UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA
IN KATOWICE

FIRST ONLINE INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR
"ROMANIPE-ROMANI IDENTITY"
OF THE EUROPEAN ROMA SCHOLARS NETWORK (ERSN)

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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Organiser:

Roma Research Centre, University of Silesia, Katowice, Poland

The aim of the International Seminar of the newly established European Roma Scholars Network (ERSN) linked with the Roma Research Centre at the University of Silesia, Katowice, is to bring together young scholars from a Roma heritage and background, working in different universities in Europe, seeking to provide them a platform to exchange new information and scientific knowledge in different fields of scholarship, regarding the history, culture, traditions, language, and other aspects of life of Roma in Europe.

The first International Seminar "*Romanipe-Roma Identity*" will focus on the issues of identity/identities of Romani communities in Europe and the young scientists and researchers are invited to explore different aspects of Romani identity through their ongoing research and to interpret their findings centering on these core issues.

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Keynote speaker:

Dr. Aleksander Marinov, St. Andrews University, Scotland, UK

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

AN INTERPRETATION OF '*ROMANIPE*' SEEN THROUGH THE WORK OF SHAKIR PASHOV (1898-1981)

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Objectives. The paper seeks to explore and present an interpretation of the concept of '*Romanipe*', a set of social norms and values shaping the everyday life of Roma, through the writings of Shakir Pashev. The work of Shakir Mahmudov Pashev (1898-1981), his surname also known as Pashov, is important since he is recognised as one of the first Roma leaders and activists in Bulgaria. His work for the betterment and the civic emancipation of the Roma in Bulgaria is evidenced by his numerous activities and initiatives. His life is a testament to his genuine passion and dedication in the cause of the Roma. Pashev set up civic organisations, published and edited the first Roma newspaper, *Terbie*, and was actively involved in both political and artistic work as it relates to the Roma.

Research methods and techniques. This paper is particularly interested in the narrative of a monographic work which Pashev spent many years developing but never managed to officially publish. The title is translated as "History of the Gypsies in Bulgaria and in Europe. 'Roma'" and is dated 1957. Through the work of the ERC Project "Roma Interbellum: Roma civic emancipation between the two World Wars", Pashev's monograph has been transcribed and translated and is currently being prepared for publication. Based on a discourse analysis approach, the present paper seeks to illuminate the projected narrative of '*Romanipe*' or Romani identity through his written text.

Results. The preliminary analysis of Pashev's monograph points to the projection of a certain Romani identity which is predominantly positive, deserving of equal status, recognition and respect by Romanies, Bulgarians and the society at large.

Conclusion. The monographic study by Shakir Pashev is a key text which sought to present a certain role and status of the Roma in Bulgaria and abroad.

Pashev's decision to refute certain aspects of the Romani identity and cultural practices and promote and present others could be seen as another example of the fluid and open interpretation of the concept of '*Romanipe*'. Since the paper deals with the written narrative and monograph, the paper offers only the discursive interpretation of the '*Romanipe*' which is but one side of the concept.

Keywords: Roma, *Romanipe*, Romani identity, Bulgaria, civic emancipation, history, Europe, Gypsies, monographic study

SEMINAR PRESENTATIONS

NOTIONS OF *ROMANIPE* IN THE ROMANI LANGUAGE

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Objectives. The aim of the paper is to discuss several phenomena related to definition of *Romanipe* in the Romani language. The language as a distinct construct has been developed in the past ten centuries and it plays a major role in the definition of the identity of Roma. *Romanipe* has not to date been adequately defined in what it encompasses.

The study. The concepts like "border line" and "purity" will be used for defining the reflection of *Romanipe* in the language as well as how they influence modern standard Romani. The purity of the language, the standardization process, the influence of language contacts (including borrowings and code switching) will be the bases for definition of *Romanipe*. Analysis of the intercommunication between cultural, social, political, and economic power will be used to map influences within the language, including the positioning of dialects.

Conclusions. The findings show that the purity of the language is correlated with the positioning of the communities toward each other. Also discussed are the roles of the dominant communities versus oppressed ones (due to political power positioning) and how the standard language is formed.

Keywords: *Romanipe*, identity, purity of language, contact language, dialects

BLESSINGS AND CURSES IN ROMA CULTURE

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Objectives. In this paper, I will analyse the blessings and curses from the collection of Trifun Dimić, *Romana rromaja, sovlahimate thaj bahtarimate –* (*Roma curses, oaths and blessings*) (1985). With this work, I want to show how the most subtle feelings, wishes and fears of the Roma are expressed through blessings and curses. Blessings and curses, as a light and dark side in spoken phraseology, express the essential nature of man, and thus the collective identity of a nation.

Research methods and techniques. In this paper, I focus on the analysis and synthesis of published blessings and curses. The blessings are divided into several categories: for a happy journey; for eating and drinking; for good health; for goodness and a good deed. Curses are divided into the categories concerning: life and death; health and disease; body parts; birth; family curses; curses against animals; and curses in relation to celestial bodies.

Results. Folk beliefs, customs, symbolism of animals and bodies, and toponyms with religious symbolism are woven into curses and blessings. God is most often mentioned both in curses and in blessings, as well as frequent mention of the eye and the serpent. These results have their basis in folk beliefs about God, as well as the symbolism of the eye and the serpent.

Conclusions. In the blessings and curses, the belief in the magical power of the word is preserved, that words can influence one's own destiny, but also the destiny of other people. In the blessings, happiness as a concept occupies a central place, while in curses, God is the most frequent concept. All these terms play a significant role in the cultural identity of Roma.

Keywords: Roma curses, Roma blessings, oral tradition, customs

References:

Dimić, T. (1985) *Romane rromaja, sovlahimate thaj bahtarimate – Romske kletve, zakletve i blagoslovi [Roma curses, oaths and blessings]*. Irig: Srpske čitaonice i knjižnice.
Radulovački, Lj. (2004) *Romi u Sremu [Roma in Srem]*. Belgrade: Nova.

DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF ROMA IDENTITY REFLECTED IN ROMANI IDIOMS

Martina Horňáková
Good Romani Fairy Kesaj Foundation, Košice, Slovakia

Objectives. The aim of the presentation is to show how the Roma perceive themselves and their world through their language. Emphasis is placed on the socio-cultural background of fixed expressions used by Roma in Romani. Special attention is paid to the analysis of the motivation of metaphors and polysemy of lexemes.

Research methods and techniques. The presentation is based on semantic analysis of excerpts of written sources (dictionaries, collections of proverbs, fiction written in the Romani language) and material collected during field research focused on the use of Romani phraseology in the language of native speakers from Eastern Slovakia, based on interviews and a questionnaire (Čermák, 2007; Lakoff and Johnson, 2003)

Results. The study discusses, in a context of the phraseology of Romani, the dichotomy of how the Roma see themselves and others, what it means to be Rom and which values are prioritized by the Roma community.

Conclusions. Analysis of proverbs and idioms revealed specific concepts related to different aspects of Roma identity in Romani. The research shows a tendency toward reduction of semantic fields of some key components of fixed expressions.

Keywords: Romani language, phraseology, fixed expressions, metaphor, traditions, culture

References:

Čermák, F. (2007) *Czech and general phraseology*. Prague: Karolinum.
Lakoff, G., Johnson, M., (2003) *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

THE RELATION OF FREE SPIRIT DISCOURSE TOWARD ROMA WITH AVOIDANT ATTACHMENT

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Objectives. There are various beliefs, patterns of behaviour and thoughts against Roma. One of them is a belief that states that they have adopted the philosophy of freedom from the past to the present. According to most people, Roma have a so-called 'free spirit'. The presentation argues that the purported 'free spirit' attributed to the Roma emerges because of attachment styles, and this style is termed 'avoidant attachment'. For various reasons, a secure relationship cannot be established between Roma families and their children. It is thought that avoidant attachment occurs due to living conditions. Avoidant attachment is an attachment style a child may develop when their parent or main caretaker doesn't show care or responsiveness past providing essentials like food and shelter. The child still struggles and feels anxiety or sadness, but does so alone, and denies the importance of those feelings. Self-confidence of individuals with avoidant attachment is quite high. They don't need the presence and support of others, and they avoid developing close relationships. For this reason, they are likely to be recognized or perceived as being free-spirited.

Research methods and techniques. For this presentation, I investigated the relevant research literature in psychology on attachment theory. Further data collection for the study is still in progress. It is planned for the research to be conducted in Turkey among Muslim Roma interviewees. A questionnaire method will be utilised.

Conclusion. The presentation will only introduce the theoretical framework of the study.

Keywords: attachment theory, Romani children, insecure attachment

THE MOST IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF ROMA FROM TRADITIONAL GROUPS

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The word 'tradition' designates the act of transmission. The origin of this word is trader, which means to pass on to the other. Tradition is the action by which we pass on something, give something to somebody. We can pass on historical facts or events, religious doctrines, and theses. One of the most important characteristics of Roma people is the family and solidarity inside the family. The Roma family is the most important value and is strong and close. Hospitality in the Roma family is a basic characteristic.

Honour in the family is particularly important. The concept of purity and impurity is also important between different Roma groups within the communities. That differs from the Jewish approach towards purity and impurity.

Love and respect are also particularly important components in Romani culture. In the Roma family, everybody knows their place and respect for others, especially for the elders, is an unwritten law. The highest honour in Roma culture is to serve others, to help others, to be useful to the family and community.

Keywords: traditions, honour, respect, love

EXPRESSIONS OF LOVE AND TEACHING RESPECT AS PART OF *ROMANIPE* IN CHILD-DIRECTED SPEECH IN TRADITIONAL ROMA FAMILIES

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Objectives. The presentation analyses language expressions of love towards children and teaching them language forms of respect in child-directed speech in traditional Roma families. Respect towards others and especially toward the elders is one of the most important elements of *Romanipe*. In extended traditional Roma families, all the members of the family and the community members take care and communicate with the children. Expressions of positive emotions towards the young children is quite normal and very often the emotions are supported verbally.

Research methods and techniques. The presentation is based on a longitudinal study with four Roma children between the ages 1;0–3;0, living in the Fakulteta Roma settlement in Sofia, Bulgaria. A Roma woman belonging to the community audio-recorded the child-directed speech (CDS) and the conversations between parents and children or adults and children were analysed for the purpose of this study.

Results. Teaching the language forms of respect to the family members, very often the parents express their love to their children with sentences which start with "*Xav to/ti/te…*" ('To eat your…') and the parents and relatives can mention different parts of the face or of the body. Together with that, the language forms of respect and politeness are introduced to children from a very early age. The paper analyses linguistic forms such as interjections, metaphors and different discourse strategies used by family members in CDS as forms of expression of love and teaching respect and politeness.

Conclusions. For the first time in the field of acquisition of Romani, the findings show the early acquisition of pragmatic aspects of the language, and the presentation relates to the basic work of E. Bates (1976, 1979), where the words are conceived as symbols. Expressions such as "*Xav to/ti/te…*" ('To eat your…') are symbols of love towards children and this is another way of

teaching the children from an early age behavioural aspects of politeness according to Roma culture.

Keywords: Romani language, pragmatics, love, respect

References:

Bates, E. (1976) *Language and context: The acquisition of pragmatics*. New York: Academic Press.

Bates, E. (1979) *The emergence of symbols. Cognition and communication in infancy*. New York: Academic Press

ROMANIPE AND ROMANI WOMEN IN POLAND

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Objectives. The aim of the paper is to present and analyse *Romanipe* – Roma identity, traditions, customs, moral standards, and values – in relationship to Romani women from the Polska Roma sub-group in Poland in the 21st century. I focus on Romani women's role in maintaining *Romanipe.*

Research methods and techniques. The presentation is based on detailed and in-depth qualitative cultural and anthropological analysis. This method allows the analysis of the collected data about the *Romanipe* code. My analysis is based on interviews of 10 Romani women representing the young generation of Roma (between 20-40 years old), as well as participant observation and desk research.

Results. The data shows that a significant majority of *Romanipe* elements – including the rules regarding the women's purity, and sexual control – regulate women's daily life, sexuality and patterns of behaviour. Thus, Romani women embody *Romanipe* with their proper and right behaviour, dress and appearance. They raise the children according to Roma principles, customs, and traditions, which have a crucial role in maintaining *Romanipe* and passing it on to the next Roma generation. Women also give up their power and subordinate themselves to males in this regard. Social control, strong family relations, and male domination serve to prevent women from refusing to adhere to the *Romanipe* roles.

Conclusions. The research showed the significance of Romani women's role in the maintenance of *Romanipe*, as well as the survival of Roma groups and Romani culture. Even though *Romanipe* is formulated and implemented by Roma in several ways, the Romani women's role is critical in the process of maintaining *Romanipe* from generation to generation. By passing on *Romanipe*to offspring and putting emphasis on raising children in *Romanipe*, teaching them how important it is to follow the rules, and stressing self-control of one's behaviour, Romani women assure the continuity of *Romanipe* and Roma culture.

Keywords: Romani women, Roma identity, *Romanipe*, Romani customs.

ROMA RESEARCHER? AN AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHY OF EXPERIENCING THE DOMINATION OF *GADJE* ACADEMICS

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Objectives. The purpose of this presentation is to analyse my experience as a Roma researcher in the world of academia dominated by non-Roma (*Gadje*) academics. The scientific discourse on the Roma in Poland shows how Roma are colonized,[1] how the myth of the eternal nomad is reproduced, resulting in the construction of the Roma as not adaptable to "normal" life (End, 2012). Therefore, in this field, we need a perspective coming from the Roma themselves, which is now lacking in Polish science. Participatory, mixed research teams are rare, which affects the quality of research.

Research methods and techniques. The experiences and reflections I describe are part of the methodological chapter of my doctoral dissertation entitled: *External migrations of Roma and the integration policy towards the Roma in Poland after 1989*. This part is based on auto-ethnography, conversations, and observations (Silverman, 2019).

Results. Being a Roma researcher, studying Roma, is to explore ourselves, our families, close and distant friends or Roma from other groups. This research status also deals with crossing ethnic borders and disrupting the intergroup distance – we communicate our research in Polish, we publish in Polish, but the research field is often immersed in contact with Roma. On the other hand, as Roma, we are subject to the assessment of our community: we may be deemed 'suspect' and accused of gathering private information from and about our community; raising topics seen as controversial or taboo is also a risk. The consequences of such acts may be negative and irreversible and access to the Roma community may be blocked.

Conclusions. The presentation shows the complicated and difficult position of the Roma researcher who faces many ethical dilemmas, challenges and choices in research on Roma. *Gadjo* researchers face different complicated issues. Therefore, the best solution is to create truly participatory Roma-*Gadje* research

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[1] Non-Roma were and are responsible for the policy of knowledge (its production, control and distribution). Only recently have the Roma been trying to take over the narratives about themselves and to create their own picture of reality.

teams where the Roma can be equal researchers influencing the research at every stage, and not just gatekeepers, as is the case today.

Keywords: Roma, *Gadje*, auto-ethnography, Roma research

References:

End, M. (2012) History of Antigypsyism in Europe: the social causes. In: H. Kyuchukov (ed.), *New faces of antigypsyism in modern Europe*. Prague: Slovo 21, pp. 7-15.

Silverman, C. (2019) From reflexivity to collaboration: Changing roles of a non-Romani scholar/activist/performer. *Critical Romani Studies 1*(2), 43-63.

LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES OF THE ROMA IN THE CONTEXT OF IDENTITY AND LANGUAGE MANAGEMENT

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Objectives. This presentation explores the language ideologies of the Roma in the Slovak Republic with emphasis on two categories: (a) language and national identity of the Roma, and (b) language problems of the Roma and the possibilities of their solution. The purpose is to document the language ideologies of the Roma in accordance with language management theory (LMT) (Neustupny, 2012), language problems and the Roma strategies for their solution. The aim is to discover the connections and relationships between the categories mentioned of Roma language ideologies with overlaps in the management of solving Roma language problems.

Research methods and techniques. The presentation is based on language field research, a corpus of metalanguage data mainly obtained by means of two research methods: (a) narratively semi-structured interviews in the Romani language (metalanguage discourse), and (b) participatory observation (verbal behaviour of speakers).

Results. The main research problem that results from the findings is the conceptualisation of discursive procedures, strategies and forces that form the aspect of the relationship between Roma language ideologies and the management of Roma language problems. This research primarily raises questions concerning the direction of further research on Roma language ideologies, the relevance of which is mainly determined by the general situation and status of the Romani language in the Slovak Republic.

Conclusions. One of the most important findings of the research is the relationship between Roma language identity and the Roma language problems in the context of language ideologies with overlaps in language management. The Romani language is not accepted in society, and it becomes a problem because there is no information within official institutions in Romani, the children do not study it at school, and the Roma cannot use it freely in society in the Slovak Republic. Against the background of these questions, the author

discusses the problems of Romani language in the context of LMT as a theoretical approach to language and communication. At the same time, the subject of discussion and conclusion concerns the question of conceptualisation of Roma language ideologies as the source of language problems, leading to their possible solution.

Keywords: language ideologies, language identity, Romani problems, Slovak Republic, language management

References:

Neustupny, J.V. (2012) Theory and practice in language management. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, 22(2), 295–301.

E-*ROMANIPE*- CONSTRUCTING IDENTITY VIA THE INTERNET

Monika Szewczyk
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Objectives. The article deals with a focus on shaping Roma identity by using new technologies. Observation of Roma activity on social networks shows that the internet constitutes an important communication channel both inside and outside the group. The analysis of the transmitted verbal and visual messages is crucial in examining the identity, everyday life, cultural patterns, and communication codes used by the Roma. Visual culture is the backdrop for all social activities and interactions, collection of forms and meanings; it is also a source and determinant of individual images, signs and symbols that constitute them.

Research methods and techniques. The experiences and reflections I have described are the results of ethnographic research on the internet, and online observation of various Roma groups. The research was carried out as part of the project "Transnational life of Polish Roma - migrations, family and ethnic borders in the changing European Union" funded by National Science Center and carried out at the Center for Migration Research of the University of Warsaw.

Results. *Romanipe*, a set of social norms and values shaping the everyday life of Roma, is, next to a language, one of the elements of Roma identity. Failure to comply with these standards may result in exclusion from the group or ostracism. *Romanipe* is also manifested in social media control as a communication tool and in this broader context, this phenomenon can be analysed as inherent in Roma culture.

Conclusions. The presentation shows how Roma construct their identity using social media. The active online participation of Roma on social networks through the creation of verbal messages (in Romani language) and non-verbal messages is a demonstration of Roma identity through E-*Romanipe* structures.

Keywords: Roma, social media, E-*Romanipe*, performativity, identity

CULTURAL APPROPRIATION AS AN ELEMENT IN THE DISTORTION OF ROMA IDENTITY

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Objectives. The aim of the presentation is to discuss key elements in the cultural appropriation and the distortion of the image and identity of the Roma. The mass mkedia as an industry often strives to profit by selling products / services with the term 'Gypsy' in the form of something 'exotic', 'mysterious', 'magical', while disregarding the reality in which Roma live. Elements of Roma culture are copied and these elements are used outside their original cultural context, distorting the Roma identity and image.

Research methods and techniques. The presentation is related to my doctoral dissertation: "'Gypsy Life Style' and Perception by the Roma Community". I conducted the research project employing an ethnographic method, utilising narrative interviews of Polish Roma. Their perspective is essential for the present study.

Results. This topic is important for the creation of the Roma identity. Cultural appropriation refers to the use of elements of Roma culture in a way that does not respect their original meaning, does not indicate their origin, strengthens stereotypes, or contributes to Romophobia. Image appropriation takes the form of denigrating, it refers to a situation where someone adopts an element of the Roma culture, for example to ridicule or degrade. I also base my results on a website review, where elements of cultural indigeneity are indicated.

Conclusions. The research sheds light on Roma perceptions of the elements of cultural appropriation. They also point to the creation of a false identity by the majority community. Roma stereotypy in regard to their homesteading shows a pattern of oppression of the Roma as contrasted over against the majority community and its colonial activities. The appropriation of aspects of Roma culture is in no way thought through and conceptualised by the majority group, but only strongly reproduces and perpetuates the stereotypes.

Keywords: Cultural appropriation, Roma identity, false identity, stereotype