

TOPIC: Literature and Creative Thinking

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Objectives of the paper act

Romani literature is still not taken seriously enough in our country. Within the framework of political correctness and multicultural education, the media reluctantly give it a limited space that reeks of condescension. When someone from the cultural front does give Romani literary works a hearing, they are usually struck by their "illiteracy", rawness, ignorance and apparent naivety. Unlike dance and music, creative literary activity by Roma is considered something unnatural, as if it were a bear on ice skates.

It is easy to forget that it is only a step from oral verbal expression, the main authentic verbal expression of the Roma in the former Czechoslovakia until the end of the 1960s, to writing. A good storyteller must have the gift of abbreviation and generalization just like a writer; he must be able to captivate, frighten, move and instruct. The practices of the folk paramisar (storyteller), relying only on his memory, are a little different from those of the written word, and the residues of oral storytelling are still evident in Romani texts. An experienced reader, however, can see in this a stimulating otherness rather than a lack of skill.

We do not want to repeat here the whole story of young Romani literature on Czech territory. We would like to focus on its recent past and the interpretation of the latest trends, i.e. the post-Soviet period, focusing on the last eighteen years or so. At least for the sake of order, however, it should be noted that the foundations of the spelling of the so-called Slovak (properly North-Central) Romany, in which most of the early works were written, were laid in 1971-2 in the pages of the Journal of the Svaz Cigánů- Romů (Union of Gypsies-Roma, SCR) Románo řil. It was also here that the first Romani-language texts by Tera Fabiánová, Andrej Giňa or Andrej Pešta were printed, and although the Union was forcibly dissolved in 1973 and the unique platform of Romani-written literature disappeared with it, pride in the beauty of Romani and the desire to publish in the mother tongue had already taken root.

Not every Romani person is a speaker of Romani, or even interested in writing in Romani - many writers gravitate towards the majority language, which is better suited for marketing and readership. However, it is still true that without the courageous pioneers of the late 1960s there would be no Romani writing on our territory, and of course it is also true that those who have Romani as their mother tongue express themselves in it most naturally, with rich and novel imagery.

A star for the wrong reasons

After the normalization lull, Romani literary and publishing activity exploded after 1989. The vast majority of the commemorative texts, short stories and poetry were published in Romani in the Romani press (e.g. Amaro lav, Romano gendalos, Romano kurko, Romano hangos, Kereka and others), or did not penetrate the awareness of the majority public. If independent publications did appear (e.g. in 1991-1994 there was an isolated publishing house of Romani literature, Romaňi čhib, headed by the editor-in-chief Margita Reiznerová), they were often marked by lack of financial resources, inexperience and the impossibility of asserting themselves and standing up to the influx of previously banned titles published "out of debt".

The distribution of titles written by Romani people has proved to be a major problem, and due to its failure, most of these rare books are not even in libraries today as part of the required copies.

The first truly representative book by a Romani author, one of the few that were read by a large number of non-Romani intellectuals, can be considered Elena Lackova's *Narodila jsem se pod šťastnou hvězdou / Born Under a Lucky Star* (Triada 1997). The gripping life story of the first documented Romani writer in Czechoslovakia (drama *Horiaci cigánsky tabor / The Burning Gypsy Camp*, 1946), from her birth in a poor Romani settlement in eastern Slovakia to her career in the civil service and university education, has since been published in its third edition and translated into several world languages. It is a great paradox that Lacková did not actually write this bestseller; over the course of eight years she retold it to her friend, the Romani writer Milena Hübschmannová (1933-2005), who transcribed it from recordings, translated it, and edited and edited it for publication.

Even so, the work and its reception had a major impact. Many readers became aware for the first time that there was a Romani intellectual elite, gained immediate insight into the world of a community so physically close and culturally so different, and realized that beneath the glaring material scarcity there was a rich set of traditional values.

The biographical narrative *I Was Born Under a Lucky Star* succeeded abroad as well, as evidenced by its undeniable imprint in the work of the British Romani-born Louise Doughty and especially in the not-so-successful biography of the Romani poet Bronislawa Wajs (known as Papusza) by Ira Colum McCann, who, in preparing the novel, disingenuously (and factually incorrectly) plundered Zola Lackova.

About us without us

Let's stay for a moment with titles that are often classified as "Romani literature" for various reasons, even though their authors belong to the majority. Titles with a Romani or "Gypsy" theme have a tradition in the Czechoslovak literary space since Romanticism. In the popular consciousness, it includes, for example, Seker's *Children of the Clay Village* (1952) or Pohl's *On the Gypsy Trail* (1981). The problem is that Romani writing is so little known and the criteria for Romani literature are so vaguely defined that anything can fit under this label. (The National and Municipal Libraries in Prague have organized two courses for library staff in the past year that have tried to reduce this disparity.)

Martin Šmaus's hugely successful novel *Děvčátko, rozděluj ohníček* (Odeon 2005) is a typical representative of such literature, exploiting the surface attractiveness of the material but not breaking out of the established prejudices. Andrej Dunka's journey from the Slovak settlement to Prague Žižkov district and back again is undoubtedly compelling as a story, but in terms of conveying a deeper understanding of the Roma it breaks down to the neck the clichés about the free spirit, unbridled sexuality and the incompatibility of Gypsies with modern times, and therefore says nothing new.

Kateřina Sidonová went in the opposite direction in her novel *Jakub* (Mladá fronta 2004), choosing as her hero a Romani boy from institutional care whose most distinctive feature is uprootedness and - to use a Romani argot - "kokosáctví" / "coconutism", or black skin with a white value system. By branding the protagonist, the author admits that she cannot speak for people of other ethnicities because they are difficult for her to recognise. Paradoxically, she has approached the problems of contemporary Roma, marked by decades of assimilation and social and societal marginalisation, much more honestly than

Martin Šmaus, even though her text is already outdated in terms of the end of the second decade of the 21st century.

A curious hybrid and proof of the persistence of prejudice even among intellectuals is the collection *Devla, devla!*, poems and stories about Roma (Dauphin 2008), which brings together contributions by Roma, but mainly non-Roma, to the Gypsy-Roma theme announced by the Writers' Union. The schematic nature of most of the texts hurts and the sloppy editorial work does not allow to put the individual concepts in context. Sometimes the effort to try to do things differently is evident, and at other times the text sticks out as the fulfillment of a homework assignment. Yet the project as a whole is not to be condemned. At the very least, it has succeeded in lifting some of the Romani names - Vlado Oláh, Emil Cina, Irena Eliášová - out of anonymity, placing them side by side with the Gagauz authors and offering a comparison of how the majority constructs the "Gypsy" and how the Roma themselves actually see themselves.

There is no simple answer to the question "what is Romani literature". Romani scholars and literary scholars internationally agree that it is appropriate to speak of Romani literatures in the plural, but they also do not completely agree on the criteria for defining them. In our region, Romani literature is usually understood as a collection of works written by Roma in Romani, Czech or Slovak. Substance is secondary; self-identification is by far the most important criterion. If a writer claims his or her origin, it is not important whether his or her themes are also Romani; if, on the contrary, he or she distances himself or herself from his or her ethnic identity, this should be respected and not included in the corpus of Romani literature.

General preparation and learners' background

On the origins of the Roma

Among the original inhabitants, the Doms (today there are so-called Dom castes in India), who are considered to be the closest relatives of the Roma, were among the separate ethnic groups. Evidence of their former ethnic and political independence can be seen in the ruins of ancient Dom strongholds (e.g. Domdígarh) in the vicinity of the city of Górákhpur (north-east India), or in the city of Domraon, which according to legend was supposed to be the seat of the Dom rajas (hereditary rulers). Tantric Buddhist literature even features the figure of the Dom king - Heruka. Based on these findings, historians assume that the Doms once had their own state and may have even formed a separate ethnic group. Eventually, the state ceased to exist and the subjugated ethnicity became a "low" caste - more accurately, a set of many marginal castes and sub-castes, as evidenced by the current status of the Dom castes in India.

The life and culture of today's Indian Doms still exhibits many of the same features as that of the Roma. Even today, members of the Dom castes are engaged in crafts that are linked to the Romani tradition (blacksmithing, boiler making, basket making, sieve making, clay work including brick making, singing, music and dance performances and other forms of entertainment - showing trained animals, acrobatics, puppetry, as well as livestock trading and various services: rasu, funeral, cleaning). Although the Roma have never been involved in one of the typically domestic professional fields - family genealogy (dealing

with the interpretation of the development of families), they have something in common with genealogists. Indian Dom genealogists provide a service to other (and higher) castes of preserving and presenting family memory in oral form; on various occasions they are invited to sing in verse and to musical accompaniment about the history of a particular family. They have to hold in memory a large number of verses, though they are often illiterate. A comparable disproportion between the ignorance of writing, and therefore the absence of literature, but a highly developed oral folklore, exists among the Roma.

The ancestors of the Roma may not always have been in the position of a low and despised social class, but may have already lived a rather long epoch on an incomparably more dignified level - perhaps as an independent ethnic group with not insignificant political power. In this context, it no longer sounds implausible that the supposed author of the ancient Indian epic Ramayanam - Valmiki - is said to have belonged to the ancestral houses (his belonging to a pre-Aryan ethnic group is very likely), and thus remotely to the present-day Roma. It is not without interest that one of the Dom groups in contemporary India - the Balmikis - derives its origin from the legendary author. Caste = Jati is an endogamous family group with a specific traditional profession. The boundaries of the caste are defined by a series of rules and regulations that each member must follow if he or she does not want to be a member of the group

Caste = Jati is an endogamous clan group with a specific traditional profession. The boundaries of the caste are determined by a set of rules and regulations that each member must follow if he or she does not want to be excluded from the group.

The members of the caste earn their livelihood by practicing a particular clan craft or profession. This means that all adult members of the group produce the same products or services. The practice of an ancestral craft has thus necessitated territorial movement for some castes; migration motivated in this way is called artisanal nomadism. A change of location occurred whenever the demand for a given product was exhausted and new outlets were sought. For economic reasons, there was also a splitting up of tribal groups into others, which went their own way in search of potential customers.

This phenomenon can be observed in India today as it was many centuries ago. In this way, the domas naturally migrated to different parts of India and further split into sub-groups - sub-castes (upjatis); gradually, the domas were able to reach more and more westwards beyond the borders of the Indian subcontinent. The direction of travel was probably partly due to a desire not to return to areas regularly affected by famine (e.g. in the desert state of Rajasthan), but also to a desire to live where the position of the lowest social classes was less oppressive. There is an assumption that the Roma never formed a homogeneous community. Certain differences between different Roma groups may date back to India;

the ancestors of the Roma probably belonged to a number of different house castes and sub-castes. Each had a specific name, often based on the profession it practiced, which was closer to its members than the more general designation Dom. It was only after leaving the Indian cultural space and arriving in countries with anthropologically different populations that the distinct differences raised the awareness of a common origin among members of the Dom groups. It was then that the name Dom could become the name of an entire gradually (and perhaps re-)forming ethnic group.

Roma in Medieval Europe

From the first quarter of the 15th century, Roma began to appear in Central and Western Europe. They came under the leadership of individual leaders (they were titled as counts or dukes), in groups ranging from a few dozen men, women and children to groups of a hundred. In contemporary records, the Roma are in some cases referred to as Saracens, Tartars or pagans. Because of their appearance, different language and culture, they were considered a foreign, exotic element. The Roma often cited persecution for their Christian faith as the reason for their wanderings, which was also expressed in numerous legends.

In the Czech lands, the first undisputed mention of the Roma is from 1417, when a record included in the Old Czech Chronicles states that "that summer, too, gypsies were dragging themselves across the Czech land and tempting people". From the 1520s onwards, groups of Roma moved around the region of Central and Western Europe, receiving alms in individual towns on the basis of protection certificates and on the basis of claims that they had been expelled from their country by the Turks. Other sources of livelihood in our territory during this period are not precisely known. It seems to have been the practice of traditional crafts (blacksmithing and other ironworking, various musical and artistic performances, together with 'sorcery', i.e. guessing from the hand or healing people and animals). The relatively good initial reception of the Roma in Europe is evidenced, among other things, by the fact that Emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg issued two protective guilds for the Roma group (1417, 1423).

Modern persecution of the Roma

While in the 15th century, the Roma were received quite warmly, gradually the attitude of Europeans towards them began to change for the worse. The change did not come suddenly; it was prepared for a long time by the simultaneous action of several negative circumstances. The Roma came to the European continent from the Orient - a distant and culturally distinct region. At first sight, their exotic appearance, different lifestyles and "incomprehensible" language aroused suspicion. In addition, they are increasingly associated with Turkish expansion into Europe and accused of spying for the Ottoman Empire. The Church, in turn, looked with disfavor on fortune-telling and guessing from the hand, which was a means of

livelihood for Roma women. Feeding off the majority society (almsgiving, begging, petty theft) was also viewed negatively.

Persecution of the Roma took place throughout Europe from the 16th century onwards, and the Czech lands were no exception. The first steps towards their expulsion were taken in Moravia - in 1538, the Moravian Estates resolved to expel the Roma from all Moravian estates within two weeks and not to allow them to return.

In 1545, Emperor Ferdinand I issued the first anti-Romani decree for the entire Czech Kingdom. Despite the existence of these prohibitions and harsh punishments, however, the Roma continued to return to the country. In 1697, they were declared outlaws whom anyone could kill with impunity. The persecution in Bohemia and Moravia reached its peak in the first half of the 18th century. (Typical punishments for men included death by hanging, while women were burned on the body, whipped around the pillory and deported from the country. Those who were recaptured had their ears cut off, nostrils torn, etc.)

Settlement of the Roma

In addition to the persecuted Roma, so-called tolerated Roma appeared in Moravia in the first half of the 18th century. These were mainly blacksmith families who settled on individual estates with the permission of the authorities.

As a result, persecution and drastic punishments proved counterproductive, as they criminalised the Roma without any alternative. Therefore, the Enlightenment monarchs Maria Theresa and Joseph II attempted to rethink the existing approach. They were the first state leaders to dare not to condemn the Roma problem by expelling them abroad, but to actually solve it. Thus, in the last two decades of the 18th century, an attempt was made to order the permanent settlement of the Roma with the aim of assimilating them and turning them into peasants. This attempt to sedentarise the Roma took place mainly in Hungary at that time (in the Czech lands only in Moravia, and then only under Joseph II) and produced only limited results.

More important than these violent measures were the spontaneous and voluntary attempts of individual Roma families to settle in their respective villages. However, the settlement process, which gave rise to the large so-called Gypsy camps in south-eastern Moravia, was regionally limited. This process did not take place in Bohemia.

Roma in the First Czechoslovak Republic

The period of the First Czechoslovak Republic brought a fundamental solution to the so-called Gypsy question with the adoption of the law on wandering Gypsies in 1927. The law mandated the issuance of special so-called Gypsy licenses, whose holders had limited freedom of movement (a ban on entering certain places) and were subject to other restrictions. On the other hand, at this time the first Roma were studying at secondary and higher education institutions and the gradual and natural integration of Roma into majority society was taking place, especially in southern and south-eastern Moravia. Gradually, some Roma also managed to penetrate from the "gypsy settlements" into the villages. The settled Roma integrated much more quickly into the majority than their comrades from isolated settlements. Outwardly, the integration efforts were manifested, for example, by the adoption of local folk costume. Before 1938, there were about 70-100 000 Roma living in Czechoslovakia. The largest group was made up of settled Slovak Roma, followed by settled Moravian and nomadic Czech Roma. The various groups of Roma were supplemented by Hungarian Roma living in southern Slovakia and Sinti (German Roma) who lived in a German-speaking environment. Pre-war livelihoods still included traditional crafts (especially blacksmithing or music), but these were gradually replaced by wage labour in industry and agriculture, or by various types of peddling and peddling.

Nazi genocide

With the establishment of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia in 1939, anti-Roma measures were tightened. Until the beginning of 1942 it was based on the practice of the First Republic; from the summer of 1942 onwards, an openly racist policy was pursued by the Nazis. The Roma had to settle and were under constant police surveillance. Also, the law on the preventive suppression of crime came into force, followed by an inventory of "Gypsies and Gypsy miscegenates" (a total of 6,500 persons) and a decree on the suppression of the so-called Gypsy vice, on the basis of which about a third of the Roma were imprisoned in newly created so-called Gypsy camps. During its existence, the camp in Lety u Písku was occupied by about 1,300 people, and the camp in Hodonín u Kunštátu by about 1,400 people. These were entire Roma families and the camp, which was planned to have a maximum capacity of 300 men, was overcrowded several times over. The disastrous food, accommodation and hygiene conditions, together with illnesses, resulted in the death of about one quarter of the prisoners. Czech gendarmes were on guard duty in both camps.

The final stage for the Roma was the decree of SS leader Heinrich Himmler in December 1942. He decreed that all "Gypsies and Gypsy miscegenates" from the Reich and its subordinate territories be interned in the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination concentration camp in what is now Poland. From March 1943 to January 1944, nearly 5,000 Roma were deported to Auschwitz in mass transports from the Czech lands.

Only about 200-300 Czech and Moravian Roma remained at large and were apparently considered for forced sterilisation in the future.

More than 22 000 Roma from all over Europe were concentrated in the so-called Gypsy Family Camp in Auschwitz under catastrophic living conditions. By April 1944, the Nazis had moved most of the able-bodied prisoners from there to concentration camps in Germany. On the night of 2 to 3 August 1944, the remaining Roma prisoners, numbering about 3,000, were herded into the gas chambers, where they perished. The total number of Roma victims from all over Europe is estimated at 300-500 thousand, with the murder of almost 90% of the pre-war Czech and Moravian Roma.

Czechoslovak Roma under communism

After 1945, Roma began to arrive in Bohemia and Moravia (also under the influence of recruitment agitation), mainly from the Roma settlements in the agrarian east of Slovakia. They went mainly to the border areas and to the industrial areas in the north, from where the German population had been expelled. After 1948, the Roma were first formally equalised, but socially they remained on the margins. From the second half of the 1950s, however, the regime - in accordance with Stalin's political conception - embarked on an open policy of Roma assimilation, the aim of which was to eliminate the "social backwardness of the Gypsies", re-educate them and then merge them into the majority population. The 1958 law on the prohibition of nomadism was also a major intervention. In the mid-1960s, the state tried to solve the so-called Roma question by organised relocation from Roma settlements in Slovakia to the Czech and Moravian regions; however, this project ended in failure. The Prague Spring and the democratization of the situation brought about the founding of the first Roma organization in the Czech Republic in 1969 - the Union of Gypsies-Roma. For the first time in history, the Roma had the opportunity to express their views on the state's policy towards them. Four years later, however, this organisation was closed down due to pressure from the state authorities, and until 1989 the policy of Roma assimilation continued, albeit in milder forms than before.

State policy from the mid-1970s onwards was oriented towards social work without taking into account national aspects, a situation which persisted until the mid-1980s. Roma national minority

Courses were organized for adults in the so-called education minimum, for women in cooking, sewing and health awareness. The state authorities also monitored the attendance of Roma children at school and began to discuss the problems of the employment of Roma children, who were increasingly being placed in special schools. Despite the officially announced efforts of the state authorities, many Roma settlements remained without basic social amenities and thus without the possibility of decent housing, and some new buildings soon became "Roma ghettos" (e.g. Chánov in Most, Luník IX in Bratislava). Since

the 1970s, and especially in the second half of the 1980s, the state used the medical method of female sterilisation to halt the demographic growth of the Roma population. This was done for the Roma primarily in Slovakia.

On the one hand, the policy of the state authorities in the years 1945-1989 brought about the formal equalisation of the Roma and an improvement in their material situation, while on the other hand, due to the long-term suppression of ethnicity, traditional ties and cultural norms were destroyed.

Present situation in numbers

According to the results of the last Census of Population, Houses and Flats in 2011 (the results of the 2021 census are not yet available), 12 953 persons declared themselves to be of Roma nationality, of whom 5 135 persons exclusively declared themselves to be of Roma nationality, and 7 818 persons declared themselves to be of Roma nationality in combination with another nationality. A total of 41 087 persons indicated that they speak Romani as their native language (or one of their native languages).

From the above statistics, it would seem that the Romani minority is not very numerous on the territory of the Czech Republic. One of the reasons why Romani people do not declare their Romani nationality is, for example, the historically based fear of the possible misuse of data obtained en masse by state authorities or the fear of being stigmatized by their surroundings. Therefore, it is necessary to take into account the different numbers of people who identify themselves as Roma (during the census or on other occasions) and who are perceived as such by their surroundings. For example, the 2018 Report on the State of the Roma Minority shows that, according to the qualified estimates of the regional coordinators for Roma affairs, there are approximately 250 000 Roma living on the territory of the Czech Republic.

After a positive period in the early 1990s, when the Roma were recognised as a national minority and Romani leaders became involved in political life, the social status of a significant part of the Romani minority began to decline rapidly, while tendencies towards territorial segregation and marginalisation of the minority strengthened. Reflecting this situation, in 1997 the government adopted the so-called Bratinka Report, which for the first time since 1989 pointed out at government level the dramatic economic and social decline of a significant part of the Roma minority. The Romani minority is worse off than the majority society, for example in the area of housing or over-indebtedness; territorial segregation is strongly manifested. According to more recent research carried out in particular by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), the position of the Roma also appears to be worse than that of the majority society in the areas of education, employment and health. All of these problems can be identified as problems that lead or may lead to social exclusion. By social exclusion of Roma we mean a process in which individual Roma, Roma families or entire groups of Roma (e.g. in a village or neighbourhood) are

marginalised; their access to resources and opportunities that are normally available to other members of society is hindered or restricted. According to the 2015 Analysis of Socially Excluded Localities, it is estimated that the number of people living in socially excluded localities is between 95,000 and 115,000.

On the international scene, the situation of Roma in the Czech Republic is perceived with concern. This is evidenced by the fact that of the three key human rights issues identified by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, two of them were related to the situation of the Roma. Given that the issue of Roma integration affects the majority of EU Member States, the European Union, and in particular the European Commission, is also concerned with Roma integration. An important link in the institutional arrangements for Roma integration is the Government Council for Roma Minority Affairs (the Council), which is an advisory body to the Government of the Czech Republic. The Council is organised by the Office of the Government Council for Roma Minority Affairs and the Secretariat of the Government Council for National Minorities of the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic, which is also the national contact point for Roma integration within the structure of the European Union.

In European terms, the group name Dom has been changed to the proper ethnic name Roma. Comparative linguistics explains the change of the vowel by the fact that the Indian cerebral consonants d, t, dh, rh are mostly changed into r in the dialects of European Roma, into l in Armenia (Lom), and into prefix d in Arabic (Dom). From the above it follows that the word Rom is etymologically very old, much older than the name Gypsy. Moreover, the name Rom was used by the Roma themselves to refer to themselves (Rom = man, Romňi = woman, Roma = people, in the sense of members of a group, an ethnic group) - it is their proper name (autetnonym), which cannot be said of the word Gypsy (aletnonym or exogenous ethnonym). People of the Dom caste probably did not always occupy such a low social status as today. Belonging to the lowest and despised social classes was probably caused by the major political changes in India. Indeed, we know of similar twists of fate in the history of many other and much better known ethnic groups or state formations. Consider, for example, the rise and fall of the ancient Roman Empire, the cultural and political rise of the Arabs during their expansion from Asia and Africa to Europe - to the Iberian Peninsula, the centuries-long immense respect and fear of Europe for the expanding Ottoman Turks, the size and importance of the British colonial empire, its collapse, and finally the unexpected emergence of the United States of America as the world's number one economic and political power.

Since the end of the 1990s there has been a massive development of associational activity among Romani people in the Czech Republic.

Significant days concerning the Roma minority

27 January - International Holocaust Remembrance Day (liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp)

7 March - Commemoration of the first mass transport of Roma from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia to Auschwitz II-Birkenau (7 March 1943)

8 April - International Roma Day

13 May - Commemorative act in Lety u Písku organized by the Committee for the Compensation of the Roma Holocaust

16 May - Day of the Roma Resistance (uprising in Zigeunerlager Auschwitz II-Birkenau on 16 May 1944)

2 August - Commemorative Day of the Holocaust of the Roma (the murder of the Roma imprisoned in Zigeunerlager Auschwitz II-Birkenau on the night of 2 to 3 August 1944 - note: on the same day two years earlier (2 August 1942), the so-called Gypsy camps were opened in Lety u Písku and Hodonín u Kunštátu)

21 August - Commemorative act in Hodonín u Kunštátu commemorating the mass transport of Roma from the so-called Gypsy camp in Hodonín u Kunštátu to Auschwitz II. Birkenau (21 August 1943)

5 November - International Romani Language Day

A little more detailed

From quantity to quality: the role of small publishers

The former abundance of Romani periodicals in the Czech Republic gradually faded, and after 2000 Romani literary self-taught writers were left with only a few publishing channels, the most consistent of which were probably the Brno-based Romano Hangos and the most prestigious journal of Romani studies, Romano Janiben. Alongside this negative trend, Romani fiction is beginning to be taken up by quality small publishing houses, which are profiling themselves as an alternative to the large publishing houses that thrive on publishing popular fiction in large editions. Fedor and Róbert Gál's publishing house G+G, which focuses on Jewish and minority themes in general, published a well-received collection of short stories by the Brno singer-songwriter and teacher Gejza Horváth, Trispras (2006).

Already in 1997, they published Markus Pape's groundbreaking text *A nikdo vám nebude věřit* (And No One Will Believe You) about the Romani concentration camp in Lety, they published three titles over the years for the controversial pro-Romani activist Paul Polanský, and in 2002 they helped bring to light Ingrid Antalová's book *Chaos Totalos: Administration from the Ghetto*, which sensitively and insightfully reveals the background of field social work in Romani settlements in Slovakia.



Gejza Horváth. Photo: Lukáš Houdek

Editor-in-chief Robert Krumphanzl's Triad has been systematically devoted to Romani people, both in terms of fiction and professional literature. After the premiere with Elena Lackova, a collection of poetry by Margita Reiznerová followed Suno/Sen (2000), followed in 2004 and 2007 by two slim collections of short stories by the until-then-unintroduced Erika Olahová (Nechci se vrátit mezi mrtvé and Matné mircadlo), followed by Paradise on Earth, a collection of Gejza Demeter's original fairy tales (2011), and their most recent fictional venture so far was a collection of Andrei Gini's life's work entitled Patyiv: We Still Know What Respect Is (2013).

The editors of the Triad have always been distinguished by their care and sensitivity, but even so, their publications are constantly improving in terms of narrative, choice of illustrators (Martina Špinková, Zuzana Mašková) and contextualization. The as-yet unfinished diptych Po židoch cigáni (the magnum opus of the Romani historian Milena Hübschmannová, collecting her lifetime of recordings with Romani World War II veterans) and the recent monumental triptych on the Romani partisan Josef Serink, written by historian Jan Tesař, have fundamentally shifted our knowledge of Romani history and to a large extent determined social discourse.

Miro dad (můj otec)

Andre šmikňa labolas / V kovárně plápolal / *The forge was ablaze*

Tosarastar andre rat / od rána do večera / *from morning till night*

Bari bari jag / mocný oheň / *a mighty fire*

O trast andre tačarlas / táta můj / *My father*

Pre kovinca bandžarlas / železo tam tavil / *He smelted iron there*

Miro miro dad / a na kovadlině ho kul / *and on the anvil, he'd hammer it*

Pipa pijelas stadži urelas / Dýmku kouřil klobouk nosily / *He smoked a pipe and wore a hat*

Kaľi cholov parno gad / bílá košile a černé kalhoty/ *White shirt and black trousers*
 leske ačhelas / mu slušely/ *suited him*
 Andre jag thovlas / do ohně dával / *He'd put it in the fire*
 Baro koter trast / kusy železa / *pieces of iron*
 Sako lestar džanelas / a všichni věděli / *and everybody knew*
 Kaj kovačis has / že je kovář / *that he was a blacksmith*

Lancos tover čokanos / Řetěz sekyru kladivo / *Chain axe hammer*
 Le grajeske petalos / koni podkovu / *a horse's horseshoe*
 Kerlas miro dad / udělal můj táta / *made my daddy*
 Jaro maro balevas / moukou chlebem slaninou / *With flour bread bacon*
 Gadžo leske anelas / gádžové mu platili / *The gadje paid him*
 Raj has miro dad / pán byl můj táta / *The master was my father*

(Gejza Horváth, original song lyrics, 2002)



Andrej Giňa. Photo: Lukáš Houdek

Let us also mention foreign Romani literature in translation, published by Argo (Matéo Maximoff: *Sudba Ursitorů* 2008 and Ceija Stojka: *Žijeme ve skrytu* 2009), or the now defunct publishing house Signeta (Ronald Lee: *Mizernej cigoš* 2009). In 2014, the Václav Havel Library, which has long provided a space for Romani literary readings and debates with and about Roma, published a groundbreaking collection of women's Romani prose, *The Sun Sets in the Morning*, which will be discussed later. And an absolutely essential publication that should not be missing from any philanthropist's library is the anthology of prose texts by Romani authors from the Czech Republic *Čalo vodi / Sytá duše* (Museum of Romani Culture 2007). This unprecedented bilingual collection of Romani prose, thanks to the intelligent ordering of its editors Jana Kramářová and Helena Sadílková, tells the whole story of Romani literature from the 1960s to the present day.

Stepping into new times

The central figure of the Romani ethno-emancipation movement before and after the revolution was the indologist and Romani scholar Milena Hübschmannová. She was involved in the creation of the Romani orthography during the existence of the SCR and collaborated with Romani authors from manuscript to publication. Her mentoring role was absolutely crucial for members of the generation of the late 1960s and the second generation of the 1990s. When Milena Hübschmann tragically died in South Africa in 2005, the Roma authors lost not only a friend, but also a primary reader, editor and translator.

Around that time, several new authors emerged who were no longer using established publishing channels but were successfully finding their own. From the point of view of Romani literature, this heralded a new phase, aiming at stepping out of the ethnic literary field, becoming independent and at the same time more involved in the majority canon.

In the context of Romani literature in the Czech Republic, Zdeněk Perský, whose *Where My Home Is* (Divus 2005) is an unsystematic variant of the Baroque confessions of criminals before their execution, seems like a visitor from another planet. Instead of expressing effective regret, the oft-punished recidivist uses rich prison jargon to celebrate his adventures in the underworld and fits the role of a criminal genius. His confessed ethnic identity plays a secondary role. Similarly, Ladislav Herák-Arpy in his small sketch *Behind Bars* (a true account of intrigue and violence behind prison walls) (Community of Roma in Moravia 2003) does not glorify or regret his past leading to punishment, but focuses on his daily survival in harsh prison conditions. And although his ethnicity is made clear by his publisher, he only lets it flash between the lines occasionally.

Pilgrimage plays second fiddle in two titles by the lone wolf Roman Erös from Krupka. His first novel, *Cadík* (Dauphin 2008), which was awarded the Mácha Rose, does look for parallels between Romani and Jewish history and has a Romani protagonist, but it is more of a myth than a reflection of reality; in his collection of short stories, *A Fourth Horse Is Wild*, published in 2012, no Romani characters are featured. Eröse is interested in mysticism, the permeability of worlds, and guilt and forgiveness. His typical hero - regardless of ethnicity - makes mistakes, succumbs to his own weaknesses and addictions, and is driven by a desire for something transcendent.

Irena Eliášová, whose debut novel *Our Settlement* (Regional Scientific Library in Liberec, 2008) was featured in one chapter in the aforementioned anthology *Devla, devla!*. In the novel with a Czech narrator and Slovak-Romani dialogues, she describes her childhood in a Romani village in western Slovakia, portrays the region as culturally heterogeneous but idyllic in the spirit of regionalist tradition, and clearly elevates Romani cohesion and value system above the values of the gadje. Irena Eliášová is currently one of the most productive and published Romani authors (including *November - Kher* 2013, the title novel in the collection *The Sun Sets in the Morning*, KnVH 2014, and *I Want to Return to the Fairy Tale*, KVKL 2015), writes in both Czech and Romani, and is a frequent guest at Romani literary readings.



Irena Eliášová. Photo: Lukáš Houdek

As has already been said, after Milena Hübschmann's sudden death, new faces emerged, while older published Romani writers were to some extent falling into oblivion. In retrospect, therefore, the project www.romea.cz Šukar laviben le Romendar (2010-2011), a literary challenge to established and unknown Romani authors, appears to be a watershed event. For almost half a year, Romea published an author's medallion and an original text every week, and thanks to this literary engineering, not only was the existing scene revived and interconnected, but also completely new authors emerged. This was quickly followed by the photography exhibition of Romani writers Lačo lav sar maro / A Good Word Is Like Bread (café Jericho 2012), which was very well received in the media, and in the autumn of the same year the same photographer and editor of Romea, Lukáš Houdek, founded the Romani internet publishing house Kher. The website www.kher.cz offers free downloads not only of fiction, but also of specialist Romani literature and a methodology for teaching Romani literature for Grade 1. In the past year, it was possible to continue reading the romantic novel by the hitherto unknown Jihlava author Judita Horváthová, He is the Right One, which has been widely read and is about to be published in book form.

Opinions on the future of Romani literature on the Internet may differ. Not everyone finds electronic publication worthy enough; many readers do not even seek reading from a monitor or screen. The fact remains, however, that the Internet is open to all and is the main or only source of information in many Roma households struggling with budgets. Web 2.0 is not only changing the face of the Roma community, but also its reading habits.



Ilona Ferková. Photo: Lukáš Houdek

Erika Olahová, however, went much further and spoke about the tolerated violence against Romani women at the hands of their husbands. Irena Eliášová, Jana Hejkrliková, Iveta Kokyová and Eva Danišová in the aforementioned collection *The Sun Sets in the Morning* cover areas that Romani literature, due to its predominantly male cast, has not covered before (with the honourable exception of Tera Fabiánová). For example, by thematising not only romantic but also physical love, they break taboos and change the social paradigm. They define themselves against their usurpers and profile themselves as strong personalities who are aware of their worth.



Jana Hejkrliková. Photo: Lukáš Houdek

The list of contemporary Romani women writers would not be complete without the poet Renata Berkyová or the author of eleven self-published girls' novels, Judita Horváthová. It can be assumed that, given the educational persistence of women, the contribution of Romani women to Romani literature will continue to grow.

The polished misery of Slovak Romani publishing

The most authentic thing happening in Romani literature in Slovakia at the moment is happening from below. The consistently bilingual yearbooks of ROLIK, the Romani literary club from Banská Bystrica, may be a bit amateurish in terms of adaptation, but they are a picture of their contributors' sincere identification with Romani culture. For the most part, the contributions are firmly anchored in tradition, their common denominator being pride in the Romani people and a communal spirit lived together.

It is therefore surprising that Janette Maziniová or Ľudovít Didi, both of whom have published with relatively established and successful publishing houses (EvitaPress and Slovart, respectively), are very critical, even offensive, towards the Roma. Maziniová's autobiographical *Gypsy* (2012) cannot escape the feeling of injustice and slides into the same generalisation that members of the majority tend to make: all Roma are backward and stupid, according to her, and only hinder their social rise. With Ludovít Didi it is a bit more complicated. Although he portrays the reality of Roma settlements with the same resentment as Maziniová does his origins on the farm, both in his novel *Čierny Róm a biela láska* (2012) and in his late Roma Tardek and *His Fate* (2013) he deals very intensely with the issue of the ghosts of the dead, called mules in Romani, and the pervasiveness of this world and the next, thus de facto stumbling on the position of the traditional Roma. To varying degrees, the schizoid situation, which Milena Hübschmann, guided by postcolonial theory, has named "colonized consciousness", is evident in both authors.

The highlight of the Slovak paradox is the fact that the Slovak Vítio Staviarsky, a three-time Anasoft Litera finalist and winner in 2013, is much more sensitive and understanding in his conception of the Slovak Roma than Maziniová and Didi combined. He is not afraid to portray the Roma community in its extreme position as hustlers and pimps, without losing the basic human understanding of the inscrutable ways of God that have led individuals, but not the masses, to extreme solutions.

Pedagogical tips for the Trainers

How can you teach literature to students accustomed to tiny screens with brief flashes of communication that instantly fade away (both in meaning endurance and visible text)? Begin by focusing on meaning. The context and need here are clear enough to jump right into the strategies.

Use combinations of media—classic and modern together, leveraging one against the other. Music, video streams, short videos (like TikTok), video games, plays, poems, film, posters, poems, essays, novels, podcasts, etc.

Have students analyze diverse media forms for their strengths and weaknesses—and involve both classic and digital forms.

Allow students to choose media while you choose themes and/or academic and/or quality standards.

Insist *all student work* 'leaves the classroom' and is published—then design units accordingly.

Use RAFT: Role, Audience, Format, and Topic/Tone/Theme. Then have them revise media in response to new roles, audiences, formats, or topics, tones, or themes. Martin Luther King's "I Have A Dream Speech"

in a new format (a video?), or to a new audience (modern hip-hop artists?), or with a new tone (angry?). Students experimenting here are experimenting with media design, which is exactly what authors do.



Use a thematic focus to design units, assessments, project-based learning—whatever activities students ‘touch.’ One of the hallmark characteristics of classic literature is that it endures. This is, in part, due to the timelessness of the human condition. Love lost, coming of age, overcoming obstacles, civil rights, identity, and more are all at the core of the greatest of literary works.

The ability to the texts to nail these conditions gives them their ability to endure, so teach through that. The author (e.g., Shakespeare) or media form (e.g., a play) may not seem relevant to a student—and that’s okay. The author chose that form based on prevailing local technology. Help them focus on what is being said and why—and how.

Use tools for digital text annotation on pdfs, note-sharing, and more to help students mark text, document questions and insights, and revisit thinking or collaborate with others during the reading of classic texts.

Create social media-based reading clubs. Establish a hashtag that anchors year-long discussion of certain themes, authors, text, or whatever other category/topic that makes sense for your curriculum.

Have students create and produce an ongoing podcast or YouTube channel on, as above, relevant themes, authors, texts, etc.

Course introduction and welcoming the learners.

Your initial welcome message is typically posted on your course homepage, but you can also email it to students shortly before the start of classes. You should think about how these “first words” will help to set the tone and expectations for your course. For example, how do they model appropriate online communication for your students? It is always good to convey a sense of enthusiasm about the content and the form of the course. What also helps is to include some information about yourself so students get a sense of who you are and indicate your availability for questions and communication, and your communication preferences. Let students know that they are not stranded on their own when it comes to online learning.

Like your course introduction, your self-introduction an icebreaker assignment is a critical opportunity to present yourself as a “real person.” You should be aware of the negative persona (voices and roles) that you do not want to present, such as the “unapproachable sage,” “apathetic drone,” or “chum.” Again, state your enthusiasm for both the content and form of the course and include some touchstones about yourself. Clarify also how you want students to address you and each other and explain your “philosophy of teaching” in simple terms, especially as it relates to online learning.

Oral communication tends to be fast-paced, spontaneous, fleeting, and less structured than textbased communication. Moreover, oral communication in a face-to-face context provides multiple non-verbal or paralinguistic cues such as facial expression and tone of voice. Socially and emotionally, face-to-face oral communication is a rich medium. In contrast, written communication might be termed a lean medium, in that much of the information that creates and sustains the group dynamic of face-to-face classes is simply not transmitted.

Warm up exercises in order to show positive narrative of the Romani identity

A warm up activity is a short, fun game which a teacher or trainer can use with students. The purpose of a warm up is to encourage the students and wake them up – first thing in the morning and after lunch people are often a little sleepy. It also helps to prepare them to learn by stimulating their minds and/or their bodies. Warm ups should last about 5 minutes. Warm ups are particularly useful to help new students or trainees to get to know each other and to mark the shift when students have finished learning about one topic before starting on a new topic Warm up activities are essential teaching techniques for good teacher and trainers.

A warm-up activity helps students ease into the classroom and the expectation of learning in a low-key way that isn't stressful. Plus, this helps the non-morning people catch up to the same level as the early risers. Here are some of the common and popular warm-up activities.

Whispers

A whispering communication game. Start with a sentence- this could be on a specific topic that you're studying- and whisper it to one learner. They then have to whisper it to the next learner, and so on. The last learner then has to say out loud what they think the sentence was that they heard- this is often completely different from the sentence that you started with, and can be incredibly funny and nonsensical.

Brainstorm

A creative activity to get students solving problems by using their imagination. Come up with a completely made up, bizarre scenario. This could be 'a Roma kid is stuck on the moon, how do we get him down?', or 'my dog won't stop eating my homework'. Get your learners to work together to come up with a ten point action plan for how to solve the problem- this could be as creative a solution as they can possibly dream of.



If I were in charge for a day...

A scary thought, I know, students ruling the school, but it's what this activity is all about. Give learners around ten minutes to write exactly what they'd do if they were in charge of the school for a day, then let them present their ideas to the rest of the class.

Getting to know you

This is another great getting to know you activity. Task learners with going around the class and finding out three facts from each learner by asking them different questions. This is a great way for a new class to get more familiar with each other. If you're not dealing with a new class, you can still use it and simply change it so that learners have to find out three things that have happened to each learner between their last lesson together and now.

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Describe the picture

Put the class into pairs. Show one half of each pair a picture- make sure it's a picture with lots of detail on it. Then that learner has to try and describe the picture to their partner in 30 seconds.

Their partner then has to try and draw and recreate this picture, based on their partner's description. Award points for the closest matching picture.



Mire Bala Kale Hin – romské pohádky. www.ceskatelevize.cz

Two truths and a lie

This is a particularly great game to play with small classes as it helps them get to know each other better. Learners in a small class will also be more inclined to get involved, asking more questions as they'll have less of an audience.

For this game, all you need is a board and pen, or just something to write on. Then each learner has to write down two things about themselves that are true, and one that's a lie. Then the rest of the class are supposed to ask them questions in order to suss out which one is the lie.

This game allows learners to practise speaking skills and explore different vocabulary. It's a great icebreaker activity for the start of a lesson at the start of a new year, but equally, you can break it out whenever you want a bit of fun in your learning.

Word ladders

The aim of this game is to start with one word and aim to get to another by only changing one letter at a time. For example, you could write the word 'rope' on the board and tell learners that they're trying to get to the word 'pile'. The sequence of words could go like this rope-ripe-pipe-pile. For every word it takes to get to the target word, they get a point. But the aim of this game is to get the least points possible.

Dinner party

Ask your learners to think about who they would invite to their house for dinner if they could invite anyone in the world, dead or alive. Then each learner gets a few minutes to explain their choice. The

rest of the class can ask them questions, like what food they would serve, what games they would play, and things like that. Again, this is a useful icebreaker for learners at the start of a year.

Brainstorming together with the learners around choice of subject and materials, what to think about during the lesson.

A brainstorming session is a useful tool to generate ideas or find solutions to a problem. These sessions explore and expand a student's ability to think critically and laterally. As students get actively involved, the sessions aid the process of learning and improve academic performance.

What are the benefits of brainstorming sessions?

Brainstorming in the classroom motivate students to freely express their ideas and thoughts on a subject. As there are no wrong and right answers, the sessions provide students with a platform where they can voice their thoughts without fear of failure. The sessions give the class a chance to tap into their previous knowledge and form connections between the current topic and what they have already learned. It also encourages them to listen and consider others' ideas, thereby showing respect for their fellow classmates.

How to get started?

Brainstorming sessions may seem like an unstructured activity, however, laying down some rules may ensure smooth functioning of the session. Here are some ideas that may aid the brainstorming sessions:

Discussing and not fighting: There is no winning or losing team while brainstorming. All the ideas and thoughts are considered and given equal preference. The teacher should moderate the session so that the discussion is amiable and students are learning. Also ensure that everyone contributes to the session.

Generate answers: Frame the question that needs to be brainstormed carefully so that maximum ideas may be generated. Teachers should prepare a list of sub-questions that may help direct the thoughts of the students in the right direction in case the discussion hangs or the students get side tracked. Instruct the students to record their ideas so that it won't be missed and there is no repetition.

Set a time limit: Set a time limit on the discussion. The time set would depend on the nature of the topic. At the end of the session, a student can summarize all the ideas that were discussed.

Teacher facilitates: The teacher should coordinate and manage the session without adding their evaluation or comments on the ideas presented.

Tips on facilitating brainstorming

Here are some methods by which the teacher may smoothly facilitate brainstorming sessions in the classroom:

Simple brainstorming

Write down the discussion question on the blackboard or a flip chart and encourage students to add their inputs. After the time is over, the students can voice the ideas written on the board or chart.

Brainstorming in groups

The class may be divided into groups. They may all be given the same topic, a paper to record their ideas and instructions on the time limit. Once the time is over, each group will choose a student who may

read out their ideas. The students may also be given a second paper to note the ideas that they have missed out. In this way, students are able to generate and understand all the ideas presented in the session.

Paired brainstorming

In this strategy, the students are divided into pairs and each pair discusses their ideas and notes them down.

Pie method

A circle is drawn and the topic written in the center. The teacher divides the circle into 4 or 6 parts, representing sub-topics. Students are instructed to generate ideas for each sub-topic and these are written down. At the end of the session, the diagram represents all the ideas that make up the total topic.

Card method

In this method, students are asked to list their ideas on a stacked card and pass it to their right. The student on the right reads the idea that was written and adds to it. In this way, the card is passed around the class with each individual contributing to an idea. In case someone has no contribution, they may write a question which could be discussed by the other students. Once all the cards have been passed around, the teacher may collect them and read back the ideas to the class.

How to end the lesson

Many teachers are guilty of ending lessons in a way that is less than inspiring – either still finishing the main content or by focusing on the detail of homework. But many personal experiences, alongside research, have shown that the end of a lesson can be as important as an appropriate starter or main activity. The right ending to the lesson can provide consolidation and an opportunity to provide an ending worthy of a lesson worth remembering. Since the class wrap up can essentially help the student's review, retain, and even remember important points in the lesson, it would be very beneficial to focus more attention on concluding your lesson in an engaging and fun way.



Here are just a few ideas to help end the lessons in a more creative way:

Minute Speeches: For this activity choose a few students or if you are working with a smaller group, have everyone take turns giving a one minute speech to the class. The students can either stand up near their desk or go up to the front of the class in order to give their brief speech. Have each student talk about what was done during the lesson, their favorite part of the class or have them give a summary about a reading activity they worked on. The topic can be modified and you may even use this activity to have your students get to know each other better during first lesson.

Corrections and feedback:

During the last 10-15 minutes of the class it is a good idea to go over some of the mistakes or errors that came up during the lesson. Many teachers also take advantage of this time to go over some common pronunciation mistakes. Correcting your students' mistakes during this final moment of class can be extremely beneficial and it is more likely that your students will remember your comments and suggestions, since it's the last activity they will be focusing on.

Write it up! Have your students practice their writing skills by doing an e-mail writing activity at the end of the class. Have the class write a brief e-mail to a friend, boss, or co-worker describing (in detail) what was done during the lesson. When the students are finished have them turn in their papers and in the next class you may provide them with feedback or go over some common writing errors together as a class. This activity can also be modified and you can switch things up every once in a while and have your students write about topics like current events, celebrities, recent vacations they have taken, or even something more specific to the lesson that you covered that day.

Correcting your students' mistakes during this final moment of class can be extremely beneficial and it is more likely that your students will remember your comments and suggestions, since it's the last activity they will be focusing on.

The cool down: since the beginning of each lesson is cleverly named a "warm up" it only makes sense that the closing activity is called a cool down. During this activity, cool your class down by talking about any confusing or difficult topics the students encountered that day. Use this time to answer questions or explain anything that your students may have had a hard time with; take advantage of these moments to make sure that everyone in the class leaves with more clarity and less confusion about the topics covered in your lesson.

The fly swatter game: This game is perfect for younger students who have a bit of excess energy to burn off at the end of the lesson. Have your students make two lines at the front of the class, each of them with a fly swatter, newspaper, or a rolled up piece of paper on hand. Write two adjectives on the board and then ask "this adjective is used to describe people and not things" then have two students run up to the board and hit the correct word with their "fly swatter", the first one to hit the right word wins a point for their team. This game can be modified to fit the level and topic of the class. Believe it or not, this activity can also be very fun for adults!

These are just some examples to help you conclude your lessons in a more engaging and fun manner.

Try them out and see how your class responds to each one, in time your students may even request that you end the class with their favorite closing activity.

Suggestions for follow-up activities

After a learning activity such as training, e-learning, or study tours, participants have acquired new knowledge and skills and need to translate their learning into practice. Follow-up is a way to accompany learners from being recipients of learning activities, to actively utilizing these new skills and knowledge and ultimately being active agents of change in their own environments.

Much research has indicated that participants are more likely to use what they've learned when they receive follow-up support. In addition, maintaining follow-up contact with participants enables organizers to develop a much greater understanding of how useful the learning initiative has been. Obstacles that participants face in implementing their learning can also inform the design of future learning activities. Here you can find suggestions for some follow-up activities.

Vocab Refresher

After a vocabulary lesson, have students follow up the activity with a high-spirited review. First, have the students individually make lists of all the words they can remember from the lesson. They shouldn't write the definitions or translations of the words, but the English target vocabulary, alone, on one side of a page. Next, put the students in pairs; within these pairs, the students must use the lists to elicit the words from their partners. They can provide definitions or explanations, so long as they only speak in English. For example, for a target word "refrigerator," a student might say "something that holds food," "something that has a cold temperature inside," "something large in the kitchen."

Play-Acting

For an extended follow-up activity, have your ESL students create and take part in a short skit along the same theme as a lesson they've completed. You will probably need an entire class to complete this activity, making it an ideal "follow-up" at the end of a chapter or a unit of study. Break the students into pairs or small groups, and have each group write a script in English that uses either a theme or target language from the lesson that your class has just completed. Once the students have completed their plays, let them perform for the rest of the class.

Letter Writing

For a variation on normal review or typical letter-writing assignments, ask your students to imagine that a member of the class has been absent for the preceding lesson. Each student must write a letter to the absent student to fill him in on the material that he's missed. Allow the students to take some liberties with the letter form. They should use the basic structure of a friendly letter; however, put their focus primarily on their retention of the past lesson, and less on the composition itself.

In Related News...

After completing a lesson that relates to contemporary news and world events, present students with a number of headlines on the related topics. For example, if your students have been studying restaurant vocabulary, you might provide headlines of restaurant reviews or news items about celebrity chefs. Have the students work in small groups, chatting about the themes brought up by each news item.

Assessment of the impact

In the context of a worldwide paradigm shift towards student-centred outcomes-based approaches, this article reviews what the research literature says about the impact of assessment on students' learning and then proceeds to translate that into practical suggestions for practice with the specific intention that this should help trainers in the development of appropriate assessment strategies and learner-centred assessment practices.

Constructive alignment

Over the last decade there has been a paradigm shift, at least in the espoused rhetoric of higher education, from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning. Many mission statements can now be found which claim

their institutions to be student-centred or learner-centred institutions. Beyond this rhetoric, possibly the most noticeable changes that can be seen, certainly in UK universities, are a greater emphasis on the development of skills, and in particular general, transferable, 'life' skills (and the notion of lifelong-learning), and the writing of course units and modules in terms of intended student-learning outcomes

Essentially, in summary, model of 'constructive alignment' requires a shift in thinking about the process of course design, to the following three stage model:

1. Identify clear learning outcomes.
2. Design appropriate assessment tasks that will directly assess whether each of the learning outcomes has been met.
3. Design appropriate learning opportunities for the students to get them to a point where they can successfully undertake the assessment tasks.

Although the term 'constructive alignment' is not used, this kind of systematic thinking is exactly what the trainer is looking for when he or she refers to effective and appropriate measurement of the achievement by students of the intended learning outcomes.

Appendices

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About the authors of the introductory section on Romani literature as a teaching resource for trainers.



Karolína Ryvolová, graduated in English and Romani Studies at the Faculty of Arts and in 2014 defended her dissertation on the construction and deconstruction of Romani identity in the life stories of Romani authors. She has been working on Romani literature for a long time, both in the form of critical reflection in professional periodicals and as an editor and translator from Romani and English. She makes her living as an English teacher and occasionally lectures on Romani writing, as well as on Romani community issues in general, to students and government officials.



Lukáš Houdek studied Romani Studies at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague. He started taking photographs in 2005, recording the situation of Roma in various localities in the Czech Republic and abroad, the life of members of the Dome caste in northern India, and the life of the dying northern Okinawan Gabra, Turkana and Elmolo tribes. Since 2010, Houdek has also devoted himself to fine art photography, through which he initially reflected suggestively on his own identity in confrontation with the surrounding society and its attitudes towards different social groups. Among his main themes is also a reflection on the displacement of the German population after 1945 and the transformation of the Czech borderlands. In these projects, he uses archival materials and testimonies of witnesses, as well as his own motives based on this dark era of Czech history.