

THE FIRST USE OF THE ROMANI LANGUAGE IN GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS IN SLOVAKIA*

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The aim of our paper is to analyse the linguistic features of the Romani census materials from 2001, which represent the first official use of the Romani language in government documents in the Slovak Republic. Although just a particular set of texts will be analysed here we believe that the census forms can be looked at in more general terms as reflecting the present possibilities of the Romani language to be used for official administrative purposes. It can be assumed that the situation has not changed much during the last nine years which have elapsed since the origin of the census forms. Although the standardization of the Romani language was declared in 2008 and a set of particular books has been published (The Rules of Romani Orthography,¹ The Textbook of Romani,² The Conversational Lexicon of Romani Grammar³) on this occasion, there is no special institution that would systematically care for the development of the Romani language, especially for its terminology.

Key words: Romani language, vocabulary, borrowings from Slovak, Romani census forms

1. Introduction

On April 29, 2008 the standardization of the Romani language in the Slovak Republic was declared and by this act the East Slovakian variety of Romani was officially recognized as the base of the literary Romani language in the Slovak

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¹ HÜBSCHMANNOVÁ, M. et al. *Pravidlá rómskeho pravopisu*. [The Rules of Romani Orthography].

² GAŠPAROVÁ, Eva – KOPTOVÁ, Anna – LUKÁČOVÁ, Ingrid. *Romaňi čhib. Učebnica rómskeho jazyka*. [The Textbook of the Romani Language].

³ ADAMOVIČ, Erika. *Konverzačný lexikón rómskej gramatiky*. [The Conversational Lexicon of Romani Grammar].

Republic. However, this ceremony was preceded by a long period of preparation and it could only have come about due to changes in the political and social situation in Slovakia, which has been also reflected in the attitude of the state towards the Roma. In 1991 the government of the Slovak Republic approved the Principles of Approach to Roma, in which the Roma in the Slovak Republic were recognized as a national minority. This meant a legislative equalization of Roma with other national minorities in Slovakia, which has brought them particular rights. These were, among others, the right to education in their mother tongue and the right to use their language for official purposes. These rights have been recognized in the Constitution of the Slovak Republic since September 1, 1992.

However, in 1995 the National Council of the Slovak Republic adopted the Act on the State Language, which restricted the usage of minority languages. It repealed the Act on the Official Language in the Slovak Republic governing the usage of minority languages in official communication and thus it came into conflict with the Constitution of the Slovak Republic. That was why the National Council of the Slovak Republic approved the Minority Language Law on July 11, 1999. The law enables citizens belonging to a national minority to use their language for official purposes. The use of minority languages is also regulated by revisions to the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on the State Language of the Slovak Republic from 2009.

In addition, the position of the Romani language in the Slovak Republic is regulated by the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages signed in the name of the Slovak Republic in Strasbourg on February 20, 2001. The National Council affirmed it on June 11, 2001, the President of the Slovak Republic ratified it on July 20, 2001 and it entered into force in the Slovak Republic on January 1, 2002.

Due to all these activities some Romani intellectuals began to pay more attention to their language, which had been until the beginning of the 1990s used entirely in its oral form. In the 1990s it started to be used also as a language of literary works (fairy tales, stories and reminiscences) and of performances in the Romani theatre Romathan. Romani began sporadically to appear in the Romani newspaper *Romano nevo l'il* as well as in radio and television broadcasting. In the majority of these texts relatively simple common Romani was used (naturally, enriched by inevitable borrowings) and therefore the authors had no serious problems with the vocabulary (except for some Romani texts in newspapers where internationalisms are used). As the Roma in

the former Czechoslovakia adopted the rules for transcription of Romani as early as 1971, the orthography is relatively consistent in all written texts.⁴

However, the first use of the Romani language in official government documents was made only as late as in 2001 in the translation of the census forms and instructions to census takers. The census documents were produced in Slovak Romani, which is spoken approximately by 80 percent of the Roma living in Slovakia who speak Romani. Besides this variety of the Romani language, Hungarian and Vlax Romani are also spoken in the Slovak Republic.⁵

When the Roma, similarly as other national minorities in the Slovak Republic, exercised their right to census forms in their own language, they were faced with a serious challenge. Even without a deep analysis it was evident that many difficulties were awaiting them. In the first place there was the insufficient lexicon of Romani, which does not contain many words included in the census documents which are not connected with the traditional Romani culture and way of living. Another handicap for the authors of the Romani documents was presented by the fact that they did not produce the texts spontaneously but had to translate Slovak phrases which were not characteristic for Romani (e.g. non-concordant attribute expressed by the genitive in the Slovak language).

2. The analysis of census forms

Two versions of Romani census forms were created. Both of them are in Slovak Romani. The first one was produced in Western Slovakia (hereinafter W), but the Roma in Eastern Slovakia did not identify themselves with it and produced another version (hereinafter E). Version E was accepted, printed and distributed as the official Romani census forms. These materials consisted of three census forms: a resident form, house form and flat form as well as explanatory notes. The census forms were bilingual, with Slovak first and Romani second, the explanatory notes on the back side of the forms were entirely in Romani.

Two versions of translation of the same text enable us to compare how individual authors coped with fulfilling the gaps in the Romani lexicon and with the non-existence of an administrative style as well as how they made use of their creativity and their knowledge of the source language (Slovak) and the target language (Romani). However, it must be said that the starting point of the authors of two versions was not entirely identical: version E was influenced by

⁴ Moreover, the Romani language has become a school-leaving examination subject at the Art High School for talented Romani youth founded in Košice. The Roma have written several textbooks and taken part in the publication of Romani dictionaries.

⁵ In the census of 1991 the figure for those declaring Romani as their nationality was 75 802, or 1/4 of all Roma living in Slovakia and in census of 2001 the figure was 88 920, or 1.7% of the total population 5 379 455 of Slovak Republic at that time.

version W, as is evident from some parts of the forms where naming units occur that have been refused by the authors of version E in other places: for instance, the Slovak „vyznačiť do kružku krížikom“ (“mark in the circle with a cross”) is translated as *avri irinel kerestociha andre kerekoca (kružkos)* in one place, whereas elsewhere the authors have left the phrase *andro kružko križikoha* from version W.

Attention will be paid here especially to three areas: the vocabulary used in the census forms, the translation of the Slovak non-concordant attribute expressed by the genitive and the translation of Slovak prepositional phrases. In our analysis we shall concentrate mainly on version E of the census forms⁶ as this version was accepted as an official government document. However, as the two versions differ significantly in some cases (for instance in creating neologisms, in translating the Slovak non-concordant attribute and in choosing a Romani preposition when translating a Slovak prepositional phrase), we shall compare some solutions in E with solutions in W in relevant cases.

As regards the orthography of Romani census materials, there was significant consistency; the authors followed the rules adopted by the Linguistic Commission of the Gypsy-Roma Union in 1971.⁷ Only occasionally can there be found some inconsistencies, perhaps typing errors, e.g. *zgeniben/zgeñiben*, *zgenipnaskero/zgeñipnaskero*, *hin/hino* (*savo phuro hino o bitos/ savo baro hin o bitos*), *možnosť/možnosca*, *splachovacos/splachovaco zachodos*, *dôvodos/dovodos*.

2.1. The lexicon

The lexicon of the questionnaires mainly contains borrowings from Slovak (either original Slovak words or internationalisms borrowed through the Slovak language). To a lesser degree there are native Romani words and also some neologisms based on Romani occur.

2.1.2. Borrowings from the Slovak language

When translating the questionnaires and the instructions for census takers, the authors often took recourse to borrowing from Slovak. As the majority of Roma live in the Slovak environment and the adult Roma are mostly bilingual, the borrowed words with particular Romani suffixes are intelligible to all. They

⁶ If no qualifier is introduced, the text refers to version E.

⁷ Setting the rules for orthography of Romani, the basis of which presents the phonetics of the Slovak language, complicated for a relatively long time discussions on the need and possibilities to codify Romani in Slovakia because some considered these the very rules for the codification of the Romani language. For more details see, for instance, HORECKÝ, J. *K otázke literárnej rómčiny* [On the Problem of Literary Romani], pp. 165–171.

include names of various objects and abstract concepts which do not represent a part of the traditional Romani way of living. They can be roughly divided into several groups and we shall introduce just some of them here:

2.1.2.1. Naming units connected with a housing space

budova (budova; building), *bitos* (byt; flat), *družstevno bitos* (družstevný byt; cooperative flat), *domovnícko bitos* (domovnícky byt; porter's flat), *služobno bitos* (služobný byt; staff apartment), *kuchňakeri plocha* (plocha kuchyne; kitchen surface), *adresa* (adresa; address), *okresis* (okres; district), *ulica* (ulica; street), *supisno čislos* (súpisné číslo; register number) and many others.

2.1.2.2. Naming units expressing a relationship to an occupied housing space

vlastnikane formi (formy vlastníctva; forms of ownership), *užívateľis* (užívateľ; user), *podnajomnikos* (podnájomník; lodger), *najmos* (nájom; rent), *pravno dôvodos* (právny dôvod; legal reason), *majiteľis* (vlastník, majiteľ; holder, owner), *vlastnikos* (vlastník; owner), *najomno zmluva* (nájomná zmluva; lease), *trvalo prenajmos* (trvalý prenájom; permanent rentals), *dočasný pobytos* (dočasný pobyt; temporary residence), etc.

2.1.2.3. Naming units of amenities of a house or dwelling

vodovodos (vodovod; water supply), *elektricko/plinovo bojleris* (elektrický/plynový bojler; electric/gas boiler), *kachľi* (kachle; stove), *mraznička* (mraznička; freezer), *automaticko pračka* (automatická práčka; automatic washing machine), *farebno televizoris* (farebný televízor; colour TV), *telefonos* (telefón; telephone), *mobilno telefonos* (mobilný telefón; mobile phone), *počítačis* (počítač; computer), *lift/liftos/víťahos* (lift, výťah; lift), *pripojka* (prípojka; connection), *septikos*, *žumpa* (septik, žumpa; cesspool), etc.

2.1.2.4. Naming units regarding education and work

škola (škola; school), *maturita* (maturita; school-leaving examination), *podnikovo inštitút* (podnikový inštitút; business institute), *učňos* (učení; apprentice), *šudentos* (študent; student), *dochodcas* (dôchodca; pensioner), *zamestnancos* (zamestnanec, employee), *štatno podnikos* (štátny podnik; state enterprise), *rozpočtovo organizacija* (rozpočtová organizácia; budgetary organization), *štatno príspevkovo organizacija* (štátna príspevková organizácia; state subsidized organization), *akciovo firma* (akciová spoločnosť; stock company), *sukromno podnikos* (súkromný podnik; private enterprise), *živnostnikos* (živnostník; sole trader), *zamestnavateľis* (zamestnávateľ; employer), *produkčno družstvos* (produkčné družstvo; production cooperative), *podnikateľis* (podnikateľ; businessman), *spoločnikos* (spoločník; partner), *obchodno firma* (obchodná spoločnosť; company), *fondos* (fond; fund), etc.

Due to the nature of the census forms mainly nouns and adjectives are borrowed. When borrowing, the rules characteristic for Romani borrowings are applied: i.e., borrowed masculines take the suffixes *-os*, *-is*, or *-s* and borrowed feminines have the suffix *-a*.⁸ Borrowed adjectives take the suffix *-o* in both genders and sometimes the suffix *-ano/-aňi* is used (*štatistikano urados*, *ekonomikaňi aktivita*). Exceptionally, the concord of the adjectival suffix with the noun can be found (*dočasnos pobytos*, *splachovacos zachodos*). Occasionally, attributes are formed from borrowed nouns with the aid of the suffix *-ker-*: *bitovoskero lil* (bytový list; flat form), *zamestnavateľiskero nav* (názov zamestnávateľa; name of employer), *školakero sikhľariben* (školské vzdelanie; school education). In borrowed Slovak prefixal verbs, the prefix is either substituted by an adverb or a Slovak prefix is left. If the adverb is used it occurs prepositionally and postpositionally but also as a prefix of a verb: *avri značinel*, *značinel avri*, *avriznačinel* (to mark); the verb without an adverb is also used with the same meaning of *značinkereľ*. Verbs with a Slovak prefix may be found: *predžal* (prejst'; pass over: *vlastnictvos napregelas* vlastnictvo neprešlo; ownership did not pass over) and *preraťarel* (prenocovať; stay overnight).⁹

2.1.3. Native Romani naming units

In comparison to the very many naming units borrowed from the Slovak language, native Romani naming units are relatively rare.

They are above all names of persons, family relationships and kinship terms: *manuš* (person), *muřš* (man), *džuvľi* (woman), *dženo* (member, person), *čhavoro* (child), *biphandlo* (single), *romňadino* (married), *hiňi romeste* (married/she), *phivlo* (widower), *phivľi* (widow), *rom* (husband), *romňi* (wife), *dživel laha* ('he-mate'), *dživel leha* ('she-mate'), *čhavo* (son), *čhaj* (daughter), *džamutro* (son-in-law), *bori* (daughter-in-law), *dad*, *daj* (parents), *papus*, *haba* (grandparents), *sastro* (father-in-law) and *sasvi/sasuj* (mother-in-law).

Next, a varied group of more or less common naming units appears: e.g., *kher* (house), *teluno* (floor), *tato paňi* (warm water), *kaštuno kher* (cottage), *d'ives* (day), *čhon* (month), *berš* (year), *džido* (live), *dajakeri čhib* (mother tongue), *devleskero paťaviben* (religion), *but'i* (work), *gav* (village), *forutno kotor* (urban area), *nav* (name), *bara* (stone), *kašta* (wood), *but'akero* (employed), *bibuťakro* (unemployed), *phuvakero* (agricultural), *them* (state), *nav pal o dad* (surname),

⁸ In version W also a borrowing with the suffix *-iben* occurred: *uživiben* (užívanie; use).

⁹ The prevalence of borrowings from the Slovak language is characteristic for both versions of census forms, though they are not identical.

barvaľipen (property), *upre phuvakero* (overground), *fala* (wall), *kherutuno* (home), *ľil* (form), *beřto* (occupied) and others.

2.1.4. Combination of a Slovak and Romani naming unit

In compound names there is often a borrowed and a native Romani naming unit combined: *bitoskero ľil* (bytový ľist; flat form), *beřiben andro bitos* (obývanosť bytu; flat occupancy), *ustredno taľipen* (ústredné kúrenie; central heating), *taľibnaskeri technológia* (technológia vykurovania; heating technology), *phuvakero plinos* (zemný plyn; natural gas), *tuho labaripen* (pevné/tuhé palivo; solid fuel), *zakladno sikhľariben* (základné vzdelanie; basic education), *dajakeri dovolenka* (materská dovolenka; maternity leave), *phuvakero družstvos* (poľnohospodárske družstvo; agricultural cooperative), *fizicko manuř* (fyzická osoba; natural person), *narodno barvaľipen* (národný majetok; national property), *falakere paneli* (stenové panely; wall panels) and many others.

2.1.5. Neologisms

There are only rare attempts to create new naming units from Romani bases. A few more of them can be found in version W, but as a rule these have not been accepted by the authors of E. Instead, they have preferred a description, for instance: W *baripe*, E *savo baro* (size); and W *phuripe*, E *savo phuro* (age). Or they have borrowed a Slovak name, for instance: W *čačune dovodos*, E *pravno dovodos* (právne dôvody; legal reasons); W *nipali seľa*, E *vereľno plinovodos* (vereľná sieť, plynovod; public gas line); W *zoralo labardľipen*, E *tuho labaripen* (tuhé palivo; solid fuel); W *landaripni*, E *kupelňa* (kúpeľňa; bathroom); W *nipo*, E *firma* (firma; firm); W *themutno*, E *šťatno* (šťatny; state); W *bikebno nipo*, E *obchodno firma* (obchodná spoločnosť; company); W *cirdlo*, E *ľiftos*, *viťahos* (výťah; lift); and W *poľiben*, E *najmos* (nájom; rent).

More rarely a neologism occurs in E and a borrowed name in W, for instance: E *mařkarutno sikhľariben*, W *stredno sikhľariben* (stredné vzdelanie; middle education); E *igisno sikhľariben*, W *upľno sikhľariben* (úplné vzdelanie; completed education); and E *ľikeriben*, W *vlastnictvo* (vlastníctvo, ownership).

However, there are several examples of using a neologism for naming the same object in both versions, but the authors have naturally not proceeded identically when creating it. On the contrary, they have explicitly confirmed the validity of the thesis that “each act of naming admits more than one possible path leading to the resulting naming unit”¹⁰ and that “which of the possible paths is taken by a coiner is determined by both linguistic factors (productivity of the available WF Rules, their mutual competition, productivity constraints,

¹⁰ ŠTEKAUER, Pavol *Meaning Predictability of Word Formation*. XVI.

preferences) and extra-linguistic factors (vogue trends, education, profession, the age of the coiner and the linguistic family background)"¹¹: E *labaripen*, W *labard'ipen* (fuel); E *phiriben*, W *phirkeriben* (attendance); E *tatipen*, W *thoviben andro bov* (heating); E *teluno than*, W *than la dil'i* (floor surface); E *manušengeri partija*, W *manušno partija* (social group), etc.

A special group of neologisms is represented by naming units that have originated with the extension of meaning of common Romani words. Among others, there is the naming unit *bešiben* formed from the verb *bešel* (to live). In the Romani-Czech dictionary the following meanings of this word are introduced: bývanie; obydlie, osada, sídlisko (housing; abode, village, housing quarters). In the census forms it has the meaning of 'occupancy' (W, E), 'residence' (W), 'accommodation' (W) as well as 'unoccupied' (W), 'flat' (W) and 'accommodation device' (E). The verb *bešel* forms also the basis for the naming units *bešindo* (inhabitant) and *bešto* (occupied).

Similarly, the name *phuvakero* (agricultural) is also used in the meaning of "overground": E *upral/opral phuvakre/phuvakere štoki*, W *uprephuvjakere dil'i*. By the naming unit *manušiben* (humanity, mankind) the sex is also marked (E, W). The naming unit *čačuno* (genuine, true, real) occurs in the meaning of "legal" in W.

The author of W has created a new naming unit *namosarduno* (permanent) in the phrase *adresa namosardune bešiben* (address of permanent abode), which merges with the meaning durable (*namosarduno* about food).¹² This is contrary to *e adresa sakodivesutnone bešibnaskero* in E.

Several naming units have been created by calquing Slovak words; the authors have more or less successfully used word-formation processes characteristic for Romani. Sometimes they have decided for an identical word-formation process: e.g. when calquing the word *sčítanie* (census) motivated by the verb *sčítať*, *spočítať* in Slovak and *te genel* in Romani (to count). A new naming unit has been created with the aid of a very productive derivational suffix *-ipen/-iben*. With the suffix *-ipen* there are as a rule formed abstract nouns from adjectives and nouns and with the aid of the suffix *-iben* abstract nouns are created from verbs. However, in neologisms formed from the Romani bases this difference has been lost in some cases as can be demonstrated by the naming unit *zgenipen/zgeniben/zginipen* (W) (census).

The authors took different (inconsistent) steps in calquing the Slovak naming unit *sčítací komisár* (census commissioner). In version W it occurs as

¹¹ Ibid. p. XVII.

¹² HÜBSCHMANOVÁ, M. et al. 1991.

zgeni/zgenipen/zgeneldo/zigineldo/zgenipendo komisari, whereas in version E it is *zgenđo/zgenipnaskero/zgenipnaskero komisaris*; the attribute formed on the basis of *zgenel* occurs as *zgenipnaskero* in the naming unit E *zgenipnaskero lil* (census form) or E *zgenipnaskero momentos* (a moment of census).

The authors of E and W took different steps also when creating the next naming units: W *lil bešinde*, E *bešindo lil*, *bešindeskero lil*, *bešto lil*, (resident form); W *khereskero/kheribno lil*, E *khereskero lil* (house form); W *butikane than*, E *o than la but'akro/but'akro than kaj kerav* (place of work); W *manušno partija*, E *manušengeri partija* (social group); W *džengero uprephuvjakere di'li*, E *keci upral phuvakere štoki* (number of grade-level floors); W *biphando but'ako than*, E *biphandle but'a* (free profession); W *labard'ipen*, E *labaripen* (fuel); and so on.

Exceptionally, neologisms created by compounding can be found: E *sakođivesutno* = *sako* + *d'ives* + *-utno* permanent (*sakođivesutno bešiben*, permanent residence).

The census materials show that the coiners do not always have sufficient knowledge and experience (language and other) when creating neologisms from the internal possibilities of the Romani language (this concerns W more than E). Naturally, various coiners can create different names for the same extra-linguistic reality, but this has to be in accordance with regular formation rules characteristic for a given language. A naming unit that has come into existence in this way cannot be considered as better or worse in comparison with some other naming unit. Which new naming unit will be finally accepted depends on language users.

3. Translation of the Slovak non-concordant attribute

The abundant use of the non-concordant attribute expressed with the aid of the genitive is characteristic for the concise administrative style of the Slovak language. Therefore, it occurs very often in the census materials. The authors of the Romani census forms have chosen several ways to translate it.

3.1. Translation with the aid of the noun form in *-ker-*

The noun form with the suffix *-ker-* is included into the Romani case system by many linguists as the genitive though it differs in many ways from other Romani cases.¹³ It is used for expressing possession (*dadeskero kher* father's house), and it can also have the possessive-attributive and attributive function

¹³ For more details see RÁCOVÁ, Anna On the Possessive Form with the Affix *-ker-* in Romani. In *Asian and African Studies*, pp. 104–113.

(*la dajekeri čhib* mother tongue, *suvakeri chev* needle's eye, *khereskero lil* domový list, house form). At the same time, it is considered to be one of the most productive ways of forming neologisms in Romani. However, when translating the Slovak non-concordant attribute it is used only in version E and this is done with both native Romani and borrowed names (sometimes with the article sometimes without it): *užívateľ bytu* (user of flat) *bitoskero užívateľis*, *názov školy* (name of school) *la školakro nav*, *periodicita dochádzky* (attendance periodicity) *le pheribnaskeri periodicita*, *adresa zamestnávateľa* (address of employer) *le zamestnávateľiskero adresa*, *orientačné číslo domu* (informative house number) *khereskero orientačno numeros*, *vlastníctvo cirkvi* (church property) *rašajengro (cirkvakro) barvaľipen*, *majetok fondu* (fund property) *fondoskero barvaľipen*, *kombinácia vlastníkov* (combination of owners) *butere dženengro barvaľipen*, etc. As can be seen, the form with the suffix *-ker-* stands as a rule before a noun. However, occasionally it may be found after it, as in *súpisné číslo domu* (register house number): *supisno čislos khereskero*.

3.2. Oblique case

In version W of the census forms the Slovak non-concordant attribute is translated by the oblique (usually without an article): *vek bytu* (age of flat) *phuripe bitos*, *veľkosť bytu* (size of flat) *baripe bitos*, *zdroj teplej vody* (source of warm water) *zdrojos tate paňi*, *list obyvateľa* (residence form) *lil bešinde*, *dátum narodenia* (date of birth) *datumos ulibena*, *periodicita dochádzky* (attendance periodicity) *periodicita phirkeripe*, *forma vlastníctva* (form of ownership) *forma pirno*, *poloha bytu* (position of flat – sometimes with the article) *than le bitos*, etc.

This way of translating the Slovak non-concordant attribute exceptionally occurs also in version E: *sčítanie obyvateľov, domov a bytov* (census of inhabitants, houses and flats) *o zgeňipen le manušen (bešutnen)*, *khera the o biti*.

3.3. Description

In version E the Slovak non-concordant attribute is often translated with the aid of description: *vek bytu* (age of flat) *savo phuro hino o bitos*, *veľkosť bytu* (size of flat) *savo baro hin o bitos*, *počet obýtných miestností* (number of occupied rooms) *keci sobi hin tumen andro bitos*, *poloha bytu* (position of flat) *savi poloha hin tumare bitos*, *zdroj teplej vody* (source of warm water) *khatar cirden tato paňi*, *dátum narodenia* (date of birth) *o datumos kana ulifal*, *forma vlastníctva* (form of ownership) *ko hino chulaj le khereske*, and so on.

A description is occasionally found in version W as well, for instance: *názov a adresa zamestnávateľa* (name and address of employer) *nav vaj adresa odole so del buŕi*, *obývanosť domu* (house occupancy) *sar pe bešel andro kher*, etc.

3.4. Prepositional phrase

In some cases the authors of both versions of census forms translate the Slovak non-concordant attribute with the aid of the prepositional construction: *obývanosť bytu* (flat occupancy) E,W *bešiben andro bitos*, *fond národného majetku* (fund of national property) E,W *o fondos pal o narodno barvalipen*, *dôvod užívania bytu* (reason for the use of flat) E *dôvodos ki o bešiben andro bitos*, W *dovodos vaš o chasnariben bitos*, *člen produkčného družstva* (member of production cooperative) E *dženo andro produkčno družstvos*, W *členos pal o produkčno družstvos*, *študent vysokej školy* (university student) E *šudentos pre uči škola*, W *študento upri uči škola*, and *domov dôchodcov* (retirement home) E *kher perdal o dochodci*, W *khera vaš o dochodci*.

As we can see, the translators of the versions E and W often did not coincide in their choice of preposition. Version W succumbs more to the influence of the Slovak language.

3.5. Ablative

In W the Slovak non-concordant attribute is translated also by the ablative: *druh domu* (kind of house) *sorta le kherestar*, and *číslo domu* (house number) *o čislo kherestar*.

4. Translation of Slovak prepositional phrases

When translating Slovak prepositional phrases the authors of the census forms often use different prepositions: *určený na rekreáciu* (earmarked for recreation) E *hino ča pre rekreacija*, W *kerdo upri rekreacija*; *neobývaný po kolaudácii* (not occupied after flat inspection) E *nabešen angle kolaudacija*, W *nabešiben pal e kolaudacija*, *kurzy na vysokých školách* (university courses) E *kurzi pri uče školi*, W *kurzi upro uče školi*, *osoba na materskej dovolenke* (person on maternity leave) E *manuš pre dajakeri (matersko) dovolenka*, W *manušni upri dajakeri dovolenka*, *na iné účely* (for other purposes) E *pro aver učeli*, W *upre avera chasna*, *napríklad* (for instance) E *pro priklados*, W *ko priklados*, *prípojka na kanalizačnú sieť* (connection to drainage) E *hin pripojka pre verejno kanalizacija*, W *thoviben upri kanalizačno siťa*, etc.

Version W here again shows a prominent influence of the Slovak language.

5. Conclusion

The analysis of census materials proves above all that the vocabulary of the Romani language is still insufficient for use at all levels of communication if

official materials were not to present a mixture of Slovak and Romani words with Slovak words prevailing.¹⁴ If Romani is supposed to fully function as a language of official documents, it is necessary to pay consistent attention to its development at a professional level. However, some attempts by the authors of the census forms also indicate how the Romani lexicon could be enriched by neologisms formed on a Romani basis. On the other hand, it must be admitted that if too many neologisms had been used for the first time in these materials it would have resulted in the unintelligibility of the census forms for the majority of the Roma, who, after all, are mostly well acquainted with the Slovak language. Neologisms have to be created gradually and their acceptability can be proved just by their usage by those who speak this language.

The census forms also reveal the inexperience of the authors with neologisms, which is evident especially in a coinage using different names for one phenomena in one official document (we are speaking just about E here), for instance: *nosna fali* and *avrutne fali* for supporting walls, *zgend/zgenipnaskero/zgenipnaskero komisarís* for census commissar, and *supisno čislos khereskero* for inventory house number but *khereskero orientačno numeros* for informative house number, *bešindo lil*, *bešindeskero lil*, *bešto lil* for resident form, etc. In materials of this kind, such variations are not proper for stylistic reasons.

On the other hand, the great consistency in orthography should be appreciated as has already been mentioned which results from the relatively strict adherence to rules adopted by the Linguistic Commission of Gypsy-Roma Union in 1971.

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¹⁴ Here the mixing of Romani and Slovak is not the case of code mixing for stylistic or conversation-strategic purposes, as described in some papers on Romani bilingualism or multilingualism (see, for instance, Matras, Y. *Romani – A linguistic Introduction*, p. 241), but simply of fulfilling gaps in an insufficiently developed vocabulary.

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