

LANGUAGE GROUPS AMONG THE GYPSIES IN HUNGARY
AND SOME ASPECTS OF THEIR ORAL CULTURE

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In the present paper the following topics will be briefly discussed: Firstly, general data concerning the Gypsy population in Hungary and its linguistic situation are presented. Secondly, some of the first results of an ongoing research project dealing with the linguistic socialization of Gypsy children in traditional communities will be discussed, including some educational implications. Finally, some recent practical developments in the linguistic and cultural policies concerning Gypsies are briefly surveyed.

i) *Gypsies in Hungary and their linguistic situation*

The latest sociological survey of Gypsies in Hungary, carried out in 1970, put the number of the country's Gypsy inhabitants at 320 thousand (Kemény, 1974). According to some recent estimates their number must presently be somewhere between 350 and 400 thousand, that is, nearly 4 per cent of the population in Hungary belong to this ethnic group.

According to linguists' estimates, roughly one third of Gypsies in Hungary maintained their original mother tongue, Romāni, a language of Indian origin: that is, Romāni is the mother tongue of more than one hundred thousand people in this country.¹ Thus, Romāni-Hungarian bilinguals represent one of the greatest, if not the greatest, bilingual group among the different ethnic minorities in Hungary.

As to the other linguistic groups within the Gypsy population in Hungary, an additional 8 per cent - about

30 thousand people, the so called Boyash Gypsies - speak certain dialects of the Rumanian language as mother tongue. This is the consequence of a language shift which occurred in the Rumanian area. The remaining group of Gypsies, about half of the Gypsy population living in this country, is at present linguistically assimilated to the Hungarian population.

The linguistic group we are mainly concerned with, that of the Romāni-speaking Gypsies, is itself split up into different dialect groups. The overwhelming majority of Romāni-speaking Gypsies belong to the Vlach dialect group. Speakers of this dialect immigrated into Hungary from Moldavia in the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. Sub-dialectal groups within this dialect, e.g. Mašāri, Drizāri, Colāri and the most widespread and most prestigious, Lovāri, can be traced back to former tribal and/or occupational units. (There are only minor linguistic differences among these subdialects). The rest of the Romāni-speaking population belongs to three unevenly represented dialects, Gurvāri, Romungro and Sinto.

The essential grammatical features and a great part of the lexicon are common in each of the Romāni dialects spoken in Hungary. Dialectal differences are limited to certain phonemic-phonetic traits and especially to the stock of loanwords, the latter depending on the immigration history (that is to say, on its period and former contacts with other peoples). Accordingly, the Vlach dialect is marked by a great amount of loanwords from Rumanian, while for example, the Romungro dialect is characterized by a significant lexical stock of older Hungarian and Serbo-Croatian loans, Sinto by strong German influence in its lexicon,

etc.

Linguistic contacts among at least some of these dialectal groups are rather widespread: diglossic use of two dialects (e.g. the use of Vlach, especially its most prestigious variant, Lovāri, by speakers of Gurvāri when performing particular genres of folklore (cf. Vekerdi, 1977) can be found, just as the trend to shift from one dialect to another (e.g. in certain communities, the gradual penetration of Vlach dialect features into the much less prestigious Gurvāri has recently been observed).

As to their present social situation, in the last several decades the majority of Gypsies have had to give up their original occupations, e.g. making adobes, horse-dealing, smithery, working as wandering merchants, or have preserved them as a complementary job, and at present work as unskilled workers in industry or as occasional day-workers in agriculture.

As to the type of their bilingualism, it belongs to the category labelled "bilingualism with diglossia" (Fishman, 1967). That is, the use of the two languages is functionally separated: Romāni (or in the case of Boyash Gypsies, Rumanian) is used for the purposes of intra-group, informal communication, while Hungarian is the language used for public purposes and for communicating with the members of the other linguistic community. (Intra-group use of Hungarian also frequently occurs when topics belonging to official, institutional domains - school, work, public authorities - are discussed).

As to their political status, Gypsies in Hungary

so far are not considered as a nationality, but as a separate ethnic group, having their own cultural values. Their acceptance as an ethnic group itself is a recent, positive development in Hungarian political life: formerly, the so-called "Gypsy question" was considered to be primarily a social problem, the cultural and linguistic sides having been completely neglected.

The research I shall speak about, just like some other research projects undertaken in different branches of the social sciences, has been made possible owing to this change in cultural policy, - to the insufficient but growing recognition of the importance of cultural and linguistic factors in social conflicts, difficulties of adaptation, under-achievement and failure in education experienced even today by a great part, if not the majority, of the Gypsy population in Hungary.

ii) *Research on linguistic socialization in traditional Gypsy communities: Some of the first results*

In coping with educational problems, one of the greatest sources of difficulties is that we hardly know anything about what happens to Gypsy children until they get to institutions - kindergartens, schools: every aspect of family socialization lacks reliable information and specialized knowledge. Earlier educational research, relying mostly on guesswork and partly on casual observations, characterized the education and family socialization of children in traditional Gypsy communities as a negative process from all possible points of view: all the children's failures at school were attributed to their supposed severe educational and linguistic deprivation (e.g. Várnagy and Vekerdi, 1979; Tomai, 1979). The lack of adequate linguistic input and conversation with the child is particularly stressed in these studies.

The present study is primarily concerned with this latter, controversial aspect of Gypsy children's family education: the functions, features, and peculiarities of adult-child linguistic interaction, and children's linguistic socialization in traditional Gypsy communities. The research, relying to a great extent on international work in this field, was directed at the following questions: What are the main characteristics of child-directed speech in traditional Gypsy communities? What kinds of language use are Gypsy children socialized for? How much and in what way do caretakers stimulate the child to speak? Do the ethnographic traditions of the given community influence child-directed speech? What are the expectations as to the child's linguistic development, and how does the child develop his/her linguistic competence?

A further part of the present investigation was concerned with certain aspects of the communication within Gypsy children's communities. The research tried to explore what Gypsy children use their native language for (beyond the trivial communicational purposes of their everyday life). Do the equivalents of the oral genres of adult Gypsy folklore (tale, anecdote, joke, etc.) exist within children's communities, i.e. does a kind of autonomous Gypsy children's folklore exist? (We know as little about this last issue as about adult-child interaction in traditional Gypsy communities).

Data were collected from 13 settlements of the country. Only such bilingual Gypsy communities as had previously been proved to preserve some kind of ethnographic traditions were selected for research.

The data of our investigation shed light on a

situation radically contradicting the assumptions about the serious linguistic deprivation mentioned in the introduction: in our material we can detect the outlines of a peculiar, very rich, oral Gypsy culture, which, from the moment of his birth, surrounds the Gypsy child, and of which he is a participant from his first consciousness. Salient peculiarities of child-directed speech could be classed into two groups. Some of these peculiarities are to be found in other cultures as well. The presence of these phenomena, e.g. the simplification of the phonological form of the words - following universal rules -, the use of baby-talk lexicon, the great redundancy induced by the frequent repetition, the chanting, the expressive prosody of the speech directed to the child, all these clearly show that, similarly to members of other language communities, Gypsy speakers involuntarily modify their language use when talking to a child (cf. Snow-Ferguson, 1977).

The other group of phenomena explored in Gypsy child-directed speech is in our view closely related to the peculiarities of Gypsy folk culture, just as the characteristics of children's plays and narratives are. Such determining features of oral Gypsy traditions are, for example, the following:

Improvisational presentation: Researchers of ethnography and folk music (e.g. Nagy, 1978; Kovalcsik, 1985) share the opinion that pieces of folklore collected in Gypsy communities - folk-songs, tales - are usually of looser construction and of more improvised nature than the equivalent pieces of European folklore. That is to say, in the pieces of Gypsy folk literature, as opposed to the more bound and more impersonal nature of European folklore, the events that are well-known

to the whole community, or the personal emotions and life of the tale-teller, or the particular events of his life very frequently appear. Olga Nagy, a Transylvanian researcher of folk-tales, expressed the view that this type of tale-telling represents the most archaic phase of the development of tales, where tales are part of the everyday life of the given community, interwoven with the episodes of this life, and tale-telling is a natural, self-evident activity practised by every member of the community (cf. op. cit.)

Dialogical character: A further important feature of the pieces of Gypsy folklore is their strongly dialogical character, which is characteristic not only of the epic genres (folk-tale, ballad) but, unusually enough, of lyrical songs, of the genre of the so-called "slow song" ("lōki djīli", cf. Hajdú, 1962; Kovalcsik, 1985) as well. (In Hungarian folk poetry the conversational character is unique to the epic genres, cf. the entry "dialogue" of the *Encyclopaedia of Hungarian Ethnography* Vol. 4, 1981).

The data presented below illustrate the importance of these features in the fields investigated.

a) *Dialogue-improvisation in the language spoken to the child*

A well-known phenomenon for the researchers of child-directed speech, of the "input language", is dialogue-modelling. This means that the mother answers her own questions for the child who is in the preverbal stage or does not answer for some other reason. (e.g. Mother: "Where is the ball? - Here is the ball!"). The importance of this communicational strategy used in the preverbal stage or in the initial stage of learning to speak is that it provides the child with patterns of

adequate behaviour in the question situation. The descriptions at hand about this phenomenon (and my investigations in non-Gypsy families) show that in the case of dialogue-modelling the question-answer pairs produced by the mother are very narrow both in content and in length: these kinds of one-person dialogues, like child-directed speech in general, borrow their topic from the events going on in the present or in the very near or immediate past or future, or, from events directly relevant for the child; and their length is usually not more than two, or some more, turns.

The equivalents of this involuntary language teaching strategy are instanced in the case of Gypsy speakers as well. In our investigation, however, we found quite an unusual, in our view, unique alternative to dialogue-modelling: long, colourful dialogues built up of numerous turns, improvised by the mother, whose topic is not a directly experienced event, but the future life of the child, his future tasks, activities, possible conflicts of his adult life, smaller or greater events of his future life, and all this very often in a very minute, tale-like or dramatic presentation. An example of this in the following dialogue-improvisation describing a scene of the fair, the main hero of which is the addressee, Déneshke, who is all of 6 months old at the time of the recording:

Jakab Mihályné (29)
 Jakab Dávid (Dénesh) (6 months)
 Gyöngyös, 1985
 by Szegő Judit

Gelëm tār vārekāj,
 dūr drom,

We went somewhere on a long
 trip,

udjē, muŕo šav?

O Dēņēšo trādelah e khūrēn;

Pālāl sodē khūre sah phangle,

Dēņēs, pala vurdon?

Haj dik, cłpisar(el): "Dāle,

andrē j akastimē e khurē, haj

tu či les sāqma? haj sō keres?

Mānge trubul vī te trādav, vī sāma

te lav pēj gras?"

He?

(Déneshke is babbling plaintively)

Mištoj dē!

Muŕo šāv žal tār, udjē, muŕo šav?

"Kāj žah, Dēņēs?"

"Ande bārī fōrō.

Ingrāh e grahtēn,"

"Sodē grasten ingreh, Dēņēs?"

"Duj vadj trīnen!"

"Haj dikhāv, te j āmma e fōm,

žās ando foro, te n āmma, či žās;"

"Ha maj kor džas e kasa

žās tar mure dadesā;

duj ženē, biknāsa, paruvās,

kinās cinē khūrēn;"

"Haj sō kereh lenca, Dēņēs?"

"Haj me kamāv e cine khūrēn!

Maj žāv, astarāv andr āndo

didn't we, my son?

The Dénesh was driving the colts;

How many colts were driven

at the back of the cart, Dénesh?

And look, he is shouting: "Mother,

the colts are caught,

can't you watch them? What are you doing?

Am I bound to drive and to watch

the colts as well?"

Hm?

All right, all right!

My son is leaving, isn't he, my son?

"Where are you going, Dénesh?"

"To the Great Fair.

We are driving the horses;"

"How many horses are you driving, Dénesh?"

"Two or three!"

"Then I'll see, if the Gypsies come

we'll go to the Fair, if they do not, won't;

"Then we'll go ...

go with my father;

two of us, we sell, swap,

buy small colts;"

"What will you do with them, Dénesh?"

"Well, I love small colts!

Then I will go and harness them to the

vurdòn, haj/kidav oprè e bute	cart and pick up the plenty of
xurdè savorèn, po vurdòn, me pale	small children and I'll
trädav pe les" - udje, mokam?	drive" - shan't I, my son?
Trädèl muro barò šav e grahtèn!	My big son will drive the horses!
E khurèn, a me pale cipij pe tu:	The colts, and I will shout
"Dëneskë(m)! Lë sãma, kam lena	"My Dëneshke! Watch out, because the
t e grah po muj, mufo šav!"	horses might betray you!"
"Haj nã dara, mama, man çì lel ma,	"Don't worry, mother, they won't catch
me çì dãrav katar e grast!"	me, I am not afraid of horses!"
Udjë, muro šav?	Are you, my son?
Hãj?	Hm?
Lindralò j lo, Dëneskë?	Is the Dëneshke sleepy?

Very similar topics of dialogue-improvisations can be found on the same recording: Dëneshke's tasks at home, breeding horses, his conflicts at school and in his future marriage; the problem of the heritage after the parents' death, etc.

b) *Gypsy children's play: "What is in the sky?" - the anvil-game*

The second text illustrating Romãni oral culture is taken from our collection of children's play. The game is as follows: The children participating in the game - 5-13 year-old girls in this case - sit on the floor in straddle position in such a way that they sit between the legs of the girls in the following row. A child chosen in advance stays on all fours; he is the anvil (Romãni: *kovanca*). In front of the row, facing each other, there are two older girls standing who raise the children one by one putting them on their all fours, and then one of the girls asks the opening question of the game: *Sòj po çtã?* "What is in

the sky?" or *Sò si po Sunto Dël?* "What is there about the Good Lord?" The child, in her raised position, improvises a text about the Virgin Mary and the Good Lord (who always appears in the texts as the Virgin Mary's husband) and their children, telling it in a chanting, continual and loud voice. The text ends with the word *amen* and/or some kind of formula resembling a supplication or prayer, as e.g. *Åmen, Kristuš, ažutìn p amënde!* "Amen, Christ, help us!" or a longer alternative: *Jãj, Dëvlakom, çumidav tut, kër te šoha n avãh nasvãle, mindig-mindig jëgesšëgëšo t avas!* "Oh, Good Lord, I kiss you, make it that we should never be ill, always-always be healthy!" Depending on the content and form of the improvised text the two older girls dip the child into "gold" or "silver" ("gold" and "silver" can be two spots chosen before, e.g. two corners of the room). The raised child is allowed to tell "ugly" texts as well. (It seems that by "ugly" texts they mean the enumeration of the organs and functions of sexual life and of material exchange and/or special Gypsy curses). In this case the two girls holding the child beat him/her against the anvil and depending on the degree of "ugliness" they dip the child into "urine" or "shit" (i.e. they put the child in a given spot in the room). For the uglier texts they put the child into "urine", for the less ugly ones they put him/her into "shit". All this must symbolize some kind of ritual punishment. The length of the recorded texts can vary from a few sentences to many pages. In most texts the same motifs recur (the children, the household tools and the animals glistening, the coach taking the children to school, the family going to the meadow to pick flowers, etc.). The 5 to 6 year-old children who also participate in the game imitate the chanting style by reciting unconnected motifs of the text. To the question of the collector, who asked what

this game is about, one of them answered: "We honour

this game is about, one of them answered: "We honour
God with it."

Let us see some examples that were appreciated by dipping the child into "gold":

Gyöngyös, 1985

by Szegő Judit

(All the texts were preceded by the question *Sòj po čiri?* "What is in the sky?" or *Sò si po Sunto Dèl?* "What is there about the Good Lord?")

I.

Lakatos Csilla (Hajnal) 11

"Čerhájë, Sunto Mārjë,	"Stars, Blessed Virgin,
phābol lako khër, řadjogil,	her house is glistening,
či dičol andaj sumnakāj,	it cannot be seen because of the gold,
anda sumnakāj kerdjon	the gold turns
gurumburi,	into doves,
hāj sošojë;	and rabbits;
Phābol lako butori, řadjogil,	Her furniture is shining and glistening,
kasavò k butori nāj č eg řomnjë,	no other woman has such furniture,
čeg Sunto Mārjā, sar e Sunto	only the Blessed Virgin, [such a woman]
Mārja.	as the Blessed Virgin.
Dëvlām. Čumlidav tu.	My God, I kiss you,
ažutin p amende,	help us,
šoha na ker t āmas oapte	make it that we never ...
te dël ame Sunto Mārje boldogo.	"Let the Blessed Virgin make us happy."

II.

Jakab Monika (Móni) 12

E Sunto Mārjā,	The Blessed Virgin,
le šavorë čillogil,	her children are glistening,
čillogil vi vōj,	[and] she is also glistening,
čillogil lako khër,	her house is glistening,
čillogil lake gurummë,	her cows are glistening,
čillogil lake šavorë,	her children are glistening,
žan lake šavor and iskòla.	her children go to school,
kana žan lake šavor and iskòla,	[and] when her children go to school,
thovël pa lënde,	she washes their clothes,
thovël pa lënde.	washes their clothes.
Kana čillogil leng-lenge gādā,	When their clothes glisten,
vi vōj čillogil.	she also glistens.
Avën khër lake šavorë,	Her children come home,
žan lasa po řëto,	they go to the meadow with her,
kiden lake luludjë.	they pick flowers for her.
Lake šavorë nasvājvon aba,	Her children got ill already,
ingrël le ka orvošo;	she is taking them to the doctor;
čillogil vōj,	she is also glistening,
sako řëřë čillogil lake:	all kinds [of things] are glistening on her;
vi lako kher,	her house, too,
vi laki gurumi.	her cows, too.
Kana řëřil pehke guruvnjë,	When she milks the cow,
vi lako thod čillogil,	her milk also glistens,
āmen.	amen.

III.

Jakab Mònika (Móni) 12
 (another occasion);
 another child from the group

Sunto Mārjē, čilloḡin lake gādà, Blessed Virgin, her clothes are glistening
 lako rom; her husband;
 Sako fēle čilloḡil; All kinds [of her things] are glistening;
 M̀ndig-m̀ndig žan ānde b̀tjì Always-always they go to work,
 d̀j žēnè, they two [the Blessed Virgin and her husband],
 m̀ndig te ingrèn penge/te xan. always to get some food for themselves.
 Hāj avèn khèrè, And they go home,
 žan m̀ndig ando sunto than, always go to the sacred place²,
 engrèn v̀ peske šavoren. and take their children, too.
 //Ando zèleno r̀to žan peska //They walk in the green meadow
 romesa, with her husband,
 sòn penge colo, haj sòvèn. they put down a sheet, and they sleep.
 Hāj / astàn pàlpàle / avilè, And, after that, they came back,
 khèrè gele; they went home;
 Sò rakhle ando kher? Rakhle: What did they find in the house? They found
 d̀j, trin ibòji. two, three violets.
 Haj phendàs o/ lako rom lake: And her [the Virgin's] husband told her:
 "Sòj gadala, m̀ri romi?" "What are these here, my wife?"

(Laughing; the children start talking loudly. After a while, out-talking
 the noise, another child continues:)

Fejil le; She milks them [the cows];
 Kana thovèl, gada čilloḡil, When she washes, the [washed] clothes glisten,
 v̀ lake šavore / v̀ voj. her children and she also [glisten].
 Sunto Mārjē! Blessed Virgin!
 Kana khèr avel lako rom, When her husband comes home,
 s̀del pa peste. she gets herself
 sòvèl lasa. [and] sleeps with him.
 Avèn khère leske šavore, Her children come home,
 āndr astarel ando hintòvo, she harnesses the coach,
 k̀j phenèl pehke šavore, and says to her children,
 gothè žal lenca. that she goes there [to the meadow] with them.
 Žal po zèleno f̀to lenca lengi She goes to the green meadow with them,
 dejòri, their mommy,
 k̀den penge luludjòrà. they pick flowerets.
 Kana ba t̀le žal o khām, When the sun sets,
 pàlpal avèn, khère, xan they go home, eat,
 haj šon - l ando b-/ pàto, and then [the parents] put them to bed,
 haj sòvèn tar. and they fall asleep.
 Destehāraj, In the morning,
 oprè vuštavèl le lèngi d̀j, their mother wakes them up:
 "M̀re šavore, vuštèn opr, and "Get up, children,
 iškòla trubul te žan!" you must go to school!"
 Oprè vuštèn, gotòn pe, fulavèn pe, They get up, get ready, comb their hair,
 astàrel andre lèngo sòlga, their butler harnesses
 ingrèn le, they take them,
 čilloḡoše / hintòvesa. on a star-decked coach.
 Amen, Kristuš ažuťin p amènde! Amen, Christ help us!
 Amen, Kristuš ažuťin p amènde! Amen, Christ help us!

These and other texts collected among Gypsy children indicate that children living in a traditional Gypsy community, acquire by school age the characteristic features of oral Gypsy culture: the improvisational presentation and even the use of formal style.

If this is so, the question arises: Why do children coming from a traditional Gypsy environment encounter serious difficulties, first of all linguistic ones, at school? Why do teachers get the impression of linguistic deprivation in these children? It would seem natural to assume that difficulties are due to the children's not being Hungarian native speakers. In my opinion, however, this fact alone cannot explain all the language problems arising in their education. For one thing, most of the children coming from a traditional Gypsy community, by the time of starting school, acquire Hungarian on some level. Secondly, as is well-known, children getting into another linguistic environment - provided that their socialization is basically not different from that of their pals - usually get over these difficulties in a few months. The deeper reason for the language problems in the classroom (which we could only note here) is in our view related to the culture of Gypsy communities, or more precisely, to the specific features of their language use that differ from that in the surrounding cultures. One of these differences is, for example, that the linguistic input these children are exposed to lacks written language or written literature, which is one of the major sources of both linguistic and other knowledge. In the traditional Gypsy community children's books are absent from the child's environment; even the typical situations or activities related to literacy (e.g. looking at

children's picture-books, naming objects or asking the names of these objects, activities, people represented in them, etc.) are absent from the everyday activity of Gypsy communities. This means, that in their native community, fostered by illiterate or functionally illiterate parents, these children lack the important linguistic resource that children living in other cultures exploit from the earliest age.

It is worth noting that the above interpretation of the origin of language problems in the classroom converges with recent results in the field: linguistic anthropologists examining language use and opportunities at school from an intercultural perspective have recently ascertained that the basic source of mass failure at school in the case of children coming from disadvantaged social groups or from ethnic groups without literacy must be due to the differences in their language use and to the absence of literacy socialization (cf. Heath, 1982, 1983; Schieffelin and Ochs, 1986). As they stress, in such cases, children could only be successful if there were a bridge between traditional speech events and those appropriate to literacy activities.

iii) *Linguistic and cultural policies concerning the Gypsies in Hungary*

The above-mentioned modification in the government's cultural and linguistic policy has opened up some modest possibilities in the education and cultural activity of this ethnic group.

As regards education, an experimental curriculum for first-grade Romani-speaking children has been published in four booklets by the National Pedagogical Institute (I: *Sityovas te ginavas* "We are learning how

to read"; II: *Amaro krujalipe* "Our environment"; III: *Ginav kathar o jekh zhikaj e desh!* "Count from one to ten!"; IV: *Gilya, poemi, paramichl* "Songs, poems, stories", Budapest, 1984). It is actually being tried out in several classes. Several other programmes aiming at the reduction of children's linguistic and educational difficulties have also been worked out: for example, in the Institute for Post-Graduate Training of Teachers in a Hungarian county (Bacs-Kiskun) an audio-visual programme of Romani has been prepared with the purpose of enabling teachers to communicate somewhat with their pupils in Romani and helping them to overcome their linguistic difficulties in the classroom where the medium of instruction is Hungarian.

Teaching Romāni at two universities (Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest and Janus Pannonius University in Pécs; at the latter, a Rumanian dialect spoken by Boyash Gypsies is also taught) will potentially promote the education of people able to advance language planning and mother tongue education for Gypsies.

As regards recently created frameworks of cultural activity, the Cultural Association of Gypsies in Hungary (Ungrikone Themeske Kulturicko Jekkethanipe) was established in 1986. Its proclaimed objective is to develop language and culture, to publicize it in the non-Gypsy environment, to help the maintenance of the better part of traditions and to promote social progress. The association publishes a newspaper entitled *Romano Nyevipe* ("Gypsy Journal") which appears every fortnight and, besides articles written in Hungarian, contains articles, interviews and literary works in Romāni, too.

One of the main problems of raising Romāni literacy in Hungary is related to the orthography used.

This is namely that, for various reasons, the leaders of the politicized language movement in Hungary have adopted an English-based spelling for the transcription of Romāni texts. However, their potential readers have all learned to read and write in Hungarian classes and in addition, the majority of them, owing to their low educational level, have rather poor skills in this field. As a consequence, they have enormous difficulties in reading texts transcribed in the above way.

Greater sensibility to readers' needs on the leaders' part would be an important prerequisite for any advance in the field of language planning and the development of Romāni literacy.

¹The survey of 1970 puts the proportion of Gypsies characterized by Romāni-Hungarian bilingualism at 21.2% of the entire Gypsy population. For methodological reasons, however, bilingual Gypsies in Hungary are probably under-represented by these data based upon questionnaire accounts. That is to say, a linguistic survey of the Gypsy population is difficult to carry out, because relevant answers concerning intra-group language use are hard to obtain from bilingual Gypsy speakers. Gypsies, as my personal experience also confirms, very often deny their knowledge of Romāni, declaring themselves monolingual speakers of Hungarian, Hungarian having more prestige than the Romāni mother tongue. This language attitude is very similar to that reported by other authors in connection with diglossic language situations (cf. below) (Barker, 1949; Ferguson, 1959). Thus, it is very probable that the estimate of a specialist in Romāni linguistics, J. Vekerdi, according to whom the number of Gypsies speaking Romāni as mother tongue would be over one hundred thousand, comes somewhat closer to reality than the finding of the above-mentioned survey.

²To a place of pilgrimage.

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