Moscow. Special trainings were introduced from 1927 onwards for Roma teachers; in 1931, the Qualification Enhancement Institute in Moscow introduced Gypsy pedagogical courses and a Gypsy Department was founded in the Pedagogical School in Smolensk. All this has been made possible by the standardisation of Romani language and the subsequent massive development of Romani literature. The dialect taught at school was that of the Ruska Roma, which was somewhat difficult to understand for the other groups of Roma: hence, some teachers tried to teach in other dialects, like P. Kravchenko who taught his students in Servi in 1931 in Ukraine (Kalinin 2005a). It was hard to keep classes and schools opened, because of poor facilities, lack of skilled teachers, or children's insufficient interest – issues that are unfortunately still relevant today. Although the results were impressive, until the government's policy changed radically: in 1938, the USSR Communist Party took the political decision to close all ethnic schools and ethnic sections in the schools of the whole Federation. Roma children were transferred into monolingual mainstream schools. The publication of books in Romani ceased, except for rare folklore texts in academic publications. The state policy did not change until today, despite the collapse of the Union in 1991 (Marushiakova & Popov 2017).

Romani is rather taught as a language of instruction than as a language of study. Apart from Romania, there is generally no curriculum planning, no clear learning targets or vision of pedagogical outcomes (Matras 2005b). The intentions of the schools and teachers can be multiple, such as teaching Romani as a foreign language, teaching its grammar with an analytical approach to native speakers, training the speakers in writing, flagging the presence of the Romani language and culture within the institutional framework, etc. Two kinds of patterns have been implemented: bottom-up initiatives, such as the Burgenland one, and top-down initiatives, such as

the Romanian one (Halwachs 2012b; 2020). Both require an intense and productive cooperation between the NGOs and the Roma communities, whereby the NGOs and the authorities shall have a positive attitude towards ethnolinguistic diversity. At the end of the 20th century, a large number of teaching materials in Romani has been issued (Bakker & Kyuchukov 2003; Bakker & Daval-Markussen 2013).

5.3. Teaching Romani in postsecondary education

Nowadays, Romani language and culture is taught at university as a full curriculum in several countries:

- in **France** (Inalco University, Paris) since **1968** where a full BA, MA and PhD curriculum exists, as well as a university degree (Tirard 2021). The chair was founded by Georges Calvet (1936–2012), who was then replaced by Marcel Courthiade (1953–2021) – see *infra*.
- in the **Czech** Republic (Charles University, Prague) since **1991** with a university degree in Romology (Sadílková 2015). The chair was founded by Milena Hübschmannová (1933–2005) and is now directed by the linguist Viktor Elšík (1974–).
- in **Romania** (University of Bucharest) since **1992**, first with an optional Romani language course, then with a Romani language section in 1997, that is now part of the department of Hungarian, Jewish and Romani Studies (Sarău 2013). A BA²³ of “*Rromani* language and literature” is proposed by the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures since 2005 and by the Department of Open Distance Learning (CREDIS). The chair was founded and held by Gheorghe Sarău (1956–), who edited many handbooks for adults (e.g. Sarău 2015; 2022) and children (see *supra*). In parallel to schooling and literacy projects for Roma children, a generous programme of the Ministry, started in 1990, allows a great number of students to be trained at high school and university, aiming at forming a young Roma intelligentsia for the needs of education and society. The academic year 1998-1999 has initiated a new phase of reform for the education of Roma through successful actions and long-term strategic programmes, renewed annually (Sarău 2013). The results are striking: Roma teachers, school mediators and assistants have been trained who can implement the Romani school curriculum. Every year between 1997 and 2007, about 12-16 Roma students have enrolled in the Romani department and 490 students are enrolled at the distance-learning training of Roma teachers (Moisă *et al.* 2007). Since 2005-2006, the BA of Rromani language and literature benefits from twenty-one annual places, of which ten to fifteen are reserved for Roma students. Between 1999 and 2007, more than 600 teachers were trained, of whom more than 300 completed or were following open distance learning courses at the CREDIS (Sarău 2013). Between 2003 and 2012, 923 Roma school mediators have been trained to be sent in schools to help schools to catch up pupils (Sarău 2013).
- in **Hungary** (University of Pécs) since **1997** with a BA and a MA in Romology offering to learn both Romani (Lovari dialect) and Boyash (a Romanian variety) (Forray 2015). The chair was founded by the pedagogue and romologue Elemér Várnagy (1930–2018), in collaboration with the linguist, anthropologist and sociologist Andrea Szalai, and the sociologist and pedagogue Katalin R. Forray (1942–). It was then held by Anna Orsós (1963–) and now by Tibor Cserti Csapó (1969–). The purpose of this curriculum is to educate professionals about questions of Romology in the linguistic and cultural fields (language and translation, history, customs and traditions, cultural values, literature, legal and social situation, institution system of the

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A MA curriculum has also existed during one year.

Roma and Boyash), and in the political, legal, educational, demographical and labour market fields (Cserti Csapó 2013). The department trains Romani language and culture teachers since 2005. A research centre of Romology has been created to work on Romani and Boyash, and on the culture, education, employment and social situation of these people. Two periodicals are edited, *Gypsy Studies – Cigány Tanulmányok* since 2000, and *Romológia* since 2013, as well as learner's handbooks and a series of collective research books. An autonomous library has also been created to gather material for research, scientific and professional literature.

- in **Croatia** (University of Zagreb) since **2016** with a MA specialisation in Romani Studies (*Romistika*) within the Department of Department of Indology and Far Eastern Studies (Lasić 2017). The chair was founded and is held by the Rom scholar Ljatif Demir (1961–).
- in **Hungary** at the Faculty of Child Education and Special Education of the University of Debrecen (located in Hajdúböszörmény) since **2019**, where a BA in Romani studies has been launched (Cserti Csapó, p.c.) with the objective of training experts about Roma issues (culture and identity, Romani language and linguistics, history, literature, music and dance, social situation, legal and institutional system of Roma) for educational purposes, institutions and social organisations. The Lovari dialect is taught, fieldworks trainings and courses are organised in kindergartens, day nurseries, local rural communities and segregated Romani communities, so that students can get basic theoretical, methodological and practical knowledge in anthropology or education. The faculty works together with the Balázs Lippai Roma College, founded in 2012, whose objective is to contribute to the formation of young Roma (and non-Roma) intellectuals committed to public life, able to take an active role in their local communities in the overall cause of social integration and inclusion, especially social pedagogy, pre-school, infant and early childhood education, social and youth work.

Furthermore, some higher education institutions propose Romani as an elective language course:

- in **Finland** (University of Helsinki), the BA programme in Finno-Ugric and Nordic Languages displays an optional unit about "Romani and Roma culture", including courses of Romani language, linguistics, culture, literature, translation and interpretation, language learning, language policy and education.
- in **Hungary** at the university of Nyíregyháza, the Foreign Language Teaching and Examination Centre offers language courses of the Lovari dialect (Cserti Csapó 2013).
- in **Hungary**, at the university of Apor Vilmos Catholic College, a course of "Gypsy literature" (*Cigány irodalom*) and a course of "Gypsy-Roma national language and learning methodology" (*Cigány-roma nemzetiségi nyelv és tanulásmódszertana*) are offered within the different BA programmes (Cserti Csapó 2013).
- in **Hungary** at the Eötvös József College of Baja, it is possible to complete a specialisation in Roma culture within the BA in education since 2013. The prospective teachers and kindergarten teachers can have access to courses of Romani language, level I and II.
- in Vojvodina (**Serbia**), Vršac's Mihailo Palov College for Educational sciences (*Visoka škola strukovnih studija za vaspitače Mihailo Palov*) proposes Romani as a language to the future educators since 2009, thus contributing to the preservation of the languages, culture and tradition of Roma (Trišić 2019).
- in **Slovakia**, the University of Nitre has an Institute of Romological Sciences (*Ústav romologických štúdií-URS*), founded in 1990 under the same Chair of Roma culture (*Katedra rómskej kultúry*) (Cserti Csapó

2013). Subjects in the field of Romology, a.o. Romani language, are or were taught for the BA, the MA and the PhD in the fields of social work and social services.

- in **Sweden**, Södertörn University²⁴ (in southern Stockholm) has been working since 2008 about courses in Romani language. A course for twenty-five future teachers in Romani has been commissioned in order to strengthen their competencies in teaching their mother tongue. Between 2012 and 2019, four training courses for Roma future teachers (“bridge builders”) focusing on schools and social services have been provided, and one training for unqualified mother-tongue teachers of Romani (Rodell Olgaç *et al.* 2021). All the students were native speakers of Romani who had completed their schooling in a majority language and had no previous formal study in Romani. The course addressed the issue of the history of Romani, its dialectology, grammar and culture revitalisation, but also Swedish grammar and academic writing (Rodell Olgaç *et al.* 2021). Södertörn University has a department of Romani Studies since 2021, held by Jan Selling (1967–), but no Roma language courses are yet provided as part of a curriculum. It is encouraged by the National Agency for Higher Education (Institutet för språk och folkminnen 2020) to pursue its national mission to produce Romani teacher education and to continue training future Roma teachers. It also promotes the creation of further courses of Romani languages for the BAs at the universities of Södertörn, Lund and Uppsala (Institutet för språk och folkminnen 2020).
- Courses of Romani for adults are being implemented by the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (**ERIAN**), located in Hungary. A handbook of Romani for adults, level A1, has been published as a test edition for a project of the Council of Europe about inclusive schools (Zătreanu & Godlova 2020).

In May 2022, the Rector’s Conference of **Bosnia and Herzegovina** supported the initiative to create a chair of Roma Language and Literature at the public university in the future (Augustinović 2022). A lectureship in Romani language used to exist in the following institutions:

- Romani has been taught as a language option at the university of Sofia, **Bulgaria**, between 1995 and 1997, by the scholar in Romani linguistics Birgit Igla. There was a similar attempt at the university of Šumen that was not successful (Kyuchukov 2020). The University of Veliko Tarnovo launched the programme “Primary School Education and Romani Language” in 2003 and organised popular summer schools (see *supra*). This programme was shut in 2010 because of the racist attitude of some professors who rejected the Roma students and the very idea of teaching Romani at the university. Moreover, according to the National Agency for Accreditation of the University Programmes, “there is no such thing as Romani language” (quoted by Kyuchukov 2020: 43-44).
- At the Kecskemét College in **Hungary**, the Faculty of Teaching Practices used to propose a course of Lovari within the Hungarian language and literature programme (Cserti Csapó 2013).
- Romani used to be taught as a free subject at the Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, **Macedonia**, between 2011 and 2015, by Ljatif Demir.
- A online animated course of Romani has been available on the online platform **Romaninet**²⁵ in 2011 for a few years (directed by the Instituto de Educación Secundaria Ribeira do Louro, Galicia).

²⁴ Originally, Linköping University was given the national responsibility for Romani studies, but in 2013 it was moved to Södertörn University (Institutet för språk och folkminnen 2020).

²⁵ <http://www.romaninet.com/?sec=home>

- A course of Romani is available on the online platform **R.E.D.-Rrom**²⁶ since 2012 (directed by Inalco, Paris).
- Teaching materials and teacher training documents in six varieties for primary, secondary and tertiary teaching at proficiency levels A1 to B2 are available on the online platform **QUALIROM**²⁷ since 2010-2013 (directed by the University of Graz, Austria).

5.4. Perspectives

The major obstacles to education in Romani are the following (Matras 2005a):

- not enough qualified Romani teachers and professors but also teaching assistants and mediators;
- few or no serious teacher training programmes in the universities, that match different types of teaching situations and that include basic concepts of Romani linguistics;
- few or no (age- and dialect-appropriate) teaching material: handbooks, textbooks, glossaries and dictionaries, journals, etc;
- not enough grants to finance the production of teaching material, university training programmes and the adequate teachers' wages;
- few grants for Roma pupils and students to continue attending school;
- legal frameworks and national syllabuses for Romani teaching;
- very few targeted pre-schooling programmes for Romani children, and catch-up classes for children who had never attended school;
- in many countries, lack of "official recognition of Romani language rights, and government support for curriculum design, media, translation and research" (Matras 2005a: 42).

Indeed, not enough teachers or teacher assistants speak Romani while training future teachers of this language should be a priority and a necessity (Matras 2005a). It is not an easy task: teaching Romani requires the teachers to be part of the Romani communities and to have not only a general teaching qualification, but also a specific training in teaching in a way that is adapted to the local context, the students' profiles, education and linguistic level (Matras 2005a). But only Bucharest, Pécs and Hajdúböszörmény, Paris, Zagreb and Prague propose university full curricula in Romani language and culture, that could help train future teachers. Besides, the number of Roma university students in general is very low all over Europe.

According to Sadílková (2015), if Romani courses were to become part of the language landscape of the schools, that would change the stereotypical attitudes towards Romani or at least open new ways of thinking. They would make education more attractive to Roma children and parents, because it would contribute to a better acceptance of Roma children by non-Roma children and teachers (Milanković *et al.* 2015). To promote Romani language rights, we need to further develop educational materials and media in the language. According to Kirilova & Repaire (2003), the existence of textbooks in Romani would help to preserve the Romani cultural heritage, encourage the children to go to school (and their parents to send them there) and to study. It would also give the majority population a more positive image of the Roma and counter the effects of prejudices and negative images.

²⁶ <http://www.red-rrom.com/home.page>

²⁷ <http://qualirom.uni-graz.at/>

Finally, it should be noted that some communities themselves refuse to allow their language to be taught or used in public space because they prefer it to be confined to domestic space. This is the case of the Sinti all over Europe, e.g. in Austria and Slovenia (Halwachs 2020), or in Germany where the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma has openly opposed the development of written publications (Matras 2005a).²⁸ Such communities disagree with the idea that linguistic emancipation requires the use of the language in public space (media and education), nor with the underlying idea that the prestige of a language increases with its public visibility (Halwachs 2020). Another reason for this position has to do with history: in Germany, the Sinti are the traditional group of Roma with centuries-long presence but have a history of persecution. They were the subject of linguistic, anthropological, pseudo-medical and racial research by Nazi scientists, who actively contributed to the extermination policy. It is not surprising that their relatives and descendants have not forgotten these facts and are suspicious of the interest shown in them by non-Roma.

6) Which dialect(s) to teach?

The goal of language education is to give users the necessary skills to claim ownership over language as a means of expression and communication (Matras 2005a). When it comes to teaching (in) Romani, the strategy shall adapt to the pedagogical context, i.e. to the target audience and learning goals: the students' profiles, their linguistic level, their educational and professional goals. Some questions arise (Matras 2005a): are the students children or adults? Are they native speakers of Romani who already use the language with family and peers, or are they beginners who expect to acquire full linguistic skills thanks to the curriculum? Is Romani the language through which they acquire literacy, or have they already learned to read and write in another language? Is Romani a subject (as a native or foreign language) or a language of instruction for other subjects (Roma history and culture, mathematics, etc.)?

From a linguistic point of view, three strategies are at work: 1) teach one dialect or the dialects of only one country, 2) teach one group of dialects of several countries 3) (try to) teach them all giving the students an overview of all dialects. These three strategies are presented by giving the example of Slovakian private schools for the first strategy, French university Inalco from 1968 to 1995 for the second, and Inalco since 1995 for the third strategy.

6.1. Strategy 1

Slovakian Roma mostly speak Slovakian Romani dialects, divided into East Slovak dialects, Central Slovak dialects and West Slovak dialects – a minority living in the South of the country also speak a Vlax dialect. In Slovakian schools, textbooks are used that are written in the Eastern Slovak dialect, belonging to the Northern-Central group (*alias* supergroup O without mutation), such as Šebková and Žinayová (2002), Gašparová, Koptová and Lukáčová (2007), or Gašparová and Lukáčová (2016a; 2016b). This strategy is the most relevant and realistic from a pragmatic point of view because it allows the teachers to be as close as possible to the linguistic variant(s) spoken by their pupils. Indeed, those courses are not targeted at beginners of Romani: their

²⁸ Other Roma groups do not object to their language being written and published: the Roma National Congress had a box published containing twelve little reading books (Balhom *et al.* 1996), all translated into three different dialects (a Polish one, a Kalderaš-Lovari one and a Balkan Vlax one), and written in a unified system using the same symbols for the same phonemes for all three varieties (Bakker & Daval-Markussen 2013)

aim is to develop skills and knowledge by native (or near native) speakers in reading, writing, grammar structure, translation. The targeted students are children and teenagers. As Romani is only an optional subject, they are expected to be already literate in the state language, Slovakian. Romani is the subject as a native or near-native language, but not a language of instruction.

Table 3 shows the third person pronouns (*jov* 'he', *joj* 'she', *jon* 'they') and the conjugation of the copula (2sg copula ending *-al*, initial /s/ > /h/ in the 3rd person) in Šebková's and Žinayová's (2002) handbook, with Slovakian translation. Figure 1 is the explanation about phonological stress in Eastern Slovakian Romani, which usually falls on the penultimate syllable (*phənav* 'I say', *baro* 'big'), a pattern typical of Central European dialects and Lovari. Figure 2 shows how the future tense is built with suffix *-a*, which is another isogloss of the Central group of dialects.

Table 3: Conjugation of the verb 'to be' in Slovakian dialects (Šebková & Žinayová 2002: 48)

	sg		pl	
1.	(me) som	<i>som</i>	(amen) sam	<i>sme</i>
2.	(tu) sal	<i>sí</i>	(tumen) san	<i>ste</i>
3.	(jov) hin(o)	<i>je</i>	(jon) hin(e)	<i>sú</i>
	(joj) hin('i)	<i>je</i>	(jon) hin(e)	<i>sú</i>

Ten [prízvuk] je vo východoslovenskej variete obyčajne na predposlednej slabike fonetického celku, ktorým môže byť 'bud' jedno lexikálne slovo, alebo spojenie slova lexikálneho so slovami gramatickými²⁹. [...] Tým, že prízvuk v rómčine má v rámci fonetického celku svoje pevné miesto, pri zmene počtu slabík v dôsledku skloňovania, časovania, stupňovania alebo zdrobňovania dochádza k jeho posunu³⁰:

le dades – <i>otca</i> (ak.)	le dadeske – <i>otcovi</i> (dat.)
phənav – <i>hovorím</i> (prítomný čas)	phəva – <i>poviem</i> (budúci čas)
baro – <i>veľký</i>	barəder – <i>väčší</i> (2. stupeň)
čhavo – <i>syn, rómsky chlapec</i>	čhavgro – <i>synček, rómsky chlapček</i> (zdrobnenina)

Figure 1: How stress works in Slovakian Romani (Šebková & Žinayová 2002: 14)

29 "This [the accent] in the East Slovak variety is usually on the penultimate syllable of a phonetic unit, which can be either a single lexical word or a combination of a lexical word with grammatical words." (Šebková & Žinayová 2002: 14)

30 "The stress in Romani has a fixed place within the phonetic unit, and when the number of syllables changes as a result of inflection, conjugation, gradation or diminutive, the accent shifts." (Šebková & Žinayová 2002: 14)

Budúci čas sa v rómčine tvorí príponou **-a**, ktorá sa pripája k príslušným tvarom prítomného času. V tvaroch zakončených na **-s** (t.j. 2. os. sg. a 1. os. pl.) sa toto **-s** pred príponou **-a** mení na **-h**³¹.

I. trieda: te kerel – *robit'*

SG		
1.	(me) kerav-a	budem robit', urobím
2.	(tu) keres>h-a	budeš robit', urobíš
3.	(jov/joj) kerel-a	bude robit', urobí
PL		
1.	(amen) keras>h-a	budeme robit', urobíme
2.	(tumen) keren-a	budete robit', urobíte
3.	(jon) keren-a	budú robit', urobia

Figure 2: How to build the future tense in Slovakian Romani (Šebková & Žinayová 2002: 120)

Teaching a single variety of Romani is in line with the intended audience and the pedagogical situation. Such a regional single-variety strategy is also found in Finland with the Kaale Roma and, according to Halwachs (2020), in Slovenia with the Prekmurje dialect and in Kosovo (Prizren) with the Arli dialect. Moreover, using only one codified variety corresponds to the prerequisites of the education system, tailored for the teaching of standardised (national or foreign national) languages (Halwachs 2020).

6.2. Strategy 2

Georges Calvet (1936–2012), a linguist specialised in Romani linguistics, founded the chair of Gypsy language (*langue tsigane*) at the French Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, Paris, where he taught Romani from 1968 to 1995. His students were non-Roma adults studying other disciplines like social work, linguistics, history or anthropology. As beginners, they usually had no particular expectations regarding the dialect(s) they were going to learn. As Inalco is a university, the students were already literate in at least one other language, mainly French. Romani was the subject as a foreign language, not intended to be a language of instruction – except during the oral practice lessons in 2nd and 3rd year. The degree of Gypsy language included courses of:

- grammar of Vlax dialects (1st year)
- written comprehension in Kalderaš and Čurari (1st year), Gurbet, Arabadži and Rumungro (2nd year), Lovari (3rd year)
- oral practice in Kalderaš in 1st, 2nd and 3rd year
- oral literature in Vlax dialects in 1st, 2nd and 3rd year
- lexicology in 2nd and 3rd year

31 "The future tense in Romani is formed with the suffix **-a**, which is added to the corresponding present tense forms. In forms ending in **-s** (i.e. 2nd person sg. and 1st person pl.) this **-s** before the suffix **-a** changes to **-h**." (Šebková & Žinayová 2002: 120)

Thus, this professor chose to teach only Vlax dialects – especially Kalderaš, because this dialect group is the most widely spoken in the world: in Europe, North and South America, Australia, South Africa...³² We may add that Vlax varieties enjoy particularly great prestige³³. Calvet also published a Kalderaš-French dictionary (Calvet 1993) and worked on Vlax dialects. Figure 3 and Figure 4 show grammatical topics he taught, that are characteristic isoglosses of the Vlax dialects: the verbal negation *či* and the 1^{SG} perfect suffix *-em*.

Či, maj, sa, vi se placent derrière le verbe. **či** est la négation du fait mentionné par le verbe : **či** ker-él « il ne fait pas »³⁴

Figure 3: The negation in Kalderaš dialects (Clanet 2021: 21)

Verbes: Marqueur suffixal sujet				
Personnes		imperfectif		perfectif
1ère pers. sing.		-áv		-ém
2ème pers. sing.		-és		-án
3ème pers. sing.		-él		-á(s)
1ère pers. plur.		-ás		-ám
2ème pers. plur.		-én		-án
3ème pers. plur.		-én		-é
[...]				
Perfectif non actuel				
Se forme à partir de la racine + la marque du participe* + la marque du sujet perfectif.				
Racine	+ marque participe	+ marqueur sujet perfectif		passé simple, passé composé
mar-	-d-	-ém	mardém	passé simple, passé composé
ker-	-dj-	-án	kerdján	je frappai, j'ai frappé
dikh-	-lj-	-á(s)	dikhljás	tu fis, tu as fait
phir-	-d-	-ám	phirdám	nous avons marché
ašun	-dj-	-án	ašundján	vous avez écouté
muk-	-l-	-é-	muklé	ils laissèrent, ils ont laissé

32 "Le dialecte choisi [...] est le dialecte 'kalderash'. Ce choix n'est pas justifié par une éventuelle supériorité de ce dialecte sur les autres mais par l'importance de sa diffusion. En effet ce dialecte s'est internationalisé et l'on peut actuellement en rencontrer des locuteurs dans la plupart des pays, aussi bien dans l'Ancien Monde que dans les deux Amériques et également en Australie et en Afrique du Sud." (Calvet 1993: 3)

33 According to Halwachs (2011; 2020), the political activists promoting Romani are part of a harmonisation process gradually resulting in an international variety based on internationally disseminated Vlax varieties, because Vlax speakers (Kalderaš, but also Gurbet and Lovara) dominate international Roma politics, and usually have more impact on the Roma international political movement – but also, at a regional level, non-Vlax varieties such as Ari. Besides, for historical and socio-economical reasons, the Vlax varieties are the most widespread around the world (Calvet 1993).

34 "Či, maj, sa, vi are placed after the verb. či is the negation of the fact mentioned by the verb: či ker-él 'he does not make'." (Clanet 2021: 21)

* **mardó** (adjectif dérivé) : frappé / participe à valeur verbale personnelle³⁵

(Figure 4: The perfect in Kalderaš dialects (Clanet 2021: 33-34)

Such a strategy is relevant for students who are either absolute beginners in Romani or whose Romani varieties are part of the same group, and for classes where Romani is a subject but not a language of instruction.

6.3. Strategy 3

Marcel Courthiade (1953–2021), a linguist specialised in Romani linguistics, taught at Inalco from 1995 to 2021 giving the students an overview of all Romani dialects. The idea was to promote a unitary language and to contribute to the emergence of a standard variety, the ‘common language’ (*khetani čhib*). This international Romani³⁶ is a *koine* gradually emerging from a mixture of different dialects, with adapted international words, and from the multitude of language planning and policy initiatives for linguistic emancipation (Halwachs 2020). It is mainly used in formal domains for communication among speakers of different Roma dialects at gatherings in Strasbourg, Brussel, Budapest, by political activists involved at national and international level (Marushiakova & Popov 2017). They contribute helping Romani in its transition from an oral language, used in informal and intimate sphere of private everyday life, to a both oral and written language with a complete range of registers, including the formal sphere in official administration, education and media (Halwachs *et al.* 2013).

As a driving figure of this movement, Courthiade published much material, a.o. dictionaries (Courthiade 1992b; 2004; 2009a), handbooks and pedagogical material (e.g. Courthiade 2010), numerous articles dedicated to the standardisation of Romani’s writing (Courthiade 1984/1986; 1989a; 1989b; 1990; 1992b; 1994; 1998; 2005; 2009b; 2018...). He was the leader of the spelling codification project promoted by the International Romani Union and published at its fourth congress in Warsaw in 1991. This alphabet is independent from any other majority language, which Matras (1999: 489-490) calls a “no-compromise strategy of codification”. This Romani common alphabet is polylectal, and especially designed for the phonology of Romani – written *Rromani*. It uses abstract letters³⁷ and diacritics³⁸ to adapt to special features of this language, to cover the breadth of possible cross-dialectal realisations of phonemes (Halwachs *et al.* 2013) and to capture the morpho-phonological alternation of case suffixes (Matras 1999). Graphemes like <θ>, <ç>, <q> transcribe a certain phoneme in some varieties and another one in other varieties, so that all Romani users can read it as in their dialect (Bakker & Daval-Markussen 2013). Critics have suggested that applying this alphabet requires too high a proficiency in morphology, questioning if variation should be adapted into a unified system, or be accounted for by using compatible writing systems codifying the different variants (Matras 1999). As it is a standard alphabet but no standard language, this convention does not aim at levelling out lexical dialectal differences: writers can use the words of their own dialect or propose alternative synonyms – a strategy also used in Kosovo with Kruezi’s own standard alphabet.

35 **Verbs: Subject suffix marker** [...] **Non present perfective:** It is formed with the root + the participle marker* + the perfective subject marker.* **mardó** (derived adjective): struck / participe with personal value (Clanet 2021: 33-34)

36 Halwachs *et al.* (2013: 55) call it “Inter-Romani”.

37 E.g. the meta-graphemes standing for two or more sounds to cover morphophonological and dialectal variation: θ, ç q.

38 E.g. the caron on vowels for marking the “pre-yotisation” of the vowel or the palatalisation of the preceding consonant: ä, ě, ě, ě, ů (däs ‘he/she gave’, buti ‘work’).

This alphabet has been in use in IRU declarations and publications of the 1990's, by some Roma political activists, in the Romanian educational system at school, high school and at the University of Bucharest since 1992, and of course at the French Inalco university where Courthiade himself taught from 1995 to 2021. Indeed, the Romanian Ministry of Education recognised this official, common, international alphabet in 1990 (Sarău 2013). Table 4 illustrates some of the salient differences between the IRU's standard orthography and the orthography adopted in Macedonia in 1992.

Table 4: Comparison of Romani orthography (after Friedman 1999: 332)

	Courthiade et al. (1991)	1992 Macedonian Conference	dialectal pronunciation	
Rom (LOC.SG)	Rromesθe	Romeste	[romeste]	[romesće]
Rom (LOC.PL)	Rromenθe	Romende	[romende]	[romende]
Rom (ABL.SG)	Rromesθar	Romestar	[romestar]	
Rom (ABL.PL)	Rromenθar	Rromendar	[romendar]	
Rom (DAT.SG)	Rromesqe	Romeske	[romesće]	[romeske]
Rom (DAT.PL)	Rromenqe	Rromenge	[romende]	[romenge]
done (PART.PL)	kerde	kerde	[ćerde]	[kerde]
Rom (INSTR.SG)	Rromeça	Romesa	[romea]	[romesa]
you do (SG)	keresa	keresa	[ćerea]	[keresa]

Inalco's students are both Roma and non-Roma: Roma who do not know Romani and wish to learn it, Roma who know Romani and want to improve their skills (especially writing and reading, and the ability to understand dialects different from their own), and a majority of non-Roma³⁹ who study other disciplines like linguistics, anthropology, political sciences, music, or other languages. Consequently, the linguistic levels of such beginners and advanced students are heterogenous, and so are the expectations about the dialect(s). The students are all adults with previous schooling in another language, usually French. Romani is the subject matter – as a native, near native or foreign language – but is usually not intended to be a language of instruction. The courses are the same for the university degree of Rromani, for the Bachelor in Romani language and culture as well as for the various bilingual B.A. They include courses of:

- grammar and linguistics (1st year)
- oral comprehension and intercomprehension strategies in different dialects and in international inter-group contacts (1st, 2nd and 3rd year)
- reading comprehension in standard alphabet (1st year) and in all kinds of original orthographies (2nd and 3rd year)
- training in writing and editing texts in standard alphabet (2nd year)
- oral practice (1st, 2nd and 3rd year)

³⁹ A situation quite similar to that at the University of Zagreb. Among the eighteen students enrolled in 2017, there were no Croatian Roma, and only three Roma in total (two from Macedonia and one from Montenegro) – because Roma pupils have difficulties completing the secondary school, or even the primary one (Lasić 2017).

- Romani civilisation (2nd year)
- Romani language history (2nd year)
- Translation Rromani-French and French-Rromani (3rd year)
- Rromani literature (3rd year)

The Master of Rromani language and culture, as well as the other Masters (linguistics, translation...) with linguistic option of Rromani, include courses of:

- Literature and literary translation
- Practical use of Rromani in argumentation context
- Professional use of Rromani for teaching
- Professional use of Rromani for research and media

Dialectology is taught and the phonetic and lexical differences between the major groups of dialects are underlined. During the first year, the texts studied are all written in the IRU spelling (Figure 5), then the various other spellings are introduced in the second year, allowing the students to read literature in original version: Latin alphabet with Serbo-Croatian, Hungarian, English-like (Figure 6), Polish, Slovakian, Romanian, German (Figure 7) spelling, or mixed spellings, and optionally in Cyrillic (Figure 8) or Greek alphabets for those students who can read them. Given the inherent plurality of Romani as a language, Courthiade and his successor think it is necessary for the students to have an overview of the Romani language and literature told and/or written in different spelling conventions, originating from different regions and countries. This way, Romani is reflected in its full diversity in the curriculum and is "a vehicle toward strengthening mutual interest, respect and solidarity" (Matras 2005a: 42).

This (maybe idealistic) project is a big challenge for full beginners who learn not only one dialect or group of dialects, but all dialects altogether. Romani-speaking students, on the other hand, need less work memorising vocabulary and practicing grammar, like beginners do, but rather need to be introduced to the specific sounds and spelling conventions of Romani, to its grammatical structure, and trained in writing and reading

MIRRI DAJ	
Avilã o pašmilaj,	Mirri daj man barãrdã,
Akana si trintonaj!	Thaj šukar man siklãrdã,
Akana si oxtoto divës,	Te siklövav, te kerav
Phen tu, phrala, so dikhes?	So and-i lümã si šukar.
Phen, çhavea!	Daje, me tut kamav
Phen tu, phrala!	Thaj palal tiro alav phirav,
So si and-o oxtoto divës?	Ke tu dãn man živipen
Si o divës kařar i daj!	Anřar tiro lačhipen!
Mirri daj si daj gudli,	Akana ke si tiro divës,
Si li jekli lači žuvli,	Anglal tuđe kamav te beřav,
Si li sovnakaj or kliam!	Te phenav tuqe: „Kamel tut mirro di!”
Si i daj so maj šukar!	Thaj te đav tut jekli luludi.
	(Palal o Jone! Kordovãn)

Figure 7: Poem of Ionel Cordovan written in IRU spelling ((Cordovan & Palfi-Tamař 2008: 60

<p><i>Karike b'el'el' ame gorgord'am ade Rezekne vesh i poroschud'am shatr'a. Duy veshengire yame i phendle so riskas tezavackiras vesh i adava i odova... Ne sir amare chaya sikadenpe angil lende, phuci « Kamen teĵinen cacipe? », lengire yakha, a manov i lengire ile zaoxne.</i></p> <p><i>Ame çhavore çurdıyampe sir kirya i zayand'am pan'ing, skendıyam kashta i, nabut koridır, varikitsi piya bagade pe yag. Veshengire dikne kerti pe sika « Amen zhakirma », a kokore i kamne kas len tezamangas. Ame habıyam i mangyam teyachen pe b'el'el'umo. Sab kerad'a vash peske, a sir skendıyam, i vıgiya barvalo xabe. Shtang'onko vitirdiya vurdenestar duy butel'a joldi. Chaya yandle murengire, i liyam texas.</i></p>

Figure 8: Short story "Pashe yag" of Vania de Gila written in his own spelling (Kochanowski 2005: 78)

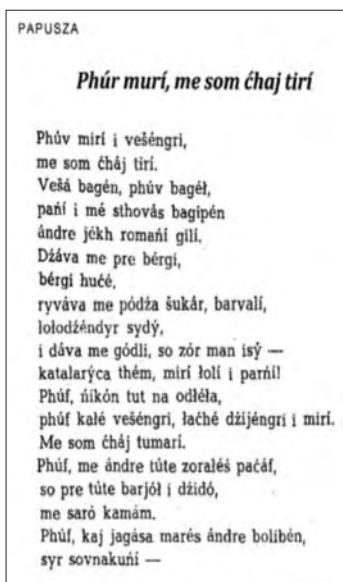


Figure 9: Poem of Papusza written in her own spelling (Wajs-Papusza 2011: 26)



Figure 10: Poem of Ceija Stojka written in Austrian spelling (Wagner 2009: 203)



Figure 11: Poem of Valdemar Kalinin written in Cyrillic (Kalinin 2005b: 61)

the language. Such a challenge is made possible by the fact that the students are adults, highly motivated and few in number: the teachers can adapt to the linguistic level and the individual needs of their students and create a friendly environment. It also requires using teaching material in different varieties existing across dialect group boundaries and national borders, in order to reflect the heterogeneity and non-national character of the Romani, as well as the geographical dispersion of its speakers (Halwachs 2020).

Rodell Olgaç *et al.* (2021) relate the Swedish experience of Romani teaching at Södertörn University in 2016-2017 and raise the issue of how to deal with many dialects while teaching Romani. The situation has been somewhat similar to that of Inalco: all 25 students were native speakers of Romani (more than thirteen speakers of Arli, four speakers of Kalderas, one speaker of Lovari, and several speakers of Džambaz, Burgudži, Gurbet). This great linguistic diversity was a challenge both for the training teachers and for the students: some exercises involved preparing a short presentation of a poem, story, song, tale or history in their variety, a task aimed at making visible the great linguistic variety that existed in the group but also the existing common denominators between the varieties. Some participants expressed that they sometimes did not understand what was expressed by their colleagues. The teachers highlighted the similarities and differences between varieties, the historical development of the language and the influence of language contact in different historical periods

and geographical areas. At the end of the course, the participants commented how positive their experience of such a diversity had been (Rodell Olgaç *et al.* 2021). The course allowed them to discover and understand the different dialects, along with the structure, grammar, history and dialectology of Romani. This way, they were trained to better teach Romani as they would better understand their pupils who speak a variety different from their own. Interestingly, during the programme, the students expected their teachers to propose a uniform and "correct" convention spelling, and to take a position in the orthographic debate. The group of students aspired to the development of a standard spelling [as if there were not already several of them], but also a common, standardised form of language to facilitate communication in the media and other official contexts between Roma speakers of different dialects, while maintaining the diversity (Rodell Olgaç *et al.* 2021).

The students in Södertörn and the native speakers among Inalco's students have in common that they are all adults with a higher level of education in a majority language, and that they speak different dialects. Furthermore, these courses have in common the pedagogical objective of confronting students with dialectal diversity; the content of the lessons are quite similar, presenting grammar, history, dialectology and the issues of language contact. At Inalco, particular emphasis was/is put on the issue of writing, through a presentation of different orthographic systems and the proposition of IRU alphabet as a solution to the "lack" of standard spelling and a bridge to a common form of Romani language (*khetani čhib*).

A similar strategy has been implemented at the university of Bucharest in Romania. It is relevant for classes of students with heterogeneous profiles: both complete beginners and advanced students. Provided that the teachers are sufficiently well trained in Romani linguistics and pedagogy, it would be relevant in other countries, for classes of students who speak heterogenous dialects, in other classes in Sweden⁴⁰ and in Austria⁴¹.

7) Conclusion

Romani is a minority dominated language, predominantly used for oral in-group use with communicative functions, mainly in informal domains and almost solely symbolic functions in formal domains – contrary to the dominant languages that developed quite early both spoken and written functional styles. The linguists commonly distinguish four to seven groups of dialects, spoken by a multiplicity of speech communities in highly diverse sociolinguistic situations (Halwachs 2020). It was not written by its speakers until the beginning of the 1920 in the USSR, then its written forms have undergone harmonisation or codification processes in pluralistic and polycentric ways in various countries. Dialects have been codified, their written forms fixed, their lexicons expanded, and some attempts have even been made to create a common international standard with elaborated new forms. Despite the codifications and the official recognition by some states (Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia...), different orthographies are still being used by authors and individual speakers, usually an adapted version of the country's alphabet.

There are socio-economic obstacles to school education for Roma that have still not been overcome, like poverty, isolation, pedagogical segregation, lack of education in mother tongue for most Roma children. Romani is sometimes perceived by teachers and Roma parents as a barrier to the education, the future, and the social

⁴⁰ According to Halwachs (2020) many different groups of Roma live in Sweden: Resande speaking Scandoromani, Kaale originating from Finland and speaking Kaalo, Kalderara speaking Kalderaš, Lovara speaking Lovari, Balkanic, especially Kosovan Roma speaking Arli.

⁴¹ According to Schrammel-Leber & Halwachs (2013), Austria is very heterogenous too, as there are Burgenland Roma speaking Roman, Sinti speaking Sinto, Lovara speaking Lovari, Balkanic Roma speaking Kalderaš, Gurbet, Arli, Bugurdži, etc., and Central European Roma speaking Servika.

mobility of the children, which may result in a language shift. As an often despised language, it is hardly taught in European schools, while no children attending the first grades of school should be expected to acquire basic reading and writing skills in a language they do not even speak. In some countries, however, it is taught as a (first or second) language in some schools, and even as a language of schooling in Romania. This country is a model in terms of the number of students, teachers, classes, schools and teaching materials it has produced. With the exception of Romania, Romani language teaching is either absent, or present thanks to individual projects of local or international NGOs. In the latter case, it is being implemented only on very limited scale, as an optional or even an extracurricular subject. It is not part of a structural multilingual education with Romani schools or classes offering a comprehensive education entirely in Romani. Major obstacles remain: the lack of teachers, of teacher training programmes, of locally adapted teaching material, the reluctance of states to involve in an official recognition and to propose a legal framework... and, by some communities, the lack of interest on the part of Roma themselves.

When it comes to teaching Romani, three different strategies may be adopted: to teach one dialect, to teach one group of dialects, or to teach all dialects. The single-dialect strategy is implemented in Slovakia and in Finland; it is relevant for classes of children whose first (or second) family language is Romani, and whose Romani variety is the same for all. The dialect-group strategy has been implemented at Inalco university by the professor Georges Calvet (and is also implemented, to a certain extent, in Romanian classes at the University of Bucharest); it is relevant for students who are either absolute beginners in Romani or whose Romani varieties are part of the same group, and for classes where Romani is a subject but not a language of instruction. The all-dialects strategy has been implemented at Inalco university under the influence of Professor Marcel Courthiade, and at the universities of Bucharest and Södertörn; it is relevant for classes of students with heterogeneous profiles: both complete beginners and students who already know the language. If the conditions are met, it could be also relevant for classes of pupils who speak diverse Romani varieties, like in Sweden or in Austria. The teaching of Romani is necessarily heterogeneous, locally adapted, and just as polycentric and pluralistic as the language itself.

Abbreviations

1	first person	LOC	locative
2	second person	M	masculine
3	third person	OBL	oblique
ABL	ablative	PART	participle
DAT	dative	PL	plural
F	feminine	SG	singular
INSTR	instrumental		

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Sažetak

Pučavanje romskih dijalekata

Romski je transnacionalni jezik kojim se služi narod koji je posvuda manjina. Romski ima mnoge oblike i različite dijalektalne skupine i nije bio zapisivan sve do 20. stoljeća. Još uvijek nema jedinstveni kodificirani pisani oblik niti općeprihvaćenu standardnu varijantu. Pučavanje je romskoga jezika izazov jer Romi iz socioekonomskih razloga imaju teži pristup obrazovanju nego neromi te zato što još uvijek nedostaju kvalificirani učitelji, nastavni planovi i programi za izobrazbu nastavnika. Nedostaju i dovoljno prilagođeni nastavni materijali, a uključivi pristup usvajanju jezika gotovo se nigdje ne primjenjuje. Romski je jezik rijetko predmet obrazovanja i gotovo nikad jezik nastave. No, uči se u nekim europskim školama. U tim se slučajevima postavljaju specifična pitanja: kako je moguće pučavati jezik s tako velikom dijalektalnom raznolikošću, koji dijalekt(e) odabrati i kako napraviti taj izbor? Provede se tri različite strategije: pučavanje jednog dijalekta, pučavanje jedne skupine dijalekata i načelno pučavanje svih dijalekata, u skladu s profilom publike, njihovom razinom znanja romskog, njihovoj pismenosti i dobi.

Ključne riječi: romski jezik, dijalektologija, obrazovna politika, jezično planiranje, standardizacija.