

FEL Annual Conference

Panel Proposal

Title:

Teaching and Learning Resources for Romani in Central Europe: Overcoming Standardisation

Panel participants:

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Abstract:

Romani, spoken as a home language by several million bilingual people, nowhere in Europe is used as the language of instruction at school, and it is seldom included in the curriculum even as an optional subject.

Our Erasmus strategic partnership project *“Translanguaging instead of Standardisation: Speaking Romani at School”* brings non-standardised, local Romani into school by making the learners’ way of speaking part of learning activities – without attempting standardisation.

The proposed panel has three main foci: first, we discuss the problematic nature of Romani standardisation; second, we review the advantages of applying the principles of translanguaging research in education; third, we provide evidence from our ongoing project, which is located in a school of nearly 500 Romani-Hungarian bilingual pupils in Hungary.

In the lack of a nation-state-like power centre, the knowledge of standard Romani does not enhance social competitiveness in a significant degree; thus, people lack the motivation to acquire a standard variety (Busch 2012). Consequently, attempts at standardisation promote the spread of standard ideologies but do not provide for the spread of resources usually associated with standards (Abercrombie 2018). In this way, local Romani ways of speaking have a low prestige and are marginalized. As schooling in Europe is strongly connected with standard varieties, spoken varieties of Romani are excluded from school learning activities.

Our project, located in Tiszavasvári, North-Eastern Hungary, is designed to exploit the pedagogical potential of translanguaging in a school attended by the children of the Roma community. In recent years, translanguaging has become a popular concept to describe a series of phenomena around bi- and multilingual language practices, pedagogies and policies. We discuss the possibilities, difficulties, and consequences of translanguaging as a pedagogical orientation both in

monolingual school systems generally and in everyday school work with bilingual Roma students.

The participants of the project have committed themselves to developing an e-volume and a video repository of the methods used, in order to familiarize trainee teachers with translanguaging in teaching bilingual Roma students. The teachers participating in the project show and analyse translanguaging classroom moments of recent activities (videos, teaching materials, etc.) developed for the repository and the e-volume, from which we shall use samples to illustrate our panel discussion.

Abercrombie, Amelia. 2018. Language purism and social hierarchies: Making a Romani standard in Prizren. *Language in Society* 47. 741-761.

Busch, Brigitta. 2012. Romani zwischen Stigmatisierung und Anerkennung: eine transnationale Sprache im Korsett nationalstaatlicher Bildungssysteme. In *Eine Welt? Sprachen, Schule und Politik in Europa und anderen Kontinenten*, edited by Peter Cichon, Konrad Ehlich, 71–92. Wien: Praesens.