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THE SYSTEM OF PERSONAL PRONOUNS IN THE ROMANI DIALECT IN
AND AROUND KÂRDZHALI

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***Abstract:** The article deals with the personal pronouns in the Romani dialect, spoken in Kârdzhali and several villages around it. The authors show the pronominal case forms, give example sentences and point the differences between the dialect in research, on the one hand, and some other Romani dialects in Bulgaria, on the other hand.*

***Keywords:** Personal pronouns, Romani dialects, Kardzhali, Bulgaria.*

INTRODUCTION

This article examines the personal pronouns in the Romani (Gypsy) dialect spoken in the town of Kârdzhali and some of the surrounding villages (such as Stremci and Perperek), which have not previously been studied. Mihajlova (Mihaylova 2000: 171) shows where the first Roma in Kârdzhali, who were primarily metalsmiths and basket-makers, originally came from. According to Enev (Enev 2004: 98-99), in 1885 there was a total of 15 Roma in Kârdzhali, out of a total population of 1,176. The town's Romani population progressively increased over the years, and by 1946 there were already between 643 and 832 Romani Muslims recorded, in an overall population of around ten thousand residents (Mihaylova – Op. cit.: 154; Enev – Op. cit.: 101-102); Kârdzhali's present-day Roma population is significantly higher. In the dialect spoken by the Roma of Kârdzhali, quite understandably, the influence of both the local dialect of Turkish and of the Bulgarian language can be felt, all the more so because they are trilingual, speaking Turkish and Bulgarian in addition to their own language.

EXPOSITION

Below is an overview of the personal pronoun paradigms of the dialect studied here. Examples of their usage will be given, along with comparisons to some other Romani dialects spoken in Bulgaria.

We will begin with an overview of the first person singular forms of the personal pronouns. The pronoun 'I' is declined in the various cases as follows:

Nominative	<i>mé</i> 'I'
Accusative	<i>mán</i> 'me'
Dative	<i>mángo</i> 'to me', 'for me'
Ablative	<i>mándar</i> 'from me'
Locative	<i>mánde</i> 'at me'
Instrumental	<i>mánsa</i> 'with me'

Overall, the forms for the 1st person singular personal pronouns are almost the same as in other Romani dialects in Bulgaria (Kostov, Iliev 2004: 100-101; Kyuchukov 2003: 97), with a few exceptions. In Romani grammars – Iliev and Kostov (Kostov, Iliev – Op. cit.: 100-101), for instance – examples are given for a genitive case for personal pronouns (in practice, only for the masculine gender – *moró* 'my', *toró* 'your'), which, however, have forms for gender and number, and are in fact possessive pronouns, because of which they also show up in the section on possessive pronouns (Ibid:

103). In the Kârdzhali Romani dialect, the form corresponding to *moró* in the Sofia Romani form for the genitive singular looks like this:

Genitive *mirnó* ‘my’

Usage examples: *Mé sim mriúš* ‘I am a man’; *Tú mán dikés* ‘You see me’; *Tú mán dés paré* / *Tú dés mánge pare* ‘You give me money’ (the verb *dav* ‘to give’ can require both accusative or dative forms); *Kavá sí mánge* ‘This is for me’; *Kó grás sí mánde* ‘Your horse is with me [in my possession]’; *Mándar tú lés pare* ‘You take money from me’; *Tú jás mánsa ká/an kasabáva* ‘You go with me into the town’; *Kavá sú mirnó* ‘This is mine’; *Kavá sí mirné paré* ‘This is my money’; *mirnó grás* ‘my horse’; *mirní romní* ‘my wife’; *mirné čave* ‘my children’.

Along with the synthetic ablative form *mándar* ‘from me’, the combination of the preposition *kátar*, in the sense of ‘from’, is also used with various case forms due to Bulgarian influence. Thus, the sentence ‘you take (the) money from me’ can be expressed not only as *Mándar tú lús paré*, but also as *Tú lés paré kátar mánda*/ *Tú lés paré kátar mán*.

The table of forms for the 2nd person singular (‘you’) is as follows:

Nominative	<i>tú</i> ‘you’
Accusative	<i>tút</i> ‘you’
Dative	<i>túke</i> ‘to you’, ‘for you’
Ablative	<i>tútar</i> ‘from you’
Locative	<i>túte</i> ‘at you’
Instrumental	<i>túsa</i> ‘with you’
Genitive	<i>kirnó</i> ‘your’

Examples: *Tú kerés bút bukí* ‘You work a lot’ – literally, ‘you do a lot of work’; *Mé tút dikáf* ‘I see you’; *Ó marnó sí túte* ‘you have the bread’ (literally, ‘the bread is on you’); *Ó marnó sí túke* ‘the bread is for you’; *Mé dáf túke paré*/ *Mé tút dáf paré* ‘I give you money’; *Túte sí paré* ‘You have money’ (literally, ‘there is money on you’); *Láf o grás tútar* ‘I take the horse from you’; *Jáf an kíno túsa* ‘I go to the cinema with you’; *Kavá sí kirnó* ‘this is yours’; *E kavá sí kirnó prál* ‘this here is your brother’.

Here as well the forms of the pronouns are almost the same as those covered by Kostov, Iliev (Kostov, Iliev – Op. cit.: 100-101), and Kyuchukov (Kyuchukov – Op. cit.: 97), but instead of *toró* ‘your’, there is *kirnó*. As in the 1st person, here too, along with the synthetic forms, the analytic combinations of preposition and case form can also be used: ‘I take the horse from you’ can also be expressed as *Láf o grás kátar tút*.

For the third-person singular masculine pronoun (‘he’) we have the following forms:

Nominative	<i>vó</i> ‘he’
Accusative	<i>lé</i> ‘him’
Dative	<i>léske</i> ‘to him’, ‘for him’
Ablative	<i>léstar</i> ‘from him’
Locative	<i>léste</i> ‘at him’
Instrumental	<i>lésa</i> ‘with him’
Genitive	<i>léskoro</i> ‘his’

Examples: *Vó kerél bút bukí* ‘He works a lot’ – literally, ‘he does a lot of work’; *Mé dikáv lé* ‘I see him’; *E kavá sí léske* ‘This here is for him’; *Tú dés o grás léske* ‘You give him the horse’; *Léste sí bút paré* ‘He has a lot of money’ (literally, ‘on him there is a lot of money’); *Láf e grastá léstar* ‘I take the horses from him’; *Jáf ka bukí lésa*/ *Lésa jáf ka bukí* ‘I go to work with him’; *Kavá kër sí lésko* ‘This house is his’; *Kavá grás sí lésko* ‘This horse is his’.

The form *óv* ‘he’ in the Sofia Erliya dialect corresponds to the form *vó* in the Kârdzhali Romani dialect (Vasilev 2007: 97; Kostov, Iliev – Op. cit.: 100-101), while the Lakho (= *Vlax* – see Kyuchukov 2003; Iгла, Draganova 2006: 53-63) dialect has (*v*)*óv* (Kyuchukov – Op. cit.: 98). As seen from the grammars cited (Kostov, Iliev – Op. cit.: 101), the genitive form *lésko* differs from the form *léskoro* indicated there.

In the third-person singular feminine form (‘she’), the situation is as follows:

Nominative	<i>vóy</i> ‘she’
Accusative	<i>lá</i> ‘her’

Dative	<i>láke</i> ‘to her’, ‘for her’
Ablative	<i>látar</i> ‘from her’
Locative	<i>láte</i> ‘at her’
Instrumental	<i>lása</i> ‘with her’
Genitive	<i>láko</i> ‘her’

Examples: *Vóy gil’ábel búť šukár* ‘She sings very nicely’; *Mé dikáf lá* ‘I see her’; *Dikés lá?* ‘Do you see her?’; *E kava sí láke* ‘This is for her’; *Mé dáť o grás láke* ‘I give the horse to her’; *Ó hurdó sí láte* ‘The child is with [literally, ‘at’] her’; *Láf látar o hurdó* ‘I take the child from her’; *Háf lása* ‘I eat with her’; *E kavá sí láko grás* ‘This here is her horse’.

Comparison with other major Romani dialects (see the cited grammars) shows that the Kârdzhali form *vóy* ‘she’ corresponds with (v)óy from the Lakho dialect, while the Sofia dialect shows óy. As with *lésko – léskoro*, here too there is an omission of the final *-ro* in the genitive form: *láko* ‘her’ instead of *lákoro*.

The following forms are observed in the 1st person plural (‘we’) forms:

Nominative	<i>amén</i> ‘we’
Accusative	<i>amén</i> ‘us’
Dative	<i>aménge</i> ‘to us’, ‘for us’
Ablative	<i>améndar</i> ‘from us’
Locative	<i>aménde</i> ‘at us’
Instrumental	<i>aménsa</i> ‘with us’
Genitive	<i>amaró</i> ‘our’

Examples: *Amén bešás an Kârjali* ‘We live in Kârdzhali’; *Tumén čalén amén* ‘You hit us’; *E kavá sí aménge* ‘This here is for us’; *Tú dés amén(ge) o grás* ‘You give us a horse’; *O más sí aménde* ‘The meat is on us [in our possession]’; *Lén o hurdó amender!* ‘(You all) take the child from us!’; *E kavá sí amoró* ‘This here is ours’.

It can be seen that in the Kârdzhali dialect, the nominative form is the same as the accusative (as it is for the 2nd person plural form, below, as well). This resembles the situation in the Sliven dialect, where there is a nominative form *amin*, differing from the Erliya nominative *amé* (Kostov, IlievB – Op. cit.: 100-101; Kyuchukov – Op. cit.: 98; Savchev – Op. cit.: 85).

For the 2nd person plural (‘you’) we have the following forms:

Nominative	<i>tumén</i> ‘you’
Accusative	<i>tumén</i> ‘you’
Dative	<i>tuménge</i> ‘to you’, ‘for you’
Ablative	<i>tuméndar</i> ‘from you’
Locative	<i>tuménde</i> ‘at you’
Instrumental	<i>tuménsa</i> ‘with you’
Genitive	<i>tumaró</i> ‘your’

Examples: *Tumén hán aménsa* ‘You eat with us’; *Tumén sánza dasá* ‘You are Bulgarians’; *Amén dikás tumén* ‘We see you’; *Amén tumén dás o grás/Amén dás o grás tuménge* ‘We give you the horse’; *E kavá sí tuménge* ‘This here is for you’; *Amén lás o grás tuméndar* ‘We take the horse from you’; *O jukél (sí) tuménde* ‘The dog is with [lit. ‘at’] you’; *Amén kerás buki tuménsa* ‘We work with you’; *E kavá grás sí tumaró* ‘This here horse is yours’; *E kavá grastá sí tumaré* ‘These here horses are yours’.

Everything said about the nominative and accusative forms above for the forms of the 1st person plural is also true these 2nd person forms –the Erliya dialect has the nominative case form *tumé*, while the Drândar dialect in Sliven has *tumin*.

Finally, the following forms are used for the 3rd person plural (‘they’):

Nominative	<i>onnará/onnarâ</i> ‘they’
Accusative	<i>lén</i> ‘them’
Dative	<i>lénge</i> ‘to them’, ‘for them’
Ablative	<i>léndar</i> ‘from them’
Locative	<i>lénde</i> ‘at them’
Instrumental	<i>lénsa</i> ‘with them’

Genitive *léngo* ‘their’

Examples of usage: *Onnará janén* ‘they know’; *Onnará ján kaabáv* ‘they go to [a] wedding’; *Amén dikás lén* ‘we see them’; *E kavá sí lénge* ‘this here is for them’; *Tú dés o grás lénge/Tú dés lén o grás* ‘you give them the horse’; *Lénde sí bút grastá* ‘they have a lot of horses’ [literally ‘on them there are a lot of horses’]; *Láf o hurdó léndar* ‘I take the child from them’; *Keráf buki lénsa* ‘I work with them’; *E kavá sí léngo grás* ‘this here is their horse’; *E kavá sí léngo* ‘this here is theirs’ – compare with *léngoro* in the Sofia dialect.

In the basic Romani dialects, the personal pronouns for the 3rd person plural are *ón* (in the Sofia Erliya dialect), *ól, ola* in the Kalaidzhi dialect, and *(v)on(ar)* in the Lakho dialect (Kostov, Iliev – Op. cit.: 100-101; Kyuchukov – Op. cit.: 99). In the Kârdzhali dialect, however, the nominative form is *onnará/onnarâ*, which is a Turkish borrowing (from *onlár* → dialectally *onnâr*), but from the Turkish dative case form rather than the nominative. The presence of the form *(v)on(ar)* in the Lakho dialect, with which correspondences and similar forms have been noted, suggests the possibility here of contamination between the Turkish pronoun *onnâr* and the similar Lakho form. As with some other forms above, here too we see analytic variations of the case forms – the sentence ‘I take the child from them’ can also be encountered as *Láf o hurdó katar léndar*.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be said that the Romani dialect of the town of Kârdzhali has an interesting system of personal pronouns, in which grammatical processes already carried out in Bulgarian, along with borrowings of forms from Turkish, are not unknown. The overall placement of this dialect in the system of Romani dialects in Bulgaria will be determined with more accuracy after researching the remaining parts of speech and their grammatical categories.

ADDENDUM – The transcription system employed

Because we are using a system of dialect transcription different from that in the grammars cited, which transcribe the sound that corresponds to Bulgarian [й] with the symbol *j*, we have used *y* here to indicate their letter *j*, and with the symbol *j*, we indicate the affricate found in the words *hodzha* and *Buzludzha* (or in the English word *just*), which in Bulgarian dialect texts is noted with *у*, in Serbian Cyrillic, with *ћ*, and in the Turkish Roman alphabet, with the letter *c* (*hoca, Buzluca*). Other symbols used are:

- ì* = stressed *i* (as in *thin*);
- ú* = stressed *u* (as in *blue*);
- ə* = *schwa*;
- š* = *sh* (as in *sure*);
- č* = *ch* (as in *chin*).

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