

## In search of Hungaro-Romani

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Para-Romani varieties, which have a Romani vocabulary but use the grammatical frame of another language, typically that of the co-territorial majority language (Bakker 2020), are known to have existed as early as the seventeenth century (see e.g. Adiego 1998 and Bakker 2002). They are also referred to as Romani mixed dialects and thought to be secret languages in bilingual communities (Bakker & van der Voort 1991). These varieties present an interesting case of language shift: in relation to Angloromani, Matras 2010 explains that the abandonment of inflected Romani took place quite abruptly, going through three phases in the growing structural impact of English on Romani, accompanied by the decline in its use due to population mixing. However, Romani vocabulary had already been used in English sentences by then, perhaps to emphasise group belonging, and this variety is retained to this day, serving an emblematic function. This scenario is not unlikely for other Para-Romani varieties and represents a way of salvaging the remains of a language endangered by and eventually lost to a more dominant one.

Besides the better documented Angloromani, Caló, Basque Romani, Dortika and Scandinavian Romani varieties, according to some of the more recent literature on Romani (Réger 1995, Kovalcsik & Kubinyi 2000, Stewart 2002, Courthiade & Rézműves 2009, Bakker 2020), a Para-Romani variety in which a Romani lexicon combines with Hungarian has also been in existence and used by Romungro musicians in Hungary. While Bakker & van der Voort 1991 do not make mention of it specifically when discussing possible other Para-Romani varieties in addition to the better known ones, they remark "it is probable that other similar dialects exist or existed formerly" (Bakker & van der Voort 1991: 29). An early reference to a Hungarian Para-Romani variety can be found in Hutterer 1963, who describes it as the remaining elements of a Romani vocabulary morphologically integrated into the new language system, and compares the process of its formation to that of Caló and Angloromani. Even more importantly, Hutterer 1963 adds that this phenomenon is observable among settled, mainly urban Carpathian Roma.

Recent activity on the VakerMore social media page, a page dedicated to the Romungro variety, in the form of posts, comments and word lists, as well as personal communication with members of the community appear to confirm the existence of Hungaro-Romani in some form; however, it is not clear whether it is still actively used and how it actually compares with better known Para-Romani varieties. In light of this, we are planning to investigate the traces of Hungaro-Romani and uncover its history to the extent that it is possible. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, we will rely on online interviews with consultants who claim this variety exists and they are familiar with it.

463 words

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