

Diachrony of flagging in Romani (with reference to related Indo-Aryan)

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Romani is an Indo-Aryan language that has been spoken in Europe since the Middle Ages (Matras 2002; Matras, Matras & Tenser (eds.) 2020). Being in contact with languages of different groups and families, it is a perfect candidate to study the effects of language contact and stability of linguistic structures. In this talk I focus on flagging which is to a large degree inherited from Middle Indo-Aryan and is thus shared with other new Indo-Aryan languages (Masica 1991). Case marking in Romani consists of several layers: the first layer distinguishes between direct and oblique forms, and the second layer of case markers is attached to the oblique form, cf. Table 1.

Table 1. Case marking in Romani (Kalderash dialect)

Case	<i>manúš</i> ‘person’		<i>bakró</i> ‘sheep’	
	SG	PL	SG	PL
DIR	<i>manúš</i>	<i>manúš</i>	<i>bakr-ó</i>	<i>bakr-é</i>
OBL	<i>manuš-és</i>	<i>manuš-én</i>	<i>bakr-és</i>	<i>bakr-én</i>
ABL	<i>manuš-és-tar</i>	<i>manuš-én-dar</i>	<i>bakr-és-tar</i>	<i>bakr-én-dar</i>
DAT	<i>manuš-és-ke</i>	<i>manuš-én-ge</i>	<i>bakr-és-ke</i>	<i>bakr-én-ge</i>
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First, I discuss how inherited flags are preserved in contemporary varieties of Romani, with a special attention to the oblique form. In most NIA languages, the oblique serves exclusively as a base form for secondary cases and cannot be used independently. In Romani, however, the oblique has several distinguished functions, as it marks animate direct objects, possessor, the recipient of the verb ‘give’, and the experiencer of certain verbs (‘feel pain’, ‘like’) (Matras 2002: 85–87). Using quantitative data from contemporary Romani dialects, I show how different functions of the oblique are preserved diachronically.

In the second part of the talk, I discuss the development or borrowing of new flags and show how flagging is lost in some Romani varieties.

I analyze diachrony of flagging in Romani keeping several factors in mind: part-of-speech distinction (pronouns vs. nouns), effects of animacy, case- vs. adposition-flagging, and different functions of flags.

References

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