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**Eastern Uzh varieties of North Central Romani**

**Východoužské variety severocentrální romštiny**

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AUTOREFERÁT (TEZE) DISERTAČNÍ PRÁCE

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## 1. Eastern Uzh Romani dialect region

The focus of this dissertation is a grammatical description of a heterogeneous Romani dialect spoken in a western part of Transcarpathian Ukraine in an area adjacent to the border with Slovakia. This dialect, called ‘Eastern Uzh Romani’, comprises language varieties of Romani communities living in several locations in the area, namely Uzhhorod, the administrative centre of Transcarpathia at the border with Slovakia, Perechyn, a district town north of Uzhhorod, Khudlovo, a village east of Uzhhorod, and Serednie, a semi-urban municipality further southeast (see Map).



**Map: The Eastern Uzh Romani dialect locations (legend: Uzhh – Uzhhorod, Per – Perechyn, Khu – Khudlovo, Ser – Serednie)**

The two key terms used throughout my work are ‘variety’ and ‘dialect’, which are understood as explained by Ferguson and Gumperz (1960). I associate a variety with speech patterns found in a single location, assuming that a variety ‘is sufficiently homogenous to be analyzed by available techniques of synchronic description’ (Ferguson and Gumperz 1960: 3). Since all Eastern Uzh varieties share a combination of features setting them apart from other varieties of closely related Romani dialects (cf. Ferguson and Gumperz 1960: 7), the cluster

of Eastern Uzh varieties constitutes the Eastern Uzh Romani dialect. The term ‘Eastern Uzh Romani dialect region’ is, in principle, synonymous with the ‘Eastern Uzh Romani dialect’, but its usage is motivated by an effort to emphasise the areal character of the dialect and the fact that it contains more than a single variety.

The attributive adjective ‘Uzh’ [uʒ] in the name of the dialect is inspired by a linguistic tradition of Slavic dialectologists in labelling local Slavic (both Slovak and Ukrainian) dialects as Uzh (Slovak plural *užské*, Ukrainian plural *ужанські*). It is derived from the name of the historical Uzh County of the Kingdom of Hungary (Hungarian *Ung vármegye*), which is now divided between Slovakia and Ukraine. All of the Eastern Uzh varieties are spoken in an east central part of this historical county.

The Eastern Uzh varieties are closely related to the Romani varieties spoken in western parts of the former Uzh County in present-day Slovakia, viz. in the Sobrance district and in southeastern parts of the Michalovce district east of the Laborec River. This Slovak dialect of Uzh Romani is called ‘Western Uzh Romani’. The delimitation between Western Uzh Romani and Eastern Uzh Romani is mainly based on non-linguistic grounds, namely, on the current political border that separates the western varieties in Slovakia from the eastern varieties in Ukraine. Although it also finds certain linguistic justification in different contact languages and in different results of the current language contact on both sides of the border, there are features that affect individual varieties of both dialects, and such features may be plotted as isoglosses linking selected parts of both dialect regions.

The entire Uzh Romani dialect cluster is part of a broader continuum of Romani dialects classified as Central Romani, and more specifically, North Central Romani (see Boretzky 1999, 2007; Boretzky and Iglá 2004). The dialect under description represents the Transcarpathian dialect of North Central Romani, and both terms, Eastern Uzh Romani and Transcarpathian North Central Romani, point to one and the same dialect. It follows that Eastern Uzh Romani is a territorial dialect spoken by long-settled local Roma and belonging to a larger dialect area. Still, it represents a peripheral dialect situated on an eastern margin of the continuum. In no other direction except for the west is Eastern Uzh Romani continued by any other Central Romani dialect. No Romani is spoken by the local Roma in Transcarpathian Ukraine further east, south and north, while some non-Central (Vlax) Romani dialects are spoken in other areas of Transcarpathia dozens of kilometres away. Although there are outlying pockets of another North Central dialect spoken north of Transcarpathia in the Galician region of Ukraine (Beníšek 2014b, 2017), these are separated from the Eastern Uzh locations by a vast area where no Romani dialect is currently spoken.

Eastern Uzh Romani is a vital dialect, still transmitted to children in all its locations. All adult speakers are at least trilingual and often even quadrilingual, which reflects the complex multilingual reality in Transcarpathian Ukraine. The main second language of Eastern Uzh Romani speakers is represented by local varieties of the East Slavic dialects of Transcarpathia, which have been classified in various ways: as Southwestern Ukrainian dialects (e.g. AUM), as South Carpathian Ukrainian dialects (Pan'kevyč 1938) or as Subcarpathian Rusyn (Pugh 2009). Another second language that has served as one of the second languages since Transcarpathia became part of the Soviet Union in the 1940s is Russian. Hungarian also plays a role for Eastern Uzh Romani speakers, while Slovak, and more specifically an East Slovak dialect, represents a recent, but not current, second language for Romani communities in Uzhhorod.

## **2. Methodology and sources of data**

The aim of my thesis is to fill the gap in the knowledge of Romani dialects of the linguistically interesting region of Transcarpathian Ukraine. Although North Central Romani in Transcarpathia has been recognised to exist by various scholars (cf. Matras 2002: 9; Čerenkov 2008: 497), the Eastern Uzh dialect has not drawn any scholarly attention until recently. There is some scanty lexical documentation of a northern variety of Western Uzh Romani from what is now the Sobrance district of East Slovakia (Miklosich 1872: 62–63), but the first analysis of an Eastern Uzh variety is my article of selected features of the Serednie variety (Beníšek 2013a). I also published three fairy tales told by a speaker from Serednie (Beníšek 2014a) and discussed some of the features of the dialect at several linguistic conferences (Beníšek 2013b, 2014c, 2014d, 2016).

The grammatical description is based on data acquired during my fieldwork research conducted between 2007 and 2016 in the traditional locations of the dialect. The fieldwork was carried out in 16 recurrent trips, and the length of individual trips ranged from three days at the minimum to one month at the maximum. The total time spent in the field researching the dialect was half a year.

The source of language data are audio-recordings of both elicited and natural speech collected in all varieties of Eastern Uzh Romani. The process of recording was carried out in the speakers' home environments or in the homes of relatives and friends of the recorded speakers. The elicitation was primarily the oral reverse translation elicitation (see Samarin 1967), mostly with the help of the Ukrainian mutation of the *Linguistic Questionnaire for the Documentation of Central European Romani* (hence LQCR; Elšík 2008–2012). LQCR in

general partly derives from the *Romani Dialectological Questionnaire* (Elšík and Matras 2001), which has been used to document numerous Romani dialects from all over Europe for the *Romani Morpho-Syntax Database* project (see Elšík and Matras 2006: 58–67; Matras, White and Elšík 2009). On the basis of LQCR, the entire Eastern Uzh region has been documented by 9,170 transcribed sentences, all of which are grammatically and lexically tagged and stored in a searchable database (Elšík 2008–) alongside the data of other Romani dialects from various regions of East Central Europe. The audio-recordings of the LQCR elicitation are stored in the archive of recordings of the Seminar of Romani Studies at Charles University. Altogether 12 speakers contributed the LQCR elicitation. In addition to the recordings of elicited translations, I also collected numerous natural-speech recordings of various genres, such as narratives, conversations and interviews on various topics. Such recordings were partly acquired during or after the sessions of the LQCR elicitation with the same speakers, but a considerable portion of language data was acquired independently of LQCR during my numerous journeys to the area. The total sum of all speakers whose language data have been analysed is 40, and their years of birth vary from 1929 to 1998. Almost 50 hours of recordings (including those of LQCR) have been included in analysis.

The dissertation is a synchronic description. However, it also includes a section on the historical phonology and contains some diachronic notes for clarification of current forms and functions. The dissertation also has frequent references to the reconstructed Late Proto-Romani ('Early Romani' in the terminology of Matras 2002). Furthermore, notes about the contact-induced phenomena that are outcomes of recent and current language contact with Slavic and Hungarian are part of the description, although an analysis of contact-induced language change is not the primary aim of the work. The description is also a comparative one in that it is focused on internal variations of the dialect and distinctions found among its individual varieties. However, it does not represent a systematic comparative grammar in terms of the Eastern Uzh dialect's relation to other Romani dialects, apart from the section on historical phonology and intermittent references on features of the most related Romani dialects of East Slovakia.

It follows that the approach of the description is language-driven rather than theory-driven (see Hyman 2001) because its goal is not an analysis of a language within a particular linguistic theory or a discussion of a theoretical issue. The description makes use of widely accepted universal terms and established concepts within the cumulative theoretical framework of what Dixon (2007) calls the *basic linguistic theory*. It also seeks to find inspiration in the contemporary functional-typological concepts (e.g. Payne 1997; Shopen

2007) that form the background of many of the recent grammar descriptions and, finally, is firmly embedded in concepts common in the up-to-date Romani linguistics (in particular Matras 2002; Boretzky and Iglá 2004; Elšík and Matras 2006).

The dissertation is organised into thirteen chapters. The proper description is designed in a bottom-up perspective as it starts in a traditional way, with a chapter on phonology, and ends by discussing complex syntactic constructions, such as clause linking. Still, morphology and syntax are not sharply divided, and a discussion of both morphological and syntactic devices of related categories is often interconnected or dealt with in a single chapter. The most striking division between morphology and syntax pertains to discussing the verbs, as chapter 3 is mainly concerned with the verb morphology, while the verb syntax has its own chapter 12. The description combines both the semasiological (form-to-function) and the onomasiological (function-to-form) approaches, with different importances attached to one or the other perspective in different chapters. On the whole, however, the semasiological perspective dominates.

The features, forms and grammatical categories discussed are amply illustrated by language examples that come from both elicited and spontaneous speech. The sentence examples are consecutively numbered within every chapter and contain the interlinear glosses in addition to the more or less idiomatic English translations. The interlinear glosses are based on conventions common in the typological literature and in grammar descriptions (the so-called Leipzig Glossing Rules). Two kinds of glossing representations occur: morphemic glossing and morphosemantic glossing. The morphemic representation provides glosses for every segmented morpheme separated from other morphemes by hyphens, both in the example and in the gloss, e.g. *gej-l-om-as* [go-PFV-1SG-REM] ‘I would have gone’. This morpheme-by-morpheme glossing is used only for words and morphemes where it is required by the ongoing discussion of the given feature. Otherwise, most examples contain only the morphosemantic glosses, which provide a complex gloss for the entire word form, e.g. *gejlomas* [go.IRR.1SG]. The numbered language examples are followed by bracketed abbreviations of names of the varieties where they were recorded and sometimes by an upper index to further identify the source, for example, in the LQCR elicitation. Although I was trying to illustrate the discussed features by choosing spontaneous sentences as much as possible, some features and categories are attested only through elicitation, or their spontaneous occurrence was not suitable for illustration. Moreover, it is more convenient to present elicited speech in some cases, for example, because of illustration of clear paradigms in broader sentence contexts and also for the sake of dialectological comparison, as

translations elicited in different varieties clearly demonstrate differences and variation of structures within the dialect region.

Transcription of the Romani language examples follows the mainstream scholarly conventions. In the chapter on phonology, the standard transcription of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is provided for some language examples.

A very brief outline of the contents of each chapter along with several structural features follows.

### **3. Outline of the descriptive chapters**

The actual description begins in chapter 2 with phonology and orthography. There are 31 to 35 consonant phonemes in the Eastern Uzh Romani varieties. Apart from the place and manner of articulation, the main distinctive features are voice and aspiration, while palatalisation plays a role in the morphophonology. The vowel phonemes inherited from Late Proto-Romani /a, e, o, i, u/ (cf. Matras 2002: 58; Elšík and Matras 2006: 71) are supplemented by the front rounded vowels /ü/ [y] and /ö/ [ø] in Hungarian loanwords. Distinctive vowel length exists for the open central vowel, as in *bar* [bar] ‘stone’ as against *bār* [ba:r] ‘fence’, while the long counterparts of other vowels undergo diphthongisation or even a biphonemic reanalysis /vowel plus consonant/, e.g. [ej] and [ov]. The latter development even affects the long counterparts of the close vowels [i:] ~ [ij] and [u:] ~ [uv]. Eastern Uzh Romani, like other Central dialects, has abandoned the conservative stress pattern (cf. Boretzky and Igla 1993: 28–34) and replaced it with fixed penultimate stress. The final sections provide a brief sketch of the historical phonology of Eastern Uzh Romani within the broader context of North Central Romani, as well as an outline of the word-specific phonological variation within the dialect region.

Chapter 3 discusses the morphology of verbs. Like in other Romani dialects (cf. Matras 2001), the verb inflection takes place along the perfective versus non-perfective aspectual opposition. The tense and mood values of lexical verbs in the non-perfective inflection are the present indicative, the future indicative, the imperfect/potential (the remote non-perfective) and the imperative. The values in the perfective inflection are the aorist or the non-remote perfective and the irrealis or the remote perfective. The copula has a TAM system slightly different from that of lexical verbs in that it expresses the indicative versus subjunctive distinction. Moreover, the past indicative and the potential are differentiated in the copula, and the aspect is irrelevant as a semantic category for the copula, even though the aspectual morphology is present. The copula also stands out in having strong suppletion; the

suppletive roots of the copula are *s-*, *h-*, *av-*, *ej-* and *uv-*, supplemented by two third-person negative copula forms *nāne* (in the present) and *nesas* (in the past), and a special optative copula *mije* ‘let/may it be so’. Furthermore, the loan-verb integration and various non-finite verb forms, such as adjectival and adverbial participles and the infinitive, are discussed in chapter 3 in detail. The subchapter on verb derivation deals with the valency-changing morphology where the discussion is inspired by research conducted in related Romani dialects (e.g. Hübschmannová and Bubeník 1997; Bubeník and Hübschmannová 1998), as well as by recent typological literature on the topic (e.g. Haspelmath 1993). The final sections are devoted to denominal and deadjectival verbs and to productive lexical-semantic modifications of verbs by means of derivational affixes.

Chapter 4 addresses the morphology of nouns. Eastern Uzh Romani displays the general properties of noun inflection inherited from Late Proto-Romani (see Elšík 2000; Matras 2002: 72), which include compartmentalisation of all nouns into two (oikoclitic and xenoclitic) stocks and a layered system of case marking (Matras 1997) typical of New Indo-Aryan languages (Masica 1991). Distinct noun classes can be identified within each compartment with further differentiation into various subclasses. A noteworthy class of the xenoclitic zero masculines, which is not reconstructed for Late Proto-Romani (cf. Elšík and Matras 2006: 72), has developed in Eastern Uzh Romani. The noun derivation comprises the denominal derivation of diminutive nouns by *-ōr-* and *-(i)c-*, the derivation of abstract nouns from various word classes by *-(i)be(n)*, *-(i)pe(n)* and *-(V)šāg-*, various strategies of the agentive and feminine derivation, plus the somewhat marginal formation of the names of some fruit trees. The very productive means of nominalisation is the conversion of adjectives into nouns with no overt derivational marking (e.g. *bāro* adjective ‘big’ > noun ‘adult’).

Chapter 5 describes the morphology of adjectives. Like nouns, adjectives are compartmentalised into the oikoclitic and xenoclitic stocks. In the oikoclitic compartment, there are two distinct classes of vocalic and zero adjectives. In the xenoclitic compartment, there is an ongoing development of differentiation of adjectives in *-Vk-*, including the relational adjectives in *-ik-* (e.g. *ungr-ik-o* ‘Hungarian’), from other borrowed adjectives whose inflection tends to shift to the oikoclitic inflection. The adjectives derived from other adjectives include diminutive, attenuative, iterative, privative and negative adjectives, while qualitative, relational, spatial, temporal and some other adjectives may be derived from nouns, verbs and adverbs by suffixes with various degrees of productivity.

Chapter 6 encompasses a discussion of forms, morphosyntactic properties and the functions of various pronominal forms. The chapter first describes personal, reflexive and



reciprocal pronouns, which often complement each other in related functions. Second, interrogative and indefinite pronouns are discussed along with their categorial classifications, such as those based on ontological values (person, thing, manner, etc.) and those based on morphosyntactic properties (substantival, adjectival, adverbial and periphrastic). Three basic series of indefinite pronouns, specific, negative and free-choice indefinites, are discussed in detail. The final sections deal with universal and differential pronouns. This chapter is also focused on numerous innovations and developments encountered in the domain of pronouns that result in variations found among particular varieties and even among speakers.

Chapter 7 focuses on various endophoric and deictic devices, such as the articles, demonstratives and various deictic expressions. Following Diessel (1999), location deictics are included as a subcategory of demonstratives. There is a four-way demonstrative system in Eastern Uzh Romani with two basic contrasts, viz. proximity (proximal versus non-proximal) and specificity (plain versus specific). Thus, there are plain proximal demonstratives (e.g. *adā* ‘this’), specific proximal demonstratives (*kadā* ‘this one here’), plain non-proximal demonstratives used mainly as endophoric devices (*odā* ‘that’), and specific non-proximal demonstratives used mainly in reference to distant entities (*kodā* ‘that one there’). Some other sets of demonstratives, such as contrastive *akā/okā* ‘the other’ and spatial indicators *āke* ‘right here’ and *ovke* ‘right there’, are present in addition to the basic demonstratives. Demonstratives are also discussed in terms of their occurrence in temporal phrases. The findings about the functions of demonstratives in Eastern Uzh Romani differ from those described by Matras (2000) for Romani in general.

Chapter 8 describes numerals and non-numerical quantifiers. Cardinal numerals inherited from Late Proto-Romani are still vital in Eastern Uzh Romani. Noteworthy is the occurrence of distinct numeral connectors in compounds of different decades with digits. Morphological categories of ordinal and multiplicative numerals are discussed, as well as analytic formations of collective and distributive numerals. The focus of the subchapter on non-numerical quantifiers is on indefinite, multal and paucal quantifiers.

Chapter 9 provides an overview of adverbs and some particles. The morphology of adverbs is mainly discussed in relation to deadjectival adverbs, while adverbs of manner, place and time, and phasal adverbs are discussed as distinct semantic categories. The subchapter on particles deals with focus and terminative particles, plus various utterance expressions.

The morphological and syntactic properties of comparison and equation/similation are described in chapter 10. Eastern Uzh Romani has a productive comparative and superlative

morphology that exhibits the structural pattern typical of languages of the area in that the comparative is marked by a suffix (-eder), while the superlative is marked by prefixation to the comparative. The comparative and superlative constructions also make use of various particles, for example, to express gradation, superlative emphasis and the standard of comparison. The syntax of equative and similitive constructions is also briefly outlined, following the framework of Haspelmath and Buchholz (1998).

Chapter 11 outlines the structure of noun and prepositional phrases in Eastern Uzh Romani. Attention is primarily focused on the detailed descriptions of the functions of case markers and various prepositions from the semasiological perspective.

Chapter 12 is devoted to various aspects of verb syntax, such as morphosyntactic alignment, subject agreement on verbs, optative constructions, clausal negation and, in particular, various kinds of syntactic modifications supplementing the verb derivations. More specifically, chapter 12 describes the productive valency-increasing periphrases with the help of the control verb *d-* ‘to give’, the valency-decreasing periphrases based on formal reflexivisation, various composite predicates of verbs with nominal elements and lexical-aspectual modifications of verbs by means of spatial and some other adverbs. Furthermore, the chapter provides a detailed overview of various modals and their functions, following the discussions of Elšík and Matras (2009).

Finally, chapter 13 describes devices used in combining phrases, clauses and sentences into larger units. The most important types of linking constructions are complementation, adverbial subordination, relativisation and coordination, which are discussed within the functional-typological framework of Shopen (2007). In addition, a marginal serial-verb construction occurs in predicates that involve a motion verb.

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