

IDEOLOGIES OF SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION AMONG TRANSYLVANIAN GABOR ROMA

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Abstract: The paper gives an insight into a few of the ideologies by which the members of a Transylvanian Gabor Roma community construct and explain intra-ethnic social differences. It analyzes how the terms (*Čurar*, *Kăldărar*) often used as labels in Roma-related literature to denote various Roma ethnic groups and their dialects function and what meanings they assume in the local practices of social differentiation. Examining the Gabor speakers' linguistic ideology, related to two morphological variables, the study points out that neither is the Gabor Romani variety a homogeneous dialect, nor can the Roma known as Gabors be considered as a homogeneous social group. It also shows that the intra-dialectal differences are not obvious facts of a language existing "out there" but rather linguistic resources imbued with local social meanings, embedded in social and situational context. The paper argues that linguistic ideologies and other ideologies of social differentiation are to be examined not in themselves, but in their interactions. In the construction and explanation of linguistic differences the ideologies of ethnicity, "rango" ('rank'), gender and locality also play an important role, and vice versa: language ideologies also contribute to the maintenance of other ideologies and practices establishing social differences.

Keywords: ideologies of differentiation, ethnicity, folk linguistic ideologies, dialectal variation, Gabor Roma

1. INTRODUCTION

While anthropological literature dedicated much space to the analysis of the strategies creating and reproducing social differences and symbolic boundaries in inter-ethnic (Rom-Gažo) relations, examining the intra-ethnic social relations, it has devoted significant attention to the ideology of egalitarianism (within same-sex groups, especially among men) as well as the ethics and practices of solidarity and sharing.¹ My fieldwork experiences among Gabor Roma in Transylvania, however, called my attention to another,

¹ For an in-depth analysis of the ideology of egalitarian, brotherly relations in a Romani community of Northern Hungary see: STEWART 1997, 1998.

scarcely examined aspect of intra-ethnic social relations, namely the social differences within Romani communities. Besides solidarity and sharing, in the Gabor communities in question the ideologies² and practices of social differentiation are equally important in some social domains. In fact, the everyday social life is motivated by the dialectics of these two tendencies.

This paper analyzes a few of the ideologies by which the members of a Transylvanian Gabor Romani community construct and explain intra-ethnic social differences. It examines, among other things, how the terms often used as labels in Roma-related literature to denote various Roma ethnic groups and their dialects (e.g. *Čurar*, *Kăldărar*) function, and what meanings they assume in the local practices of social differentiation among the Gabor. I also describe the kind of social meanings that are attached to certain phenomena of intra-dialectal variation by some Gabor speakers, and how they use them in the process of social differentiation.

Applying a constructivist approach to ethnicity, I regard it not as a “thing” existing in the world, or as a culturally determined substance, but as a perspective on the world: a way of seeing, interpreting, and representing the social world.³ Ethnicity is meant as “a relationship, and a connected, structurally also important way of seeing, which realizes itself in the social practices of boundary making and differentiation”.⁴ Thus, when referring to *Kăldărar*s and *Čurar*s, I do not think about Romani ethnic groups and their dialects, but about the ideological and categorization processes by which this social and linguistic difference is constructed and interpreted in a Gabor Romani community.

Romani dialectology has examined a certain aspect of linguistic variability, the differences *between* dialects. However, literature has hitherto devoted little attention to other, e.g. social and situational aspects of the variation *within* particular Romani dialects. As Matras has pointed out,⁵ in Romani linguistics dialects have usually been considered as well-defined, separate entities. Although Romani dialects are primarily conceived as categories describing the geographical variation in language,⁶ they are also treated as linguistic varieties implicitly linked to social entities. Traditionally, especially in the earlier ethnographic literature, Roma people identified with particular ethnonyms were imagined as separate, distinct Roma ethnic (sub)groups (or formerly as tribes⁷), speaking their own distinctive Romani dialects. This scholarly approach assumes the coincidence of linguistic and social boundaries, and treats language varieties (i.e. dialects) as an index of a social entity, e.g. a separate Romani ethnic (sub)group.

In this paper, similarly to Irvine and Gal,⁸ I point out that homogeneous language (including dialects) is as much imagined as is community. Examining Gabor speakers’ own

² Following ECKERT – McCONNEL-GINET’S (2003: 35) definition, I use the term *ideology* in a broad sense, referring to a “system of beliefs by which people explain, account for, and justify their behaviour, and interpret and assess that of others”.

³ BRUBAKER 2006.

⁴ FEISCHMIDT 2010: 12.

⁵ MATRAS 2007.

⁶ On the geographical-historical dialectological theories and methods used in the dialect classification in Romani linguistics, see MATRAS 2005.

⁷ E.g. in Erdős’s papers in VEKERDI 1989; BARI 1990.

⁸ IRVINE – GAL 2000: 76.

linguistic ideology related to two morphological variables, the study shows that the Romani variety spoken by the Gabors is not a homogeneous dialect, and the Roma known as Gabors cannot be considered as a homogeneous, undifferentiated social group. It also argues that the intra-dialectal differences are not “objective”, obvious facts of a language existing “out there”, to be discovered by a researcher, but rather linguistic resources imbued with local social meanings, embedded in the social and situational context. Revealing the local understandings of two phenomena of intra-dialectal variation, the paper also contributes to the Romani dialectology and sheds some light on a rarely examined aspect of it.

2. THE LOCATION OF THE FIELD RESEARCH: THE GABOR ROMA COMMUNITIES

I carried out a 24-month-long fieldwork in Romani communities of Gabor Roma in a region of Maros (Mureş) County, in Transylvania, Romania. The *Gabor* ethnonym is usually applied by these Roma mainly as their external self-identification, that is, in their communication with non-Roma (*Gažos*) in the Hungarian or Romanian language. Non-Roma all over Transylvania and Romania refer to them with the terms (in Hungarian) “*gábor cigányok*” ‘Gabor Gypsies’ or (in Romanian) “*Gabori*” ‘Gabors’. The emergence of the *Gabor* ethnonym is probably the result of a process of iconization: from a frequently used family name, the term “Gabor” has become, as a *pars pro toto*, a term used for ethnic categorization. In intra-ethnic discourses, when speaking in their mother tongue the Roma known as Gabors usually refer to their own ethnicity by using a simple “Us” versus “Others” opposition: “*amară roma*”, “*amară feli roma*” ‘our Roma’, ‘our kind of Roma’, thus distinguishing themselves from other, non-Gabor Roma (“*aver roma*”).

Communities of Gabor Roma live in a traditionally multi-ethnic and multilingual region of Romania, in Transylvania, in the neighbourhood of the Hungarian minority. Therefore the Gabor Roma are usually trilingual. Their first language is a Vlah Romani dialect. In intra-ethnic domains, both in private and public situations, Romani is the dominant code of communication in these communities. Besides Romani, most of the adults also know the regional Hungarian dialect, and they also speak Romanian as the language of the state and of the larger social environment. The multilingualism of these communities has appeared rather stable and Romani-dominated. I have not experienced any symptoms of language shift in the case of the younger generations either.

The Gabor Roma in Mureş County have their own ethnicized social geography. In their views this region is “the centre” of Gabor Roma. They distinguish three local Romani communities closely linked to each other. In Romani discourse these are often referred to with the synecdoche “*ol trin gava*” ‘the three villages’. I spent most of my time in the settlement which the Gabors throughout Transylvania refer to with metaphors like “*centro*” ‘centre’, or “*o baro gav*” ‘the big village’. This terminology also emphasizes the importance and prestige attributed to certain segments of the Romani community of about 800 souls in this settlement. I borrow the term “Big Village” from the Gabor Romani political discourse, and I use it when I refer to the local Romani community. For ethical reasons, I have changed not only the names of the settlements, but also that of all persons and patrigrups quoted or mentioned in the paper.

Most of my experience and data concerning social and linguistic ideologies and practices comes from the Gabor community of Big Village. Relying on the kinship network of the Romani families of Big Village I have also established contacts with many other families living in the other two villages and in the county town. I have also participated in family events organized in other Transylvanian settlements (e.g. in Cluj, Oradea, Huedin) and I also had occasion to visit Gabor families living in Hargita (Harghita) County.

As to the methods of fieldwork, I followed the principles of linguistic anthropology. I drew the linguistic data from speech activity embedded in social context. Besides participant observation, I have conducted interviews and audio- or video-recorded spontaneous (not elicited) discourses in different speech events and situations in these communities.

3. IDEOLOGIES OF SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION

3.1. DESCENT AND “RANGO” (‘RANK’)

The Gabor communities of “the three villages” are dense-network communities whose members are interlinked by consanguineal and affinal kinship relations⁹ as well as by various forms of social and economic cooperation. They participate in each other’s important social events (e.g. vigils, funerals, public oaths). These communities maintain a vivid “news economy”, by virtue of which not only the members of a given local community, but also the other “two villages” possess up-to-date information concerning significant social and economic events. In these communities the positions of the individual, the family and the patriline are closely intertwined. The past and present connections and prestige relations between families and patrilines are popular, frequently discussed topics during both family reunions and various public gatherings. Evaluation of these relations contributes to the dynamics of social life among the Gabor Roma. Social statuses and prestige relations are of course not fixed but changing, and they are negotiated and ratified in social interactions. However, certain kinship groups have established ideologies by which they seek to fix, to “freeze” the current prestige relations that are favourable to them.

This is partly done by the Gabor Romani concept of “*rango*” ‘rank’ as well as of the naturalizing and gendered ideology connected with it. In this ideology, rank is a social category based on paternal descent. The position of individuals by rank is determined by “*kon sah lengo elădo, kon sah lengo dad, lengo papo*” ‘who their forefather, their father, their grandfather was’. By linking rank to descent, they consider it not as a social construction but as a biologically determined heritage, which is associated with the idea of relative stability and invariability. In this ideology, rank is a category that resists socio-economic changes. Not surprisingly, it is mostly those of a higher rank who prefer to emphasize that “*o rango na-j potjindo*” ‘rank cannot be paid for’, that is, it cannot be obtained by economic enrichment, neither can it be lost by impoverishment.

The Gabors of Big Village distinguish between three ranks within their local commu-

⁹ Among the Gabor Roma ethnic endogamy is preferred: marriages to other (non-Gabor) Roma and non-Roma are equally rejected.

nity, and represent the relationship between these ranks as a hierarchical social organization. The “first rank” embraces the members of the descent group which by now has become dominant both in number and in social status, and which traces back its patrilineal genealogy to a common forefather called *o baro Janko* ‘the big Janko’. The members of this patrilineal descent group are often referred to with the term *ol Jankášti* ‘the offspring of Janko’. “Big Janko”, also considered as “the founder of the village”, may have belonged to the fifth generation counted back starting from the generation of the seventy-year-old Roma of today. In this community, especially in this descent group it is a common practice that ten-year-old children can mention, i.e. count back at least eight generations of their male predecessors. It is a socially highly valued knowledge to be acquired, especially by boys, at an early age. From the early years of their socialization they are trained for competent participation in genealogical discourse which is an important topic of the political discourse at public gatherings among Gabor Roma adults, especially among men. The memorization and frequent discussion of the patrilineal genealogies and other important social relations at public social events can be interpreted as a discursive genre of collective recollection, by which the Gabor Roma construct their own ethnic past and oral history.

The “second rank” includes the members of another patriline which in the last two decades has seized important wealth, prestigious co-fathers-in-law from the “first rank”,



Fig. 1. Conversation among Gabor Roma at a funeral.
(Photo: Andrea Szalai, 2010)

and an increasing social appreciation even within their Gažo environment. Furthermore, some Kăldărar families that are not patrilineal descendants of “big Janko” are classified to this rank as well. Finally, the lowest rank, the bottom of the hierarchy is constituted by the so-called “Čurars”. (On the Kăldărar–Čurar distinction see below.)

One of the discursive aspects of rank ideology is the use of honorific terms. The names of the deceased male ancestors of the “first rank” are usually mentioned with the epithet “*baro*” ‘big’, while those of the other two ranks at most receive the “*phuro*” ‘old’ adjective. Status evaluation connected with ranks manifests itself in the frequently mentioned opposition “*bară řoma – cine řoma*” ‘big Roma – small Roma’ as well as by the term “*kăzepeša řoma*” ‘medium, middle-class Roma’, which is mainly used for those of the “second rank”.

The social practices of status evaluation of course are much more complex. It must be noted that besides rank, the prestige of an individual, extended family or patriline also depends on a number of other factors, such as economic success (especially in the prestige item economy¹⁰), social capital (e.g. influential co-fathers-in-law) or the extension of the family (number of brothers, number and gender of the children and grandchildren) and it is always a question of social negotiation and evaluation. The differences established as a result of individual and familial success are seen as important “situational” differences which do not cancel but tinge rank differences. Partly these so-called situational differences provide the motivation of the status rivalry between individuals, families and patrilines. Their detailed analysis would exceed the framework of this essay.

The members of the patrigroup classified as “first rank” evaluate and construct the ethnic past on the basis of the naturalizing concept of rank, by attempting to present, legitimize and maintain the current prestige relations as continuous, invariable differences, projecting them back to the past. In addition, they also use various discursive strategies to veil the fact that the currently dominant ideology of rank and the related social practices are socially constructed ways of differentiation and not obvious consequences of a given, pre-determined “heritage”. When referring to their own social position, they often use the formulas: “*Kade mukhlah o Del*” ‘This is how God has ordered it’, or “*Sar dah amen o lašo Del*” ‘As the good God created us’. By these formulas the speakers represent their favourable social position and success not as an achieved position, the result of their own efforts and competences, but as an ascribed position, as the consequence of factors that lie beyond their control. This is why they can be used as conventional politeness routines which indicate the speaker’s modesty towards other Roma participants, whose support and agreement is necessary to represent the speaker’s success as a socially appreciated social action that increases his/her prestige.

The formulas mentioned, however, are not just politeness routines. Precisely because they represent the current status relations as social structures that exist irrespective of the will and actions of individuals and groups, they help to understate the role of social agency and responsibility, making them irrelevant in the discourse context. Thus, those members of the community whose position and interests are supported by the ideology of rank, appear just as much the passive “victims” of the current status hierarchy as those belittled by the rank ideology.

The rank ideology and the various social and economic practices that are influenced by it (e.g. the marriage politics, i.e. the selection of co-fathers-in-law, the negotiation on the amount of money to be given together with the daughter as a dowry,¹¹ prestige item economy¹²) play an important role in the construction of intra-ethnic social differences. This ideology does not veil the existence of these differences, but rather their origin. It hides the social interests and agency of the current elites interested in the maintenance of this hierarchical differentiation. Thus, the ideology of rank is a source actively used in establishing and explaining status differences which – thanks to the way it addresses the issue of agency and responsibility – is difficult to challenge.¹³

¹⁰ See: BERTA 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013.

¹¹ See: BERTA 2005: 92–107.

¹² See: BERTA 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013.

¹³ The analysis of the ideologies and practices questioning the dominance of rank ideology is beyond the scope of the present paper.

3.2. ČURARS AND KĀLDĀRARS

The Gabor Roma of Big Village make a distinction within their own local community between Čurars (*čurare*) and Kāldārars (*kāldārare*). In Romani-related ethnographic and linguistic literature these terms have been used both as ethnonyms and linguonyms referring to Romani dialects. The Roma described with these terms have usually been regarded as different Romani ethnic groups, and the Romani varieties spoken by them as different Vlah Romani dialects. The following case study offers an alternative approach. It examines how these categories work in the context of ideologies and practices of social differentiation within a local Romani community, and what social meanings are attached to them. The ethnic designations mentioned, as it is common in the case of Central and Eastern European Roma, can be traced back to the names of traditional occupations.¹⁴ (For their etymology see the Romanian nouns: “*căldărar*” ‘kettle-maker’, “*ciurar*” ‘sieve-maker’.) Among the Gabor Roma, however, the terms Čurar and Kāldārar are mainly used as categories of intra-ethnic social differentiation rather than occupational terms or terms referring to inter-ethnic boundaries. This distinction¹⁵ plays a role in the construction of social hierarchy among the Gabor Roma. Although the Kāldārars regard both themselves and the community members they call Čurars as belonging to the same ethnic group (“*amară roma*” ‘our Roma’, Gabor Roma), they establish and emphasize a social distinction between the two categories. In their discourse the term Čurar is not merely a descriptive social category to place the respective person or family within the community, but also an evaluation of social status. Being a Čurar is often synonymous with having a lower social prestige (“*o trito rango*” ‘the third rank’).

In fact, the Čurars and Kāldārars of Big Village are linked by affinal relationships, many of them are relatives by marriage, consequently, the boundary between these categories is quite fluid. Nevertheless, the Kāldārars seek to enforce ideologies and social practices which support their symbolic detachment. The categorisation of the children born in a “mixed marriage” also contributes to the fixing of boundaries between the two social categories. They are considered either as Čurar or as Kāldārar. This categorization, as in the case of rank, is based on the male-dominant principle of descent, that is, patrilineality. The children of either genders are identified with the category where their *fathers* have been considered to belong. Thus, for example, the children of a Čurar man and a Kāldārar woman are regarded as Čurars, because “it is the father who determines”.

Nowadays the Kāldārars emphasize the ideology of endogamy, and try to avoid marital relations with members of the patriline regarded as Čurar. They are usually reluctant to talk either about the affinal ties between the Čurars and the Kāldārars or

¹⁴ The predecessors of the Čurars, besides other subsistence strategies, were engaged in the tanning and sale of animal skins, while many Kāldārar men earned their living from metalwork, the making and repair of copper products or tinsmith works. In recent decades both groups have earned their living mainly from intermediary trade, while some families – also including Čurars – do tinsmith work.

¹⁵ The classification of certain individuals and families is problematic. There are some who are certainly not regarded as Čurars, but many people are also uncertain whether to classify them as Kāldārars.

about the status relations between them in the past.¹⁶ In contrast, some Čurar families in certain situations would readily refer to their kinship ties with the “first rank” Kāldārars families.

The Kāldārars’ desire for social distance also manifests itself in their efforts to create and maintain spatial separation. During the fieldwork I was informed about three real estate transactions where Kāldārars families bought the houses around their own house – although they had no intention to live there – by offering a higher price to the Hungarian sellers than previously contracted by a Čurar buyer, simply to prevent the nearby Čurar families from expanding in that direction. They undertook this financial burden in order to maintain at least a distance of a few plots between them, so as not to have Čurars as their neighbours.

The Kāldārars often use occupational stereotypes as well to rationalize their own ideology devaluing the Čurars. To justify their efforts to keep social distance from the Čurars, some of them still refer to a supposed odour thought to be typical of Čurars. This stereotype goes back to the circumstances of their former traditional occupation, despite the fact that the majority of the Čurars, just like the Kāldārars, have been working as traders for several decades. (This motif often occurs in caretaker speech, especially in teasing addressed to little children and in the conflict talk between children.)

The pervasiveness of the ideology regarding the Čurar–Kāldārars relationship as unequal, asymmetric is also indicated by the fact that even the children know and use it among themselves in several situations. When observing the interaction of 5–10-year-old children playing cards or a board game, I was often witness to the practice that some of them used the “Čurar” origin of their playmates as a principle of legitimation when negotiating a more advantageous position for themselves (e.g. the right to start the game). E.g.: “*Me som o dintuno! Tu aś, kǎ tu čurari san!*” ‘I’m the first! You must wait, as you are a Čurar!’

Focusing on two morphological variables, in the following I examine how the ideology of intra-dialectal differences contributes to the fabrication and maintenance of symbolic boundaries between the Čurars and the Kāldārars.



Fig. 2. Gabor man making a copper kettle. (Photo: Andrea Szalai, 2012)

¹⁶ BERTA 2007: 39–40.



Fig. 3. A young man in his tinsmith workshop. (Photo: Andrea Szalai, 2001)



Fig. 4. Gabor Rom trader selling a small kettle in Cluj Napoca. (Photo: Andrea Szalai, 2009)

4. LINGUISTIC DIFFERENCES AND SOCIAL BOUNDARIES

4.1. LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES: THE MISSING LINK BETWEEN LINGUISTIC FORMS AND SOCIAL CATEGORIES

Interest in the social heterogeneity and variability of the language and language use, as well as in the social meanings of linguistic forms has greatly increased since the 1960s in linguistics. Sociolinguistics insists on the assumption that language is not homogeneous either at the individual level, or at the level of the speech communities. Quantitative sociolinguistics has pointed out that the relationship of linguistic variables to social categories (ethnicity, class, gender, etc.) and the context of speech situation (e.g. setting, level of formality, topic) are often characterized by systematic, structured variability.

However, the explanation of the relationship between social and linguistic variables is still contested today, which is not independent from the problems of the social theoretical background of correlational studies. The assumption, for example, that the patterns of linguistic variation reflect the social structure, has been subject to criticism, since this would imply a naive, simplistic social theory in which the social categories and identities are *a priori* and well-defined entities, separate from and prior to language.¹⁷ This approach ignores the fact that language use does not merely reflect society, but it is a social practice constituting social categories and relations. Speakers are creative social agents: they use language not only to describe, but to construct, challenge or transform their social world. The fact that the identities and statuses are not given, fixed categories, but relations constructed in the course of social actions – for example, in speech – is well demonstrated by the studies examining the linguistic aspects of social status, e.g. linguistic politeness and honorification.¹⁸

According to correlational sociolinguistic studies, the language use is distinctive in respect of social groups. So they were primarily interested in the characteristics of group patterns, and – especially the early studies – often overlooked the variation within the particular groups.¹⁹ Later, in order to explain the variation in language, sociolinguists paid more attention to socially constructed norms instead of *a priori* social identities: the view that “people’s use of language reflects groups’ norms (...) recognizes that human behaviour needs to be explained not in terms of invariant causes and effects but in terms of the existence of social meanings, in the light of which people act to reproduce or subvert the order of things”.²⁰ However, the norms and conventions are multiple, changing and subject to negotiation, just as the speakers’ relation to these norms can vary from acceptance to the various forms of rejection (e.g. invention of alternative norms). The behaviour of the lan-

¹⁷ For criticism see: IRVINE 1985; CAMERON 1990; ECKERT – McCONNEL-GINET 1992; BUCHOLTZ – HALL 2004.

¹⁸ See: DURANTI 1992; AGHA 1994; IRVINE 1998.

¹⁹ The homogenising approach, according to which the speakers’ behaviour in one social category (African-Americans, women, working-class people, etc.) is similar, while differing from that of other social groups, also often considered as homogeneous, has also been criticised. On the criticism of essentializing and dichotomizing ideologies, see: BING – BERGVALL 1998; TRECHTER 2005.

²⁰ CAMERON 1997: 60.

guage users is influenced but not determined either by their position in the social structure or by the socio-cultural norms associated with it. It leads us back to the core dichotomy of coercive power attributed to the social structure versus subversive power of individual agency. Within the variationist paradigm these issues are difficult to explain.

Linguistic anthropology offers another perspective for studying the relationship between linguistic forms (phonological, morphological or lexical items, dialects, styles, etc.) and social or cultural categories (nation, ethnicity, gender, social class, aesthetics, authority, etc.). Since the 1990s this connection has often been considered as a socially constructed, ideologically mediated relationship. Instead of focusing on the forms of variation, this approach pays more attention to the ideological processes by which people construct, explain and reproduce social and linguistic differences.²¹ Language ideologies mediate, i.e. create links between linguistic or discursive forms and various social and cultural categories or social actions, thus they are not limited to language itself.²² That is why the study of language ideologies has become an interdisciplinary field of research, attracting the interest of socially oriented fields of linguistics (e.g. sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, critical discourse analysis), as well as social anthropology and cultural studies. In the last two decades several books²³ and special issues of journals²⁴ have been dedicated to the language ideologies.²⁵

Language ideologies are representations of language, “sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use”.²⁶ This term refers to “sets of *representations* through which language is imbued with cultural meaning for a certain community”.²⁷ The examination of language ideologies can contribute to a better understanding of the processes through which social actors, either as immediate (“lay”) participants of a sociolinguistic field, or as “experts” (linguists, anthropologists, etc.) “conceive of links between linguistic forms and social phenomena”.²⁸

Not only the participants, but also the researchers have their (implicit or explicit, more or less conscious) language ideologies. In the last few years many studies investigated how the experts’ language ideologies influenced the scholarly descriptions of a language/variety, its status and relation to other languages/varieties. The research on professionals’ ideologies also reveals the social consequences of these linguistic representations. For instance, they describe how the experts’ ideologies were utilized in (post)colonial, national²⁹ and gendered³⁰ discourses and social practices.

²¹ IRVINE 2001b.

²² WOOLARD 1998; KROSKRITY 2004.

²³ E.g. JOSEPH – TAYLOR 1990; SCHIEFFELIN et al. 1998; VERSCHUEREN 1999; KROSKRITY 2000; GAL – WOOLARD 2001; MAR-MOLINARO – STEVENSON 2005.

²⁴ E.g. *Pragmatics* 1992/3, 1995/2, *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 2008/4.

²⁵ For Hungarian literature on the topic see for instance: BARTHA 2007; BORBÉLY et al. 2009; LANSTYÁK 2009a, 2009b; SZABÓ 2012; SZALAI 2009.

²⁶ SILVERSTEIN 1979: 193.

²⁷ CAMERON 2005: 447.

²⁸ IRVINE – GAL 2000: 37.

²⁹ BLOMMAERT – VERSCHUEREN 1998; ERRINGTON 1998; FRIEDMAN 1997; GAL 2001; IRVINE – GAL 2000; IRVINE 2001a.

³⁰ OCHS 1996; OKAMOTO 2002, 2004.

In recent years research interest turned to the mediating and constitutive aspects of linguistic ideologies, i.e. to the ways by which they establish social meanings. A number of semiotically inspired theories have been elaborated. Some of them³¹ analyzed the ways, i.e. the semiotic associations, through which particular linguistic forms have become indices of social categories (e.g. gender, race or ethnicity). These theories rely on the everyday experience that for certain groups of speakers a number of linguistic forms and actions are indexical. An indexical form is “a linguistic form or action which, in addition to or instead of contributing to the denotational or ‘literal’ meaning, points to and sometimes helps establish ‘social’ meaning”.³² Any linguistic form or discursive strategy (e.g. overlaps, silence) can become an index pointing to a social category or identity, or to a stance, a speech act or a speech event.³³ For example, the referential meaning of two variants of the same word or morpheme can be identical, but the choice among them may convey different social meanings for a person or a social group: it can be interpreted as an index of ethnic identity, gender, social class or locality of the speaker. In bilingual communities, code choice, code-switching and code-mixing can also be an index of ethnicity, or at least of the political statement about the relationship between language and ethnicity.³⁴

According to Irvine and Gal,³⁵ when speakers explain and rationalize the usage of indexical linguistic forms, they create linguistic ideologies on the meaning and source of linguistic and social differences. Their theory on ideologies of linguistic and social distinctiveness and differentiation³⁶ examines the social semiotic processes by which people create links between linguistic forms and social categories or activities. In these ideological explanations “linguistic features are seen as reflecting and expressing broader cultural images of people and activities”.³⁷ Irvine and Gal³⁸ argue that in spite of differences between various social, linguistic, cultural and political contexts one can reveal a considerable similarity in ways through which various social groups try to interpret, rationalize or justify sociolinguistically complex relations. They distinguish three interrelated semiotic processes in the establishment and “working” of ideologies: *iconization*, *fractal recursivity* and *erasure*. In their view these semiotic processes are based on the indexical relationship between linguistic forms and social categories.

“The *iconization* involves a transformation of the sign relationship between linguistic varieties and social images with which they are linked.”³⁹ As a result, linguistic forms become iconic representations of social groups or actions, giving the impression that the linguistic feature represented the inherent nature or essence of the social group or action. “Speakers are taken to be the way that they supposedly sound (e.g. noble, harsh, lazy, rational), and the way they sound comes to be heard as itself epitomizing that way of

³¹ OCHS 1992, 1996; SILVERSTEIN 1985, 2003; JOHNSTONE – KIESLING 2008.

³² JOHNSTONE 2008: 133.

³³ OCHS 1992, 1996.

³⁴ LAIHONEN 2001, 2008.

³⁵ IRVINE – GAL 2000.

³⁶ IRVINE – GAL 2000; IRVINE 2001b.

³⁷ IRVINE – GAL 2000: 37.

³⁸ IRVINE – GAL 2000.

³⁹ IRVINE – GAL 2000: 37.

being.⁴⁰ Iconization is thus a kind of essentializing process.⁴¹ It often naturalizes the relationships between linguistic forms and social groups or actions, making them appear as natural and inevitable. However, these relationships have social origins, being the consequence of historical or political processes and cultural conventions.

Fractal recursivity is “the projection of an opposition salient at some level of relationship onto some other level”⁴², like the projection of an intra-group or a linguistic opposition within a language onto the intergroup relations, or onto the relation between different languages, or vice versa. Recursivity often characterizes colonial and national ideologies or those concerning genders.⁴³

Erasure is a simplifying process which makes certain persons and groups, actions or linguistic phenomena invisible. Those facts that are inconsistent with the ideological framework remain “unperceived”. This is how social groups or languages are supposed to be homogeneous, by neglecting their internal variation. This homogenizing process is a frequent element of identity politics which define the “us”-group in contrast to a supposedly homogeneous and essentialized “other”. (An instructive case of erasure is the statistical imagination of the “Gypsy minority” and its homogeneous “Gypsy language” in Hungarian census-taking practice.⁴⁴)

4.2. VARIATION WITHIN THE GABORS’ ROMANI DIALECT – FROM THE KĀLDĀRAR PERSPECTIVE

According to Gabor Roma known by me, there are social and regional differences within their dialect. (Their dialect is labelled as Gabor Romani in Romani linguistics.) Nowadays there is only a slight difference between the Romani varieties spoken by the Kāldārars and the Čurars of the “three villages”. It is mainly limited to some phonological and lexical preferences and minor morpho-phonological differences at a few points of the nominal paradigm. The Kāldārars’ language ideology, however, projects the Čurar versus Kāldārar opposition onto the language as well. Through their language ideology they try to “discover” and reproduce the patterns of this social differentiation in language as well. The Kāldārars claim that “*ol čurare na kade horbinpe, sar ame*” ‘the Čurars do not speak like us’, “*von či žanen te horbinpe kade vuže sar ame*” ‘they cannot speak as clearly as us’. To my questions inquiring about the difference I usually got the answer that “*But-but differencije sîn*” ‘There are many, many differences’. The specific examples, however, although they often took the form of a multi-word list, were essentially limited to only one morphological variable. This is the plural nominative ending (*-urV*) of the masculine nouns of foreign origin which end in *-o* in the Romani athematic morphology.⁴⁵ According to the Kāldārars, this variable has two variants: [*-uri*] among the Čurars, and [*-ure*] among the

⁴⁰ WOOLARD 2008: 438.

⁴¹ BUCHOLTZ – HALL 2004: 380.

⁴² IRVINE – GAL 2000: 38.

⁴³ GAL 2001a; IRVINE 2001a, 2001b.

⁴⁴ For more details see: KONTRA 2003; SZALAI 2006.

⁴⁵ For thematic versus athematic distinction in Romani linguistics see: BAKKER 1997.

Kăldărars. For instance, “*pitjōkuri*” versus “*pitjōkure*” ‘potatoes’ (this noun is borrowed from the Transylvanian Hungarian dialect: “*pityóka*” ‘potatoes’), “*adidasuri*” versus “*adidasure*” ‘products of Adidas brand’. The first variants of the word pairs ending in [-uri] are labelled as the Čurar forms, the latter ones ending in [-ure] as the Kăldărar ones.

Let us examine the social meanings attached to this opposition in the Kăldărars’ linguistic ideology and the semiotic processes constructing them. As we have seen, important characteristics of the Čurar–Kăldărar relationship, at least in the view of the Kăldărars, are detachment and asymmetry, that is, the Čurar as a category is associated with a lower status and the concept of the “third rank”. The main patterns of the ideology attributing a higher prestige to the Kăldărars are also reproduced in language ideological categories which evaluate the above-mentioned variants in aesthetic terms by claiming that [-ure] is “cleaner” (“*maj vuži*”), “original” (“*oridžinalo*”), “more noble” (“*maj nemešo*”), than the [-uri] variant associated with the Čurars. That is, the Kăldărars project onto the relationship of the two different variants of the (-urV) morphological variable not merely the Čurar–Kăldărar opposition, but its evaluation as an asymmetric and hierarchical relationship. In other words, a group of speakers projects a dichotomy existing on a certain level of a relationship (in this case, between two social categories) onto a different level, to language, to a phenomenon of dialectal variation. The patterns of a social opposition are reproduced in the relationship of two morphological variants, creating another, linguistic opposition. In my view, this ideological process can be interpreted as an instance of fractal recursivity.

The Kăldărar linguistic ideology ignores the considerable similarities between the varieties of the two groups: this is the ideological process of erasure or invisibilization. The Kăldărars emphasize the above-mentioned small difference and utilize it as a linguistic ideological means for the construction and representation of a social contrast perceived within the same ethnic category, among the Gabor Roma. As a result of this process, now the [-uri] variant is not merely seen as an index of a social category to which an individual belongs, or as a linguistic form pointing to the speaker’s identity. It is a stigmatized form, a stereotype⁴⁶ evoking the social evaluations associated with Čurars. This variant has become a stereotype of “Čurarness” and lower social prestige.

It is interesting to note that, similarly to other Vlah Romani dialects, in Gabor Romani the plural nominative suffix (-urV) is borrowed from the Romanian language. Its Romanian standard form is [-uri]. As we have seen, in the Kăldărars’ language ideology the Čurars’ [-uri] variant, which is identical with the Romanian standard form, is not just not considered as a prestigious variant, but it is openly stigmatized.

It is important to note that the use of [-uri] is contextually varied in the language use of Čurar speakers: in several situations they also use the [-ure] variant. It is also common that the same speaker within the same interaction uses both forms, and sometimes it can even happen that in a given interaction no “Čurar variant” occurs in the speech of a person

⁴⁶ LABOV 1972: 178–180. According to LABOV (1972), stereotypes are linguistic variables, whose variants are both socially and stylistically stratified. The speakers consciously pay attention to these variables which are often subjects of explicit metalinguistic commentaries. The patterns of actual use are often very different from what a certain group of speakers says about them. The stigmatized variants may eventually disappear from vernacular speech.

regarded as Čurar. As the Čurars themselves are aware of the stigmatized character of the [-uri] variant, they try to avoid its use. That is, linguistic ideology has inspired linguistic accommodation at the level of individual interaction, and language change at that of the structure of language. It cannot be excluded that this difference is only a Kăldărars invention. The clarification of this question requires further study.

The social embeddedness and interest-laden nature of this linguistic ideology is even more conspicuous if we compare it to the Kăldărars' attitude to another instance of intra-dialectal variation in the case of another morphological variable.

To understand this phenomenon, we need to be familiar with the Gabors' own ethnized linguistic and social geography. It includes a distinction between *Alsóvidék* 'Lower Region' and *Felsővidék* 'Upper Region'. Stressing the criterion of the region of origin, keeping in mind where their patriline's male predecessors were from, the Gabors distinguish between the Roma of Lower Region and those of Upper Region. According to this ethnicized mental topography, the decisive factor is not mainly one's current place of residence. Regarding their origin, the members of each patriline are classified on the basis of their forefather's geographical origin. The "three villages", including Big Village belong to the Lower Region, which is located in Maros (Mureş) County, the lower region along the river Nyárád (in Romanian: Niraj). That is why the Gabors of Upper Region often refer to the Gabor Roma of Lower Region ("*telune roma*"), including to those of Big Village, with the term "*Mirižere/Njirižere Roma*" 'the Roma of Nyárád/Niraj'.

According to the genealogical recollections, predecessors of some significant, large Gabor patrilines were from various settlements of the Upper Region. The area called Upper Region can be found high up the Nyárád/Niraj river (in Hungarian: *Felső-Nyárádmente*), and around the river-head of Kis-Küküllő/Târnava Mică. It also includes the settlements of the region called Sóvidéki-dombság/Subcârpați Târnaveni Mici (e.g. Parajd/Praid, Szováta/Sovata, Kibéd/Chibed, etc.). The members of those patrilines who trace back their ancestors' origin to this region, are known as "*oprune roma*", 'Roma from the Upper Region', irrespective of their current place of residence.

Among Gabors of the Upper Region, there is a large, prestigious patrigroup with which the Roma of the "three villages", including the "first rank" Kăldărars of Big Village, i.e. the descendants of Big Janko have maintained affinal relations for several generations. Henceforth I refer to this patrigroup of Upper Region origin with the pseudonym *Pištešti* 'descendants of Pišta'.

The Romani variety of Upper Region is different in some respects from the variety of Lower Region, spoken by the Kăldărars and Čurars of Big Village as well. Among others, there are minor differences at a few points of the verbal paradigm. Perhaps the most salient difference is related to the palatal pronunciation of /-d-/ and /-l-/ morphemes marking the perfective aspect of the verbs.⁴⁷ While the Gabors of Lower Region (including the Čurars and Kăldărars of Big Village) use *non-palatal* variants of the perfective markers (see e.g. *gălom, kărdom* 'I went, I did'), the Gabors of Upper Region use their *palatal* variants (e.g. *găjom, kărdjom*). Furthermore, there are speakers of Upper Region who use a palatalized [-lj-] (that is, not fully palatal) variant of the /-l-/ perfective marker. In their speech we

⁴⁷ MATRAS 2002: 151–155.

find forms like: *gǎljom*, *xaljom*, *piļjom* ‘I went, I ate, I drank’. (See *Table 1* below.) These speakers usually belong to a patriline stemming from a village called *Harco*.

In the Gabor Romani variety of Upper Region, palatalization affects several points of the verbal paradigm where perfective markers occur. It is characteristic with not only loan verbs, but with all verbs, in singular and plural, in all persons except for the third person plural,⁴⁸ in the paradigms of past (often mentioned as aorist or preterite in Romani grammars) as well as of pluperfect and counterfactual.⁴⁹ As *Tables 1* and *2* show, the frequency of the variables marking the perfective aspect of the verb is much greater than that of the (-*urV*) variable. As we can see, in case of (-*urV*) variable the variation affects just one (or in the case of inanimate nouns two) point(s) of the masculine nominal paradigm (plural nominative), exclusively in the case of a special, restricted class of nouns. (It occurs only with nouns borrowed from contact languages.) Consequently, there is significant difference between the salience of the variants of the morphological variables in question. (See *Tables 1* and *2* below.)

Table 1.

Variants of the perfective markers: /-d-/, /-l-/						
<i>Telune rome/Mirižere rome*</i>		<i>Oprune rome</i>		<i>Hārcovaje rome</i>		
‘Gabor Roma of Lower Region’ (‘Roma of Nyārād/Niraj’)		‘Gabor Roma of Upper Region’		‘Gabor Roma of Harco’		
Perfective, non-remote forms		Perfective, non-remote forms		Perfective, non-remote forms		
<i>kār-</i> ‘do’, <i>xal-</i> ‘eat’		<i>kār-</i> ‘do’, <i>xal-</i> ‘eat’		<i>kār-</i> ‘do’, <i>xal-</i> ‘eat’		
non-palatal	non-palatal	palatal	palatal	palatal	palatalised	
SG1	<i>kārdom</i>	<i>xalom</i>	<i>kārdjom</i>	<i>xajom</i>	<i>kārdjom</i>	<i>xaljom</i>
SG2	<i>kārdan/kārdal</i>	<i>xalan</i>	<i>kārdjan/kārdjal</i>	<i>xajan</i>	<i>kārdjan/kārdjal</i>	<i>xaljan</i>
SG3	<i>kārdah</i>	<i>xalah</i>	<i>kārdjah</i>	<i>xajah</i>	<i>kārdjah</i>	<i>xaljah</i>
Pl.1	<i>kārdam</i>	<i>xalam</i>	<i>kārdjam</i>	<i>xajam</i>	<i>kārdjam</i>	<i>xaljam</i>
Pl.2	<i>kārdan</i>	<i>xalan</i>	<i>kārdjan</i>	<i>xajan</i>	<i>kārdjan</i>	<i>xaljan</i>
Pl.3	<i>kārde</i>	<i>xale</i>	<i>kārde</i>	<i>xale</i>	<i>kārde</i>	<i>xale</i>

*Among the Gabors of Lower Region there is no difference between the *Kāldārars*’ and *Čurars*’ pronunciation: both use the non-palatal variants.

Nevertheless, in the *Kāldārars* linguistic ideology it is not the more frequent, highly salient variants that are the stigmatized ones. In spite of their salience, the palatalized variants of the perfective markers are not regarded as socially highly marked, stigmatized differences by the *Kāldārars* of Big Village. If they make any reference to them at all, they usually do not use categories of social differentiation (e.g. ethnic, occupational, or others,

⁴⁸ For the historical-phonological reasons see: MATRAS 2002: 139–143.

⁴⁹ In Gabor Romani dialect, the pluperfect and counterfactual forms can be generated by adding the -*ah* remoteness-marker to the past forms. Due to lack of space, these paradigms are not listed in *Table 1*.

like Čurar, Kăldărar, “first rank”, etc.) or kinship and genealogical terms (e.g. *X-ešti* ‘the offspring of X’), but geographical ones, e.g. place names (“*accent of Z village*”, “*speech of the Upper Region*”). In other words, the variants of the perfective markers are usually seen simply as indices of locality pointing to the geographical origin of the speakers. In the Labovian sense, they are seen as markers and not as stereotypes by the Kăldărar language ideology.

In a speech genre, in ‘slow song’ (“*žalniko djili*”) the Kăldărars of Big Village occasionally also use the palatal variants characteristic of the speech of the Gabors of Upper Region. In this practice, the attitude to a variant different from theirs is positive. Its use is associated with positive values like elevated style, archaism, authenticity and the performer’s high competence. According to several people, “*the words of the song go together better like this*”, “*this is the original voice*”, “*it is an old/archaic style*”, etc. I have never observed a similar practice in the case of the stigmatized variant associated with the Čurars.

In the background of the fact that the Kăldărars of Big Village stigmatize a variant characteristic of the language use of the Čurars living in the same settlement but do not do so with a variant of the Pištești, i.e. a patriline of Upper Region, we can discover contested interpretations of the past and current social relations. The analysis of genealogies and genealogical discourse can help us in understanding the hidden motivations. The status relations between the forefathers of the Čurars and Kăldărars in the past – or at least their Čurar interpretation – are well illustrated by this quotation from an interview with a Čurar woman in her sixties.

Table 2.

Variants of (-urV)					
(Masculine Plural Nominative suffix of loanwords ending in -o)					
“Čurar” variants			“Kăldărar” variants		
<i>pitjoko</i> ‘potato’ (from Transylvanian Hungarian dialect: <i>pityóka</i> ‘potato’)					
<i>šefo</i> ‘boss, leader, chief’ (from Romanian: <i>șef</i> ‘boss, chief’)					
Plural athematic paradigm					
NOM.	<i>pitjokuri</i>	<i>šefuri</i>	<i>pitjokure</i>	<i>šefure</i>	
ACC.	<i>pitjokuri</i>	<i>šefonen</i>	<i>pitjokure</i>	<i>šefonen</i>	
DAT.	<i>pitjokonenge</i>	<i>šefonenge</i>	<i>pitjokonenge</i>	<i>šefonenge</i>	
LOC.	<i>pitjokonende</i>	<i>šefonende</i>	<i>pitjokonende</i>	<i>šefonende</i>	
ABL.	<i>pitjokonendar</i>	<i>šefonendar</i>	<i>pitjokonendar</i>	<i>šefonendar</i>	
INSTR.	<i>pitjokonenca</i>	<i>šefonenca</i>	<i>pitjokonenca</i>	<i>šefonenca</i>	
GEN.	<i>pitjokonengo/-i/-e</i>	<i>šefonengo/-i/-e</i>	<i>pitjokonengo/-i/-e</i>	<i>šefonengo/-i/-e</i>	

“Žaneh, von amen tele dikhăn. Kă ame čurare sam. “Ha, kadala čurare-j!” (...) De ezelétt, ande kode lume, ol čurare opral sah p’ol Jankăști, (...) kă majbaro mištimo sah le, no, le phură čurarăh. Numa žaneh, von, ol tărnimata bolde le, žaneh? Kă von kon-i, ol Jankăști! The kadala- čurare! Akana žaneh, sar sîn! Kakala Jankăști bară inkărănpe. Amen inkărah ame majtele. Kă amaro njamo na-j kado baro. Čurare sam.”

‘You know, they despise us. Because we are Čurars. “Aah, these are Čurars!” [they say] But before, in the old world, the Čurars were above the offspring of Janko. (...) Because the Old Čurar [forefather of the Čurars of Big Village] had greater heritage [that is, more prestige items, silver beakers and tankards]. Only you know, they, the young people reversed it, you know? [They boast], who they are, the offspring of the big Janko! And that we are only Čurars. You know how’s that. These Jankăști think much of themselves. We consider ourselves less. Because our kinship is not that prominent. We are just Čurars.’

In addition, my interlocutor also questioned the legitimacy of the Kăldărar ideology devaluing the Čurars by referring to the fact – not willingly mentioned by the Kăldărars – that the maternal predecessor of the Jankăști, that is, the wife of Big Janko was also a Čurar woman: “*Von žaneh kah prasanah? Pen! Kă o čurare nah lengă strejino! Lengă mameki mami le phură Čurarăhki šej sah!*” ‘Do you know who they mock? Themselves! Because the Čurars were no strangers to them! The grandmother of their grandmother was the daughter of the Old Čurar!’

As we could conclude from a genealogical survey, the forefather (Big Janko) of the Kăldărar patriline now dominant in Big Village probably came in the second half of the 19th century together with his widowed mother from the Upper Region. His settlement in Big Village was considerably enhanced by the fact that he was able to marry one of the daughters of the local Rom now referred to as ‘the Old Čurar’ (“*o phuro Čurari*”), who had five sons and possessed five silver beakers as prestige items.⁵⁰ That is, at that time, the Old Čurar was the wealthy local inhabitant who accepted the young Janko, the newcomer, as his son-in-law. It is therefore probable that at the time of the settlement of Big Janko, the Kăldărar–Čurar relations were not characterized by asymmetry and inequality favourable to Kăldărars, even if the Kăldărars, by their ideology of rank, try to project the current status relations back into the past, and represent them as having existed for several generations. This may also explain why Jankăști, i.e. the currently dominant Kăldărar patriline of Big Village has been interested in depreciating the Čurars by various ideologies, and why they made efforts to create status difference between them. These ideologies may have contributed to camouflaging the earlier prestige relations between the Rom now known as Big Janko once arriving to Big Village as a young, lonely newcomer on the one hand, and his host, the Čurar family with five sons and five prestige items, receiving him, on the other.

The examination of the genealogical memory can help us to explain why Jankăști show a more tolerant attitude towards the variants considered by them as the indices of “Upper regional speech”. Perhaps the reason is that their predecessor, Janko, whom they often mention as their “founding father” when they try to legitimate their own patriline’s ancestry and their autochthonous position in Big Village, came from a patriline of Upper Region origin. The motivation of their positive relation to the Upper regional variants is thus probably rooted in their patrilineal history. It is to be assumed that the Romani variety spoken by Big Janko at the time of his settlement was nearer to the Romani variety now called “accent of the Upper Region” by the Gabors of Lower Region. We may also assume that the Romani variety of Big Janko was in a minority position in Big Village at

⁵⁰ BERTA 2007.

the time of his arrival. It is also probable that his children learned the majority, that is, maternal, “Čurar” variety as their vernacular.⁵¹ This would also explain the great similarity of the current “Čurar” and “Kăldărar” varieties, and the fact that both of them differ from that of Upper Region, with respect to the pronunciation of perfective markers as well. In the absence of data concerning the earlier linguistic situation, this assumption cannot be confirmed.

Those interpretations of ethnic past that do not support the explanation and rationalization of the current status relations (the fact that the patrilineal ancestor of the Jankăști was a newcomer who badly needed the support of a local Čurar family, and his wife, that is the maternal ancestor of the first Kăldărar rank was a Čurar woman) are ignored and suppressed by the “first rank” Kăldărar. The ideology of rank combined with the “Čurar”–“Kăldărar” differentiation is a useful means for them in this process. As we have seen, the examination of the ideology of minor intra-dialectal differences has also supported us in revealing the ideological processes of social differentiation.

4.3. LINGUISTIC ACCOMMODATION AND GENDER

The traces of kinship with the Gabors of Upper Region can still be detected in the Kăldărar families of Big Village and in the other two Gabor communities of the “three villages” as well. Several families have daughters-in-law belonging to the *Pištești* patriline of Upper Region. Furthermore, the mother or the grandmother of a number of prestigious old Roms of Big Village also belonged to this patriline. Among the daughters-in-law coming to Big Village by marriage some have preserved the variety of their family of orientation, i.e. the variety of their own patriline and speak and sound in an “Upper Region” manner, while others have accommodated to the variety of the family of their husbands, and try to avoid the variants associated with the Gabors of Upper Region (e.g. the palatal variants of the perfective marker). In the families where the daughter-in-law from the Upper Region has maintained her own original variety, and thus the husband and the wife speak slightly different vernacular varieties, the children learn the paternal variety dominant in Big Village (the variety of “Lower Region”).

The convergent linguistic accommodation⁵² to the husband’s variety can also be motivated by the gender ideology of the Gabor communities which expects the daughters-in-law to adapt to and identify with the family of procreation, i.e. the family of their husbands. “*Kît de njamo lašo t’el, kode žuvli pale le muršăhki sî te bandjol vi ando horbimo.*” ‘However high-bred the wife is, she must lean (accommodate) to the custom of the husband even in the speech.’ In my experience, it is mainly those women who accommodate to the Lower regional variety of their husbands whose father-in-law is a prestigious, influential person of the “first rank” in the “three villages”, that is, a Rom who is interested in the

⁵¹ Of course, I do not assume that the varieties of Upper Region and Lower Region (including Big Village) 100 or 150 years ago were the same as now. I just think it is likely that already at that time there were differences between the varieties spoken by the ancestors of the Roma now labelled as Gabors of Upper Region and Lower Region. We cannot know whether these categories existed at that time.

⁵² BARTHA 1999: 100–105.



Fig. 5. Gabor women preparing food for a wedding after-party. (Photo: Andrea Szalai, 2012)



Fig. 6. Gabor women selling clothing items at a second-hand market in Mureș County (Photo: Andrea Szalai, 2009)



Fig. 7. Children using a public internet spot in a shopping centre in Târgu Mureş. (Photo: Andrea Szalai, 2009)

the Pištești patriline of Upper Region]. (...) A kin-group of a smaller prestige. A lower one. And she entered into a big kin-group [that is, into the family of her husband, a first rank family of Big Village] You see? And there was no shame in her leaning towards the big kinship. It is a noble family, by rank. And no shame in her speech having changed.⁵³ And we, too, you see? My father was a Čurar man. (...) And I also leaned to my husband, Mate. You see? There is no shame in it.”⁵⁴

By linguistic accommodation a daughter-in-law can also express her aspiration to share the status of her husband's family. That is, for her the choice of the “Lower regional” and “Kăldărar” variants instead of her original “Upper regional” or “Čurar” ones (used by her family of orientation) can be not only the index of regional identity and gender roles, but also of social status and rank. It seems that the women adapting to their husbands' variety apply the strategy of convergent linguistic accommodation in the interest of expres-

representation and maintenance of the current status relations supported by ideology of rank. In these cases the women's linguistic accommodation can be motivated, apart from gender ideologies, also by rank ideology and related status efforts.

The women's complex motivations for linguistic accommodation are well illustrated by the words of a Čurar woman of Big Village in her early fifties, whose husband belongs to a “first rank” Kăldărar family.

“Na-j lažavo, phenah la, sar sîn e Žužka, kaj lah la o Pišta, kă voj sitjilah. Voj- ando maj ćofro njamo. (...) Maj cino njamo. Maj ćofro. The voj dah andră ko baro njamo. Xatjarăh? The na-j lažavo, kana voj bandjilah pal'o baro njamo. (...) Nemes család, rangilag. The pařudjilah laki horba, kode na-j lažavo. Apoj, vi amen, dikhăh? Muřo dad sah ćurari. (...) The me, vi me bandjilom pale muřo řom, pal'o Mati. Xatjarăh? Kade na-j lažavo.”

“There is no shame in it. Like there is, for example, in Žužka's situation. After Pišta married her, she learned. She is from a poorer kin-group [Žužka is from

⁵³ Žužka, who has lived in Big Village for more than twenty years, has given up the variants associated with Upper Region and, similarly to the “first rank” family of his husband, she uses the non-palatalized variants of the perfective marker in her speech.

⁵⁴ During the interview that lasted several hours this Čurar woman who married a man from a “first rank” Kăldărar family, always used the non-Čurar [-ure] variant of the (-urV) variable.

sing their identification with his family and of gaining the increase of prestige hoped from it. This strategy may be successful concerning their individual position, but in a broader context this choice indirectly supports the maintenance and reproduction of male-centric gender and rank ideologies of their communities. Furthermore, it may contribute to the devaluation of the dialectal variants other than those of the Kăldărars of Lower Region as well as to the depreciation of the groups (local Čurars and Gabors of Upper Region) using them.

5. CONCLUSION

I have investigated how the Gabor Roma construct and explain social differences in a local community, and how they interpret and use certain phenomena of intradialectal variation in this process. We have seen that the connection of social categories and linguistic variables is a socially constructed relationship which is established or at least influenced by the linguistic ideologies of the various groups of speakers.

In their study on the phonology of the Romani dialect spoken by the Gabors, Gardner and Gardner⁵⁵ stated: “The Gabors say that they all speak in the same way and they are not conscious of those several slight differences in the pronunciation, vocabulary and even grammar that the authors have encountered”⁵⁶. As the paper showed, my experience regarding the speakers’ metalinguistic awareness of intra-dialectal variability was different from their observations. Although my analysis here was limited to only two morphological variables, it became clear that the members of the Gabor communities examined not only recognize the intra-dialectal differences, but they also rationalize, manipulate and actively use them in the construction of intra-ethnic social differences⁵⁷ as well as in the individual identity practices as we have seen in the case of women’s strategies of linguistic accommodation.

Relying on my data I have also pointed out that the linguistic ideology is not only a partial representation of linguistic practice, but also a source that can be actively utilized in the processes of social differentiation as well as in the individual identity practices. As we could observe in the case of the Čurar–Kăldărar opposition, the “erasure” of linguistic similarities and the “invention” of or emphasis on minor differences can contribute to the construction and maintenance of social boundaries. The case study on intra-dialectal variation illustrated that language ideologies “may also serve to influence or even generate linguistic differences in those cases where some sociological contrast (...) seems to require display”⁵⁸. As we have seen, certain variables become socially significant and marked, even stigmatized, while others do not. However, the difference lies not only in the relationship to the various linguistic variables. The social meanings of the same linguistic form can also be varied,⁵⁹ de-

⁵⁵ GARDNER – GARDNER 2008: 105.

⁵⁶ Gardner and Gardner, as they also mention it in their study, collected linguistic data among Gabor families in Temesvár (Timișoara) and Marosugra (Ogra). However, they formulate their conclusions as being valid for the Gabors in general.

⁵⁷ GAL 1992; IRVINE – GAL 2000.

⁵⁸ IRVINE – GAL 2000: 39.

⁵⁹ JOHNSTONE – KIESLING 2008.

pending on the speaker or the speech situation. The palatal vs. non-palatal pronunciation of the perfective marker is usually interpreted as an index of the regional origin of the speaker (as an index of belonging to a Gabor family of “Upper Region” or “Lower Region”, pointing to the regional origin of the speaker’s patriline). In certain situations and for certain speakers this morphological variable is also associated with some further indexical meanings. Among the women coming from a patriline of Upper Region, and marrying into a family of Big Village, there are some who prefer the use of the non-palatal, Lower regional variants of their husband’s family. In their case, the choice between different variants is also used to express indexical meanings connected with gendered roles (a good wife accommodating to her husband and his local community in pronunciation as well) and social status. (Claims of symbolic sharing of the higher status of her husband’s patriline.) The palatal variant acquires a further indexical meaning in a particular speech genre, in “slow song”. In this context it becomes a marker of archaic style and authenticity, used by the Gabor men of Lower Region for certain purposes (e.g. in performing various speakers’ roles, i.e. “voices” in the song).

As a methodological lesson, I argue that in the data collection and interpretation it is not satisfactory to apply only those fieldwork methods (survey, elicitation, interview) that remove the linguistic data from their social and discourse context. It is also problematic if we draw on linguistic theories that dismiss the local notions about language and language use as unworthy of attention and thus exclude them from the analysis. To understand the connection of the linguistic forms with social categories and interactional context, it is also indispensable to study the linguistic ideologies that play an important role in the construction and interpretation of this connection.

The paper argued for an intersectionalist approach pointing out that linguistic ideologies and other ideologies of social differentiation are to be examined not in themselves but in their interactions. In the construction and explanation of linguistic differences the ideologies and practices of ethnicity, “rank”, gender and locality also play an important role, and vice versa: linguistic ideologies also contribute to the maintenance of other ideologies and practices establishing social differences.

TRANSCRIPTION NOTATION

In the transcription of Romani discourse, I used the following notation:

Centralized vowels: *ǎ* is a central *e* [ɛ], *î* is a central *i* [ɨ].

Palatal consonants are denoted by a *j* after the sound: *dj*, *nj*, *tj*.

x is a uvular fricative.

ʀ is a uvular *r* [R].

Aspirated sounds are denoted by an *h* after the respective consonant: *kh*, *ph*, *th*.

č, *š*, *ž*: post-alveolar consonants.

ś, *ź*: palatalized sibilants

ć: palatalized affricate.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am especially grateful to Gabor Roma of the “three villages” for their patience and help and to Péter Berta who was my colleague during fieldwork. I would like to express my thanks to Michael Stewart for his encouragement and support during the fieldwork and my research stay in London. I am heavily indebted to Péter Berta and Margit Feischmidt for their helpful suggestions and comments on the earlier versions of the paper. The field research would not have been possible without the support provided by Open Society Institute (Budapest) and the Hungarian Scholarship Board’s Eötvös Scholarship. This paper was supported by a grant from the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (PD 101752) and a János Bolyai Research Scholarship of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

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