

Romanes (Sinte) (Languages of the World/Materials 105). Daniel Holzinger. Munich. LINCOM Europa. 1995. 45 pp. ISBN 3-89586-017-4 (Pb.)

Sepečides-Romani (Languages of the World/Materials 106). Petra Cech and Moses F. Heinschink. Munich. LINCOM Europa. 1996. 65 pp. ISBN 3-89586-036-0 (Pb.)

Burgenland-Romani (Languages of the World/Materials 107). Dieter W. Halwachs. Munich. LINCOM Europa. 2002. 82 pp. ISBN 3-89586-020-4 (Pb.)

Lithuanian Romani (Languages of the World/Materials 452). Anton Tenser. Munich. LINCOM Europa. 2005. 62 pp. ISBN 3-89586-959-7 (Pb.)

Dolenjska Romani (Languages of the World/Materials 457). Petra Cech. Munich. LINCOM Europa. 2006. 69 pp. ISBN 3-89586-772-1 (Pb.)

Reviewed by Victor A. Friedman

The series *Languages of the World/Materials (LoW/M)* began publication in 1993 with the purpose of producing grammatical sketches of the world's languages following a uniform format to allow for comparability for typologists, and coverage of basics for linguists in general. As of this writing, close to 200 of 474 numbered titles have appeared, although new languages are constantly being added. Although the description of Kalderaš by Lev Tcherenkov and Moses Heinschink (*LoW/M* 73) has not yet appeared, the number of Romani descriptions in the series has now reached a point where it will be useful to take stock of those currently available. The publisher's concept of *language* might best be construed as 'linguistic system' or, to borrow the phrasing from Halwachs, *language variety*, eschewing the troublesome language-dialect distinction. On the one hand, it is clear that each of these varieties can be taken as a dialect of the Romani language. On the other, they are different enough that each merits its own description—as do other Romani varieties—and each one represents a different dialect group (see below).

Each of these descriptions is by an expert on the dialect in question, and most are distilled from or elaborated in larger works (Holzinger 1993; Halwachs 1998; Cech and Heinschink 1999; Tenser 2008; the latter a comparative overview of the Northeastern dialects). In the case of the most recent of these, *Dolenjska Romani*, however, the *LoW/M* volume is the most detailed general description available to date. Even for those dialects for which larger descriptions are available, the *LoW/M* volumes are convenient and concise references, especially for those who need to check essential facts or learn the basic facts of the dialect. As noted above, each of these volumes treats a dialect belonging to a different group. Sepečides is South Balkan, Sinte is Northwestern, Lithuanian Romani is

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Northeastern, Roman (Burgenland-Romani) is South Central, and Doljenska Romani has features from South Balkan, South Central and Northwestern such that it does not fit neatly into a stammbaum model. Of the major dialect groups of Romani, only Vlax is unrepresented, a situation which will be remedied when the description of Kalderaš is published.¹

It must be stated at the outset that the volumes in the *LoW/M* series vary considerably in their length and detail. While the original project initially envisioned a limit of 60 pages, in fact some of the volumes are considerably more detailed. The volume on Icaro Dargwa (Sumbatova and Mutalov 2003), which is a dialect of a dialectally highly differentiated Daghestanian language, for example, runs to 257 pages. Of the five descriptions under consideration here, *Sinte* is considerably less detailed than the other four. In addition to being the shortest, the examples are in a larger font and the spacing is larger. The other four are roughly comparable in detail.

The organization of each grammatical description is also at the discretion of the author. As a result, the grammars are not as cross-comparable as originally envisioned. Let us take for example negation and future marking, which show considerable typological variation in the languages of the world. In Romani, negation combines the most ancient inherited elements (the indicative/modal opposition *n-/m-* from Indo-European via Indic) with loan elements from a variety of contact languages and some diagnostic differentiation. Future marking reflects major dialectal and geographical divisions within Romani: the dialects of the Balkans (both Vlax and Balkan proper) have a Balkan type of 'will' future normally using a particle derived from the root *kam-* 'want' (carried into Crimea during the Ottoman period), while those outside the Balkans use the long present indicative in *-a* or have no special marking.

In *Romanes (Sinte)*, negation is treated in a paragraph on noun derivation: both inherited *bi-* and the Armenian loan *či* can be used as privative prefixes and *či* alone means 'nothing' (§2.1.1.2.6, p. 13). The topic gets its own heading again as *negation of clauses* (§3.6, pp. 36–7). Apparently *ma* is limited to imperatives, German *gar* negates indicatives, and it is implied by not illustrated that German *nit* can function like *gar* in addition to emphasizing negation in the example *Men his tek maro nit* 'We didn't have (any) bread', where *tek* is glossed as 'no', although it is introduced in §2.1.4.7 (p. 21), the section on indefinite pronouns, as meaning 'nobody'. There is no separate heading for the future;

1. The consensus classification of the majority of Romani dialects is into four groups: Northern, Central, Vlax, and Balkan, each of which has two major divisions. While the North–South divisions in Central, Vlax, and Balkan dialects plausibly reflect divergences from shared respective earlier stages, the Northeast and Northwest dialects are united more by their geographic peripherality than by shared innovations. There are also some individual dialects that do not fit neatly into the quadripartite category. See Matras (2002: 3–13, 214–37; 2005) and Boretzky and Igla (2004) for discussions of Romani dialect classifications.

rather, the introduction to tense aspect (§2.3.2, p. 25) mentions that the present also functions as a future.

In *Sepečides-Romani* negation has its own heading in the section on morphology (§2.9, pp. 30–1) after imperatives and is also included with the heading for indefinite pronouns (§2.5.5 pp. 18–19). There are two sections treating the future, one under morphology (§2.8.2.5, p. 29) and the other under morphosemantics (§3.8.5 p. 54)—a chapter heading not found in the other descriptions; this last section gives considerable useful data on usage. Since *ka* is polysemous (or homonymous) owing to the reduction of *kana* ‘when’, there is also a special section devoted to the various uses of *ka* (§3.7, pp. 50–1). It is interesting to note that in *Sepečides* the indicative negator *na* is frequently accompanied by the Turkish particle *hiç* ‘nothing’ in the syntagms *hiç na VERB* or *na VERB hiç* as in other Balkan languages, but to such an extent that it is not always emphatic. Turkish *hiç* cannot occur alone, however. Also the modal negator *ma* is used with the future as well as with the imperative.

In *Burgenland-Romani* the future is treated on p. 26 of §3.2.1, where, as is expected, final *-a* is added to the present (with syncope), e.g. 3 pl *piren* ‘they go’ *pirna* ‘they will go’. Negation is treated under the heading *Negative particles* (§3.3.4, p. 456), between conjunctions and modal particles in the section on particles in morphology (adverbs are also treated here, although some can inflect, e.g. *angle* ‘in front’, *angleder* ‘more in front’ p. 44). The opposition between indicative *na* and modal *ma* is also mentioned at the bottom of the section on the imperative (unnumbered), which is part of mood (§3.2.4, p. 35), and negation is also treated with indefinite pronouns in the pronouns section §3.1.3, (p. 20). The special negative of ‘be’ is given in a section of verb morphology entitled *Special forms* (§3.2.3, p. 33).

In *Lithuanian Romani*, the description of the future (in *-a*) is part of the section on tense and aspect marking (§3.3, pp. 29–30). The section takes the trouble to compare Lithuanian Romani with other Northeastern dialects and notes a number of interesting morphological and syntactic phenomena. The negators *na* and *nane* are labeled *negative determiners* and discussed under indefinite pronouns (§2.10, p. 23). Since the modal negator *ma* is absent in Northeastern Romani, its absence from this outline is understandable. Nonetheless, in view of the dialectal specificity of this fact in the larger Romani context, it would have been appropriate to note it.

In *Dolenjska Romani* the future is given a separate section (§4.1.3, pp. 12–13) as part of verbal inflection. The marker is final *-a*, as in much of non-Balkan Europe. The grammar also has an extensive section on negation at the end of the section on verbal inflection (§4.2, pp. 19–20) that discusses some interesting effects of the indicative negator, e.g. the monosyllabics meaning ‘go’ and ‘give’ (but not ‘take’ and ‘eat’) behave like disyllabic stems when negated, an effect

that is not produced when a borrowed Slavic prefix is added, e.g. *d-el* 's/he gives', *na-d-i* 's/he doesn't give' (*-i* being the regular innovative 3 sg marker), but *iz-d-el* 's/he betrays'. The modal negator is *ma*, and there is a section on negative pronouns (§4.5.5 pp. 37–8).

Another interesting set of comparisons can be made at the end of each monograph. *Sinte* is the only volume that concludes with a selection of texts (pp. 37–43), glossed interlinearly and given idiomatic translation. *Sepečides* concludes with a gloomy paragraph (pp. 66–7) describing the morbidity of the dialect, comparing it to that of the Romani of Wales, which disappeared shortly after Sampson described it. With the shift from rural peripatetic to sedentary urban economy and the absence of any infrastructural support, the language is not being learned by the younger generation. It should be noted, however, that in recent years Romani organizations are at last becoming active in Turkey, while the country itself—at least on paper—is becoming more tolerant to minority languages spoken by Muslims. This might be a source of hope.

Burgenland-Romani concludes with a detailed description of the sociolinguistic situation, specifically language use and language attitudes with respect to non-Romani contact languages: German, Hungarian, and Croatian (pp. 77–80). Here, too, despite recent activism, the dialect is endangered. At the same time, however, this grammar reflects efforts to revitalize the dialect, as seen, among other things, by the fact that the orthography used is a German-based one preferred by the Roman-speakers themselves. *Lithuanian Romani* concludes with a section on borrowing (pp. 58–9), which summarizes the observations made throughout the grammar, and a section on dialect classification discussing Lithuanian Romani's place within the Northeastern group and its shared and distinguishing features (pp. 59–60). *Dolenska Romani* does not have any chapters beyond the introductory, phonology, morphology, and syntax. It is noteworthy, however, that in the introductory matter, Cech refers to the grammar as a *codification* and notes that speakers themselves have published poetry as well as a pre-school textbook in their language.

Borrowing and dialect classification receive very little attention in *Sinte*, where the section entitled *Historical sketch and position among other Romani dialects* (§0.4, p. 2) gives only a few general historical facts and does not actually put *Sinte* in its Romani dialectological context. *Sinte* treats borrowing in a section headed *Lexicon* (§2.0, pp. 5–7), which begins the larger section on Morphology. The section consists simply of a list of a few inherited items and borrowings from Persian, Greek, Slavic, Romance, and German. The declension of foreign nouns and loan verb adaptation are not discussed. *Sepečides* has separate sections for the declension of borrowed nouns (§2.1.2.3, pp. 11–12), the adaptation of loan verbs (§2.10.2, p. 32), and comparisons with relevant Romani dialects are frequently brought in where relevant. There is no special

section on borrowed lexicon *per se* however. In *Burgenland-Romani*, loan word declension is treated as part of the section on masculine nominal classes (§3.1.1, p. 12), German loan adjectives are treated in the adjectives section (§3.1.4, p.22), but there is no section on the lexicon as such. Borrowing is treated by word class in *Dolenjska Romani*. There is a section on loan verbs at the end of the section on the present of other verbs (i.e. other than 'be' and 'have', §4.1.2, p. 21). Loan adjectives have their own section (§4.4.2, 9.29). Likewise loan substantives are treated in a separate section (*athematic classes* §4.3.4.2, pp. 26–8).

All five of the grammars also have chapters on syntax, all in a functional-descriptive framework. While the organization is, again, not directly comparable from one book to the other, there is plenty of good material in each volume. Taken as a group, these five Romani dialect descriptions can be used with profit by a wide range of audiences. Linguists with no previous acquaintance with Romani would be well advised to start with Matras (2002) in order to get a basic orientation, after which these grammars could be used with greater profit. A typologist simply skimming grammars of the languages of the world looking for this or that feature will probably find what s/he is looking for, although it will be necessary to take each description on its own terms, and the researcher will need to read through rather than skim the descriptions in order to be sure not to miss something (RMS 2001–2005 is also worth noting here as an excellent source of typological and Romological data). Anyone who already knows Romani will be able to use these grammars to broaden his/her knowledge of the richness and variations of the language. The descriptions can also be used in courses on the Romani language to acquaint the students with dialectal diversity. All in all, this is a useful series of Romani dialect descriptions, and in the case of the most recent ones, the most thorough and up-to-date material currently available.

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