Romany Children and Their Preparation for Literacy: A Case Study. *Hristo Kyuchukov*. Tilburg: Tilburg University Press (P.O.Box 90153, 5000 LE,Tilburg, The Netherlands), 1995. x + 79 pp. (paper). ISBN 90-361-9984-0.

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The European Union's funding in 1991 of a newsletter entitled *Interface* devoted to Romani education is symptomatic of the increased interest in Romani educational issues. In this context, the current case study of the preparatory education of Romani children in Bulgaria—a country outside the European Union and not represented in *Interface*'s Ad Hoc Group—is particularly welcome.

The monograph is divided into three parts plus a preface (v), an introduction (vii–viii), appendices (69–74), and a bibliography (75–77) containing 49 items: 16 in Bulgarian, 15 in Hungarian, 9 in English, 5 in Russian, and one each in French, German, Greek, and Italian. The first part, Theoretical Backgrounds, comprises chapters on Romani origins (3–8), Romani education in selected European countries (9–27), and Romani education in Bulgaria (29–34). The second part, Case Study, is divided into two chapters on the psychological preparedness of 5–6-year-old bilingual children for learning to read and write (37–41) and testing the preparedness of Romani children in Bulgaria for these tasks(43–55). The final part, Conclusions, is a single chapter (59–66) consisting of methodological recommendations.

In his preface, Kyuchukov states that his purpose is to inform the reader about Romani language and education and to present his particular case study. The introduction gives a brief general picture of questions of literacy and standardization. Chapter One on Romani language and origins is basically sound but contains numerous errors and poor formulations. Thus, for example, we read on p. 3: "During the 11th century there were two Romany groups, 'ben' and 'phen'. The first group set out to Syria and the second to Armenia. The European Roms were called 'phen'." Kyuchukov is referring here to the word for 'sister' (*phen* in Armenian and European Romani, *ben* in Syrian Romani), which Sampson takes as emblematic in his division of Romani dialects according to their treatment of original Indic voiced aspirates. Unfortunately, Kyuchukov's presentation does not make this clear. The uncritical citation of the folk etymology *ek Gippe* 'from Gippe [a town in Greece]' as the source of the Romani association with Egypt (p. 4) should have been omitted. While some of Romani's most important borrowings from Greek are cited accurately on pp. 4–5, the category of gender is mistakenly listed among them. In fact Romani preserves its Indic heritage in this respect. The productivity of borrowed morphemes

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is by no means peculiar to Romani (p. 6), the presentation of two systems of Romani dialect classification cited on pp.6–7 from Soravia (1984) and Ventcel' and Čerenkov (1976) consists of lists of names with no indications how these dialects are distinguished from or related to one another, and the comparison of sixteen Hindi and Romani words (pp. 7–8) illustrating the fact that Romani is an Indic language contains numerous errors even if one allows for the omission of diacritics (e.g., in the Hindi column *vu* 'earth' should be *bhu*, *gar* 'house' should be *ghar*, *bon* 'salt' should be *lon*, etc., and in the Romani column *fun* 'earth' should be *phuv*, *rum* 'tree' should be *rukh*). These shortcomings aside, the basic facts in this chapter are correct and the treatment of the difficult topic of Romani history is handled judiciously and with reliable dates.

Chapter Two mistakenly claims that "nowhere are they [the Romani people] recognized as minority groups" (p.9). In the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, for example, the rights of the Romani people and their language are explicitly recognized together with other minorities. Kyuchukov gives figures for the number of Roms living in 26 European countries, but he gives no indication of the sources of his figures (p.9). The figure of 260,000 for Macedonia is considerably at variance with the official figure of 43,732 from the preliminary results of the 1994 census, and even allowing for the fact that many Roms do not declare themselves as such it is even beyond the figures cited by Romani ethno-politicians in Macedonia itself. There follows a survey of Romani education in eight European countries: Austria, France, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Sweden, and the UK. The length of treatment varies from nine lines (Finland) to four pages (Hungary). The chapter concludes with six recommendations for improving Romani education (creating textbooks, training teachers, using mother-tongue education, etc.).

Chapter Three is expanded from Kjuchukov (1992). Although it contains much useful information, it passes over in silence the severe discriminatory and assimilationist policies of the Bulgarian government during its attempt to create a mononational Bulgarian state between 1972 and 1985, with particular attention to the assimilation of Muslim Gypsies during 1982–83 (Rudin and Eminov 1993:51). The case study in Chapters Four and Five gives concrete questionnaire and test results together with statistical analyses for different groups of Romani children in kindergarten and in preparatory classes in Sofia and northeastern Bulgaria. (Unfortunately, the exact locations of the communities aside from the Sofia Christian Romani group are not specified.) The conclusions of Chapter Six include sample diagnostic tests for entrance level and at the end of the first and second semesters as well as several concrete suggestions for improving Romani education in Bulgaria. The appendices contain a questionnaire to be filled out by teachers and a Romani diagnostic test in three dialects labeled Kalderari, Sofia, and Northeastern.

The tests differ in some significant details from those published in Kjuchukov (1992).

This work is a valuable addition to the small but growing literature concerned with Romani education, and it is particularly important because it makes available in English both important new material and a study based in a country that does not often figure in "European" discussions. Kyuchukov is to be congratulated for taking such important steps to improve Romani education while at the same time providing valuable concrete data for scholars of education everywhere.

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