

# **Ethnicity Designating Romani Loanwords in Some European Slangs: their Origin, Meaning and Ideology**

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## **Introduction**

The slangs and argots<sup>1</sup> of many European languages are characterized by a relatively wide contribution of words of Romani<sup>2</sup> origin. The paper deals with the presence of such words in the colloquial language and slang/argot. I will especially focus on European Spanish and some of the Central European languages (Czech, Slovak, Hungarian, Romanian). I will provide a brief overview of semantic groups where these words can be found. These groups, present in each of the investigated languages, show a striking lexical similarity.<sup>3</sup>

The principal objective of this paper is to point out the semantic group of some ethnic terms (especially with the focus on in- and out-group members) and show up an eventual meaning shift, often towards the negative/pejorative, present in every language. I also will try to explain the reasons why the words in question penetrated into the slang/informal language and why their meaning could have changed and provide some examples of usage in Czech, Hungarian and Spanish coming from Internet blogs and discussions. The data about the actual diffusion of the Romani loanwords and their semantic modifications cited in the last chapter come from my field research conducted between 2006-2012<sup>4</sup>.

## **Several short historical notes about the Gypsy population<sup>5</sup> in Central Europe**

Roma people came on the territory of Central Europe in major numbers in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and from here they followed to the Western Europe and reached Spain<sup>6</sup>.

During the history the Gypsies migrated through Europe in several waves. A huge wave reached Central and Western Europe in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when on the territory of today's Romania there was abolished a cruel serfdom<sup>7</sup>. This fact caused a massive migration of traditionally living Olah Roma to the Central and Western Europe. During the Second World War there was a massive genocide of the Gypsies in the Central Europe. These Gypsies lived in this territory for centuries and were integrated into the society.

After the war, in Czechoslovakia<sup>8</sup> there was an organized displacement of the Slovak Gypsies who lived traditionally in Gypsy settlements (mostly in Eastern Slovakia) to the Czech territory, often to the borderland parts. During the dictate of communism the traditional Gypsy culture, language and national feeling were systematically oppressed. This led to a disintegration of

traditional values of the majority of Gypsy population. Since the fall of the Iron Curtain there have been several other migrations of Roma from Eastern and Central Europe towards the West.

I should point out here some similarities which can be observed with the reference to the Gypsy groups resident in the territories of such geographically distant European countries as Spain and Hungary. In both countries we can find a high number of Gypsy population, similar history of them (violent sedentarization and persecution during in the past, especially during the 18th century which led to the negation of the existence of Romani ethnic, prohibition of the word “Gypsy” and replacement of it by e.g. “New Spaniard” and “New Hungarian”) and contribution to a specific musical style which is nowadays considered a part of national identity of these countries (*flamenco* in Spain and *verbunkos* and *csárdás* in Hungary). All these factors might have contributed somehow to the large proportion of Romani loanwords in their argots.

### **Romani origin words and their position in the lexicon of European languages**

The Romani dialects spread throughout Europe have been investigated by linguists since the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>9</sup> It is generally known that the Romani language contains, aside from the Indian basic lexicon and ancient loan-words from Armenian, Persian, Greek and Slavic, a large number of loan-words coming from the majority population’s languages where the Gypsy minority lived or lives.

Nevertheless, it seems that the opposite phenomenon – the influence of Romani in the majority languages – still remains out of the major interest of the lexicologists, sociolinguists and language contact experts.

The Romani origin words<sup>10</sup> are interspersed in some argot or slang dictionaries<sup>11</sup> and in some articles<sup>12</sup>, but in the most of European languages does not exist a more extensive work concerning this topic and focusing the attention exclusively on the Romani origin words.<sup>13</sup>

An average native speaker, e.g. of Czech, is able to recognize relatively easily an English or German origin word in Czech language, but probably has never heard about Romani origin words. This is a consequence of age-long marginalization of the Roma ethnic<sup>14</sup> and Romani language and also of the fact that Romani penetrated into the majority languages almost exclusively through marginal layers of the society and gangland.<sup>15</sup>

The Romani origin words are traditionally more frequent in marginal language layers but many of them have penetrated into the common colloquial language as well, however their Romani origin remains mostly unknown (and sometimes not mentioned in the dictionaries).

Languages differ in the number of Romani origin words contained in their argots or slangs. We can find relatively a large number of Romani loanwords e.g. in the colloquial Hungarian,

Romanian or Spanish, somehow less in Slovak and considerably less in Czech. The causes of these differences are mainly historical and sociocultural.

First of all, there live a large Gypsy community (naturally heterogeneous) in Czech Republic and Slovakia, in Hungary, Romania and Spain. The Gypsies of these countries speak various Romani dialects (and some groups do not speak Romani anymore). In spite of the traditional marginalization of Gypsy population the mutual loanwords of Romani and majority language respectively prove evidence of a long-term social contact between the Gypsy and non-Gypsy population.

The argot of the most of European languages is partly (and quite largely) formed by the contribution of Romani language. This tendency has been recorded since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the number of words grew up considerably,<sup>16</sup> and is apparently connected with industrialisation and moving of Gypsies to the cities. Some of these words ceased to be perceived as argot and nowadays form part of the general colloquial language.

### **Romani words in Czech, Hungarian, Romanian and Spanish argot**

The Czech argot developed in a straight contact with the German argot and for a long time it contained a lot of Hebrew (or Yiddish) loan-words. (A half of German argot has Yiddish origin and we find a lot of Yiddish words also in Hungarian argot.) The number of Gypsy words was very low till the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and it grew gradually.<sup>17</sup>

We can find traditionally a lot of Gypsy words in the slang of circus performers, jugglers, strollers and other people which lived in an itinerant way. A lot of words of their jargon is equal to the criminal slang because they often moved on the margin of the society. In the traditional slang of Czech circus performers there are 35% of Romani words; not all of them have been conserved till nowadays, but this Romani heritage is still alive among these people<sup>18</sup>.

The Hungarian and Spanish argot also is characterized by a large number of Romani words. These words have been supported by documents since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In that period we can suppose their huge increase. It might be related to the industrialization and the following move of Romani population into the cities. The Roma contributed to the creation of a specific suburban slang. A lot of Romani words became part of the colloquial Hungarian and Spanish. The total number of these words is, according to my estimates, around 400.

We can find a lot of Romani loanwords in the contemporary Romanian as well. This is caused by a long intimate contact between the Gypsies and the majority population during the history.<sup>19</sup>

### **Semantic characteristics of Romani loanwords with some examples in European languages**

We can observe, from the semantic<sup>20</sup> point of view, some tendencies common to all languages:

1) The original meaning of the Romani word has been conserved in most of the cases: Rom. *šukár*<sup>21</sup> 'beautiful' → Hung. *sukár*<sup>22</sup> 'beautiful', Span. *juncal*<sup>23</sup> 'beautiful'; Rom. *jakha* 'eye PL' → Span. *acáis* 'eyes'.

2) However, many times the meaning has become more pejorative: Rom. *vakerel* 'to speak (3sg)' → Hung. *vakerál* 'to gossip (3sg)'; Rom. *čhaj* 'girl' → Span. *chai* 'prostitute'.

3) The meaning can also vacillate: Rom. *gadžo* 'peasant, not Gypsy' → Hung. *gádzsó* 'not Gypsy man', 'man', 'Gypsy man'; Span. *gachó* 'man', 'bad (man)'.

4) The meaning has often changed: Rom. *mangel* 'to ask, to beg (3sg)' → Span. *mangar* 'to steal', Hung. *mangázik* 'to steal (3sg)'; Rom. *rat* 'night'<sup>24</sup> → Span. *rachí* 'party; spree' (slang of La Coruña).

In this place, a brief survey of semantic categories in which Romani loanwords most frequently appear is provided. These semantic domains (with some examples from every language of our interest) are:

1) kinship terms, ethnicity or professions designating terms, i.e. Hung. *csaj* 'girl, girlfriend' (Rom. *čhaj*), Span. *chaval* 'guy' (Rom. *čhavo*, *čhavale* voc. pl.), Hung. *góré* 'boss' (Rom. *goro*, *gore* voc. sg.), Span. *manús*, Hung. *manusz* 'chap' (Rom. *manuš*), Hung. *more* 'Gypsy' (Rom. *moré* voc. used for addressing a man); we will deal with ethnicity designating terms further in this article;

2) denominations of various parts of human body, often with focus to the specific male or female ones: Span. *bul*, *bullate*, Hung. *bula* 'buttocks' (Rom. *bul*, *buljate* loc.), Span. *chucháis*, Hung. *csöcs*<sup>25</sup> 'breast' (Rom. *čuči*, *čuča* pl);

3) words expressing secretions: Hung. *kula* 'excrement' (Rom. *khul* 'excrement'), Span. *giñar* 'to have stools', Czech *chynda* 'buttocks' (Rom. *xin-* 'shit' vlg.), Hung. *mutrál* 'to urinate 3sg' (Rom. *mutrel* 'urinate 3sg');

4) prostitution and sex: Span. *lumi* 'prostitute' (Rom. *lubni*, var. *lumni*), Hung. *lugnoya* 'prostitute' (Rom. *lubnja-* c. obliq.);

5) food and drink, inebriation: Hung. *kaja* 'food', Span. *jalar* 'to eat' (Rom. *xal* 'to eat 3sg'), *pia* 'alcohol' (Rom. *pijel* 'to drink 3sg'), Span. *mol*, *mollate* 'wine', Hung. *mólés* 'drunken' (Rom. *mol* 'wine');

6) speaking and expression of emotions: Hung. *hadovál*, *dumál* 'gossip (3sg)', Span. *chivar* 'to betray', Hung. *rovázik* 'cry 3sg' (Rom. *rov-* 'to cry'), *rinyál* 'cry (3sg)';

7) criminal activities: Hung. *csór*, Span. *chorar* 'to steal' (Rom. *čor* 'thief');

8) money: Hung. *lővé* 'money' (Rom. *love*), Span. *parné* 'money' (Rom. *parne* 'white pl');

9) adjectives expressing something big, great, excellent: Hung. *baró* (Rom. *baro*), *lácsó* (Rom. *lačho*), *csácsó* (Rom. *čačo* 'right'), Span. *chachi*;

10) qualities and characters: Hung. *gőgyis* 'clever' (Rom. *godi* 'brain'), *dilis* 'crazy' (Rom. *diló*, *dilino* 'mad'), Span. *chungo* 'bad' (Rom. *džung* 'evil'), *gili/jili* 'crazy' (probably Rom. *xir* 'donkey');

11) basic verbs expressing a state, movement or feelings: Span. *chalar* 'to go' (Rom. *džal* 'to go 3sg'), *chalarse* 'to become mad', *sobar* 'to sleep' (Rom. *sov-* 'to sleep'), *chanar* 'to know' (Rom. *džan-* 'to know'), *camelar* 'to love, to trick' (Rom. *kamel* 's/he loves'), Hung. *džsal* 'go (3sg)' (Rom. *džal*), *kamel* 'love 3sg', *szovel* 'sleep 3sg'.

Some of the words are of the same word base (and often also of the almost same form) in more languages<sup>26</sup> The frequency of diffusion of single words varies in single languages. The dictionaries of all languages often lack words of large diffusion (e.g. Hung. *csávó* 'young man' from Rom. *čhavo* or Span. *queli/keli* 'house, flat, home' from Rom. *kher* 'house' are not contained in the dictionaries of use in both languages).

### **Romani loanwords as a reflection of Gypsy values and life experience?**

The dictionaries often mention a vulgar or pejorative connotation of the Romani origin words. It is true that e.g. the Czech colloquial words as *čokl* (dog) or *čórnout* (to steal) do not sound very nicely to the Czech ear. And it is similar in other languages, not only according to the dictionaries. Also in my inquiry it was proved that many Romani loanwords resulted in perplexity, embarrassment or even aroused indignation in my informants. This fact perhaps could lead an inexperienced speaker to a conclusion that Romani is a kind of rough and obscene jargon. This opinion, evidently false, appeared many times during the (even recent) history.<sup>27</sup>

As one can see in the previous chapter, aside from the expressions from the field of delinquency, there is a large number of common or less common expressions from the semantic domains of kinship and ethnicity, feelings, activities, professions, characteristics, emotions and expressions. Furthermore, we can observe a certain concordance between the semantic domains of Romani loanwords in European languages and of the inherited lexicon (together with the oldest loan components). In fact, Matras (2002:25-28) cites the semantic domains of the inherited lexicon which corresponds in high level to the domains cited in this article. These domains seem to be fundamental for their value system and spiritual world, faith and life experience. As Matras (2002:28-29) says,

“we are left with the question whether the semantic structure of the inherited lexicon has any significance for attempts to reconstruct ancestral Romani culture. The expectation that the composition of the ancient lexicon should reflect an ancient habitat, ancient traditions, or forms of social organisation is a working hypothesis borrowed from traditional Indo-European studies;

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but it is not one that is necessarily valid in our context, as can be seen from the contrasting interpretations that are sometimes given to the lexical data.”

If we apply this approach to the Romani loanwords in European languages, it might be quite difficult to affirm that the Romani loanwords reflect the Romani way of life and value system. Some of the cited semantic domains, such as body parts, sex and taboo words, inebriation terms, delinquency terms, expression of emotions, are abundantly represented in European argots and suggest more probably the way through which the Romani words penetrated in the majority languages than a reflection of Gypsy way of life. On the other hand, some of the terms connected e.g. with music, are not so typical for argot. In the next chapter I will try to bring some examples of ethnicity designating terms and their semantic modifications which, under certain circumstances, could be considered as reflection of a traditional Romani way of thinking.

### **Ethnicity designating terms**

The Gypsies brought from India a highly developed sense for a complex caste stratification which was showed by a strict endogamy in their own group. Therefore it might be seen natural that between Roma and the majority population there always has been an abyss, in spite of some social contact.

Minority ethnics which have traditionally been disdained by the most of the majority population use special terms for denomination of the members of the majority population. This term is not equal to the word foreigner or stranger. (e.g. Jews call a non-Jew *goi*). Among Gypsies, there is a term *gádžo* for a Czech, *Gatscho* for a German, *gádzsó* for a Hungarian, *gagiu* for a Romanian, etc.

As Matras (2002:29) claims,

“the division between Rom and non-Rom in terms referring to human beings (...) is sometimes interpreted as reflecting the prominence of the opposites purity vs. pollution, preserved in the culture of some Romani groups. But while some connect it with the Hindu caste system (cf. Hancock 1991), others regard it in the more specific context of peripatetic cultures (Sutherland 1975).”

The Romani expression *gadžo* means a non-Gypsy man (*gadži*, a non-Gypsy woman). This word penetrated in most of the European languages in its original meaning. In some cases (e.g. in Czech) it is perceived as a typical Gypsy word and it is used exclusively when talking about “Gypsy issues”. However, when a Czech speaker uses this word (always when talking about the Rom and non-Rom relations), there is often a certain degree of a negative connotation. In some European languages, the Romani word *gadžo/gadži* is used in the extended meaning as a man (or woman, respectively) in general (not exclusively non-Rom) with eventual positive or negative connotation.

In Czech, *gádžo* (and its feminine form, *gádžovka*) is used when speaking (or writing, e.g. the journalists) about issues concerning the Gypsy community and the mutual Rom and non-Rom relations, always with the intention to use the “Gypsy” term the Romani origin of which being generally known and causes a stylistic tincture. On the other hand, there is no exact equivalent of this word in Czech, just the description “the member of the majority population, here Czech”. In the jargon of circus performers it means also anybody who does not belong to their community, e.g. the audience.

Nowadays, most of the Spanish Gypsies – *gitanos* or *calé* -, call the Spanish people *payos*. The term *payo* has a very similar function as the Czech *gádžo*, being used also by Spanish people when talking about the mutual relations between *gitanos* and non-*gitanos*. But in the Spanish argot (and also in the colloquial language) appear the words *gachó* and *gachí* as well (also in the form *gache*). In Caló<sup>28</sup> this word means a non-Gypsy man or woman, but in the Spanish argot the meaning extended to a man (or a woman) in general. According to my sociolinguistic research made in Spain, *gachó* is sometimes perceived as someone strange or not confidential or even bad (and it has this shifted meaning also in Latin America). On the contrary, *gachí* was more frequently defined as an attractive woman or girl but sometimes also as a prostitute.

The concept of a lover or prostitute appears also in Hungarian (*gádžsi*, this term sometimes has a neutral meaning of a woman/girl as well) and in Romanian (*gagiu* – lover or padrone, *gagičă* – female lover).

According to my opinion, the connection of *gadžo* with lover and *gadži* with female lover or even prostitute could arise from the traditional Gypsy conception of sexual love (cf. Stewart, 2005) and one could suppose this semantic modification even before the contact between Romani language and the argot.

In the Romanian argot, the conception of *gagiu* as padrone and lover can have, in addition, historical reasons as well: on the territory of today's Romania the Gypsies were held as servants or slaves till the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the sexual contacts between (especially female) Gypsies and their non-Gypsy padrones were quite frequent and generally known.<sup>29</sup>

According to my research, some Hungarian and Spanish informants considered the word *gadžo* so much "Gypsy" that they defined it with the meaning of Gypsy.

The Gypsies used also other names for the neighbouring population. As an example we could mention the Romani word *xulaj* 'landowner, padrone, farmer' which penetrated in the Spanish argot as *julay/julai* with the meaning of imprudent. In this case, the shifted meaning of this word could be related to the well-known Gypsy ability to deceive, to trick a *gadžo*. The hero of Gypsy fairytales is often a clever Rom who is able to deceive a stupid, naive and simple-minded *gadžo*.

In some cities and environs in Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, the Roma use the expression *goro* (in hindi *gorá* means somebody of fair skin) instead of the name *gadžo* which was traditionally more connected to the rural areas. In the colloquial Hungarian appears the word *góre* with the meaning of boss, director, which comes from the vocative form of *goro* and this word is generally known among Hungarian youth.

In the Hungarian argot we also find Romani expressions *raňi* (*rányi* in Hungarian) with the meaning of lady and *raj* with the meaning of padrone (in these cases, the original Romani meaning was preserved).

In the languages of the majority population appear also some Romani expressions which designate members of the Roma community. The term *Rom* (pl. *Roma*) penetrated into the awareness of most of the European speakers as an alternative denomination for the Gypsies. The term is closely connected to a certain emancipation movement of the Gypsies who started to present themselves with their own ethnic denomination. In Czech colloquial language, the derivation *romák* (with negative connotation) appears.

The expression *more*, used among Roma people for addressing a younger Gypsy male, appears in Hungarian (*móré*) with the meaning of Gypsy.

In the argot and colloquial language, we can also find words referring to young Roma. The Romani language makes difference between Gypsy and non-Gypsy boy/son and girl/daughter. The Gypsy boy/son is *čhavo*, the Gypsy girl/daughter is *čhaj*, the non-Gypsy boy is *raklo* and the non-Gypsy girl is *rakli*.

The terms for non-Gypsy youth appear e.g. in the Spanish argot as *lacorro* (boy) and *lacorra*, *lacorrilla* (prostitute). (There is again, like in the case of *gadži*, this connection between a prostitute and a non-Gypsy girl). Nevertheless, the words *čhavo* and *čhaj*, much more common in the European languages, extended in the most of cases their meaning to a boy or girl in general.

In the colloquial Hungarian, there are the expressions *csávó*, *csávesz* with the meaning of a man, young man or a guy, *csaj*, *csajszi*, *csajszli* with the meaning of a girl, girl-friend (and also with derivatives as *csajozni* – to go out with a girl).

In the colloquial European Spanish we find a very spread word *chaval* (boy, guy) and also *chavó*, *chavea*. (The word *chavo* is very common in Latin American Spanish as well.) In the Spanish argot appears *chai* (girl, young prostitute) (and in the slang of Galicia *ja*, *jay* as girl, girl-friend) and diminutive forms *chaborró*, *chaborrillo* (little boy).

In the Czech argot we can find *čajka*, in Slovak *čaja*, in German *Tschei* (this word is documented also in Romanian, Swedish, etc.)

As I already mentioned, Roma make difference between *rom-romni* (Rom, husband – Rom, wife) and *gadžo-gadži*. But at the same time in Romani does exist a general expression for a human: *manuš* (male human) and *manušňi* (female human) as well and also a general expression for man – *murš* – and woman – *džuvli*. Some of these terms also penetrated into the argot. The term *manuš* appears in Spanish as *manu*, *manús* with the meaning of man, in Hungarian – *manus*, *manusz* (also with the meaning of man). The expression *džuvli* (in the territory of Romania also in the variant *žuli*) appears in Romanian as *julă*.



## Some examples of *gadžo* usage from Czech, Hungarian and Spanish Internet blogs<sup>30</sup>:

### 1/ Czech

*Na mezinárodní soutěži Eurosong už budou lídry Radoslava Gipsyho Bangu a Vojtěcha Lavičku doprovázet „gádžové“.* (In the international competition Eurosong, there will already *gadžos* accompany the leaders Radoslav Gipsy Banga and Vojtěch Lavička.)

*Když se Romové vystěhují z Česka do Kanady, budou spokojeni i gádžové z Ostravy!* (When Roma move out from Czech Republic to Canada, also *gadžos* from Ostrava will be satisfied.)

*Občas byli docela hlučnější, ale na Žižkově, kde je v každé ulici 10 hospod, je hlučnej každej - **morei gádžo**.* (Sometimes they were rather noisy but in Žižkov where there are 10 pubs in every street everybody is noisy – *more* as *gadžo*.)

### 2/ Hungarian

*Sok gádzsó használ a szlengben cigány eredetű szavakat...* (Many *gádzsók* use Gypsy origin words in slang...)

*Két csávó meg egy gádzsi ...* (Two *csávó* and one *gádzsi* ...)

### 3/ Spanish

*¿Me quieres, mi gaché?* (Do you love me, my *gaché*?)

*Pese su odio a todo lo americano el gachó llevaba unos vaqueros de marca Levi's.* (In spite of his hate of everything American, the *gachó* was wearing jeans of Levi's.)

*No seas gacho* (Don't be *gachó*.)

*Sólo una gachí rica puede salvarme ahora* (Only a rich *gachí* can save me now)

*(...) el Ayuntamiento de Valencia, gobernado por la "gachí" del ferrari...*(the City Hall of Valencia, controlled by the *gachí* of Ferrari...)

## Conclusion

To conclude, we can observe a lot of Romani origin words in the argot of European languages. However, their number differs and depends on historical and sociocultural factors. The original meaning is sometimes conserved in the loanwords, but more often it has either shifted towards a negative conception or has changed (meaning extension or meaning specification). I consider that such meaning changes occurred because of social and historical reasons.

1In this article, the term argot is used in the meaning of “argot común” [Sanmartín Sáez, 1991:VII] and corresponds to the meaning of a general slang which is not specifically attributed to a social layer or a specific professional group. It can, however, sometimes include also some terms from the marginal language layers such as from prisoner or criminal slang which occasionally penetrate into the general slang.

2Romani is a language of Indo-Aryan origin which is spoken in Europe by the people known as Gypsies (who usually refer to themselves as Rom, pl. Roma).

3In fact, many Romani words, such as father, son, girl, non-Gypsy, bread, to eat, to drink, to steal, money, God, devil, fear etc., appear in every language. One could say that a special kind of Gypsy traditional values and life experience can be observed in the argot lexicon of Romani origin for historical and social reasons. Taking into account these reasons and analysing them one could suppose to be able to explain the presence of every single word of Romani origin in the argot of the of the majority population’s language. Further in this article I will deal with this attitude as with a possibility.

4A more detailed analysis of the results of several polls based mainly on questionnaire and internet survey methods, conducted in Hungary (2006-2007) and in Spain (2006-2009) can be found in Čengerová (2007, 2008, 2009) and Krinková (2013).

5See Frazer (1998) for more detailed information about the history of the Gypsies in Europe.

6For more detailed survey of the history of Spanish Gypsies see e.g. Pym (2007), Gómez Alfaro (1999), Sánchez Ortega (1976, 1977, 1988).

7This serfdom is, probably because of its cruelty, called slavery by some authors.

8For more historical information about the Gypsies living in the territory of the former Czechoslovakia, see Horváthová (2002), Hübschmannová (2000), Nečas (1999), Pavelčíková (2004).

9Some sporadic lists of Gypsy words appear in various European countries already in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. See Matras (2002:2)

10I use the "Romani origin word" and "Romani loanword" terms as synonyms to designate all the words which are part of 'core and inherited lexicon' (of Indian origin) and 'loan components' (of Iranian, Armenia, Greek, Slavic origin) which are part of all or at least most of the dialects. (Matras 2002:20-25).

11See slang and argot dictionaries, i. e. Besses (1905), Sanmartín Sáez (1999) for Spanish; Fazakas (1991), Kövecses (1998) for Hungarian; Hugo (2006) for Czech.

12See articles of Kakuk (1993) for Hungarian, Clavería (1951, 1953) for Spanish and the articles contained in Matras (1998). Further, several articles on this topic for some languages can be found in various volumes of the Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society (Romani Studies).

13It seems, according to my opinion, that in Spain and Great Britain the linguists dealt with the problematic to somehow greater extent already during the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. (See i. e. Borrow 1843, 1845). It is a paradox that exactly in these countries the Gypsies do not speak Romani anymore. In Spain and Britain there was spoken (and by some Gypsy groups still might be in use) a mixed language based on the Romani lexicon and the grammar of the majority language. This kind of mixed language is called Para-Romani (Cortiade 1991, in Matras, 2002:13) and it is, among others, the case of Caló in Spain and Angloromani (Romanichel) in Britain. In Spain there existed an extensive literature on caló and gitanismos (Gypsy origin words) already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century but, unfortunately, we mostly cannot rely on these sources because of frequent cases of plagiarism which sometime continue till the present times. The information about these cases of plagiarisms in Spanish Caló can be found i. e. in Adiego (2005, 2006).

14However, the marginalization of the Gypsy population cannot be generalized, e.g. some of the Gypsy musicians reached a very high social status in the society already in the 18<sup>th</sup> and even more in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially in Hungary and Spain.

15A Czech speaker could then suppose, that if there are any Romani origin words in Czech, those would be exclusively a kind of criminal or prisoner slang. This conception seems to appear in the opinion of other European speakers as well.

16This tendency is reflected e. g. in Spanish, German and Czech dictionaries of argot from 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century.

17In the German argot we can observe from 10 to 20% of Romani words. Beside the prisoner slang we can find a lot of Romani words in the argot of Brno (*hantec*) - this kind of slang was in an intimate contact with the argot of Vienna – and a lot of words there are still in use in that area.

18There is no recent study dealing with the actual language of circus performers which could confirm the exact extent of the Romani lexical contribution. However, on the base of some recent interviews published in 2008 in a Czech newspaper, it seems that the circus performers know very well about the Romani origin of some slang words which they use.

19I did not do my own research on the frequency of Romani origin word in nowadays Romanian. The Romanian examples are taken from Ciorănescu (2005). Some information can also be found in Matras (1998).

20In this article, I do not deal with grammar adaptation of Romani origin words. The majority languages generally took over all the lexical categories, most frequently nouns, adjectives and verbs. From the nominal or verb base, the languages create, with the help of their own affixes, other lexical units. Sometimes the Romani words are taken also with Romani grammar suffixes, e.g. the verb are often taken in 3sg. The loan words have been fully adapted to the majority languages' phonology and grammar system (e.g. loss of aspiration, substitution of unknown sounds by usual ones, prolongation of accented vowels in Hungarian and others).

21The Romani dialects differ considerably throughout Europe. This differentiation is always necessary to be taken in consideration when speaking about the language contact between Romani and a majority language. The Romani forms cited in this article generally appear in all the dialects (common Romani words) and are cited from Boretzky (1994). For more information about the Romani dialects see Boretzky (2004), Matras (2002).

22The Hungarian forms of Romani origin words in this article are taken from Kövecses (1998). The semantic meanings of these forms and their actual diffusion were examined during my own field research (2007).

23The Spanish forms of Romani origin words in this article are taken from Sanmartín Sáez (1999). They usually correspond to the forms cited by Besses (1905). The semantic meanings of these forms and their actual diffusion were examined during my own field research (2006-2009). See also Čengerová (2007, 2008).

24In some dialects, -t is palatalised. The final -i in the Spanish form also exists in Romani as adverbial form. See Boretzky (2004: 242).

25The word *csöcs* is cited as a romism. Nevertheless, we must take in consideration the neutral Hungarian word *csecsemő* 'suckling' (*csecs* 'breast' + *emő* 'suckling'). The word *csecs* is mentioned already in 1508 and is not very probable it be of Romani origin here. It might be a babble word related to e.g. the Czech words *cecek* 'nipple' and *cucat* 'to suck'.

26See the Hungarian and Spanish cognates: *dzsal* ~ *chalar*, *kamel* ~ *camelar*, *csaj* ~ *chai*, *muj* ~ *mui*, *csávó* ~ *chavó*.

27As an example can serve the Spanish lexicography of the 19<sup>th</sup> century which mixed almost freely the terms *caló* (language of Spanish Gypsies) and *germanía* (Spanish argot). *Caló* was often regarded as an argot of criminals. In fact, there was a mutual influence between *Caló* and argot. Also, the term *Caló* penetrated in Portuguese and in Latin America in the meaning of argot (Portug. *calaõ* 'argot', U.S. *Chicano Caló* 'argot of the Chicanos, population of Mexican origin living in Southwest of U.S.')

28I mean here *Caló*, the language of Spanish Gypsies.

29As a result of this, it is said that *Oláh Roma* (Gypsies from Romania) have a relatively fair skin because of a lot of non-Gypsy blood.

30For more examples of use of Romani loanwords in Internet blogs see Čengerová (2007, 2009).

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