

Tanulmány

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The Comparison of Loanwords from Romani to Be Found in Non-Standard Hungarian, Spanish, Czech and Romanian

Abstract

The paper outlines problems one faces when studying loanwords from Romani (called Romisms). It provides a brief overview of the history of their incorporation. The main objective of the paper is to define fundamental common nodal points (or elementary differences) in penetrating of loanwords from Romani into non-standard varieties of several European languages. It especially focuses on European Spanish and Hungarian (in a lesser extent, there are also examples from Czech and Romanian). It is based on my field research conducted in Spain and in Hungary.

Keywords: language contact, loanwords, Romani, Hungarian, Spanish, Czech, Romanian, sociolinguistics, colloquial language, slang, argot

1 Introduction

The language of Roma people started to spread from the Balkans to Europe at latest in the 15th century. Since then the majority languages have been in contact with Romani. Most linguistically oriented works deal with an influence of majority languages upon Romani dialects. The language contact is nevertheless always reciprocal, i.e. that also Romani has left its traces in languages of the neighbouring population, though being it in a much lesser degree that on the contrary.

In this paper I will deal with the influence of Romani upon majority language. I will especially focus on European Spanish and Hungarian. Non-standard varieties of these two languages are partly (and relatively largely)¹ formed by the contribution of Romani language. There are several similarities between Spain and Hungary with reference to Romani ethnic groups resident in the territories of both countries. These is to be found a high number of Romani population, comparable older history (violent sedentarization and persecution during the 18th century, negation of the existence of Romani ethnic, prohibition of the word “Gypsy” and replacement of it by “New Spaniard” and “New Hungarian” respectively),² contribution

¹ The number of loanwords from Romani is, however, very low in all languages if compared with the lexical influence of other European languages.

² The history of Roma people in various European countries is described in Fraser (1995).

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to a specific musical style which is nowadays considered a part of national identity of both countries (*flamenco* in Spain, *verbunkos* and *csárdás* in Hungary). There are, however, considerable differences as well. I would like to mention at least two of them. Firstly, in Hungary various dialects of inflectional Romani can still be heard (though not all members of Roma ethnic speak Romani), while in Spain already several centuries ago an inflectional dialect of Romani had been replaced by so-called Para-Romani languages (mixed languages which predominantly make use of the grammar of the surrounding language, whereas the Romani-derived vocabulary is partly retained) based on Spanish, Catalan and Basque.³ And even these mixed languages are nowadays in decline. Secondly, Spanish and Hungarian differ both in genetic and structural classification with respect to Romani. There arises the question whether there are to be found common nodal points in penetrating of loanwords from Romani into non-standard varieties of Spanish and Hungarian. The answer is supposed to be found in this article.

In this paper, I will outline some general problems one faces when studying loanwords from Romani. Then, I will try to define fundamental common nodal points (or differences) in penetrating of loanwords from Romani into non-standard varieties of European Spanish and Hungarian from the grammar and semantic perspectives. I will point out the semantic group of some ethnicity-designating 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. I will try to document my findings on the examples from other languages as well, especially from Czech and Romanian.

I draw both from my own sociolinguistic field research carried out in between 2006-2012 among Spanish and Hungarian respondents⁴ and from vast literature (dictionaries of argots and slangs, etymological dictionaries).⁵

³ In this article, I will only deal with Spanish Para-Romani (called *Caló*) and I will leave aside the other ones.

⁴ The survey strove to map awareness about selected Romisms (and their semantic meaning, first and foremost their prospective semantic modification in contrast with the meaning published in dictionaries of argots or slangs) and further on their potential tendencies concerning the knowledge of particular Romisms from the side of respondents in the relation to their age, sex, education and region. The course and results of the survey research carried out in between 2006-2007 among Spanish and Hungarian speakers are in detail described in my unpublished M.A. thesis (Čengerová 2007). The main purpose of the thesis was to compare the existence and frequency of some words of Romani origin in the actual Spanish and Hungarian from the sociolinguistic point of view and to prove the convenience of some methods of investigation (questionnaire, language corpus, Internet). In this way, 57 words of Romani origin in Spanish and 47 words in Hungarian were investigated. The number of respondents, originated from all regions of Spain, was about 1000. The Hungarian part of the research contained over 200 respondents. (The respondents from both countries were non-Roma. They were mostly aged between 18 and 45 years and had a high school or university degree.) Later, the Spanish part of the research has been extended to a total of 1500 Spanish speakers. The quantitative analysis and interpretation of the results of the survey regarding the knowledge of Romisms in Spain are in detail described in my Ph. D. thesis (Krinková 2013) and I will publish them in another paper. However, a brief summary of the Spanish part of my research (including the methodology and an outline of my findings) can be seen in Krinková (2014).

⁵ In my research, I compared my findings regarding the knowledge (and possible meaning shift) of chosen Romani loanwords and their sociolinguistic status with the statements that are to be found in the dictionaries and in other sources. For this purpose, I used the works of Benkő (1976), Juhász et al. (1999), Kövecses (1998), Kakuk (1997), Schirm (2006) for Hungarian and Besses (1905), Buzek (2010), Clavería (1951, 1953), Sanmartín Sáez (1999) for Spanish. The Spanish and Hungarian words mentioned in this article as

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The objective of this paper is not to cover in detail or define so-called “secret languages”, i.e. old or new European slangs or argots (the argot is perceived here as a speech of marginal social levels) or specific slangs of various groups of the population and present Romani loanwords to be found in these. Neither will I deal in detail with the Romani loanwords present in mixed language codes or in ethnolects (Para-Romani varieties) spoken by the Roma population (or persons being in the closest contact with them). I deem as the Romism such a word (more concise definition to be found later) that has penetrated from a particular Romani dialect to some of non-standard forms of the majority language and is used by non-Romani speakers.⁶ The Romani forms presented in the paper as basic ones come from the dictionary Boretzky & Iglá (1994) if not stated otherwise.⁷

2 A brief overview of the influence of Romani on chosen European languages

Romani has penetrated into majority languages only slowly, the most often being it by means of an argot that is usually explained due to a more narrow contact among marginal groups of the population. Particular languages differ in a number of lexical loanwords and also in an extent of their use. Some European languages (or more precisely their non-standard varieties) are characterized by a relatively wide contribution of words of Romani origin.

The presence of Romisms is documented in non-standard varieties or secret languages in many places of Europe, e.g. in Scandinavia (Ward 1936; Van Den Eijnde 1991; Ladefoged 1998), the British Isles (Grant 1998), in Netherlands (Kluyver 1934), in France (Esnault 1935; Max 1972), in German speaking countries (Kluge 1901; Matras 1998), in Hungary (Nyusztay 1920; Kakuk 1997; Schirm 2006), in Czech lands (Leeuwen-Turnovcová 1993), in Italy (Pasquali 1935; Scala 2004), in Croatia (Lapov 2005), in Romania (Graur 1934; Leschber 1995), in Bulgaria (Kostov 1956), in Turkey (Kostov 1970; Kyuchukov & Bakker 1999), in Spain (e.g. Clavería 1953; Buzek 2010).

It is symptomatic that in old (west and central) European argots there are only few or none Romani words to be found; a more significant inpour of these words into argots began as late as in the course of the 18th, or if you like mainly in the 19th century. This tendency is documented not only in central Europe in German *Rotwelsch*⁸ that played an important role

examples of Romani loanwords appear also in at least one of the aforementioned works. The examples of loanwords from Romani that are to be found in Czech and Romanian are only drawn from dictionaries and other secondary sources in this paper. I used the dictionaries of Hugo et al. (2006), Machek (1971) and Holub & Leyer (1978) for Czech, and the works of Cioranescu (2005), Leschber (1995) and Graur (1934) for Romanian. I also used several dictionaries of Romani (Boretzky & Iglá 1994; Hübschmannová & Šebková & Žigová 2001; Sztojgó 2002) and Caló (Trujillo, 1844; dictionaries contained in Torrión, 1988) in order to verify the Romani (or Caló) origin of the words.

⁶ In the case of Spanish, I consider as Romism a word of Romani origin (see further in the article) that has penetrated from Spanish *Caló* into a non-standard variety of Spanish.

⁷ As for all basic Romani forms I follow the spelling of this dictionary. In Romani loanwords I follow the spelling of given majority languages, e.g. Rom. *xal* ‘he/she eats’ > Sp. *jalar* ‘to eat’, Cz. *chálka* ‘food’.

⁸ Matras (1998: 193) states that the expression *Rotwelsch* is first documented in German around the year 1250. Its use in older sources is related to a special lexicon of non-standard language varieties which it draws mainly from old dialectal terms and deliberately transformed German words. The contact of the Romani language with marginal non-standard varieties started in Germany and neighbouring countries at first in the 15th century. *Rotwelsch* of an older type still prevailed nevertheless also other varieties were born of a

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also in neighbouring countries where German was the official language,⁹ but also e.g. in the British Isles¹⁰ and in the south of Europe in Spanish.¹¹ It is connected predominantly with industrialization and a birth of a specific speech of the urban periphery and underworld.

The most important sources about the penetration of Romisms into majority languages are in general the works dealing with non-standard varieties of given languages (especially historical and present dictionaries of argot and slang). It is not rare that the comprehensive or/and etymological dictionaries of a given language do not contain many expressions from Romani, in some cases the Romani origin of the word is not mentioned.¹²

Loanwords from Romani started to appear in Hungarian argot in the 19th and their inflow continued during the 20th century. As Schirm (2006: 150) points out, the words that appeared after 1940 come from Lovara dialect, whereas the words adopted previously were taken from Rumungro dialect. The absolute majority of them got into the language through argot from which some of them got into the colloquial language as well.

The number of Romani loanwords in Czech was low until the 19th century when a gradual increasing occurred. In contrast with Hungarian, the number of Romani loanwords is very low in Czech, though a detailed investigation of their presence especially in the contemporary language is still missing. Traditionally, most of Romani loanwords¹³ in Czech were used by circus performers, comedians and carousel operators. A lot of words are to be found in historical criminal argot, some of them passed to present prisoner slang as well.¹⁴

As Leschber (1995: 152-154) points out, there is a general lack of information about Romanian argot. Similarly as in other countries in the region of Eastern Europe, in the era between 1947-1989 the subject of Romani etymologies was taboo.¹⁵

In comparison with the aforementioned languages we dispose of much more information about the situation in Spanish. The so-called *Germanía*, the criminal lingo spread in Spain first and foremost from the 15th to the 17th century and recorded especially in the dictionary of Juan Hidalgo *Bocabulario de Germanía* (1609) does not contain – as it is observed by Torrión (1988: 140) – expressions of Romani origin from Caló language (apart from two non

“secret” language which incorporated also the Romanic, Hebrew and later (in the 18th century) also the Romani lexica.

⁹ Hungarian and Czech argots were thus closely connected to the German argot at that time and contained a vast contribution of loanwords from German and Hebrew (or, more properly, from Yiddish).

¹⁰ Grant (1998: 175) states that most words of the Romani origin got into written English in the half of the 18th century. He adds though that these expressions had been used much sooner in spoken language. Many of these expressions were first documented in London slang. Some expressions used in cockney do not exist at present outside of London at all. At the same time it is nevertheless evident that in the history of English slang we do not find another more significant boom of the Romani loanwords.

¹¹ Clavería (1953: 17-18) points out that coexistence of jargons of marginal low social levels and the Roma people was only slow and probably did not come into being before the end of the 17th century. Nevertheless in the 18th century a confusion of the Spanish *Germanía* (the criminal argot) and *Caló* (the language of the Spanish *Gitanos*) must have been – according to his words – quite common in Spain.

¹² Several works about the Romani loanwords in Hungarian and Spanish have shown the disproportion in number of Romani loanwords present in various dictionaries (cf. Buzek 2010 for Spanish, Schirm 2006 for Hungarian).

¹³ The loanwords taken before the Second World War came from Czech Romani (now extinct). Later loanwords should mostly come from East-Slovak Romani, but their inflow (if there is any) has not been mapped in any work so far.

¹⁴ For information about Czech argot, cf. Hugo (2006).

¹⁵ This tendency can be observed also in Czech and Hungarian of that time (cf. also Kis 1997).

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confirmed etymologies).¹⁶ The intermingling of both communities thus had to have been really slow. On the contrary though in works such as *El delincuente español* by Salillas (1896) or Besses' *Diccionario del argot español* (1905)¹⁷ the expressions as Caló (Spanish Para-Romani) are very numerous. Similar situation prevails also in the dictionaries of the argot in the 20th century. Nevertheless, as Sanmartín Sáez (1999) states in many places of her dictionary of argot, many Romisms (in Spanish called *Gitanismos*) have grown obsolete or have gone completely out of use from contemporary Spanish.

The confusion of the argot or another secret language with the Romani language is documented in the course of the history in various places of Europe. Mixed forms of the Romani language often played a role of a secret language, but it does not differ from other secret languages from a pragmatical point of view. Contrary to other secret languages the speakers of the Para-Romani share the feeling of the belonging with the Roma ethnic group (cf. also Bakker 1998: 69-96). Confusion of the argot and *Caló* has been since the 18th century quite common even in Spain¹⁸ and the expression *Caló* has been used as the synonym of the argot similarly to Portuguese (Portuguese *Calão*).

As already mentioned, *Gitanismos* in Spanish do not come from an inflexional dialect of Romani but from the Para-Romani *Caló* which is itself a mixed language of Romani and Spanish. We can find similar situation in other places of Europe where these mixed varieties of Romani and a majority language were born.¹⁹ Contrary to other languages of Southern and Western Europe (e.g. Italian and French) where maximally several dozens of expressions have been documented, a relatively great number of Romisms have penetrated into non-standard forms of Spanish some of them still being in use. According to the opinion of Clavería (1953) the number of *Gitanismos* (Romisms) is in the Spanish argot stable and will not thus grow which can be expected also with respect to lesser and lesser competences of the Spanish Roma people in *Caló*. The present situation of *Caló* is described in Gamella et al. (2012).

The spreading of *Gitanismos* in Spain was helped significantly by a popular wave of a so-called *flamenguismo* (popularity of *flamenco*) that had its greatest boom in the second half of the 19th century. This phenomenon was observed already by Clavería (1953: 360-361) who points out two channels (argot and *flamenco*) by means of which the Romisms got into Spanish. Ropero Núñez (1991) deals with the *flamenguismo* more in detail. Further on, he

¹⁶ Salillas (1896) deems the word *gao* 'louse' a substantive originating from the *Caló* present as early as in the old *Germania*, being it the word he derives from the word *chugao* 'louse' (cf. Rom. *džuv* 'louse'). He ascribes the variety of this word (*gaul* 'louse') to the expression from the *Germania* *gao*. *Gao* in the meaning of the 'louse' appears in the dictionary of *Caló* by Trujillo (1844) and Coelho (1892) who attributes it an origin in the *Germania*. The word *gau* is documented in French argot of the end of the 19th century. Vidocq (2002: 65) presents the word *gaux* 'louse' (*gaux ou picantis*, *piota* 'tavern' in the Italian argot, cf. also *piolle* 'tavern' in the French argot. Cf. Vidocq (2002: 108).

¹⁷ Besses' dictionary started, as pointed out by Buzek (2010: 30-31), a period of a popularity of dictionaries of the Spanish argot that lasted for the whole 20th century and produced works of a various quality. The terms argot and *Caló* were deemed synonyms in this period and their registry can be thus only hardly singled out. Besses includes also in his dictionary apart from the Romani words also folk, vulgar ones etc. The dictionary became very popular and it was used as the source by later authors of the dictionaries of the argot. It contains a part *Lenguaje jergal-lenguaje usual* (around 5000 entries) and a reversed part *Lenguaje usual-lenguaje jergal* (around 3500 entries). The sources used by Besses remain unquoted and we have not known them precisely so far.

¹⁸ Cf. Clavería (1951: 18-19).

¹⁹ Cf. Grant (1998).

draws the attention to a frequent confusion of the terms *andaluz*, *gitano*, *flamenco*, *caló*, *germania* etc. and finds these terminological vices also in the dictionary of the Spanish Royal Academy (DRAE). Terminological and other vices in connection with documentation of *Gitanismos* in Spanish dictionaries are systematically covered by Buzek (2010) as well.

3 The delimitation of the term “Romism”

Romisms (expressions taken over from Romani²⁰) which have penetrated into non-standard varieties of majority languages belong in most cases into the so-called inherited Romani vocabulary (i.e. these are the words of Indian origin further old, pre-European loanwords from Iranian and Armenian and loanwords from Greek; the inherited vocabulary is shared by all European Romani dialects).

In my opinion, we can take for Romisms also new loanwords from some of the European languages the Roma people had been in contact with, if the particular loanword had got into the majority language via Romani. We may use as an example the word of Slavic origin *pusca* ‘rifle’ present in the Spanish Para-Romani Caló²¹ from where it succeedingly spread into the Spanish argot. Whereas in Spanish we may quite easily – thanks to a geographical isolation of Spain – reveal that the mentioned word of Slavic origin had got to Spanish via Caló (and thus we can take it as *Gitanismo*), in other languages – e.g. in Hungarian and Romanian – the situation is not so unambiguous since these languages themselves contain numerous loanwords from neighbouring Slavic languages. This is also the case of the Hungarian word *puska* which had been taken over then most likely from one of Slavic languages, as it is pointed out also by Kniezsa (1974). On the contrary, in the colloquial Hungarian present word *duma* ‘speech, conversation, tattle’ (and its derivatives *dumál*, *dumázik*, *dumcsizik* ‘he tattles, babbles’,²² *dumás* ‘voluble’, *dumcsi* ‘conversation’ etc., together with compounds such as *dumagép* ‘extremely talkative person’, literally ‘the tattling machine’, *dumaláda* ‘radio, television’, literally ‘tattling case/box’) are also of Slavic origin but had come to Hungarian via Romani which had taken it over from some of the South Slavic languages, as it is pointed

²⁰ In case of Spanish the definition of Romism as loanword from Romani is not appropriate, because the so-called *Gitanismos* (this term is largely used in Spanish literature instead of Romism) are in fact always loanwords from Spanish Caló. I consider the Romani origin of the given loanword from Caló as a necessary criterion for considering it *Gitanismo*. In order to simplify the terminology, I will however use the unifying term Romism also for loanwords from Caló (though not taken directly from a proper dialect of Romani). In the last two decades a new migration wave of Roma has got to Spain and Portugal, mainly from the region of the Balkans as a consequence of the new political situation. These Roma people still speak various dialects of inflectional Romani; nevertheless I do not know about any contact between the Spanish Gypsies and these forlorn immigrants (cf. Jiménez González, 2009) or about any linguistic influence of their speech on Spanish language.

²¹ The great majority of loanwords the origin of which is ascribed in the dictionaries to the Caló is without any doubts of the Romani origin (that is belongs to the inherited vocabulary, or it is the loanword from Greek or other European language, which had got to Spanish via the Caló). The Spanish dictionaries of argot agree on the Caló origin of most of words, whereas the dictionary of the Spanish Royal Academy (DRAE) cites the Caló etymology only in some cases. As for several Romani words it cites another etymology or an unknown origin.

²² Elementary dictionary form of the verbs is in Hungarian the 3rd person of SG, the infinitive is made by adding of the suffix *-ni*.

out in Benkő (1976: 687) in the etymological dictionary of the Hungarian language. In this interpretation it can be thus perceived as the Romism.

4 General characteristics of Romisms

Romisms have a tendency to show certain common characteristics: a phonological, morphological and semantic one. On the ground of a comparison of a presence of Romisms in non-standard varieties of Hungarian and Spanish I have arrived to several general conclusions some of which can be applied also to Romisms present in other European languages.

The characteristics regarding phonology and grammar are the following:

1) The Romisms often largely (or totally) adopt a sound system of the host language. As for an assessment of the extent of their adaptation we must know first what the sound form of a given word in a particular Romani dialect is from where it had been taken over to the majority language. In Romani dialects we also find – quite often due to their contact with the majority language – changes in the field of the phonological subsystem. We can see a full adaptation to the sound system e.g. as for loanwords from Caló in Spanish, since already Caló fully adopted the phonological subsystem of the majority language (e.g. the loss of aspiration, changes in articulation of some phonemes etc.). Romisms present in Hungarian and Czech contain partly phonemes which are for the particular language untypical and which appear only in foreign words, e.g. /dž/ in the Czech word *gádžo* ‘Gaujo’ (but compare Czech *čokol* < Romani *džukel* ‘dog’) or Hungarian *gádzsó*. Nevertheless some features such as the shift of the stress or the loss of aspiration (if we compare them to so-called Common Romani, that means the form common to the majority of Romani dialects in Europe) are present also in the local Romani dialects from which these words were taken. In some cases though the remains of an aspiration (if present in the local Romani dialect) can be preserved despite of the absence of aspirated sounds in the majority language. We may use the Hungarian slang word *dikház* ‘he finds out’ (Kövecses 1998: 64) as an example, to be found sporadically also in the slang of Turkish homosexuals (*phuri* ‘old homosexual’, cf. Kyuchukov & Bakker 1999: 97).

2) One Romani stem can serve as the source for formation – by means of affixes of the surrounding majority language – of a great range of new lexical units, e.g. the Spanish Caló word *currar* (documented also in the variety *currelar*) ‘to beat’ and also ‘to work’ is used for forming of nouns as *curro*, *curre*, *currele*, *currelo*, all with the meaning of ‘work’, *currante* ‘worker’, *currito* (*dar un currito* ‘to slap someone’).²³ Leschber (1995: 153) described similar phenomenon in Romanian. The Romani basis can become also a part of the compound the second part of which comes from the majority language, e.g. the already mentioned colloquial Hung. *dumaláda* ‘television’ (< Rom. *duma* ‘speech’ + Hung. *láda* ‘case’).

3) The words are often adopted together with Romani affixes, such as the suffix *-ipén* in the colloquial Span. *chachipén* ‘glorious’ (< Caló *chachipén* ‘truth’ < Rom. *čačipén* ‘truth’). Also the Romani affixes can be used in some cases independently in specific levels of the

²³ Sometimes the particular morpheme of the majority language (here Spanish) occurs also in the Para-Romani Caló from which the argot draws.

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majority language such as the suffixes *-os*, *-ete*, *-engher used* (minimally in first decades of the 20th century) in the Romanian Press when artificially copying the speech of the Roma people, as it is mentioned in the work of Graur (1934). In non-standard varieties of Spanish there is the suffix *-eta*, to be found with the adjectives in later and present sources concerning Caló, coming the most probably originally from the Romani comparative suffix *-edér*, as it is suggested by Adiego (2005: 67)²⁴; in vernacular Spanish: *majara* ‘fool’ (< Caló *majará* ‘holy’) and also *majareta*, *pureta*²⁵ ‘parent; younger person acting as an older one’, or the verb suffix *-el-/iñ-el-*. All these suffixes are however documented also in Caló and they are connected only with the Romani roots, which to a certain extent refutes the statement that the suffixes are productive in the argot.

4) The verbs are often taken over with the Romani suffix of the person, the most often *-(e)l* (3SG). This trend is evident also in the Para-Romani languages. Nevertheless it seems that also in regions where the Para-Romani was not born the verbal Romisms penetrate into the majority language often together with the suffix of the person: Cz. argot *kamelit* ‘to love’ (< Rom. *kamél* 3SG + Cz. infinitive *-it*), *dárelit se* ‘to be afraid of’ (< Rom. *darál* 3SG), Hungarian *kamel* ‘he/she loves’, *csórel* ‘he/she steals’ (< Rom. *čorél* 3SG), *dikhel* ‘he/she sees’ (< Rom. *dikhél* 3SG), *dzsal* ‘he/she goes’ (< Rom. *džal* 3SG), *darál* ‘he/she is afraid of’. In some cases there are even two forms: argot. Span./Caló *chanar/chanelar* ‘to know, can, understand’ (< Rom. root *džan-*, *džanél* 3SG, with the same meaning), *dicar/diquelar* ‘to see’ (also these two variants are documented in Caló as well). The verbal personal suffix frequently appears in other deverbal derivatives as well.

5) Further we can assume that in all languages the most adopted lexemes there are words classes with the full lexical meaning. The most often are nouns, e.g. the argot. Span./Caló *breje* ‘year’²⁶; colloq. Span. *chaval* ‘boy (used also when addressing someone)’²⁷; argot. Span. *mollate* ‘wine’²⁸; adjectives (e.g. argot. Span. *chungaló* ‘bad’²⁹), and verbs (e.g. argot. Span. *camelar*, colloq. Span. *currar* ‘to work; to beat’³⁰; argot. Span. *chalar* ‘to go’, colloq./argot. Spanish *chorar* ‘to steal’. In some cases the change in word class may occur, the most often being it nominalization due to a shift of a semantic meaning on the ground of a metaphor: e.g. in colloquial Span. *parné* ‘money’ (noun) < Caló *parné* ‘money’ < Rom. *parné* ‘white PL’ (adjective).³¹ There may though occur also other word classes, e.g. pronouns: for example Spanish *menda* ‘I’ < Caló *menda* ‘I’ < Rom. *amendar* ‘we ABL’ or perhaps *mandar* ‘I ABL’.

²⁴ Sanmartín Sáez (2002: 526, 711) takes *-eta* for a (Spanish) diminutive suffix. Adiego however in my opinion quite convincingly argues against the Spanish (or Catalan) origin: Spanish diminutive suffix *-eta* is feminine (the masculine form being *-ete*), whereas in Caló it appears only as masculine.

²⁵ The forms with *-eta* are not present in the older sources of Span. Caló, but are documented in present-day Caló (e.g. in Adiego 2005).

²⁶ < Rom. *berš* ‘year’

²⁷ In the older Caló dictionaries, only the nominative forms (*chavó* SG and *chavé* PL) are documented, the form *chaval* comes from Rom. vocative *čhavále* PL.

²⁸ < Caló *mol*, *mollate* ‘wine’ < Rom. *mol* (nominative), *moljate* (locative)

²⁹ < Caló *chungaló* < Rom. *džungaló*

³⁰ < Caló *currar* ‘to work; to beat’ < Rom. *kuř/kur-* ‘to beat’

³¹ This phenomenon can be found often already in Romani dialects themselves; it is thus always necessary to weigh if this shift occurred indeed as late as at the moment of adoption of the Romani loanword.

Characteristics regarding the frequency of use:

6) The frequency of knowledge among the speakers as for particular Romisms differs markedly. Some Romisms have penetrated only to marginal language levels (such as a prisoner argot), some appear routinely in the colloquial language and they are known by most native speakers of the given language. My research revealed that very frequent words are *chaval* ‘boy’, *currar* ‘to work’, *molar* ‘to enjoy’ in Spanish, while in Hungarian there are common expressions such as *csaj* ‘girl’, *csávó* ‘boy’.³² In Czech it is for example *čokl* ‘dog’. It is quite symptomatic that the speakers using these expressions often have no clue that the expressions are of Romani origin.

5 Semantic aspects of Romisms

5.1 The most frequent semantic groups

The Romisms that have penetrated into the non-standard varieties of majority languages belong in most cases into one of semantic groups that are delimited by Matras (2002: 25-30) within the so-called inherited vocabulary.³³ These semantic groups are among others expressions labelling persons (hierarchical relations within the family and community, attribution of nations, professions and functions), human body and its functions and qualities, human activities, further on religion and spiritual matters, natural phenomena and time, fauna and flora, basic groceries, attributions of dwellings and places, names of things and tools. We may state that most of these semantic groups often cover also the lexica of argots of the European languages.

The semantic groups of Romani origin loanwords present in each of the studied languages show a striking lexical similarity.³⁴

As for Romisms, the most frequent semantic groups are (1) human body and its functions, including activities and conditions related to the body, emotions and mind, (2) expressions concerning the life in the society (there are names of professions and functions, criminal activity and money) and (3) the expressions delimitating hierarchical relations within the family and community,

Ad 1) Human body and its functions, including activities and conditions related to the body, emotions and mind, for example the Romani *muj* ‘mouth’ > Span./Caló³⁵ *mui*, written also as

³² My research revealed that more than 50% of respondents knew 19 of investigated words (from 57) in Spanish (*calorro, camelar, chachi, chachipén, chalar, chaval, chivar, chungo, currar, gachó, jolín, queli, majara, mangar, molar, paripé, parné, pinrel, sobar*) and 23 of investigated words (from 43) in Hungarian (*baró, bula, csaj, csávó, csór, darál, devla, dili/dilis, duma, dzsal, gádzsó, gizda, gógyis, góré, havová, kaja, lóvé, manus, megmurdel, more, pia, rinyál, vakerál*).

³³ There occurs though some shift since also new loan words are deemed a Romism which had penetrated into the major language via the Romani language.

³⁴ In fact, many Romani words, such as father, son, girl, non-Gypsy, bread, to eat, to drink, to steal, money, God, devil, fear etc., appear as a loanword from Romani in each of the studied 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.

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muy ‘mouth’, also in the phrase *achantar la mui* ‘to hush up’; Rom. *jakh* ‘eye’ > Span./Caló *acáis, sacáis, escáis* ‘eyes’; Rom. *pindró* ‘foot’, *pindré* PL > Span./Caló *pinrel* ‘foot’; expressions of intimate body parts are very frequent: Rom. *bul* ‘bottom’ > Span./Caló *bul, bullate* ‘bottom’; Rom. *mindž* ‘female genital’ > Span./Caló *minche*, Hung. *mindzsó*, Czech *mindža* ‘female genital’; Rom. *čuči, čuča* PL ‘breasts’ > Span./Caló *chucháis*. Another relatively common category are the words somehow related to the body (e.g. excretion, sexual intercourse): Rom. *khul/ful* ‘excrement’ > Hung. *kula* ‘excrement (vulg.)’ (and derivatives: adj. *kulás*, verb. *kulál*), Span./Caló *ful* ‘excrement’; Rom. *xin-* ‘to shit’ > Span./Caló *jiñar* ‘to shit’; Czech *chynda* ‘bottom’, *chyndit* ‘to shit’; Rom. *rat* ‘blood’ > Span./Caló *araté* ‘blood, menses’. Other expressions are also related to the body, such as Rom. *xa-* ‘to eat’, *xal* 3SG > Hung. *halózik* ‘he eats’, *kaja* ‘food (vulg.)’, Span./Caló *jalar* ‘to eat’, Romanian *a halí* ‘to eat’; Rom. *pi-* ‘to drink’ > Hung. *pia* ‘alcohol’, *piál* ‘to drink, to booze’; Rom. *mandró* ‘bread’ > Span./Caló *manró*; Rom. *mol* ‘wine’ > Hung. *mólés* ‘little bit drunk’; Rom. *bokh* ‘hunger’ > Span./Caló *boqui* ‘hunger’; Rom. *vaker-/rakir-* ‘to speak’ > Hung. *vakerál*, Span./Caló *naquerar/araquerar*; Rom. *dža-* ‘to go’, *džal* 3SG, *džan* 3PL > Hung. *džsal*, Span./Caló *chalar*, Romanian *geánă* ‘to go, to hurry’; Rom. *sov-* ‘to sleep’ > Span./Caló *sobar*; Rom. *rov-* ‘to cry’, *rin-* PERF > Hung. *rovázik* ‘he cries, he complains’, *rinyál* ‘he cries, he complains; he is afraid’ and many others.

Ad 2) Expressions related to the life in the society. This category contains also the names of professions or functions – among others typical for majority population, e.g. the policeman, judge, superior, e.g. substantive *barander/barender/baranda* (from the Romani comparative *bareder* ‘greater’, from *baró* ‘great’) has in non-standard Spanish various sociolinguistically differentiated meanings: stands for the ‘judge’, ‘lord, commander’, in prison argot ‘warder’, from Rom. *beng* ‘devil’ originated the Czech *benga* ‘police people’. Very often you may come across to terms related with money, e.g. Rom. *love* ‘money’ > Hung. *lóvé*, Czech *love*, Romanian *lovéle* ‘money’ and various criminal activities, e.g. Rom. *čor-* ‘to steal’ (*čorél* 3SG) occurs in the colloq. Spanish *chorar, chorelar*, in Hungarian *csórel*, in German *schornen*, in Romanian *cioran, ciordi, ciorti, ciordani*, in Czech *čórnout*, all with the meaning ‘to steal’.

Ad 3) Expressions delimitating hierarchical relations within the family and community. The Gypsies brought from India a highly developed sense for a complex caste stratification that 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 that have traditionally been disdained by the most of the majority population use special terms for denomination of the members of the majority population (e.g. Jews call a non-Jew *goi*). This term is not equal to the word foreigner or stranger. Among Roma, 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

³⁵ The forms present in Spanish Caló and in Span. argot or slang are usually the same.

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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 *gadžó* means a non-Gypsy man (*gadží*, 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 relations between Roma and the majority), there is often a certain degree of a negative connotation. In some European languages, the Romani word *gadžó/gadží* is used in the extended meaning as a man (or woman, respectively) in general (not exclusively non-Gypsy) 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 relations of Roma and the majority, always with the intention to use the “Gypsy” term Romani origin of which being generally known and causes certain 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 – that called themselves *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* (and also the originally plural form *gache*) as well. In Caló³⁶ 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 (*gádzsi*, 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 *gadžó* with lover and *gadží* 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 19th century and the sexual contacts between (especially female) Gypsies and their non-Gypsy padrones were quite frequent and generally known.³⁷

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

³⁶ I mean here Caló, the language of Spanish Gypsies.

³⁷ As 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.

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The Gypsies used also other names for the neighbouring population. As an example I could mention the Romani word *xuláj* ‘landowner, 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 *gadžó*. The hero of Gypsy fairy-tales is often a clever Rom who is able to deceive a stupid, naive and simple-minded *gadžó*.

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

In the Hungarian argot we also find expressions from Romani *rányi* 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 derivate *romák* (Rom 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 *čhavó*, the Gypsy girl/daughter is *čhaj*, the non-Gypsy boy is *rakló* and the non-Gypsy girl is *raklí*.

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 *čhavó* 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-romní* (Rom, husband – Rom, wife) and *gadžó-gadží*. But at the same time in Romani does exist a general expression for a human: *manuš* ‘male human’ and *manušní* ‘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 Romani expression *džuvli* (in the territory of Romania also in the variant *žuli*) appears in Romanian as *juľă*.

5.2 *Semantic shift and modification of the meaning*

The original semantic meaning remains often preserved (e.g. the Spanish *bul* ‘bottom’, *mollate* ‘wine’, *acáis* ‘eyes’, *brejes* ‘years’, *chuquel* ‘dog’). Generally however the Romisms are perceived rather pejoratively as it had turned out in my sociolinguistic research: Rom. *vakerel* ‘he speaks’ > Hung. *vakerál* ‘he rattles’; Rom. *pijel* ‘he drinks’ > Hung. *piál* ‘he boozes’, Rom. *čhaj* ‘Roma girl, daughter’ > Span. *chai* ‘young prostitute’.

In some cases there has been a meaning shift, or a broadening or narrowing of the meaning of the word. We may however find various semantic modifications already in Romani dialects themselves from where the Romisms get to major languages. The example of a common semantic modification documented in various Romani dialects is e.g. the shift on the ground of the same quality: *loló* ‘red’ > ‘tomato’ or *laló* ‘mute; stupid’ > ‘labelling of the member of a neighbouring nation’ (cf. *lalorró* ‘Portuguese’ in Caló). Nevertheless it is evident in some cases that the meaning modification happens as late as in the Romism: such as in Caló *majaró* ‘saint’ > Span. argot and colloquial Spanish *majara*, *majareta* ‘fool’; Rom. *mang-* ‘to ask for’ > Caló/Span. *mangar* ‘to beg’ > Span. *mangar* ‘steal’; Rom. *rat* ‘night’ > Caló *rachí* ‘night’ > Span. or Galician (among others in the province La Coruña) *rachí* ‘drinking-bout’. Another example is the Romani adjective *phuró* ‘old’ (Caló *puró*), which has penetrated into colloquial Spanish in the form of the *pureta* ‘young person which behaves as the old one’, *purili* ‘old person, retired person’, ‘conservative person’, *puril* (in the province La Coruña) ‘older person’, also ‘parent’.³⁸

The semantic modification can be in some cases quite comprehensively varied, such as for the aforementioned word *gadžó*. The Romani expression *gadžó* ‘non-Roma male’ and its female counterpart *gadži* have penetrated into majority of European languages being it either in their original meaning or in the general one as ‘male/female’ (with possible positive or negative connotations). The word appears in the Czech (*gádžo*, *gádžovka*, in Hungarian (*gádzsó*, *gádzsi*), in Romanian (*gagiu*, *gagică*), in Spanish (*gachó*, *gachí*).

The Spanish Roma people call the Spanish at present the most often by means of the expression *payos* which comes from the old Spanish *Germanía* and has got into the Spanish awareness similarly as the Czech *gádžo*. In the Spanish argot though, but also in the vernacular one, there is also *gachó* and its female counterpart *gachí*. Sanmartín Sáez (1999: 391) states that “this word has been adopted from the *gachó*, *gachí* ‘the male or female of the non-Roma origin’, but the shift of the meaning occurred since it does not label the person of non-Roma origin but any person.” In DRAE there appear both words (with an attribution *vulgar*), *gachó* in the meaning ‘male, especially as the lover of the woman’ (cf. Romanian argot. *gagiu* ‘lord, lover’³⁹) and *gachí* as ‘female, girl’.

My sociolinguistic research has shown that in Spanish the expression *gachó* is apart from neutral expressions perceived as ‘untrustworthy, strange person’, or even ‘bad, nasty’ (in this meaning it is to be found especially in Latin America), *gachí* is on another hand defined the

³⁸ In the Romanian argot there is the expression *puriiu* ‘father’.

³⁹ In Romanian argot the concept of the *gagiu* as the lord and lover can have in addition also historical reasons. The Roma people had been till the 19th century held in the territory of Romania as bondsmen or slaves and there was quite frequently a sexual contact among them.

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most frequently as a 'pretty, attractive woman' (there is maybe a connectedness with a white complexion), but also the prostitute. *Gadží* in the meaning of the lover or prostitute appears in the Hungarian argot (*gádzsi*, but it can have also a neutral meaning 'woman, girl') and the Romanian one (*gagică* 'mistress'). The connection of *gadžo* with the lover and *gadží* with the mistress or prostitute originates in my opinion from a traditional Romani interpretation and we may suppose that the word could have got this meaning independently without the contact with the argot. Stewart (1997), who made a field investigation among the Roma people from Harangos (Hungary).

My survey has shown further on that only sporadically a shift of the meaning of the expression *gadžo* 'non-Roma male' > 'Roma male' has occurred, when the majority population perceives this word as a typically Romani and starts labelling by means of this word also the members of this ethnic group. I have thus recorded sporadically the definitions *gádzsó* 'Gypsy', *gácsi* 'Gypsy woman' in Hungarian and *gachó* 'Gypsy' in Spanish.

6 Conclusion/discussion

In the non-standard varieties of European languages there are to be found loanwords from Romani. Their number differs in particular languages and depends on historical and sociocultural factors. Their inflow has been recorded mainly since the 19th century, when the number of Romani loanwords grew up considerably in our investigated languages (and especially in Hungarian and Spanish). This tendency is apparently connected with industrialization and moving of Gypsies to the cities. Some of the words of Romani origin in Spanish and Hungarian have ceased to be perceived as argotic and nowadays form part of the colloquial language.

Our observed languages generally take over all the lexical categories, most frequently nouns, adjectives and verbs. The Romani stems can further be expanded by the means of derivational morphology of the respective majority languages. The loanwords have usually been fully adapted to the phonological and grammar system of the given majority language. We can find many loanwords of the same Romani base present in all of the investigated languages, though in single words their frequency of diffusion varies.

Our languages of interest share several tendencies regarding semantics. The original meaning of the word has been preserved in the majority of the cases. In some semantic fields, however, it tends to change: often it has either shifted towards a negative conception or has changed (i.e. meaning extension or meaning specification). I consider that such meaning changes have occurred because of social or historical reasons.

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