
THE ROMANI LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE
MANAGEMENT

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CTS-92-09

August 14, 1992



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1. THE ROMANI LANGUAGE AND THE ROMS

The term Romani refers to the dialects of the Gypsy language, spoken by a considerable number of people over many parts of Europe.¹ While most Roms² of Western Europe are nomadic and speak a language characterized by an admixture of vocabulary and structures of the respective matrix languages (Kenrick 1979, Liégeois 1987), Roms of Central and Eastern Europe are sedentary, often for centuries, and their language maintenance is much superior. Exact numbers are not easy to obtain from official censuses. For instance, in Czechoslovakia the 1991 census revealed 114 000 people who claimed Rom origin (Mann 1992a), but we know from semi-official records kept by local authorities until 1989, that the more likely figure would be in the vicinity of 400 000 to 500 000. Rom sources claim 800 000 people (Hübschmannová, forthcoming). Representatives of the Romani Union, a private international association of various Rom organizations, quotes the total number of Roms in the world as 10 to 15 million.³ Areas which have particularly high absolute

¹ I have profited from the opportunity to participate in the conference *Rómovia vo východnej a strednej Európe* organized at Stupava in Slovakia from 30th April to 2nd May 1992 by the Federal Government of Czechoslovakia and the Slovak and Czech Governments with the support of IREX. I wish to thank Dr. Tomáš Haišman of the Premier's Department for making my participation possible. I am also grateful to Dr Milena Hübschmannová and Dr. Björn Jernudd for reading my manuscript and providing useful comments and to Ing. Petr Víšek and Ms Jitka Gjuričová for important materials and discussions. There should be no need to say that I alone am responsible for the views expressed in this paper and for possible misinterpretations.

² The name Rom (plural mostly Rom or Roma, cf. Hancock 1979, p.8) has been adopted as a general denomination for all Gypsy groups (Rom, Sinti, Kalé, etc.) since the 3rd Congress of the Romani Union in 1981. Originally it referred to only one part of the whole population (cf. the journal *Lačho lav* 4/90, p.17).

³ Palek (forthcoming) in his overview of the language situation in Eastern Europe based on reports by the governments concerned arrives at the conservative total of 1 500 000 to 2 300 000.

numbers of the Roms are Romania, former Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and the former Soviet Union.

The Roms arrived in Europe from India not later than at the beginning of this millennium. By the 14th and first half of the 15th century we find frequent references to them as they moved through a number of countries, first tolerated but later expressly unwelcome or banned (Málek 1990). Although the language and folklore of the Roms clearly points to India, the Roms themselves have lost the knowledge of their origin (Hancock 1988). Their traditional trades and skills have almost everywhere been replaced by unqualified manual work. In the postcommunist countries the economic changes towards a free economy have often left them jobless and there is little hope that this situation will change in the near future. The only Rom community reported to be doing well is the relatively small Polish community (approximately 20 000 people) the members of which recently became successful merchants and small manufacturers.

During World War II many Roms, including almost all Roms from Bohemia and Moravia, were exterminated in Hitler's concentration camps (Nečas 1990). The communist regimes of the post-war period gave Roms work and social security, but pursued a relentless paternalistic policy of assimilation (Information 1991). Nevertheless, the results of these policies were undistinguished, with the Rom communities perhaps losing some of their traditional culture but gaining little instead. Many of the problems of the contemporary Roms are problems of an ethnic group in transition.

As most of those concerned with Rom matters realize, a potentially highly explosive situation is developing in most Central and East European countries which have a sizeable Rom population (Information 1991). The aim of this paper is not to present recommendations how to face the problem. It deals with a limited number of issues that are of relevance to the theory of language problems. Although the perspective adopted covers all Central and East European Roms, most of my information derives from

However, he comments that due to the fact that many Roms opt for other ethnicities in censuses, it is at present impossible to arrive at an objective count.

Czechoslovakia and does not allow general conclusions for other Rom communities.

2. LINGUISTIC, SOCIOLINGUISTIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC PROBLEMS

The issue of language can only be dealt with if we accept the primacy of socioeconomic and sociolinguistic (communicative) problems in comparison with linguistic ones. Without a solution of the former there can be no solution to the latter. Language problems cannot be removed through working on language alone.⁴

As an example, we can consider the mastery of various languages by the Roms. They employ a whole repertoire of varieties of language: apart from Romani (the competence in which, of course, varies) there is the system of varieties of the matrix language (including pidgins or creoles), regional dialects and possibly foreign languages. The presence or absence of these varieties in the language system of particular speakers depends on the range of communicative situations in which the speakers participate, on the extension of their communicative networks, topics of conversation, and other circumstances. These are sociolinguistic (communicative) facts which, in turn, depend on a whole range of socioeconomic activities, social networks, employment, etc. Or, in the case of competence in reading and writing⁵ (linguistic facts), the availability of texts and reading

⁴ This paper applies to the Rom issue a theory of language problems that is normally described as language management (cf. Jernudd and Neustupný 1987, 1991). Though it basically works within the same paradigm as language planning, the theory of language management differs in a number of points. Some of them are the requirement to consider sociocultural and sociolinguistic problems along with linguistic ones, to commence the study of language problems from problems in discourse, and the need to consider positive as well as negative evaluations of language.

⁵ According to the 1970 census, 70 percent of the older generation of Roms residing in Czechoslovakia were illiterate (Hübschmannová et al. 1991, p.6). With members of the younger generation the situation has since then improved.

habits (sociolinguistic, i.e. communicative, facts), and the need to read and write in the execution of the speakers' employment and everyday life (socioeconomic facts) are all interconnected.

If we start from individual socioeconomic (SE), sociolinguistic (SL) or linguistic (LG) facts, it is possible to establish clusters (SE/SL/LG clusters) of features that depend on each other. In this paper I shall discuss several clusters which start from the following SE areas:

1. Structural problems
2. The Rom culture
3. Deculturation and
4. Attitudes of the matrix population.

1. Structural problems

In this group I propose to include problems that cannot be fully accounted for by contemporary differences in culture. The term "structural" derives from the fact that the problems connect with the structure of the Rom society as embedded within the context of the matrix society. *Cluster A1* commences from the relative economic, social and cultural underdevelopment of the Roms. They frequently have no work (Information 1991) and if they do, such work is limited to positions which require almost no qualifications. Many Roms live in urban slums, others in separate settlements (Gypsy colonies) with few facilities, little running water, sometimes at a considerable distance from schools and shops. There is a high incidence of illegal activities. Their representation in political life is very limited.

Roms did not place themselves in this position. The regimes of the past have not done enough or have been unsuccessful in removing these conditions which are clearly perceived as social problems, both by the present governments and by the Roms themselves. When the Roms speak about their situation, they mostly refer to this group of socioeconomic problems.

In the sociolinguistic (communicative) area these problems imply that the Roms can only participate in a limited number of communicative situations (Hübschmannová, forthcoming). However, this also means that the language they speak, be it

Romani or the national languages of the matrix communities, remains lexically and stylistically underdeveloped. In order to develop the language, it is necessary to start by changing the socioeconomic features of the cluster, which will give rise to more communication needs and will eventually result in the development of linguistic segments: the lexicon and syntactic and hypersyntactic means. Limiting action to the creation of vocabularies, translation work, or language teaching would not provide the remedy that is needed. The sociolinguistic and socioeconomic problems must be attended to at the same time. The cluster A1 can be represented as:

SE: underdevelopment

SL: limited needs and participation

LG: lexical and stylistic underdevelopment.

Furthermore, the features of underdevelopment limit the possibility of generating communicative networks with either members of other Rom communities or members of the matrix society. This creates *cluster A2*, due to which language, too, is affected. The process of standardization of Romani naturally lags behind. Rom adults develop pidgins and children develop creoles (Information 1991; Hübschmannová, forthcoming) rather than master the matrix language. This cluster can be formulated as:

SE: underdevelopment

SL: limited networks

LG: lack of linguistic integration.

It is of interest to note that according to Hübschmannová (1979), mistakes in Czech in the speech of Rom children were not reduced when they spoke mostly Czech or Czech only. Grammatical and other mistakes were recorded in the Rokycany community (Western Bohemia) where 82 percent of children reported speaking Romani at home, but the rate of error increased in a Prague location where 94 percent of children reported speaking Czech, or sometimes Romani and sometimes Czech. In other words, to speak Czech most of the time, or to speak practically no Romani, does not guarantee that the speakers' Czech will be fully grammatical. In order to rectify this situation, sociolinguistic (communicative) policies are needed to broaden the children's networks, but these cannot be successful unless a socioeconomic pressure is induced to support them and remove the underdevelopment of the Roms.

The postcommunist governments of Central and Eastern Europe can relegate responsibility for the current situation of the Roms to their political predecessors. However, in a decade or less people will ask what these governments themselves have done to change the structural aspects of the Rom problem.

2. Rom culture

The way in which most Roms work and conduct daily life is different from the host societies. Evidence abounds in reports on their "deviant" behaviour, erratic attendance at work, lack of manual skills, the handling of apartments and other dwellings, attitudes to children's education, etc. These factors are cultural in character.

The Roms possess not only extensive culture in the sense of traditional tales, proverbs, music and more recently also painting and modern literature (cf. the journal *Slovenský národopis* 36/1, 1988; also Hůbschmannová 1991 and Mann (ed.) forthcoming), but also culture in the sense of rules for the conduct of daily life and the life cycle (cf. Mann 1988) and a traditional value system. It is their culture in the latter sense what accounts for much of their "deviance".

The distinction between the structural and cultural features is important. Children may be unable to attend school because of the distance, poor clothing, inability of the parent to provide notebooks, pencils, etc. These are structural conditions. However, the problem may be aggravated due to the value system of the parents and children themselves and these cultural features are not easily removed.

A letter to the editor of the Rom weekly *Romano l'il* (No.34, 13-19 April 1992, published in Prešov, Czechoslovakia, translation by JVN) documents at least some of these problems:

"I am a Romani woman and a subscriber to *Romano l'il*. You write much truth about Roms and their problems. I agree with you on many points and this is why I am writing to you.

The place where I live is Zvolen and I can see how many Roms live here. They have never worked. They did not want to go to work and, instead, live from social security or

family allowances. These Roms praise the democratic system but a decent Rom, who liked to work [when work was available], who still wants to work and live at a reasonable level, has got no work now, or a subsidy.

At Zvolen, too, we have a number of backward Roms, who make a bad name for us. The Whites have bad experiences with these people. I live in a prefabricated apartment house. There are three Rom families here but we have never had any conflict with the others nor have they with us. On the contrary, we visit each other on the basis of equality.

However, what is the situation in the case of Roms who live in timber houses? These houses were dormitories for single people and are located in good surroundings. However, now when Rom families have moved in, they look like after an explosion. It is simply a catastrophe. The flats are demolished, the surroundings dirty, there is lot of rubbish everywhere, in front of each flat you can see a lot of unused old things.

With regard to parents and the education of children, the situation is very bad. The children are badly dressed, dirty, the parents simply do not look after them. They attend school at their whim. The most important thing for the parents is that they go, instead of attending school, to look up things in rubbish bins - sometimes with their parents - and buy for their parents apple wines, which the parents give to children to drink from an early age. I can see Rom children who smoke and drink beer from bottles, and their parents do not mind. How can they live in this way?...
Alena Čipčalová, Zvolen

Although this letter to the editor seems to reproduce stereotypes about the Roms, the stereotypes, in this case, agree with reality. Note that the writer charges all socioeconomic problems to the account of culture. The problems are not the result of conditions imposed by the matrix society but can be explained by the acquired cultural features of the Roms. While complaining about structural conditions ("we are not given conditions equal to those of the matrix society") is typical for Rom activists, accounting for problems by cultural factors is typical for members of the matrix societies. As we see in the above text, such people are joined by Roms who are eager to integrate.

The main argument here is that the culture of the Roms "makes a bad name" for them and thus limits their access to networks and, what is not said by Čipčalová in the letter to the editor, to linguistic models. We can speak here of *cluster B1* which can be expressed by the formula

SE: culture

SL: limited networks

LG: lack of linguistic integration.

If networks are to be widened and the acquisition of language facilitated, an active policy will be needed. Such a policy, in accordance with the current ideology of interethnic variation, is unlikely to be an assimilation policy or its variety (such as an "integration"). However, even if we apply a "multicultural" policy, the fact is that the Roms will continue living within the same societies with other people, and that it will be difficult to assume that the matrix society is the only one that will change its value system.

3. Deculturation

Deculturation (Information 1991) refers to problems caused by the loss of the traditional culture which is not being replaced by another culture. Traditional work and living skills are being lost and only partly replaced by new skills. The family and community largely decompose. New types of illegal activities emerge. This gives rise to *cluster C1*.

Sociolinguistic (communicative) conditions change accordingly. In the new situation where TV is available in virtually each family, the traditional tale-telling is prone to be lost. The dispersion of families and communities within urban environments only supports this trend. Further, the weakening of the feeling that the linguistic traditions of the community should be maintained seriously affects the maintenance of the Romani language. Except in those communities where isolation has been imposed by the matrix society, children understand the language but often do not speak it any more (Hübschmannová et al. 1991). In many communities this situation extends to the middle generation. The cluster involved can be formulated as

SE: loss of traditional culture
SL: loss of situations of Romani use
LG: language shift.

The attitude will no doubt change as the ethnic consciousness grows, but this is at present quite low. Note that, as mentioned above, out of more than 500 000 Roms in Czechoslovakia only 114 000 declared in 1991 their ethnic origin as Romani. Many Rom politicians and ordinary citizens quite frankly claim that they do not need the Romani language⁶ - either because they want their children to be assimilated or because their Romness (romipen) does not depend on the language. However, from the fact that the language is still strong and from the analogy of other cultures we can predict that it is unlikely to disappear easily. Attempts at its introduction to schools, initially as an auxiliary language for children who arrive with no knowledge of the matrix society language, are currently underway. As the growth of the Rom middle class proceeds, there will be a need for a handy symbol for Rom ethnic self-identification and it would be strange if language would not assume an important position there.

To invest money into the teaching and development of the language without countering at the same time the factors that lead to its massive loss would be futile. The whole cluster must be addressed. A sociolinguistic (communicative) policy that would make people use the language, and a general socioeconomic policy that would remove the "deculturation" of the Roms, must run at the same time or prior to language teaching programs.

4. Attitudes of the matrix population

A number of problems (*cluster D1*) derive from the attitudes of the matrix population towards the Roms. In general, in Central and Eastern Europe the attitudes are currently utterly negative. Ondrušek (1992) reports that

"...one of recent representative public opinion polls (with 2.5 thousand polled participants) came to the conclusion that more than 75% of the population would object to having any

⁶ Even the leading Romani poet Dezider Banga (writing both in Romani and Slovak) is an active member of an organization that proposes the assimilation of Roms (Hübschmannová, forthcoming).

members of the Romany (Gipsy) community as neighbours... Similarly, even among social workers and people in helping professions the situation is not much better..."

Among Slovak social workers 62% rejected Roms as neighbours, 81% as a son or daughter-in-law and 19% thought that they did not have equal right to work as Slovaks.

Effects of these attitudes overlap with those of a number of clusters already mentioned above: they further limit the scope of social situations and networks of the Roms and, by limiting models of the new culture and language, correlate with deculturation. In order to remove the language problems which result, a policy affecting the attitudes of the matrix population must be adopted.

Such policies, however, are not common. The idea of the matrix population is that it is the Roms who have created the problems and who should remove them by either "returning wherever they came from"⁷ or promptly assimilating. A more enlightened version of assimilation is called integration but "multiculturalism", with no hierarchically arranged pecking order between a "majority" (with historical rights) and a "minority", is a concept that has only been applied more recently.

It thus appears that any language policy dealing with the Romani problems must include a policy directed towards the socioeconomic and sociolinguistic attitudes of the matrix populations. This policy is as vital as policies directed towards the Roms themselves. It should be addressed to the government, economic and social organizations and the public in general.

3. WHERE ARE THE PROBLEMS ?

Until very recently, what constitutes a language problem was normally defined by specialists who acted on the basis of their own informal experience and evaluation criteria. The existence of some problems, such as illiteracy or language shift was never questioned. However, under particular conditions, illiteracy may not

⁷ Mann (1992b) quotes Bačová's survey in which 45.2% of subjects in the city of Košice said that they would like to exclude Roms from their country.

constitute a problem - it may be non-literacy which receives no negative evaluation (cf. Srivastava 1984). Similarly, language shift, such as the abandonment of the Romani language, may not be evaluated negatively by participants in the process. This is not to say that the negative evaluation by participants is the only criterion for an issue being designated as a language problem. However, it is an important feature and its absence must be seriously considered. Obviously, it is necessary to commence the listing of problems by an examination of what is or is not considered to be a problem by individual participants in individual discourse (Neustupný 1983).

This procedure has so far not been systematically followed for any community of the world. At least three methods of investigation can be used. The first method for the listing of language problems requires recordings of interactive situations and their analysis. A "follow-up interview" after the recording is normally used to find whether participants evaluated segments negatively (Neustupný 1990). A second and third method are an interaction interview and an examination of verbalizations of negative evaluations. In the former instance we conduct extensive interviews that map actual behaviour of participants in particular events and also examine their evaluation of speech. In the latter case, unsolicited reactions to speech, normally written down, are assembled and analysed. This is a kind of "content analysis" which keeps in mind that not all verbalizations of negative evaluations are the result of the writer's evaluation in the given situation: some may have been derived from ideological considerations or from the system of topics in the communication system concerned.

Two comments should be made here. Firstly, there is a general lack of research on the Rom culture, society and on contact situations between members of the matrix culture and the Roms - a lack that is not frequently noted. For example, not a single group or interdisciplinary project in the area has been recorded for Czechoslovakia. Still less exists from what a listing of evaluations and the final listing of problems can be produced.

The second comment is that research should concern itself with all three types of problems mentioned above: socioeconomic, sociolinguistic and linguistic.

The study of socioeconomic problems must start in actual processes of interaction through recording or interaction interviews. Since the intervention of ideologies is likely to be strong in written materials, content analysis will be difficult to apply. Let me add that negative evaluations either by Romani or non-Romani participants will not automatically form the final list of interaction problems; however, they must stand at the beginning of any listing.

The study of sociolinguistic (communication) problems represents a necessary link between the socioeconomic and linguistic areas. Until the 1960s no models existed that would allow us to survey the whole range of sociolinguistic problems. Thanks mainly to Dell Hymes (Hymes 1962, Neustupný 1987) we now know what it is necessary to look for: norms pertaining to the initiation of situations, the control of variation, the various functions performed, participation of personnel, handling of content, arrangement of messages and the use of channels and the management of discourse.

In contact situations between Roms and the matrix population the most important problems, as mentioned above, are probably those of the violation of socioeconomic norms, but much "misunderstanding" (including the misunderstanding of intentions, attitudes, personality, etc.) probably also derives from the way people communicate: for example, who speaks to whom, about what, how one laughs⁸ and many others. Which of these norms give rise to communication problems? The area must receive proper attention within any future project that aims at solving interaction problems between the Roms and a matrix population.

The study of linguistic norms in the narrow sense of the word, in other words, the study of grammatical, lexical, phonological and graphical competence, is equally important. Are there any typical interaction problems that derive from deviations

⁸ A popular belief is that the Roms never laugh and lack the sense of humour. These suggestions obviously originate in the experience of the matrix population in communicating with the Roms in contact situations, where the control of language leads to strong pidginization of communicative behaviour by Rom participants.

from norms of this type? What is actually the situation with regard to pidginization and creolization of the matrix languages? A host of issues awaits future researchers.

4. OBJECTIVITY OF LANGUAGE PROBLEM SOLUTIONS

As soon as interaction problems are identified, the next question is what solutions are available.

Members of the communities concerned often assume that the language management profession can provide answers which are "objective", "value-free", or "scientifically" valid. Language managers who act on behalf of governments or other groups sometimes suggest that they are able to provide such answers. However, the claim is incorrect (cf. Neustupný 1983, Jernudd and Neustupný 1987).

Active participants in language management can be divided into theorists and executives. In principle, theorists mostly make statements, while executives produce discourse that is advisory and performance-oriented and guides the implementation of policies. The two categories overlap, with some theorists being directly involved in practical management work and some executives (politicians, employees of language management agencies, etc.) also being competent in theory. We expect that the work of theorists consists of displaying what choices exist, what consequences such choices carry, and what solutions are likely to be preferred by what kind of executives and why. Theorists should declare their personal interests and predilections because even if they restrict their suggestions to what has been said above, it is likely that their own personal interest cannot be fully suppressed and will surface in their statements⁹.

⁹ I should hasten to declare my own interests. I believe in multiculturalism, perhaps because I am an "ethnic" who lives in a society which is mostly Anglo-Saxon. My personal history makes me emphasize the issue of equality, mostly social equality, against other criteria. I have never met any significant number of the Roms personally except in the army where a number of them served in my unit. It was a strong experience for me to see how the "personality" of the Roms changed when they left the matrix group

Some executives are trained in theories of language management and as such may also openly display choices and discuss the possible consequences, but this is not often the case. Typical executives, for example an official of a language management association or an official of the ministry of education, after an informal inquiry will normally adopt one particular solution, legitimize it and implement it. Personal or group interests remain undeclared - if any discussion occurs it normally emphasizes the optimality of their selected solutions. In fact, the interests are there and significantly affect the choices and their implementation.

Although there is, to my knowledge, no specialized language management agency for language problems affecting the Roms, we can list even now a number of part-time executives and other agents with differential interests:

(1) Federal, state and local governments

In view of their other engagements, these agents are likely to press for minimum effort solutions. Since to handle socioeconomic problems in interaction is difficult, they may gradually switch to an emphasis on language problems, in particular language teaching.

These agents normally represent the ideologies and interests of the leading groups of the matrix society and are likely to emphasize SE/SL/LG clusters such as the "Rom culture" cluster (i.e., problems occur because of acquired cultural patterns of the Roms). Initially, before the ideology of multiculturalism will prevail, they may defend integrationalist solutions to problems. The fact that the Roms may in principle live with their own culture and language alongside the matrix population may be difficult for them to acknowledge.

Politicians will gradually realize the value of the minority ethnic vote (so far unused in Central and Eastern Europe) and will defend solutions that satisfy leaders of the Rom communities. Language maintenance measures are likely to profit from this fact.

and interacted among themselves, using Romani or, in some cases, Hungarian.

(2) The matrix population at large

The ideology of this population is against the presence of the Roms. However, a similar way of thinking has changed in recent decades in countries such as USA, Canada, Australia, Britain, Sweden, or the Netherlands into the ideology of multiculturalism. According to this ideology all variation is good and should be retained. All "deviant" parts of the population (ethnic groups, women, children, physically handicapped, homosexuals, etc.) possess the same rights. This ideology reflects a historical period when the danger of ethnic separatism has either disappeared or does not pose serious threat to societies in which internal as well as international integration is proceeding fast. When these conditions are fulfilled, the ideology of multiculturalism is likely to appear in the whole of Europe and influence the ways the majority of the population looks at the Roms.

(3) The Rom middle classes

The Stupava conference has emphasized that we must seriously count with the existence of the growing middle classes of Rom origin. The interests of these people, lawyers, politicians, administrators, doctors - and in some countries such as Poland, also merchants and managers - differ from those of their poor cousins. It is interesting to note that these people often accept their Rom ethnicity. The culture and language become for them symbols of their identity. However, a symbol is not necessarily a part of the active culture and many of these people, in fact, have lost the ability to use the Romani language. Although many of them pay lip service to the maintenance of Romani, we should not expect them to be its ardent defenders.

(4) The ordinary Rom

No doubt differentiation will appear among what we today can call "the ordinary Rom". Since there is little chance that they would assimilate in a quiet way, there will be a need for symbols of their identity - and an interest to maintain the language, again, is likely to emerge as one of them. This may happen despite the fact that the practical communicative functions of the Romani language may be limited and the competence of the community in the language may decrease.

A language management theorist can predict a plurality of interests that are likely to be represented by a plurality of language management agents with partly identical and partly diverging policies. On the basis of our experience we can expect that the ideology of variation (multiculturalism) will become very strong and that together with it policies towards the maintenance of the Romani language will become an important component of language management. However, the SE and SL components of the clusters may receive less attention and may not provide a sufficient backup for a process that would maintain the language. On the other hand it is most likely that the processes of pidginization and creolization will recede under the conditions of lesser isolation from the matrix society.

5. ONE SPECIAL PROBLEM: THE STANDARDIZATION OF ROMANI

In this section I shall discuss one particular problem from the point of view of a language theorist. The problem is the standardization of Romani. An opinion has recently appeared that the teaching of the Romani language in Czechoslovak schools, even its use as an auxiliary language for first grade children who possess no other language, should wait until the language is codified. What can the theory of language management contribute to the issue?

In the first instance we can help to clarify what codification is. Codification normally means the fixation of the norms of a standard language in an explicit way. Obviously, in the case of the Romani language the task is to produce the standard norm, i.e. to standardize (Daneš 1988) first, before the norm can be codified. Of course, the norm of a dialect can also be codified, but this does not seem to be what has been meant in this case. Standardization is not necessarily accompanied by codification: Hancock (personal communication) has pointed to the case of standardization of Romani in the USA, which has not led to codification. It simply means that features of a certain dialect (or a mixture of features from several dialects) are selected as "standard" features, in the case of which the label "dialect A" is erased. The result is a variety

of language¹⁰ that is neutral with regard to regional or register labels, and which is developed to serve a large number of intellectual functions within the community.

Secondly, a language management theorist can provide a history of standardization and codification, which leads to some prediction concerning the immediate future. In Early Modern societies, where the spoken language became the base of the incipient Standard, standardization proceeded slowly, both in the written and the spoken language. By the second half of the 18th century the spelling of most European languages was still relatively free and the same can be said about the lexicon and grammar. In German and Czech the codification process was not finalized until the turn of the 19th century.

However, in the following "modern" period the Standards and their codification were taken very seriously. Written communication never employed any other variety than the Standard, and in speaking a language close to the Standard was used. Even in languages such as Czech, which are characterized by a diglossic situation (the duality of Standard and Common Czech), some members of the middle class tried to speak the Standard in virtually all situations, even where Common Czech would normally be employed. Codification was extensive and strictly adhered to.

The use of the Standard was often legitimized by referring to communication problems that would appear should dialects be used. However, sociolinguists know of a phenomenon called "semi-communication" (Haugen 1966) in which speakers of languages such as Norwegian and Swedish, or Czech and Slovak use their own language when speaking with each other and no major misunderstandings eventuate. No doubt, with institutionalization, such practice yields excellent communicative results and is fully applicable to the Romani situation.

It is necessary to realize that today most countries of Europe do not live in a "modern" system any more. Even if they have not necessarily become fully "post-modern", they are in the course of a

¹⁰ For this language the term "Standard" is commonly used in English, while other languages use other terms such as "Literatursprache" (German), "spisovný jazyk" (Czech), etc.

transition towards postmodernity. The new epoch shows a much more friendly attitude towards dialects and variation in general. For example, even the BBC, once a staunch defender of Standard English, now uses announcers with local accents. It appears that contemporary societies can function without a Standard (and its codification). At the same time constraints on the mixing of varieties are also relaxed and we find that, for instance, Czech intellectuals speak usually a language in which Standard and non-Standard (Common Czech) elements are used side by side even in semi-formal or formal situations (the president's radio broadcast).

In this atmosphere a language management theorist will claim that it would be unrealistic to require that the strict "modern" view of standardization and codification be applied to the current situation of the Romani language. Of course, we should expect that as contact between speakers of various Romani dialects intensifies, some form of standardization will automatically appear. At the same time it is necessary to anticipate that the language will further develop in order to satisfy complicated communicative needs. No doubt, organized attempts to standardize and codify will continue (for example, the activities of the Romani Union) or newly develop at national levels or internationally, but only some of them will agree with developmental tendencies and can be expected to succeed.

It is most unlikely that in the case of the Romani language a state of affairs similar to that of the immediately past "modern" European languages would or should be created. The dialects of the Romani language will come closer to each other¹¹, but they will form a free grouping with a common newly developed core, rather than one single Standard language of the old type.

Language managing executives can influence the process of the new type of standardization by creating conditions under which the unguided processes will eventuate. They can ensure that Romani is employed in local administration, in meetings and conferences, in cultural life of the community, youth camps, in radio and television. It is possible to encourage the use of the

¹¹ As they already do, see Hübschmannová 1989, p.115 et sequ. and Hübschmannová et al. 1991, p.7.

language in a considerable number of written documents and in school textbooks.

In this connection I cannot but refer to the model of variation which L.Khubchandani (Khubchandani 1981) has postulated for Indian languages, a model in which grass root multilingualism exists and in which there are no hierarchies, no penalties for mixing; there is no Standard. Of course, it is doubtful whether this state of affairs is true for contemporary Indian languages. However, it is not impossible that elements of this model are not very distant from the current attitudes of the Roms to their language, and that the situation might exert positive influence on the future process of standardization of Romani as I envision it.

The third way in which the language management theory can contribute to the issue of standardization of Romani is the question what are the consequences of various paths of solving the problem. The rigid "modern" model of standardization not only requires large amounts of linguistic expertise and time, but is obviously very expensive. Before the task would be finished, the solution might not agree with the ways how either the Roms or the matrix society look at the issue. On the other hand, the application of a postmodern model is likely to raise objections from those who have been educated within the older system and who would like to see the issue handled in a more traditional way. In the case of the Roms there may be a need to jump over the "modern" period and in the case of the matrix participants to get away from the remnants of the old ("modern") paradigm. Unless a strong leadership in the matter emerges, a period of confusion may result.

Fourthly, as a language management theorist I can hypothesize about the possible attitudes of various interest groups towards standardization. Those who do not believe in maintaining the Romani language will either show lack of interest or will prefer a solution that postpones the beginning of actually using it. We can predict that those for whom the language only fulfils a symbolic function may come out to support a more "prestigious" solution of the older type. However, it is in the interest of those who actually need the language to adopt a fast solution of the "postmodern" type.

The above discussion has attempted to remain at the "theorist's" position. However, the reader may have noticed that I do hold my personal convictions and do in fact support particular solutions, such as an early "postmodern" solution of the standardization issue. I believe in multiculturalism and believe that languages should be given due consideration - even if it may not be possible to retain the present level and pattern of linguistic variation in the world.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this paper the management model (Jernudd and Neustupný 1987, 1991) of the solution of language problems has been used to discuss some issues faced by the Roms. The model has been extended by suggesting two new components: the SE/SL/LG cluster, and the theorist/executive distinction.

Whatever may eventually happen to the Romani language, at present it is still very much alive. Those who had the opportunity to listen to speeches given in Romani at conferences such as at Stupava, speeches in which a polished variety of the language¹², without uncontrolled borrowing was used, are likely to believe that the future for the language is bright. We should not forget that even if language shift proceeds over the next decade or so, the growth of ethnic consciousness will give Romani a strong stimulus for maintenance. Although it is difficult to imagine that Romani would be developed to serve as a tool in all domains of communication, it is also unlikely that it will completely disappear. Within the process of maintaining and developing the language, the attitudes of the matrix societies will be as important as those of the Roms themselves.

In integrated Europe the multicultural model should widely apply and the Roms will not remain the only ethnic group of its kind. Although the mixing of groups will not - at least not initially - be of the magnitude that monolingual and monocultural areas will disappear, there will be mixing, and the fact that the Roms lack a

¹² Cf. equally positive comments on the language of such public speaking in Hübschmannová, forthcoming.

continuous territory of their own may lose much of its significance. They will be just another widely dispersed group which may maintain its language for some communicative functions exactly because of its dispersion and mobility.

In the Draft European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages issued in February 1992 by the Council of Europe, languages other than national languages are divided into "territorial" and "non-territorial". The latter group includes languages that "although traditionally used within the territory of the state, cannot be identified with a particular area thereof" (Council of Europe 1992, p.3). If the draft is adopted, non-territorial languages, of which Romani is given as an example, will enjoy a much lower degree of protection than the "territorial" ones. Obviously, the distinction is not made because of Romani. The authors of the draft felt that it was necessary to exclude the languages of the guest workers and Romani happened to be caught in the same net. Perhaps another factor in the decision was the fact that the character of the Rom population in Western Europe is different. However, with the emergence of the new Europe, encompassing contemporary Central and Eastern Europe, the problem of the status of Romani will necessarily be raised again.

At present it is important that the problem of Romani, the problem of the communication of the Roms (both among themselves and in contact with the matrix populations), and the problems of interaction in general will not become the area of language management executives alone. There is a need for theoretically based studies of these problems and for policies that accommodate a fair amount of intervention by language management theorists.

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