

Lithuanian and Latvian Romani: Between Slavic and Baltic

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Romani dialects in Europe



Location of the principal dialects of Romani [Matras 2002: 11]

Northeastern dialectal group of Romani



Location of the principal dialects of Romani [Matras 2002: 11]

Romani dialects of the Baltic states

Northeastern dialects

- Polish Romani
- Russian Romani (North Russian, Xaladitka) + Polish Xaladitka
- Belarusian Romani
- Lithuanian Romani
- Latvian Romani (Lotfitka)
- The “bežency” variety

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Lithuanian Romani

- Lithuanian Romani is spoken by the majority of Roms in Lithuania (including recent migrants to the UK), in the Kaliningrad region, and in some parts of Belarus bordering with Lithuania (e.g. Ašmiany)
- according to the 2011 census 2115 Roms live in Lithuania (2571 according to the 2001 census)
- most Roms live in the Vilnius, Kaunas and Šiauliai regions
- there are approximately 3000-5000 speakers

Lithuanian Romani



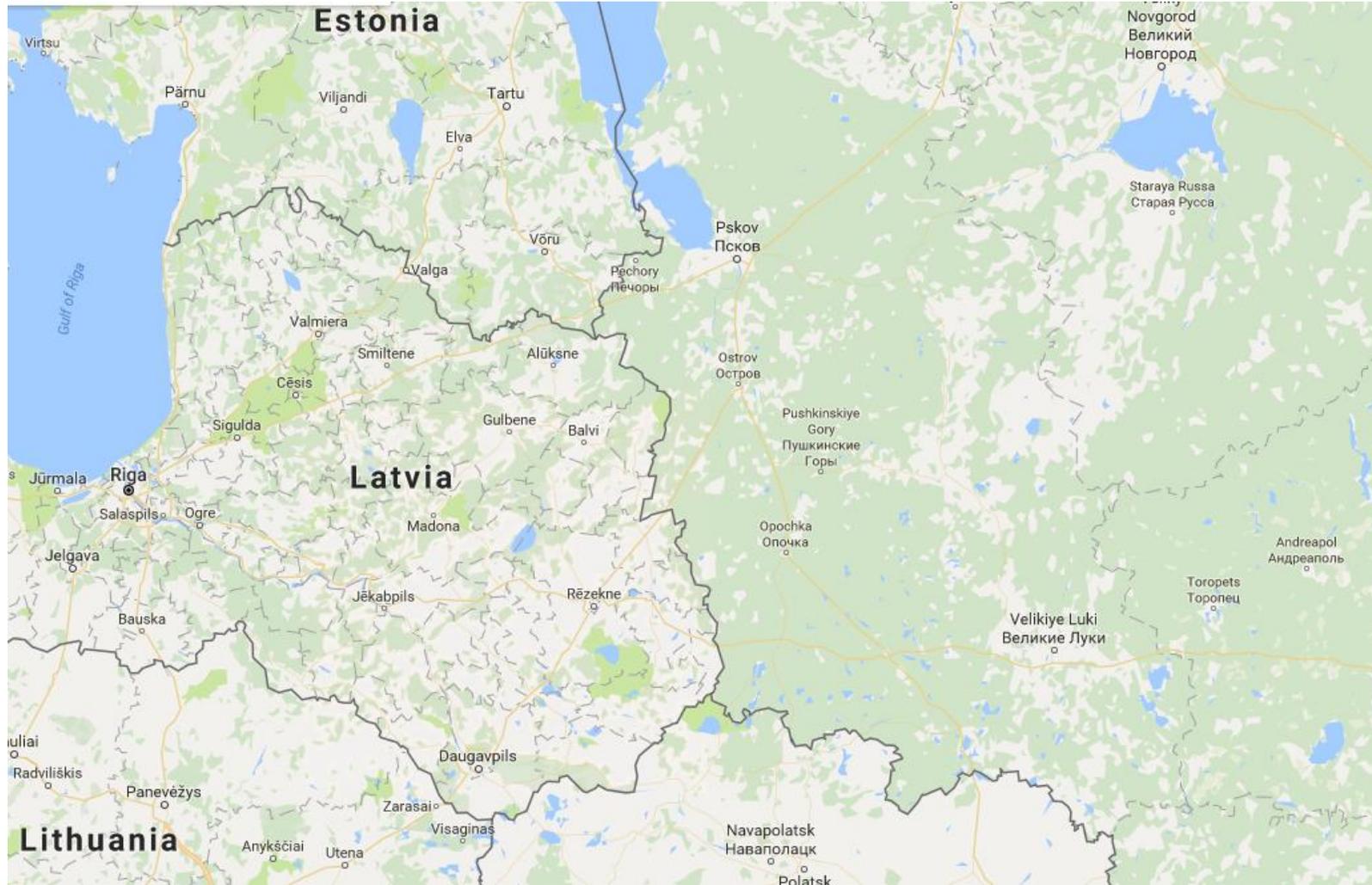
Sources for Lithuanian Romani

- Sporadic lists of lexemes [Narbutt 1830; Dowojno-Sylwestrowicz 1889; Погодинъ 1902; Jopson 1939]
- ABC [Bagdonavičienė, Prośniakova 2003], grammar [Tenser 2005, 2008; Beinortienė 2011], variation within the dialect [Czerenkow 2009], elicited interviews [RMS; RomLex]

Latvian Romani

- Latvian Romani is mainly spoken in Latvia and Estonia (including by recent migrants to the UK) and northern Lithuania (Šiauliai, Žagarė, Mažeikiai)
- 8204 Roms in Latvia (according to the 2000 census)
- 542 Roms in Estonia (according to the 2000 census)
- ~ 10000 speakers

Latvian Romani



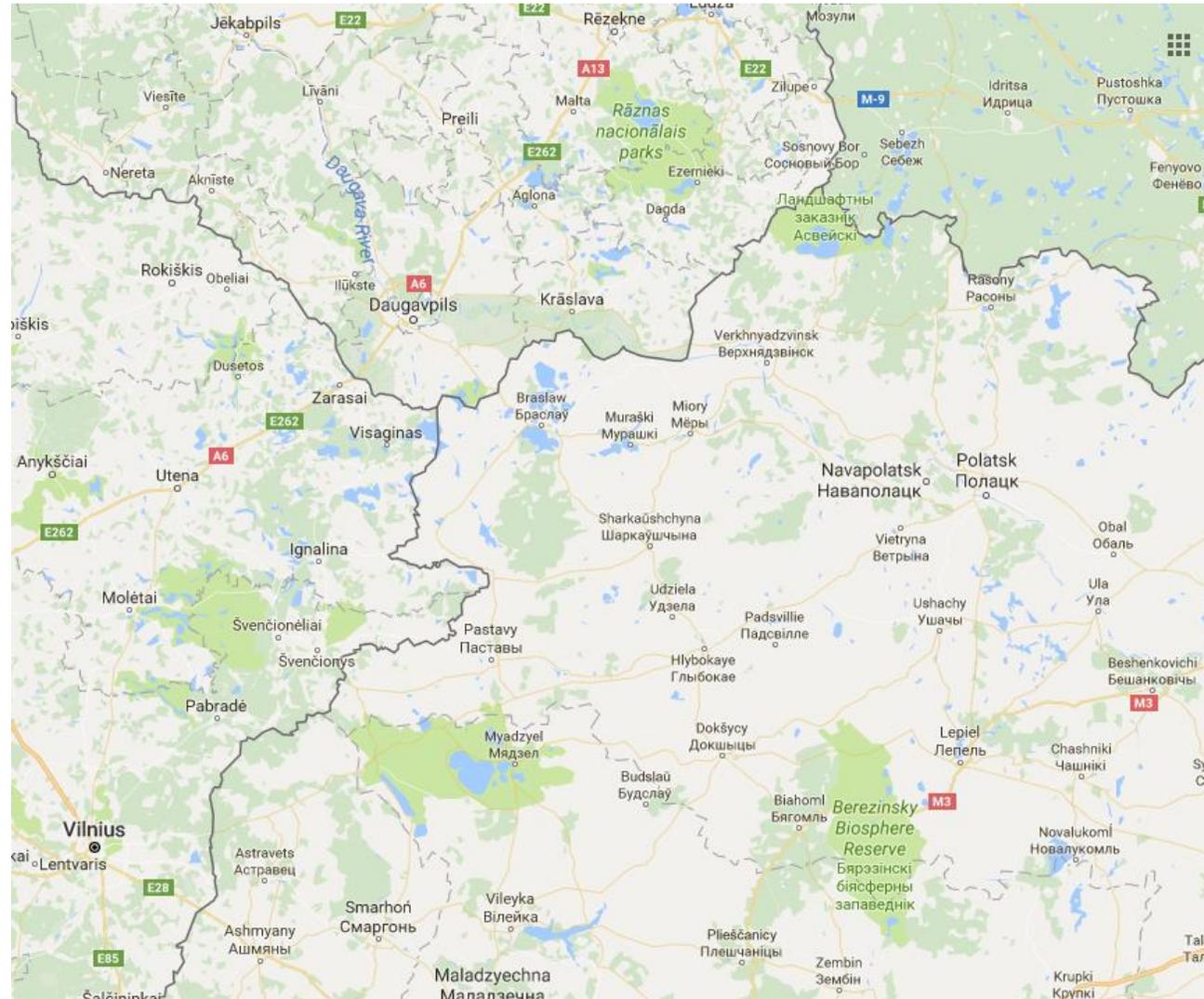
Sources for Latvian Romani

- works by P. Ariste in Estonia in the 1930s [Ariste 1938]
- dictionary [Mānušs 1996]
- elicited interviews [RMS]

The “bežency” variety

- This variety is spoken by the Roms who live in northeastern Belarus (Vidzy, Postavy), southern Latvia (Latgalia), and northwestern Russia (the Pskov and Novgorod regions)
- It has never been systematically described, but for some notes, see [Tenser 2008; Czerenkow 2009]

The “bežency” variety



Common origin of these dialects

- Affricatization of palatalized /tʲ/ and /dʲ/

RusRomani: *šut'ól* 'it dries', *kerd'óm* 'I did'

LitRomani: *šuc'ól*, *k'erdz'óm*

LatRomani: *šuč'ól*, *kerdž'óm*

Lexical borrowings: LitRomani

- very few lexical borrowings from Baltic, cf.

pác' in *da pác'* 'the same', *vaikin-* 'to chase away', *k'émo* 'yard');

- massive borrowings from Belarusian and Polish (to some extent from Russian), cf.

pon'edz'alko 'Monday', *Víln'a* 'Vilnius', *ci* 'Q' etc.

Lexical borrowings: LitRomani

*Kon butý k'érlas k'e **n'émcó**, délas i ksíl, délas, i **šykaládo** délas,
i doj **batóny** savé dénas, parné dénas.*

‘To those who worked for them, the Germans would give
butter, chocolate, and some bread, white bread’

Lexical borrowings: LatRomani

- old layer of Slavic borrowings, cf.

gužíkos ‘button’, *kóldra* ‘blanket’ etc.

- numerous borrowings from Latvian, cf.

dzīvin- ‘to live’, *braucin-* ‘to drive’, *paldies* ‘thanks’, *vai* ‘Q’

Lexical borrowings: LatRomani

*Ne, vidyné la pal roméste, jój **braucyndžá** awrý lésa ko lēskiré i po **bégi** jój dykhéla, sy jów, jów isýs bédo mānúš...*

‘So she got married, she went away with him to his [relatives], and after some time she sees, that he is a bad man...’

Morphological borrowings

- LatRomani borrowed the superlative prefix *vis-* from Latvian [Manuš-Belugin 1973],
cf. *bāró* 'big' ~ *bāredír* 'bigger' ~ ***visbāredír*** 'the biggest'

Borrowed morphology: verbal prefixes

- All northeastern dialects of Romani have borrowed a set of Slavic prefixes, cf.

PolRomani: ***dodav*** 'I add', ***vydžál*** '(s)he walks out'

RusRomani: ***dodžál*** 'to reach by walking', ***obdžál*** 'to go around'

LitRomani: ***zamarava*** 'I will kill', ***rozmarava*** 'I will break'

LatRomani: ***rozphandav*** 'to untie', ***otphenav-man*** 'to refuse'

Borrowed morphology: verbal prefixes

- In the Baltic dialects of Romani some Baltic prefixes were additionally borrowed [Czerenkow 2009; Kožanov 2011], cf.

LitRom: *nu-*, cf. *nutradyjá* '(s)he drove away'

Borrowed morphology: verbal prefixes

- In LatRomani a few Latvian prefixes were borrowed; see [Ariste 1973; Manuš-Belugin 1973; Kožanov 2011]

aiz-: ***aizdžal*** ‘to go away’

uz-: ***uzdžinel*** ‘to learn about smth’

ie-: ***iedžal*** ‘to enter’

no-/nu-: ***nodžal*** ‘to pass; to go down’

pie-: ***pieđžal*** ‘to approach’

pār-: ***pārdžal*** ‘to cross’

Borrowed morphology: verbal prefixes

- In LatRomani, borrowed Slavic and Baltic prefixes can coexist side by side, cf.

ot- and *at-*

aiz-, *uz-* and *za-*

Borrowed morphology: verbal prefixes

- LitRomani, see [Tenser 2005: 35]

Table 3.5 Aktionsart integration

Prefix	Borrowing		Calquing		Semantic integration	
	Romani stem	Russian equivalent	Romani stem	Russian equivalent	Romani stem	Russian equivalent
<i>po-</i>	<i>po-dumin-</i> 'to think'	<i>po-dum-</i>	<i>po-mang-</i> 'to ask'	<i>po-pros-</i>	<i>po-dykh-</i> 'to see'	<i>u-vid-</i>
<i>pod-</i>			<i>pod-gij-</i> 'to approach'	<i>pod(o)-šol</i>	<i>pod-l-</i> 'to take'	\emptyset - <i>vz-</i>
<i>ros- (ras-)</i>	<i>ras-pravin-</i> 'to fix'	<i>ras-prav-</i>	<i>ros-pxen-</i> 'to tell'	<i>ras-skaz-</i>	<i>ros-suv-</i> 'to sew'	<i>za-š-</i>
<i>vy-</i>	<i>vy-krasin-</i> 'to paint'	<i>vy-kras-</i>	<i>vy-pi-</i> 'to drink'	<i>vy-p-</i>	<i>vy-bičh-</i> 'to send'	<i>ot-prav-</i>
<i>za-</i>	<i>za-stavin-</i> 'to force'	<i>za-stav-</i>	<i>za-pres-</i> 'to pay'	<i>za-plat-</i>	<i>za-xačkir-</i> 'to burn smth.'	<i>pod-pal-</i>

Borrowed morphology: verbal prefixes

Borrowed Slavic prefixes are used according to Baltic patterns, cf.

Jow

***ot**tradyja*

Moskvate

3.NOM

PRV.drive.3SG.PST

Moscow.ABL/LOC.SG

‘He arrived in Moscow’

Borrowed morphology: verbal particles

- Verbal particles [Manuš-Belugin 1973]

fardo: *kerel fardo* 'to close'

pširo: *kerel pširo* 'to open'

andre: *džal andre* 'to enter'

avri: *džal avri* 'to go out'

+ [Tenser 2014]

paše: *jawdža paše* 'approached'

upral: *upral urdi* 'dressed' (PP.F.SG)

Borrowed morphology: verbal particles

Borrowed prefixes and particles can be combined with the verb simultaneously, cf.

pal *savé* *roméste* *te* *vidáw* ***awrý***
behind which Rom.LOC.SG COMPL PRV.give.1SG.PRS away
'to which Rom should I marry [her]' (lit. give away)

Perfect in Lithuanian Romani

- LitRomani makes use of the *-i* participles (absent in most other dialects) in perfect-like contexts

užé šówto bérš dž'ál miré dák'e,
already 6th year go.3PRS my mother.DAT.SG

sýr mejí
how die.PART

‘it’s already the 6th year since my mother died’

Perfect in Lithuanian Romani

Sare *vitradyne* *de* *Anglija...*
everyone.NOM.PL PRV.drive.3PL.PST in England.NOM.SG
'Everyone went to the UK'

I *me* *somas* *tradyji...*
and 1SG.NOM COP.1SG.PST drive.PART
'And I've gone there as well...'

Conclusions

- Baltic dialects of Romani are an interesting study case reflecting the sociolinguistic history of the region
- Lithuanian Romani does not show many traces of Lithuanian influence and was mostly affected by the Belarusian and Polish local varieties (similarly to other minority languages in Lithuania, such as Yiddish or Karaim)
- Latvian Romani was greatly influenced by Latvian (similarly to Livonian) and contains numerous examples of lexical and grammatical borrowings

Conclusions

- Baltic dialects of Romani are a playground where various changes induced by the contact with Slavic and Baltic languages occur
- Structural similarities between Baltic and Slavic languages allow for the use of earlier borrowed Slavic morphemes according to Baltic patterns

Parikirow tumeng'e!