Romani dialectology and structure, sociolinguistic situation of Romani language speakers, Roma as multilingual speakers in monolingual states

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Introduction: Roma and Romani language

Overview of Romani (1)

- Romani belongs to the Indo-European language branch of the Indo-Aryan subgroup of Indo-Iranian languages.

- one of the Indian languages, spoken outside of India by traditionally nomadic group of people, whose ancestors left India.

- since the Middle Ages it has been the only Indo-Aryan language spoken exclusively in Europe; Today it is spoken in the United States, South America and the Middle East.

- The name *rom* or *řom* is the counterpart of the names used by other Indian-speaking traditionally nomadic groups: *lom* people of the Caucasus and Anatolia, *dom* of the Middle East, and *dom* in northern Pakistan dom-nation (ROMANI Project Manchester, 2006a).

Overview of Romani (2)

- There is no definitive information on the number of speakers: a conservative estimate is 3.5 million speakers in Europe and 0.5 million in the rest of the world

- most speakers are in South-Eastern Europe: Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, but also in Greece, Slovakia, Moldavia and Hungary.

- Roma communities in Portugal, Spain, the UK and Finland have almost completely lost the Romani language and switched to the majority language. (with the exception of the old Scandinavian Roma)

- Nowadays, there are some estimates of about 50-60 dialects.

Speakers of Romani by country (Bakker & Kyuchukov 2000) (1)

country	speakers	%
Albania	90.000	95%
Austria	20.000	80%
Belarus	27.000	95%
Belgium	10.000	80%
Bosnia-Herzegowina	40.000	90%
Bulgaria	600.000	80%
Croatia	28.000	80%
Czech Republic	140.000	50%
Denmark	1.500	90%
Estonia	1.100	90%
Finland	3.000	90%
France	215.000	70%
Germany	85.000	70%
Greece	160.000	90%
Hungary	260.000	50%
Italy	42.000	90%
Latvia	18.500	90%
Lithuania	4.000	90%
Macedonia	215.000	90%
Moldova	56.000	90%
Netherlands	7.000	90%
Poland	4.000	90%
Romania	1.030.000	80%
Russia	405.000	80%
Serbia and Montenegro	380.000	90%
Slovakia	300.000	60%
Slovenia	8.000	90%
Spain	1.000	1%
Sweden	9.500	90%
Turkey	280.000	70%
Ukraine	113.000	90%
United Kingdom	1.000	0,50%

Romani dialects

Current dialects (1)

- Today in Europe there are at least 50-60 Romani dialects

- The dialect names are often derived from the self-appellation of the group
  - *lovarengi čhib* ’lovari language’ or Finnish *kaalengo tšimb* ’language of the Kaale',
  –
- The same process applies to adverbs: *sintikes* ’in the Sinti way'.

- The research literature on Romani dialects often refers to dialects by the plural forms of group endonyms or exonyms .
  - Plural *xaladitka* refers to the North Russian Romani dialect, from the name used by other Roma to refer to them (endonym is Russka Roma).

Current dialects (2)

- Some of group names used in the Balkans: *arli* 'settled person' < turk. *yerli*, *bugurdži* 'drill maker' < turk. *burgucu*, *čurari* 'sieve maker' < roman. *ciurar*, *kalderaš* 'cauldron maker' < roman. *căldărar*, *sepeči* 'basket wievers' < turk. *sepetçi* and *ursari* 'bear leaders' < roman. *ursar*

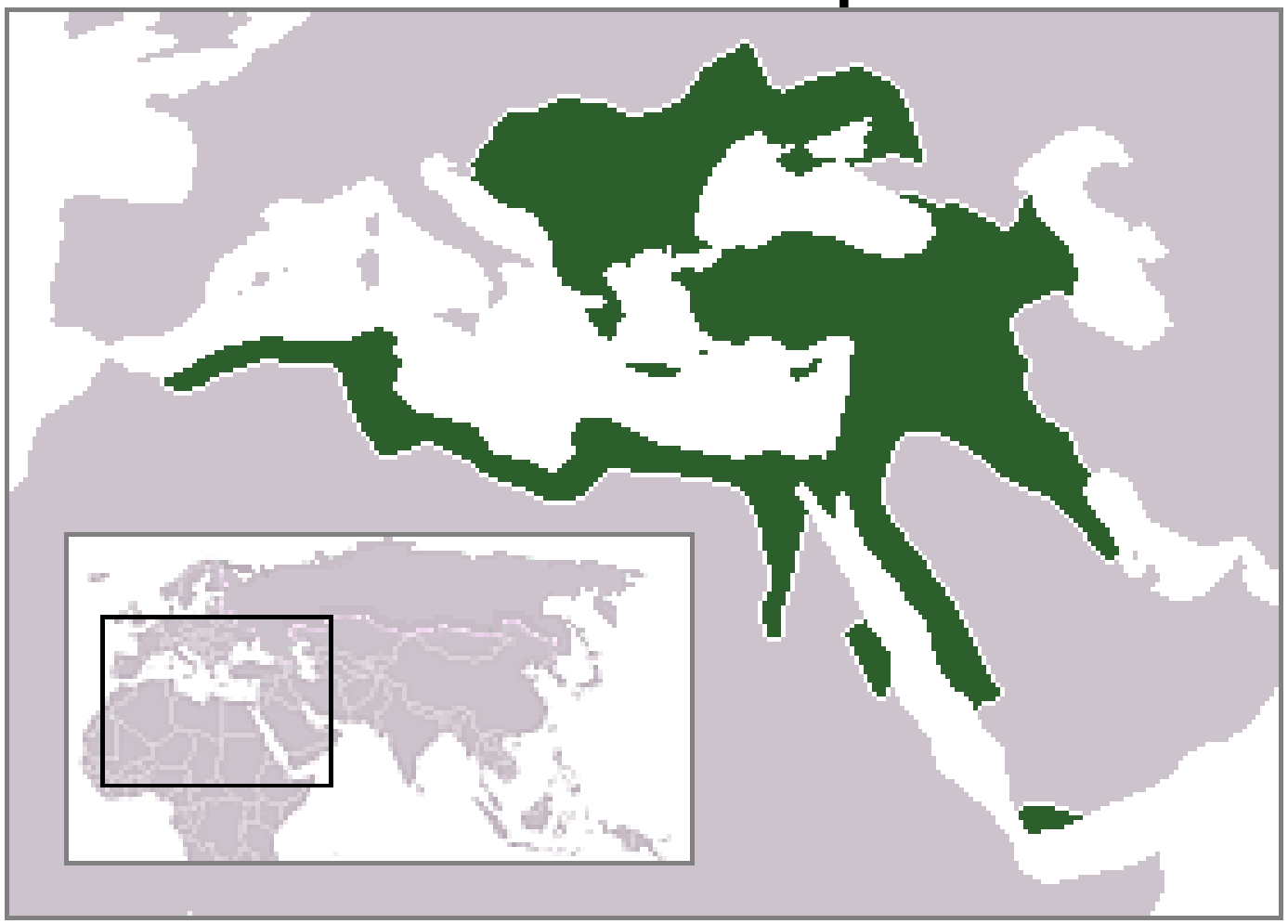
- The group names do not always match linguistic varieties one-to-one:
  - Groups using the same speech variety sometimes live as separate communities and use different names.
  - Sometimes groups speaking different dialects use the same self-appellation, based on common religious affiliation, trade, or region of origin

(Matras 2002: 5.)

Current Romani dialects – background (1)

- The Ottoman Empire expanded around 1300-1400 to include the formerly Byzantine areas of modern Turkey, Greece, the Balkans and the Crimea.
- The unrest in the region has driven some Roma to migrate from Byzantium to Central and Western Europe.
- In the 1500's the Ottoman Empire expanded along the Mediterranean coastline and included Tunisia, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Hungary and some regions of Europe all the way to Vienna.
- The Ottoman expansion in Europe stopped with the unsuccessful siege of Vienna in 1529.
- In 1571, during the battle of Lepanto, the Spanish fleet defeated the Ottomans.
- The Habsburg monarchy and the Ottoman Empire was then divided by a political boundary, preventing contacts between the different groups of the displaced Roma on either side of the border.

Ottoman Empire



(http://fi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiedosto:Ottoman_1683.png)

Great Divide (1)

- At this time the diffusion of linguistic features was inhibited, resulting in a dense and distinctive set of linguistic boundaries (isoglosses).

- Yaron Matras (2005) used this political frontier to explain the cluster of differences between the Northern and Southern European Romani dialects, terming it the Great Divide.

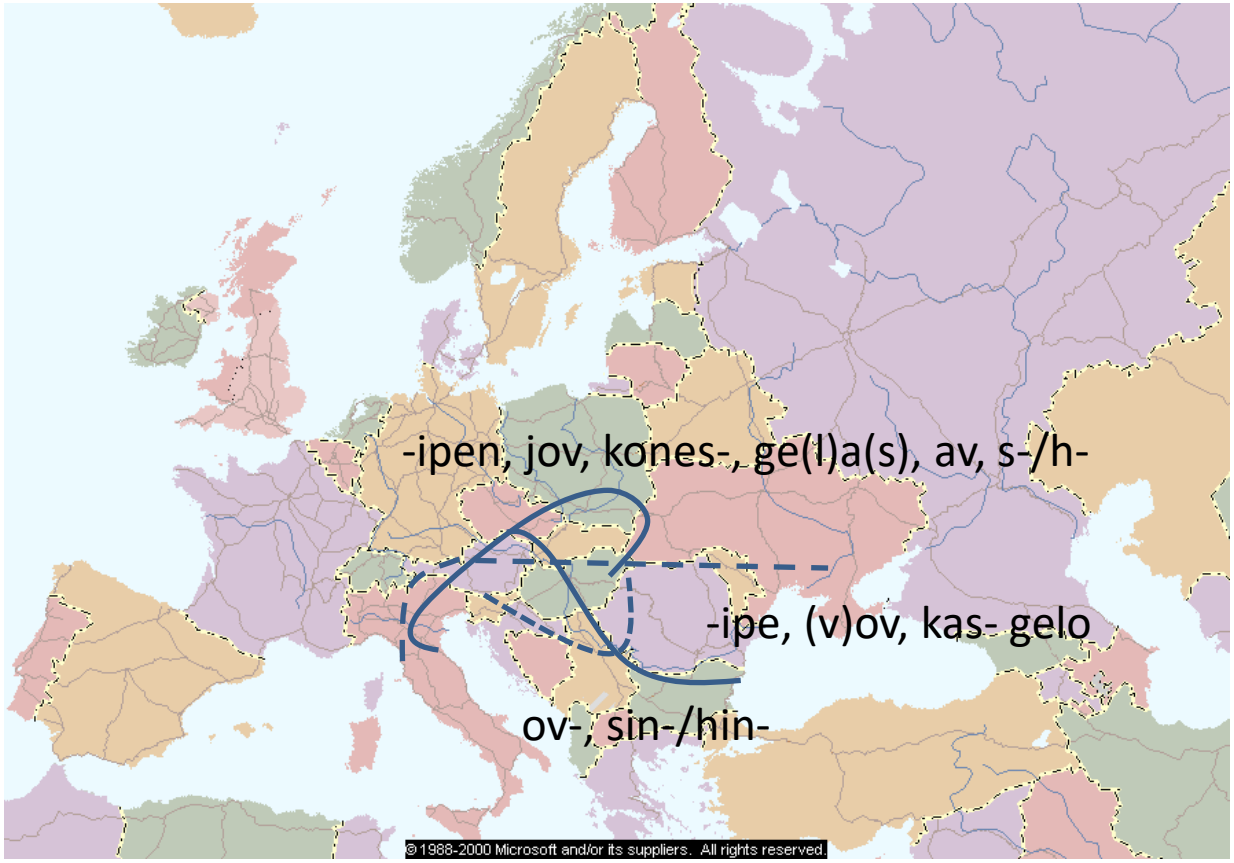
Great Divide (2)

- Both sides of the Habsburg-Ottoman border had separate centers of linguistic innovation of Romani.

- To the north of the border, there is the German-speaking northwestern region. Innovations in this zone have spread from the east and to the north, affecting British Romani, Finnish Romani and the Northeastern Romani dialects.

- To the south of the border, there is the South-Eastern zone of innovation. It has two distinct distribution patterns.
  - The first of these covers the entire Balkans
  - The second one is more specific to Transylvania/Wallachia, but often influences the Balkans, especially around the the Black Sea coast.
  - It sub-divides the southern Balkans into the eastern and western zones, as well as the Transcarpathian areas to the northwest of it. (Matras 2005: 13-14).

Great Divide (3)



Great Divide (4)

- Innovations spread on each of the two sides of the Great Divide, but each side's innovations are contained by the Divide and do not spread across it.

- Northern Romani dialects show a preference for word-initial jotation (prothetic *j*-) rather than vowel-initial nominals, e.g.:
  - *aro* > *jaro* 'egg',
  - 3rd person pronouns *ov* > *jov*, *oj* > *joj, on* > *jon* 'he, she, they'

- With interrogative pronoun *kon* 'who', the conservative irregular oblique form *kas*- has been replace in the North by a regular form *kon-es,* transparently derivable from the nominative *kon*.

Great Divide (5)

- Another prominent feature to the north of the Great Divide is the disappearance of the gender-inflected perfective forms of verbs of motion, e.g. *gel-o* 'he went', *gel-i* 'she went'. These are replaced with *geljas/gejas/geja* 'he/she went' - forms found in the regular perfective paradigm, analogous to *kerdjas/kerdja* 'he/she did'

  - This replacement is a relatively late development, which has not had time to spread throughout the whole north.

  - Participial and verbal forms coexist, for example, in Austria, Hungary and parts of Romania. (Matras 2005: 14-15).

  - In Finnish Romani both of these forms are found

Great Divide (6)

- In addition, in the north the subjunctive and future copula (‘to be’, ‘to become’) relies on the root *av*- ‘to come’ . In the south, the original *ov*- is retained.

- Finnish Romani has documented irregular variant of *ov*- , *uljuv*- 'become something'.

- Dialects in the north tend to not have the extension -*in*- in the copula
  - exceptions include the transition zone around Slovakia, as well as Finnish Romani as a peripheral dialect.
  - In these dialects the copula form of the present tense 3rd person is *hin(o/i)* ’he/she is'.

- In southern Europe the -*in*- extension is more common and occurs sometimes throughout the whole paradigm (e.g. *sine* ’he/she is', *sinom* 'I am', *sinan* 'you are'). (Matras 2005: 15-16).

Great Divide (7)

- The isogloss bundle of the Great Divide is partly strengthened by a southeastern cluster
- To the East, this line connects the dialects of the Black Sea coast region with the Carpathian region.
- Some features stretch to Bulgaria, and as far north as Slovakia and southern Poland.
- In the center, this zone contains the northern Vlax dialects, which appear to be the source of many of the innovations on the eastern side of the line.
- These innovations include affrication of palatalized dentals **t'* and **d'*
  - E.g. *tikno > cikno* 'small', *dives* > **džives* > *dzes*, *zis* 'day' . *cikno* occurs from East Slovakia all the way to Epiros (Greece). Both of these extreme regions show de-palatalization in *dives*

Great Divide (8)

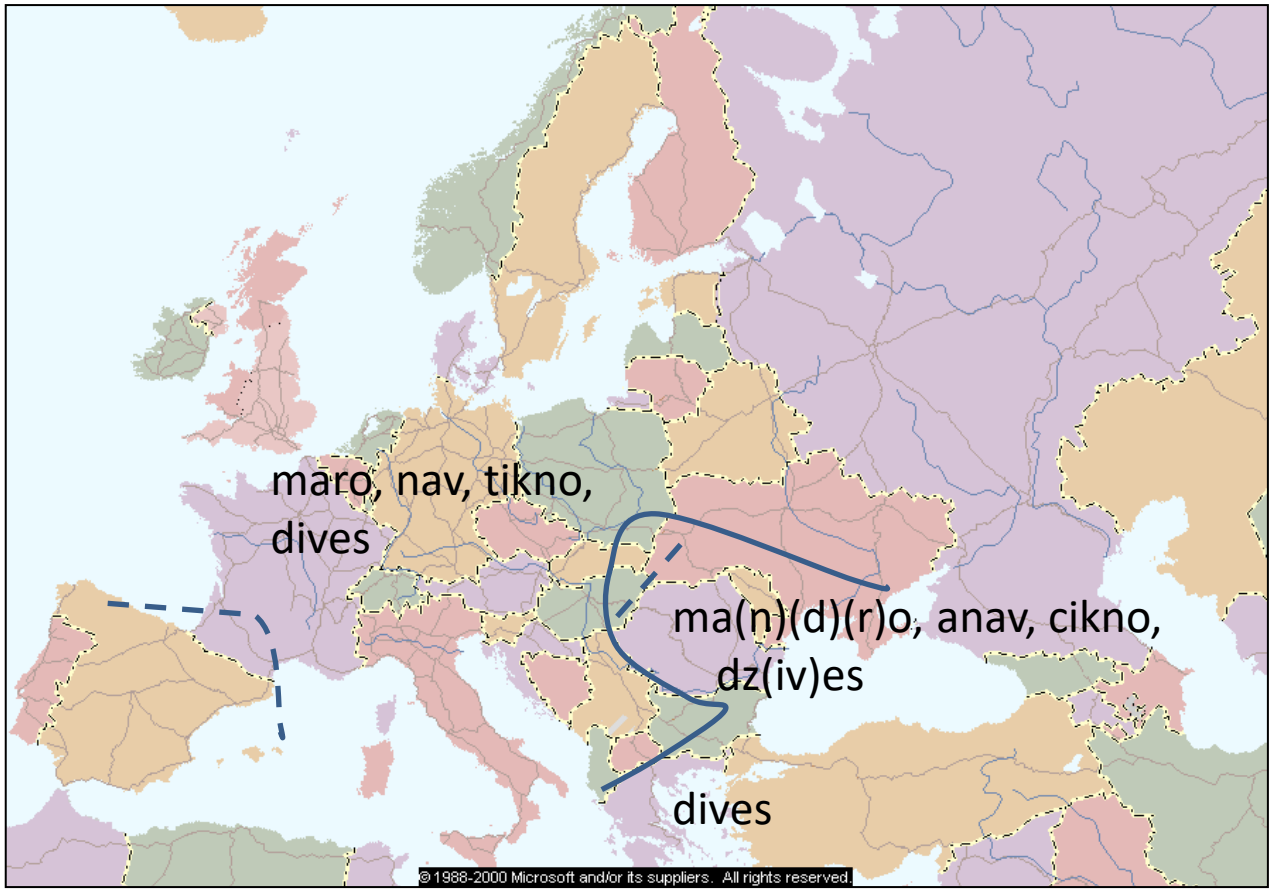
- Another eastern innovation is the prothetic *a-* in lexemes, e.g. *nav* > *anav* 'name', *bjav* > *abijav* 'wedding'. (Matras 2005: 16)

- Demonstrative pronoun stem *kad-* is common to northern Vlax dialects of Transylvania, East Slovak Romani, as well as Drindari and Burgudži varieties of Bulgaria

- Archaisms in the East:
  - The historical consonant cluster *-ndr-* is found mainly in the South-East Europe, where we find it continued in forms such as *mandro*, *manro* and *marno* 'bread'. Eastern Slovakia is a transitional area, where there is on the one hand *jandro* 'flour', but on the other hand *maro* 'bread'. (Matras 2005: 16)

  - Another archaism is the retention of Early Romani loan verb adaptation markers *-is-(ar -) /-iz- ,* found in Vlax group, Black Sea coast, but also in the periferal areas of Iberia and Wales. (Matras 2005: 16-17).

Great Divide (9)



South-East division (Matras 2005: 17.)

Early Romani option selections (1)

- We already mentioned some variation that existed already in Early Romani, and continued as options selection in the current dialects

- One of these concerns the *s~h* variation:
  - Copula verb forms in *s-/h-* 'to be',
  - Inter-vocalic position in grammatical markers (instrumental case, 2SG and 1PL present tense verb endings, imperfective marker)
  - Interrogative pronouns .

- The appearance of one of the forms over another is not a genetic trait that was passed to current dialects before leaving the Balkans

- The current variation rather reflects the selecetion of one option over another, which happened *in situ*

Early Romani option selections (2)

- Dialects with intervocalic and copula -h- are Sinti, Finnish, Central, Slovene, Gurbet (south Vlax), and some Arli varieties, transitional Vlax and Central varietis (such as Cerhari and Gurvari), and some fringe dialects, like in northern Greece.

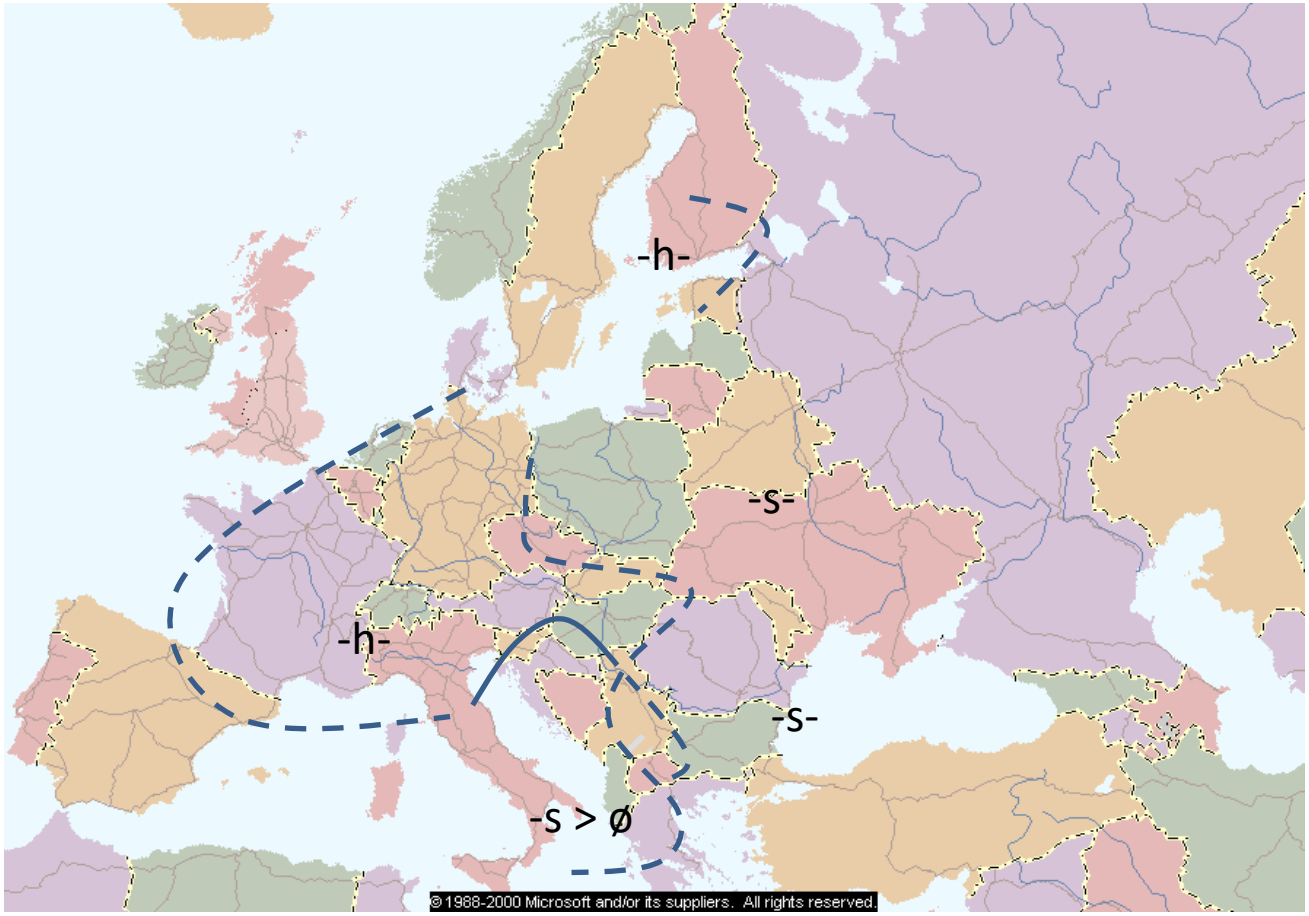
- The process affects partially some Kelderash varieties in Serbia and Transylvania.

- A more straightforward process is the loss of –s in final position in the zone of eastern Adriatic coast – Deljenski, Southern Central, southwestern Vlax and Arli.

- Remarkably similar to the isogloss representing -h- in internal position, is the isogloss representing differentiation b/w perfective concord markers of 2SG (-al) and 2PL (-an), both also used in present copula
  - Outside the zone both persons merge in-*an* by analogy. This is widespread and not contained in a single area (Matras 2005: 18–19.)

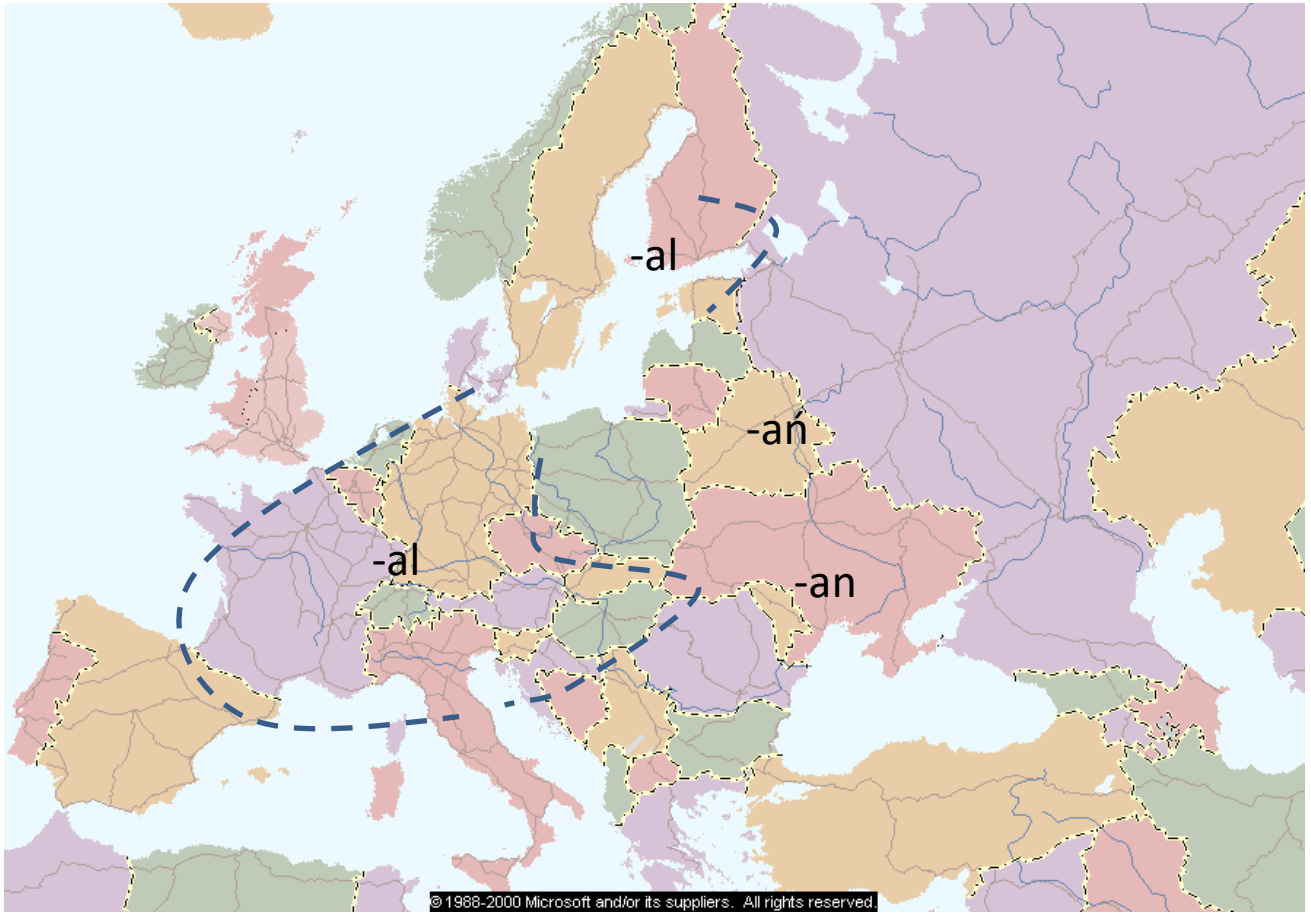
- This suggests that the –an/-al variation is also the result of option selection, with both options present already at the Early Romani stage

Early Romani option selections (3)



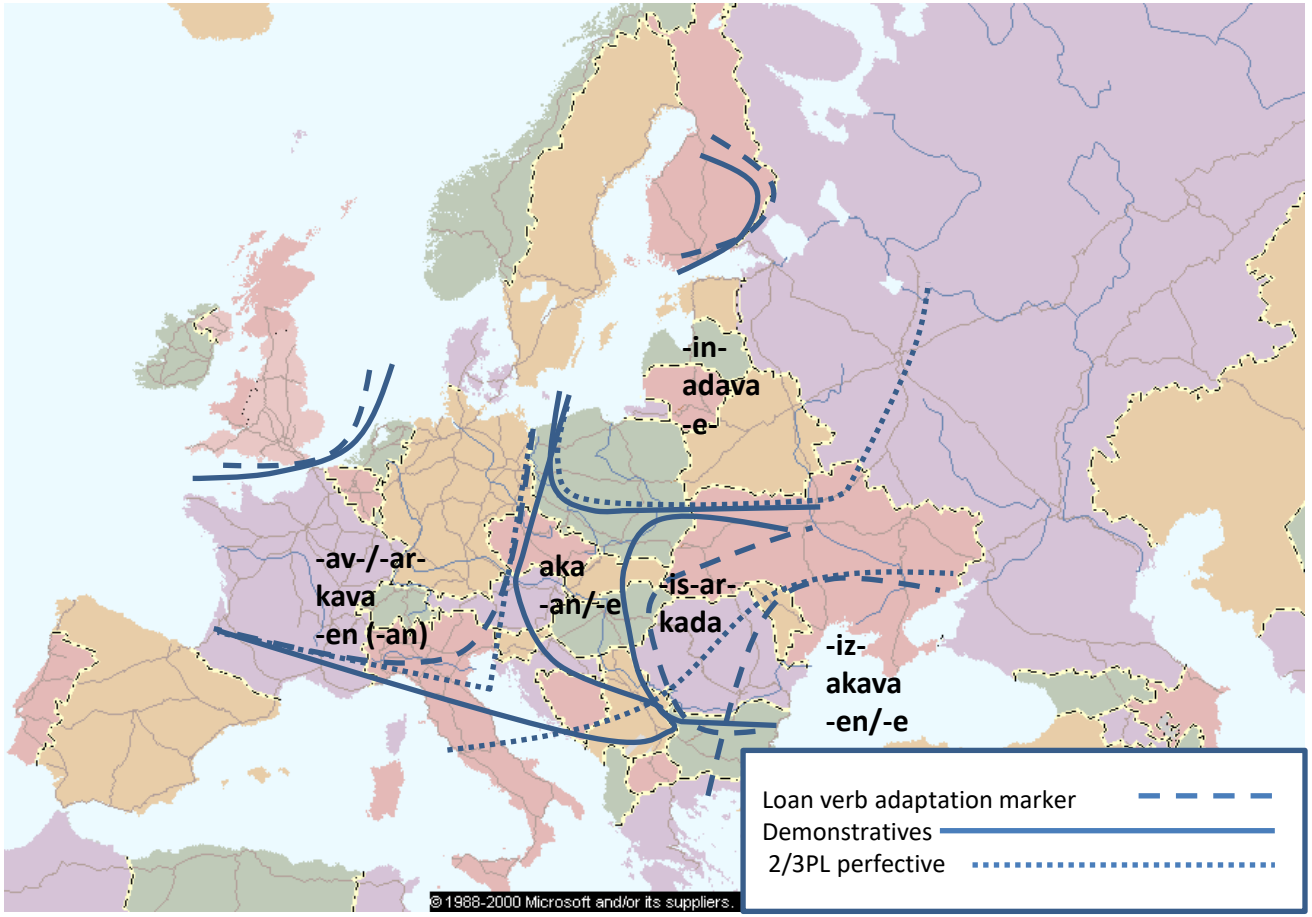
-h-option (Matras 2005: 18).

Early Romani option selections (4)



Preterit 2nd person forms(Matras 2005: 19).

Complex morphological paradigms



The consensus classification is more relevant with restructuring of complex morphological paradigms (Matras 2005: 24.)

Genetic classification of Romani (1)

- European Romani dialects have traditionally been classified using the genetic model; the same model is used when reconstructing language families. (Balto-Slavic -> Slavic -> east Slavic -> Ukrainian)

- During the Byzantine time, the Proto-Romani variety gave rise to several branches, that were further differentiated after moving to the Balkans.

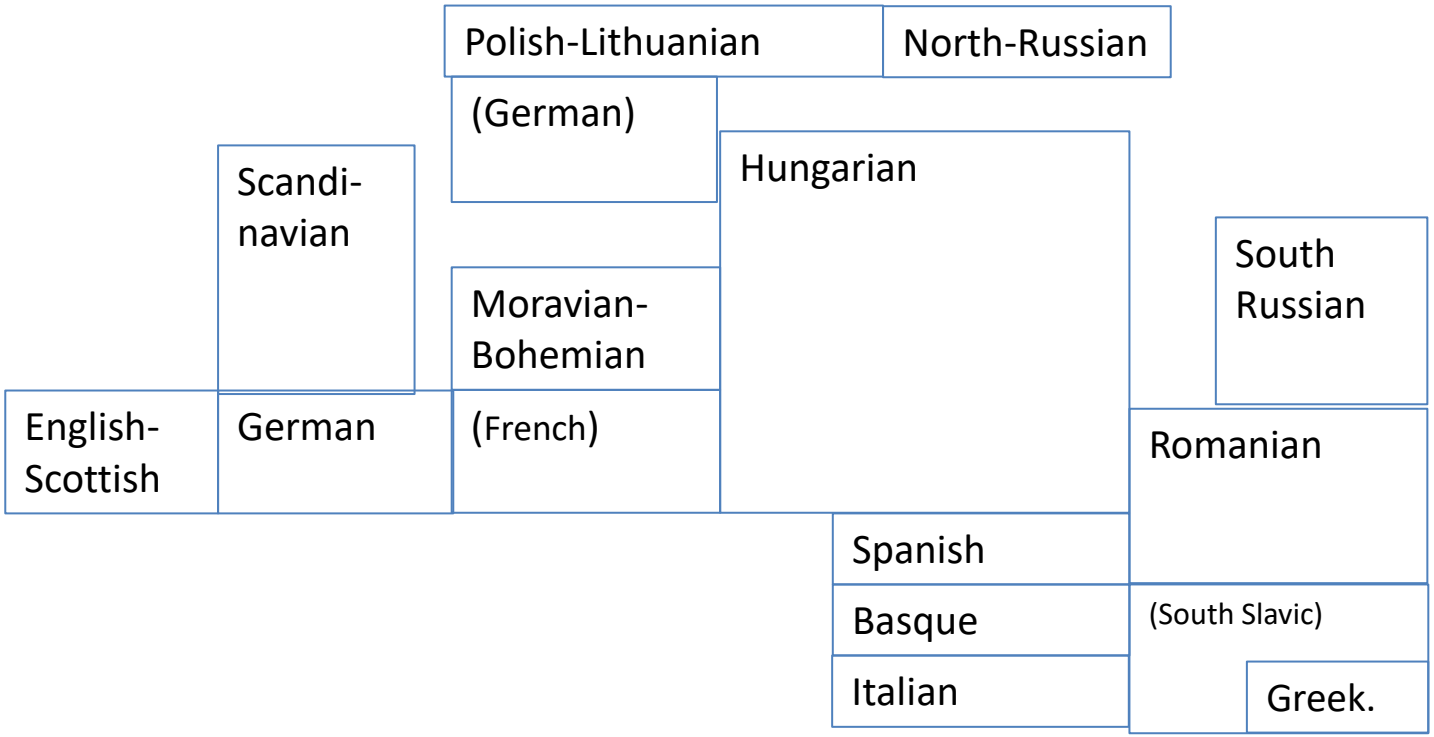
- Each current dialect is considered to belong to one or another genetic branch that came out of the Proto variety.

- The more two dialects resemble each other, the closer they are to each other genetically.

Genetic classification of Romani (2)

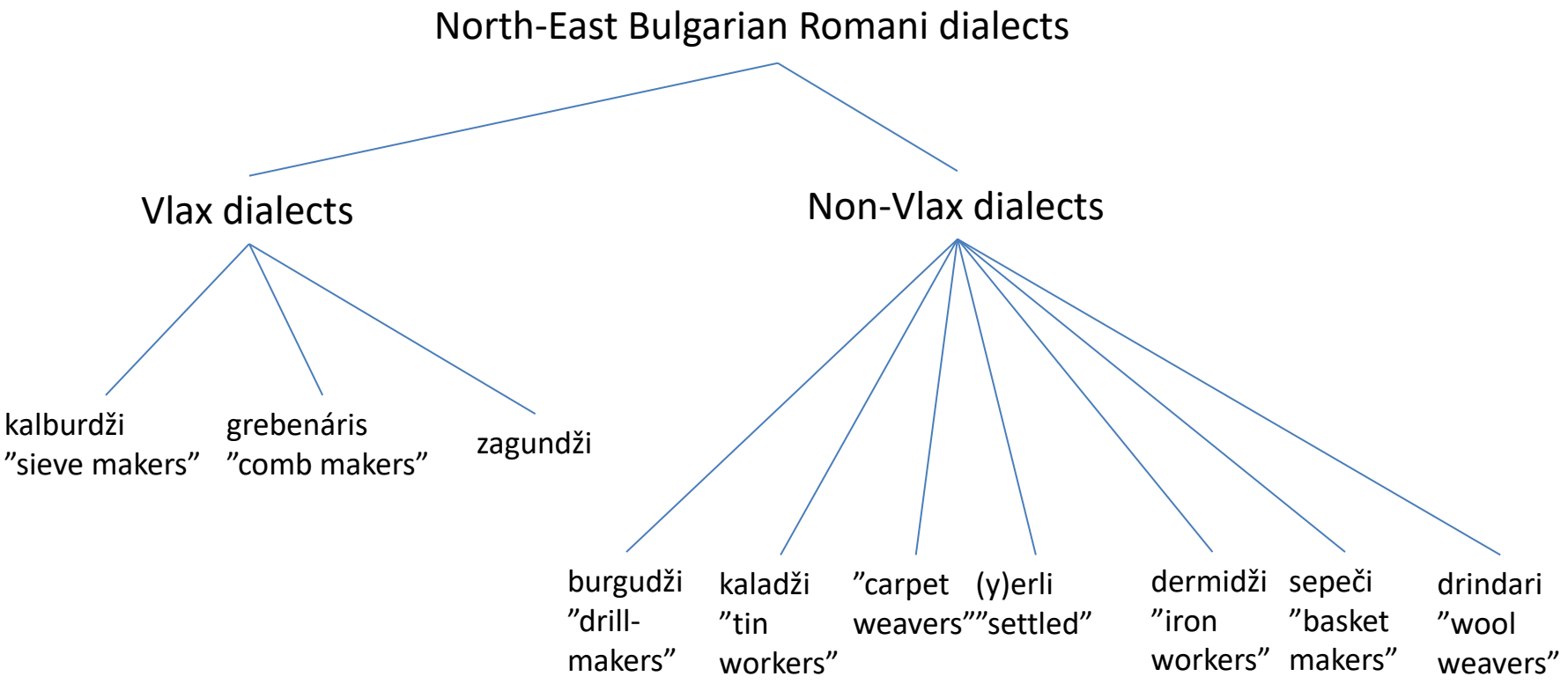
- Romani genetic dialect classification is based on the pioneering comparative and historical work of **Franz Miklosich** (1813-1891), a Slovenian linguist
- **Bernard Gilliat-Smith** (1883-1973) – Vlach- non-Vlach
- **Jan Kochanowski** (1920-2007) - attempted (1963-64) to synthesize the classifications by Gilliat-Smith and Miklosich
- **Tatjana Ventcel' and Lev Čerenkov** (1976) suggested a classification with 8 separate dialect groups
- **Terrence Kaufman** (1979: 134) considered about 60 dialects, and proposed a three-way division of the main dialects (Balkan, Northern, Vlach)
- **Norbert Boretzky** and **Birgit Igla's** (1991) – Vlach vs. non-Vlach

Genetic classification of Romani (3)

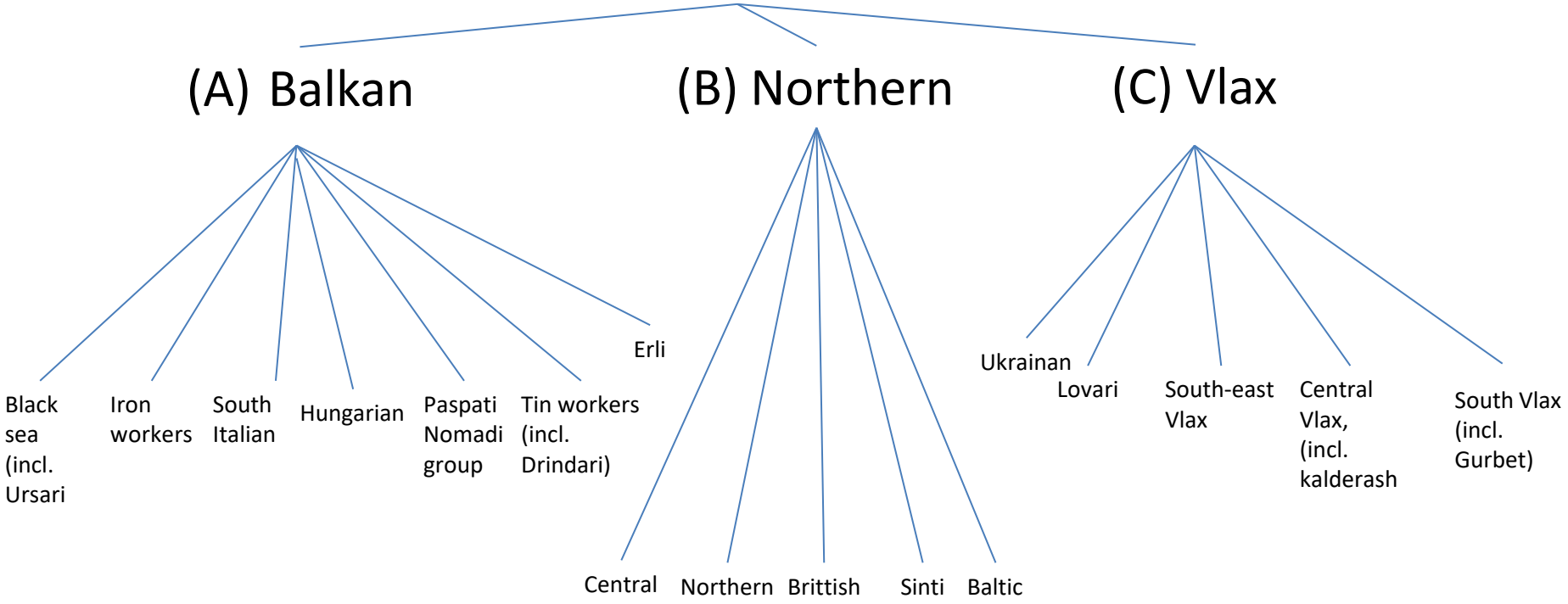


Miklosich (1872-1880, III). 13 dialects, based on contact influence

Genetic classification of Romani (4)



Genetic classification of Romani (5)



Kaufmann (1979) 3-way classification

Genetic classification of Romani (6)

- The division of dialects into Vlax vs. non-Vlax was finally dropped in the 1990's.

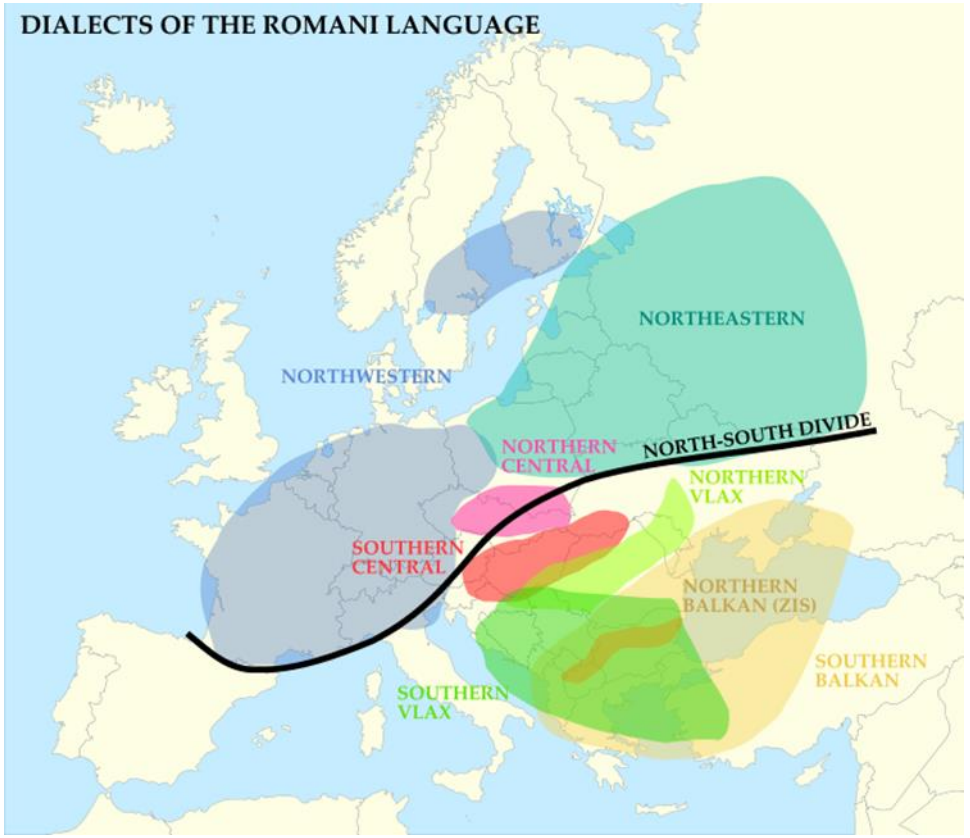
- It gave way to a 4-branch system, each with equal hierarchical status:
  - **Balkan,**
  - **Vlax,**
  - **Northern,**
  - **Central (Bakker & Matras 1997).**

- While this 4-way division is somewhat intuitive, there were later attempts to connect specific linguistic features to these groups.

- E.g., **Peter Bakker** (1999) listed a series of features, which he argues are genetic characteristics of the Northern branch.

Genetic classification of Romani (7)

- **A consensus classification grid**:
  - Differentiates around 4-5 principal divisions among dialect groups, with further sub-divisions:
    - 1) Balkan Romani;
    - 2) Vlach;
    - 3) Central Romani;
    - 4) Northern dialects.
    - Seen as hierarchically equal dialects groups (Bakker & Matras 1997).



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Romany_dialects_Europe.svg.

Genetic classification of Romani (8)

- **Boretzky** (1999a, 1999b, 2000b, 2000c) took stock of various characteristics that are shared within each of the 4 branches

- He also further divides 3 of the groups into 2 subgroups each:
  - Central branch is divided into North Central and South Central,
    - The South Central is further divided into Vend-type and Romungro-type.
  - Vlax branch is divided into South Vlax and North Vlax
    - South Vlax is further divided into South-east and South-west.
  - Balkan branch is divided into South Balkan I and South Balkan II ('south', because Vlax is also spoken in the Balkans)
    - South Balkan I has Arli, Erli, Rumelina, Crimean etc.
    - South Balkan II has Drindari, Kalajdži and Burgudži).

Geographical diffusion model

- A competing, **geographical diffusion model** has been proposed by Matras (2002, 2005).
  - variation among dialects is subject to the geographical continuum and is best accounted for by assuming linguistic contact between the speakers of adjacent territories.
  - This model has been applied to the Northeastern group in Tenser (2008), and to Finnish Romani by Granqvist (2014).

- Centre-periphery dynamics - Northern Romani dialects

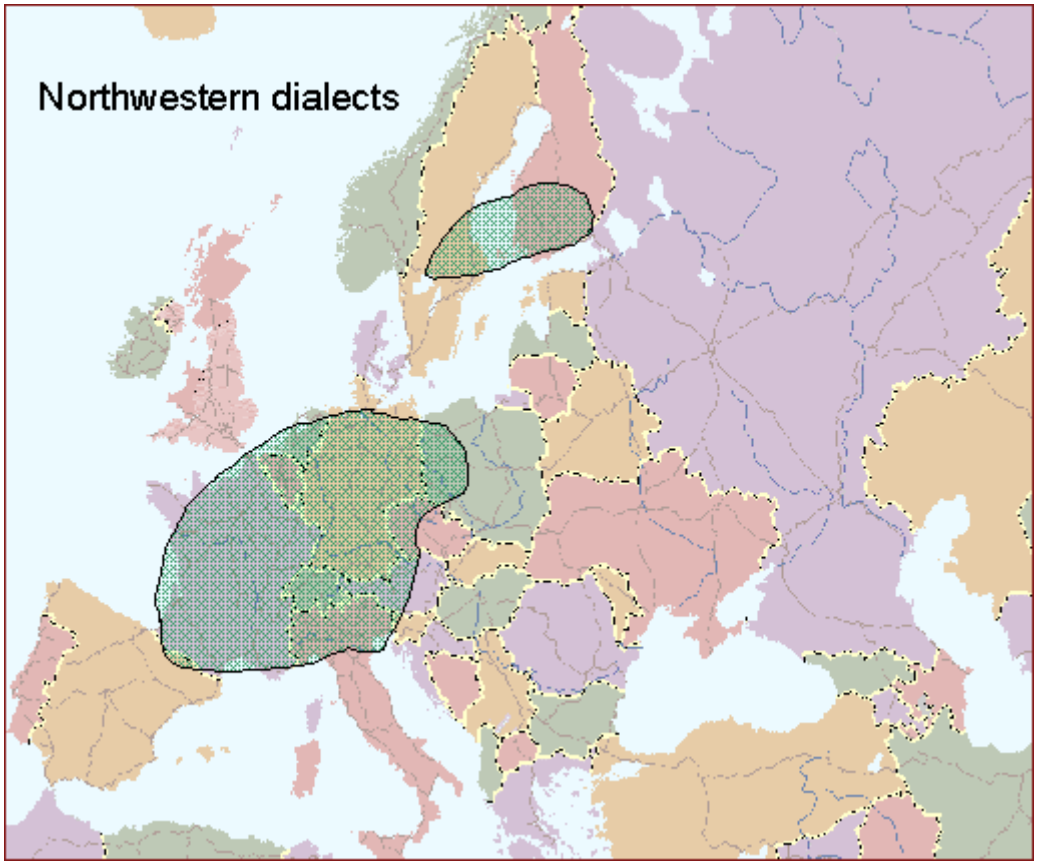
Centre-periphery dynamics - Northern Romani dialects

- **Bakker (1999):**
  - Proposed the term Northern metagroup, which was futher divided into Northwestern and Northeastern.
    - Northwestern subgroup included Finnish Romani, German Sinti, Spanish Calo, Welsh and English Romani, as well as some varieties spoken in Italy.
    - Northeastern included dialects of the Baltics, North Russia, some varieties of Poland
  - In this classification 'Northern' does not refer strictly to a geographical North
  - It is a reference to a genetic group, based on diagnostic linguistic features, which for the Northern group include:

Centre-periphery dynamics - Northern Romani dialects

1. Prothetic **j** in 3rd person pronouns **jov/joj/jon**- ’he/she/they’
2. Specific quantitative pronouns **čiči** ‘nothing’, **čimoni** ‘some’, **kuti** ‘a little’, **keti** ‘how much’ (Finn. rom,. Buutko? Sar buut?)
3. Location diectics **adaj/adoj/akaj** (vs. **kate/kote**, **katka/kotka**).
4. Demonstrative pronouns endings -**va**/-**ja**/-**la** (mask./fem./pl.) vs. -**o**/-**i**/-**la**.
5. Long forms of genitive marker: -**kir**- vs. -**k**-.
6. Negation adverbial **kek** ’no a single one’.
7. Prothetic **v** in **vaver** ‘other’.
8. **r** omission in **korkoro** > **kokoro** ‘alone’.
9. **vr** > **r** in **vraker**- > **raker**- ‘talk’.

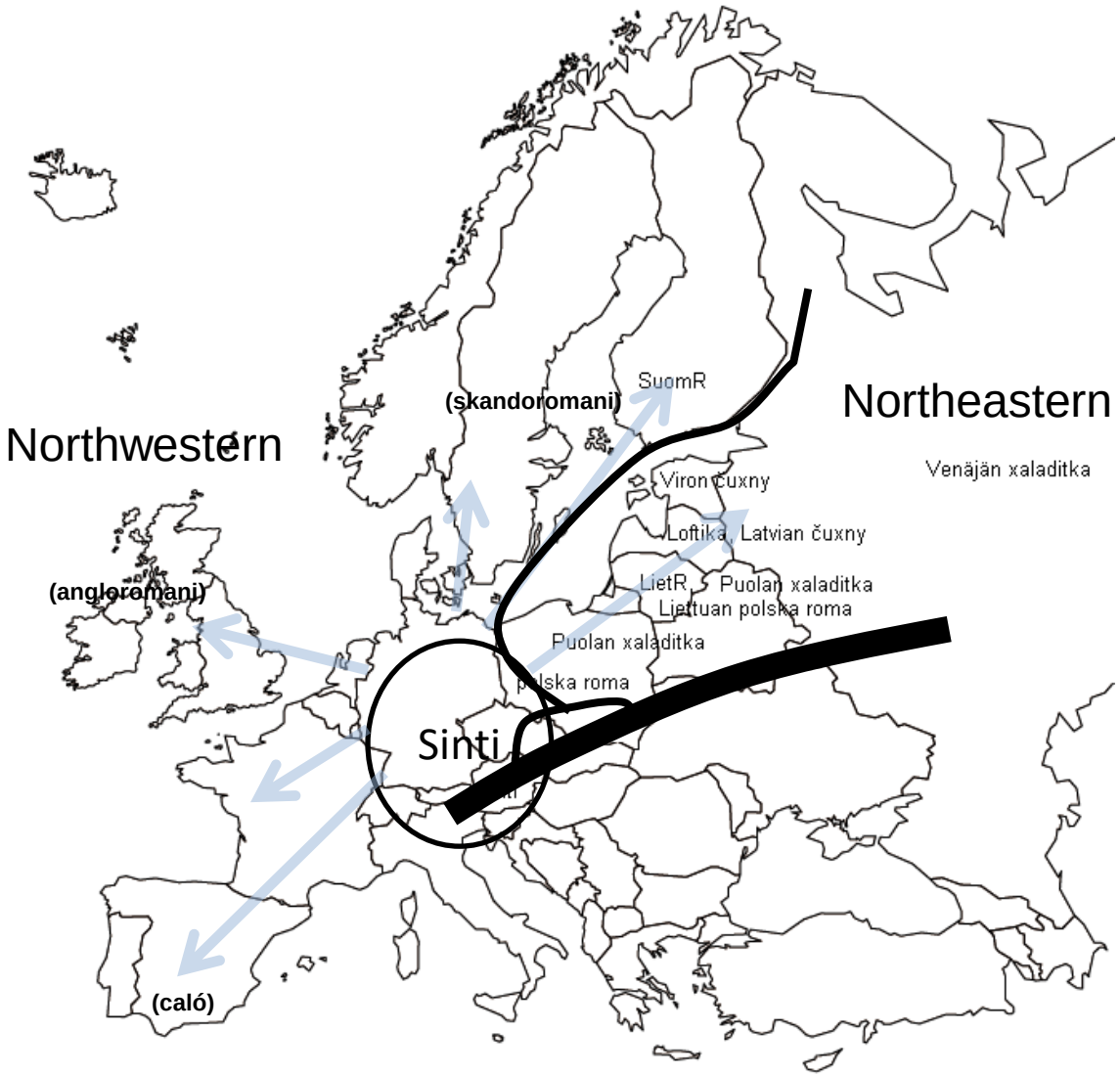
Northwestern



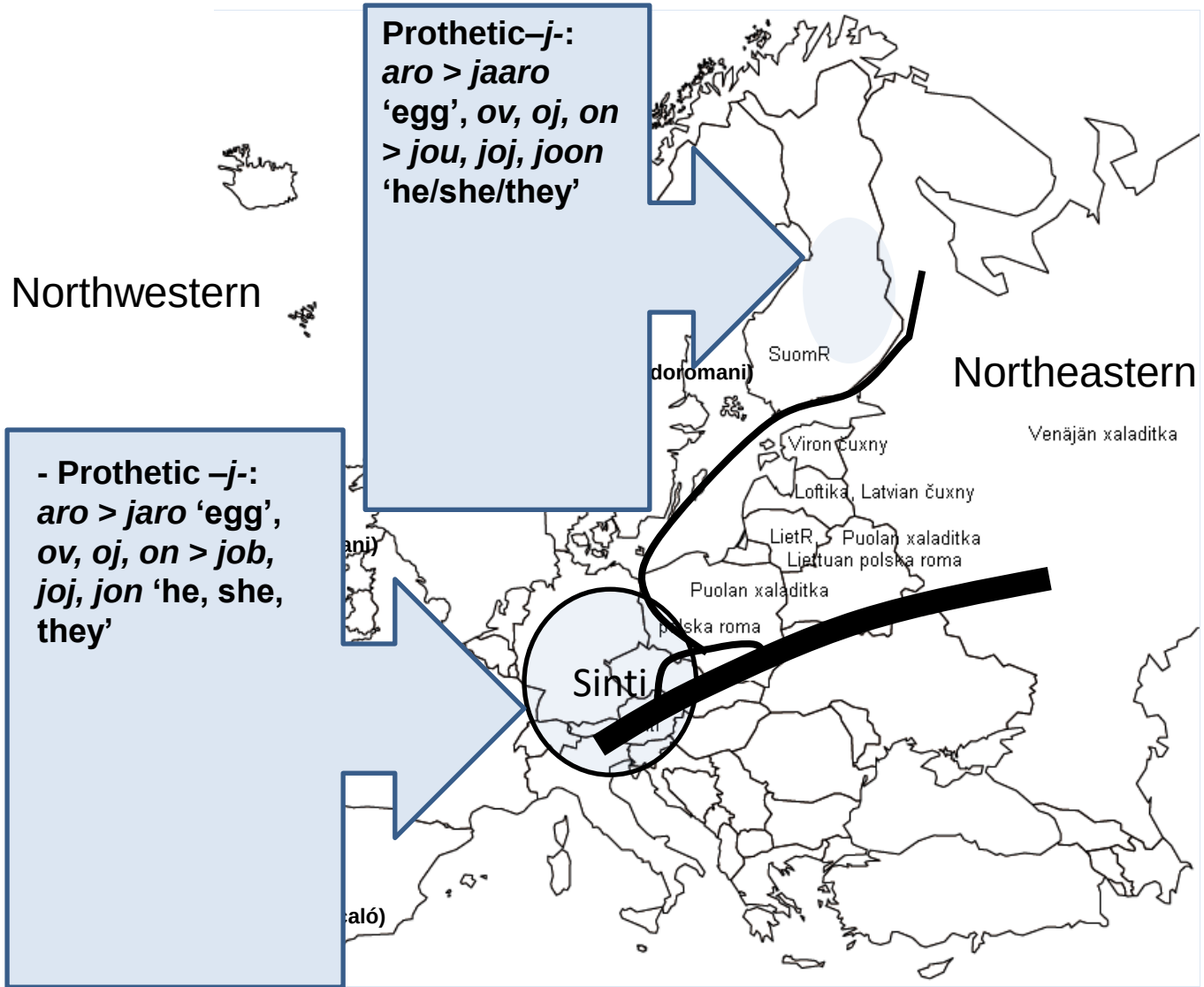
(http://romani.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/wh
atis/classification/dialect_classify.shtml)

Northern Dialects

German Sinti Center of Innovation



German Sinti Innovation Center– Finnish Romani



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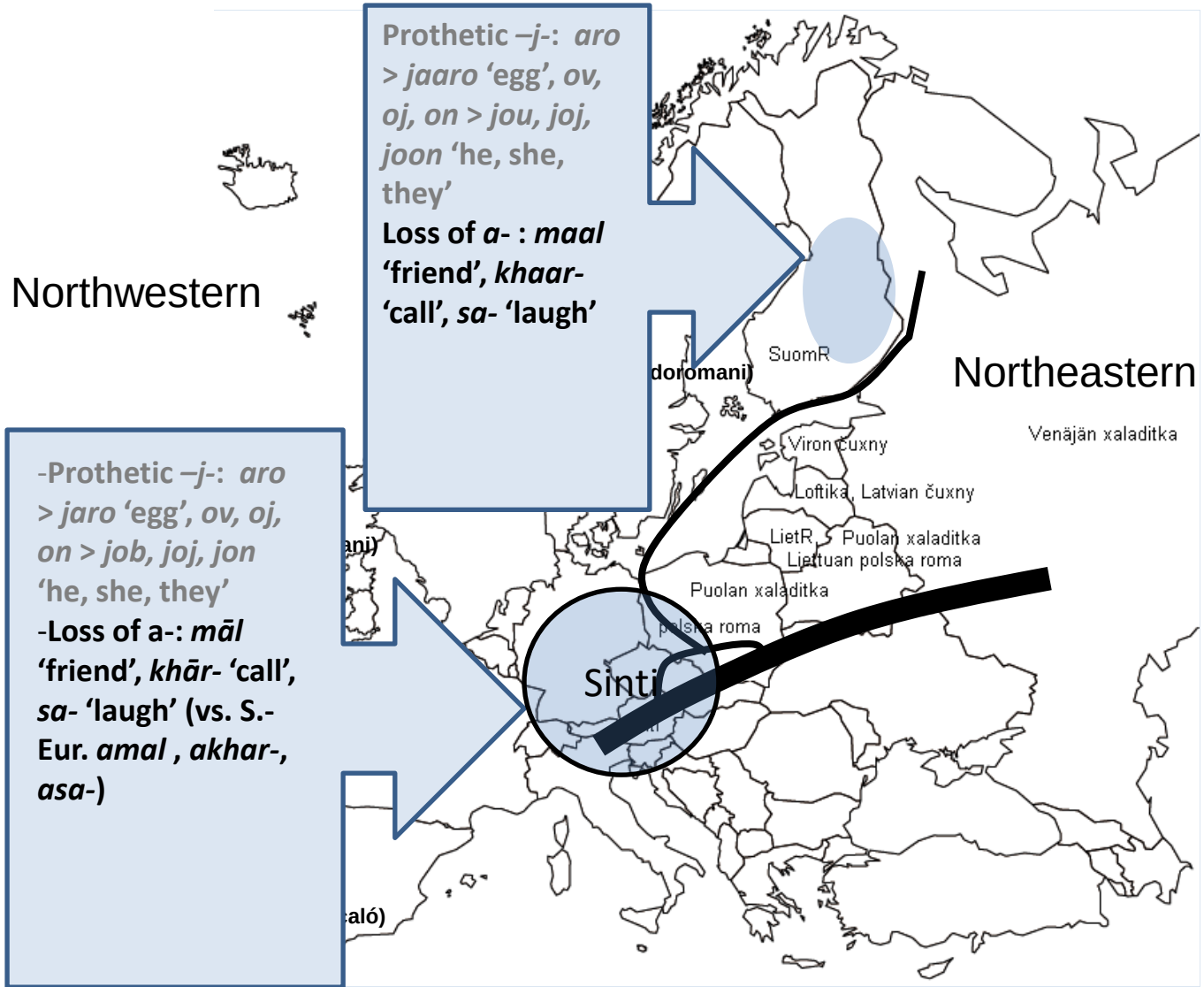

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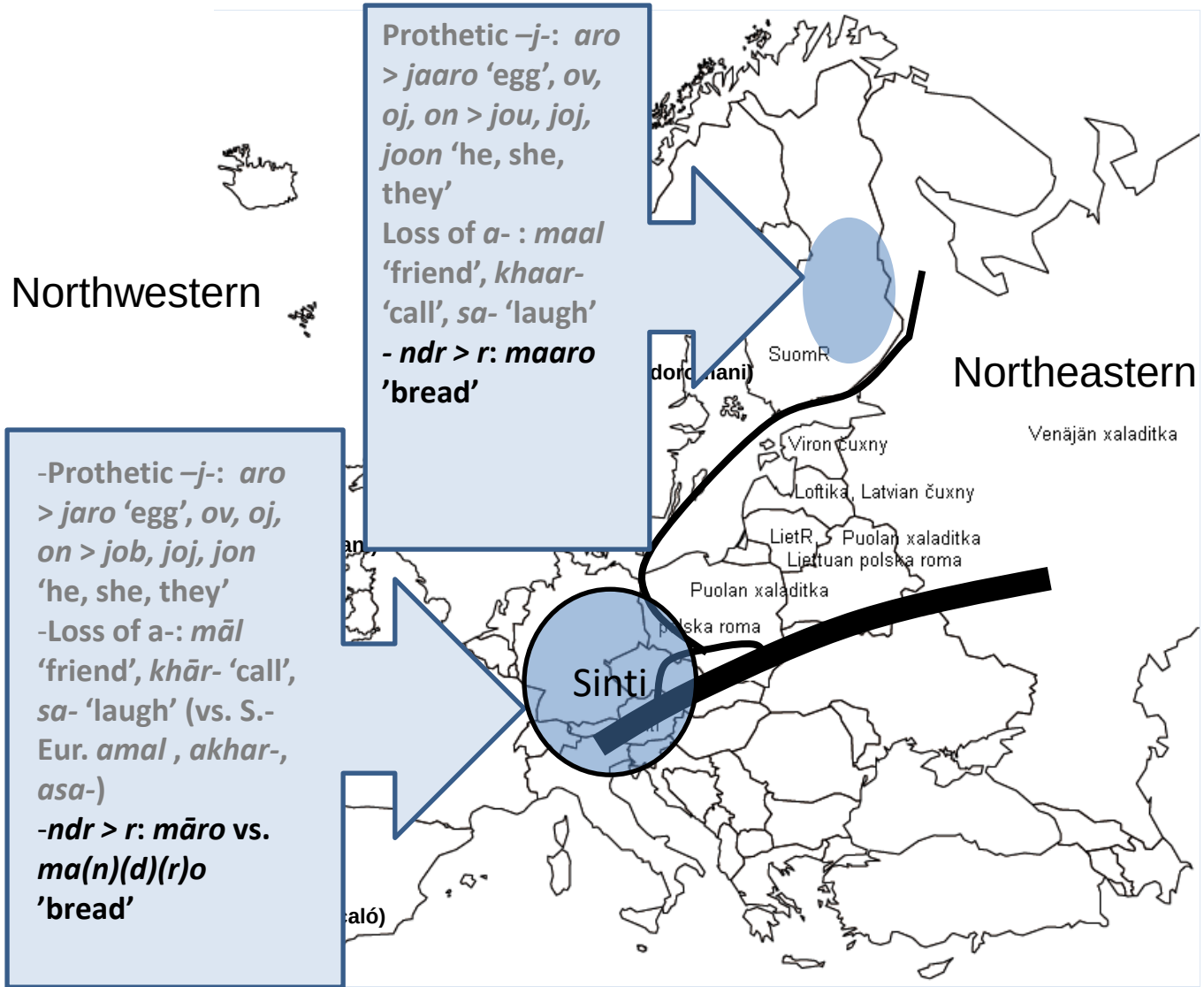

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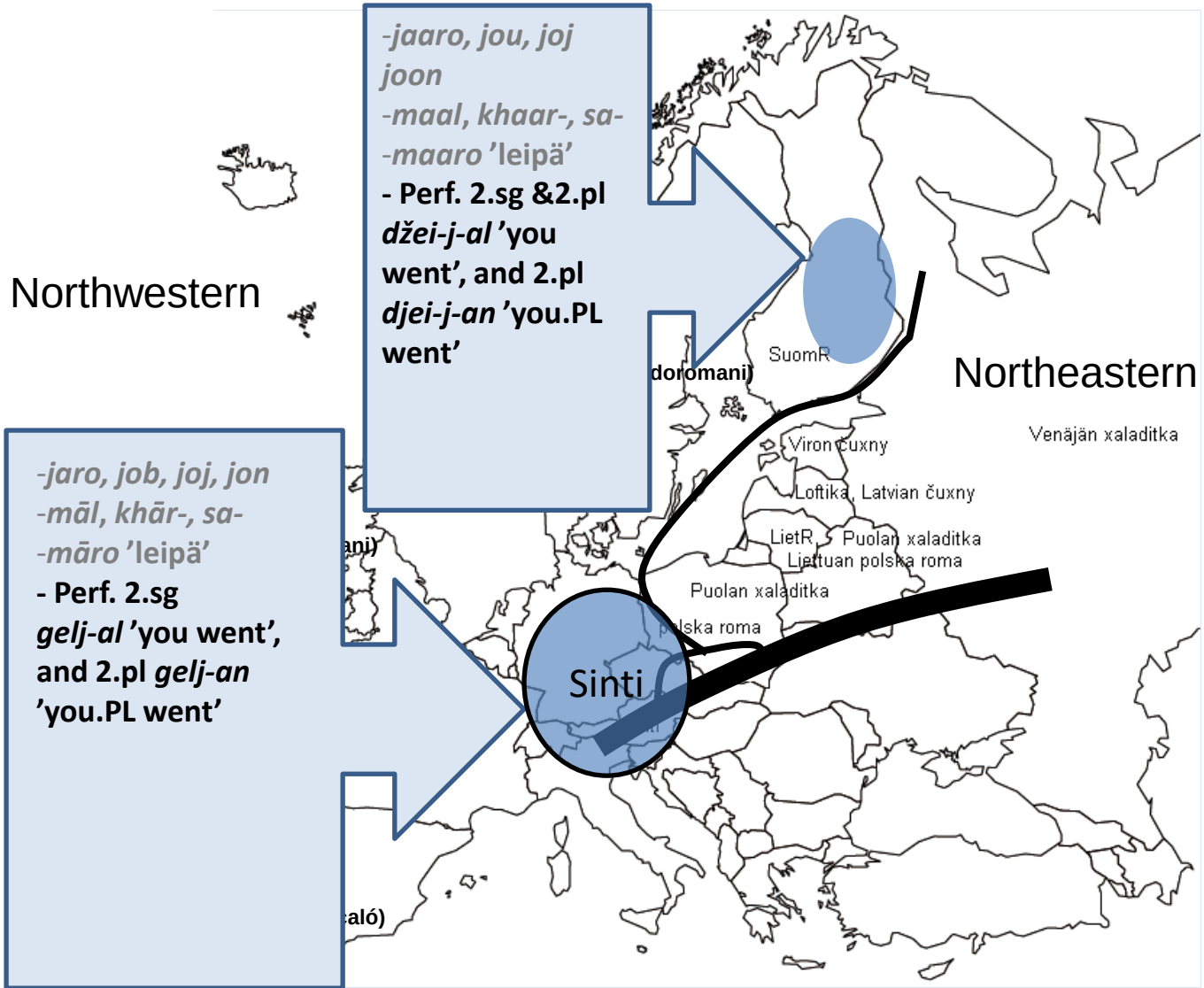

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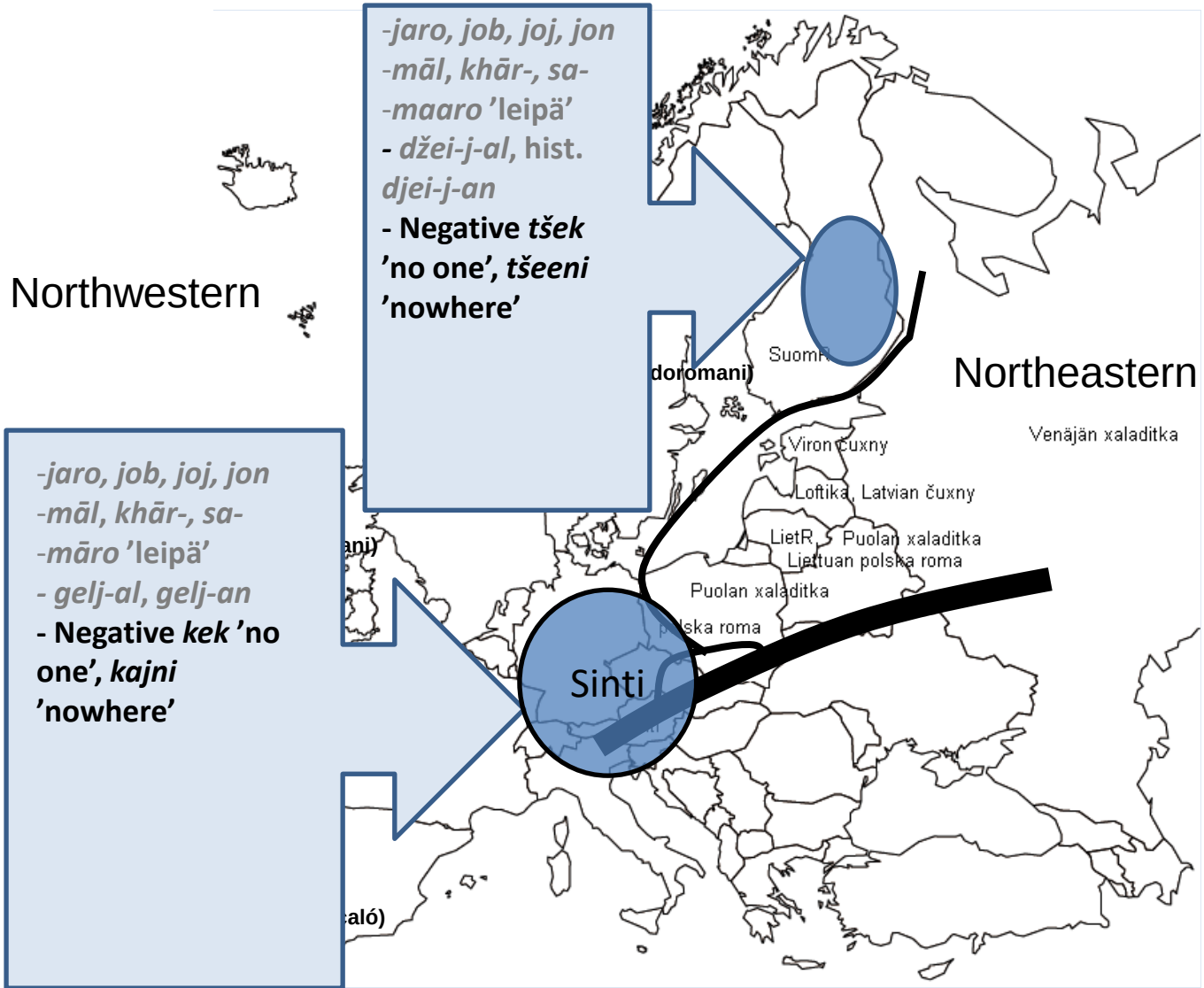
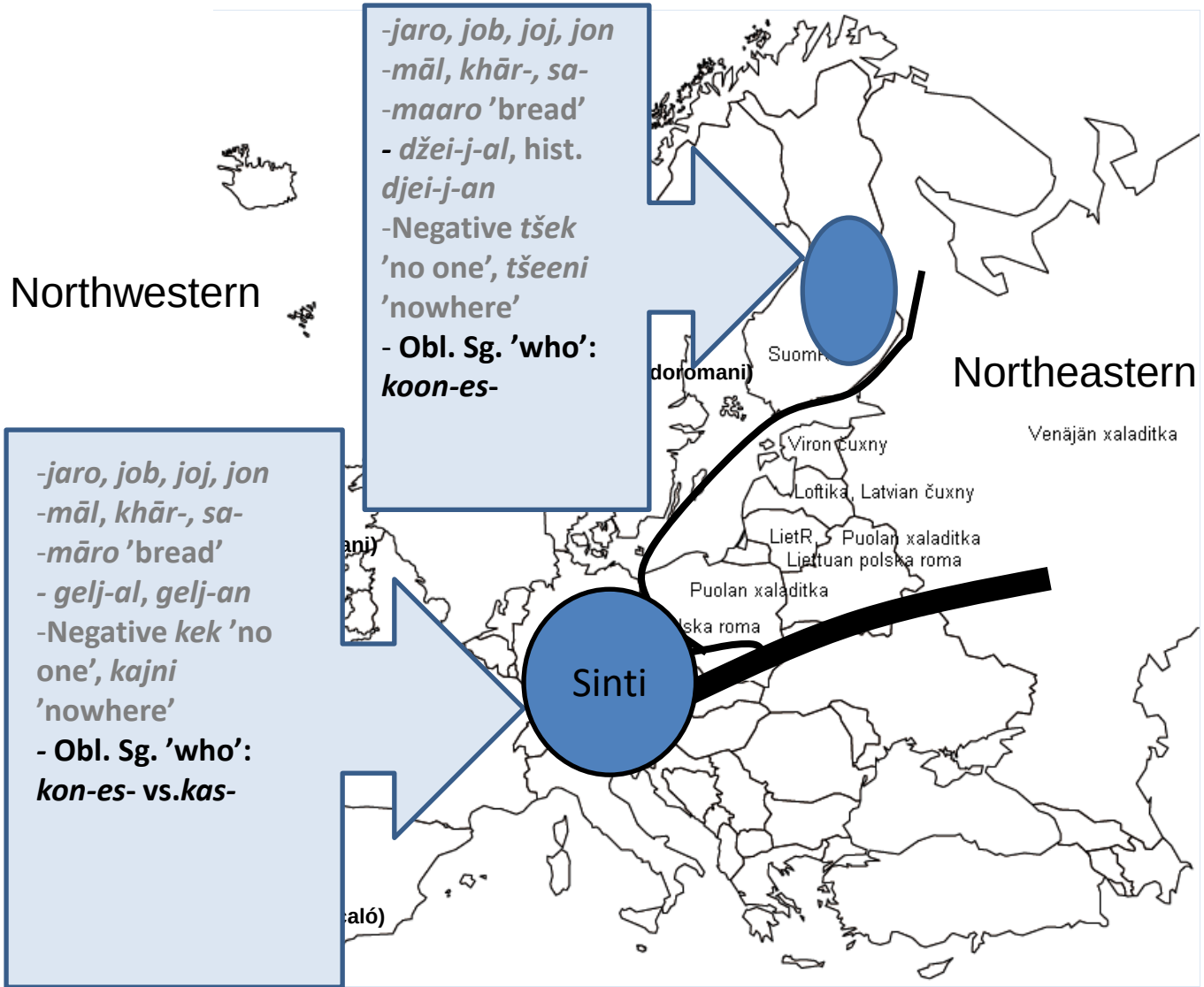
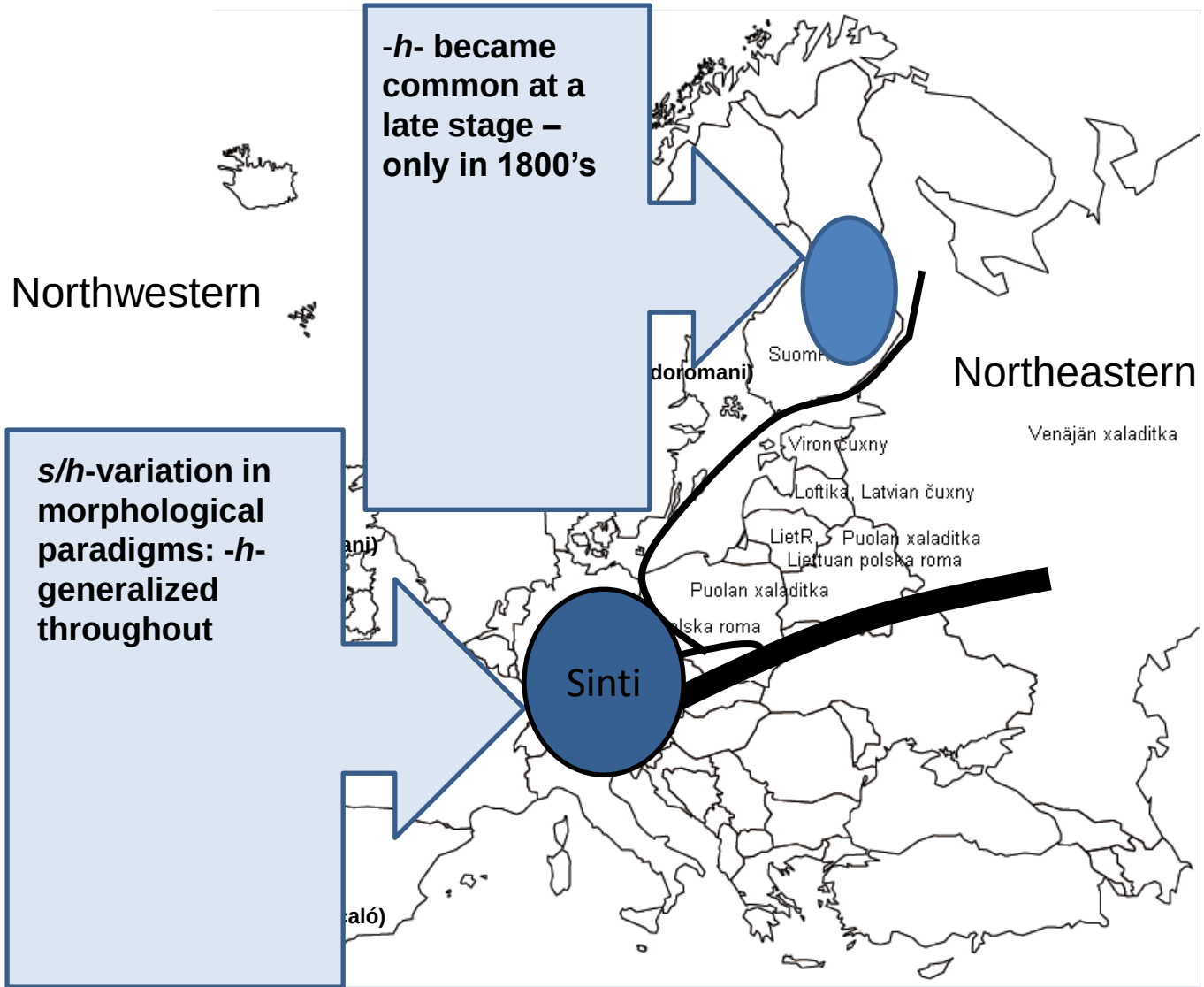


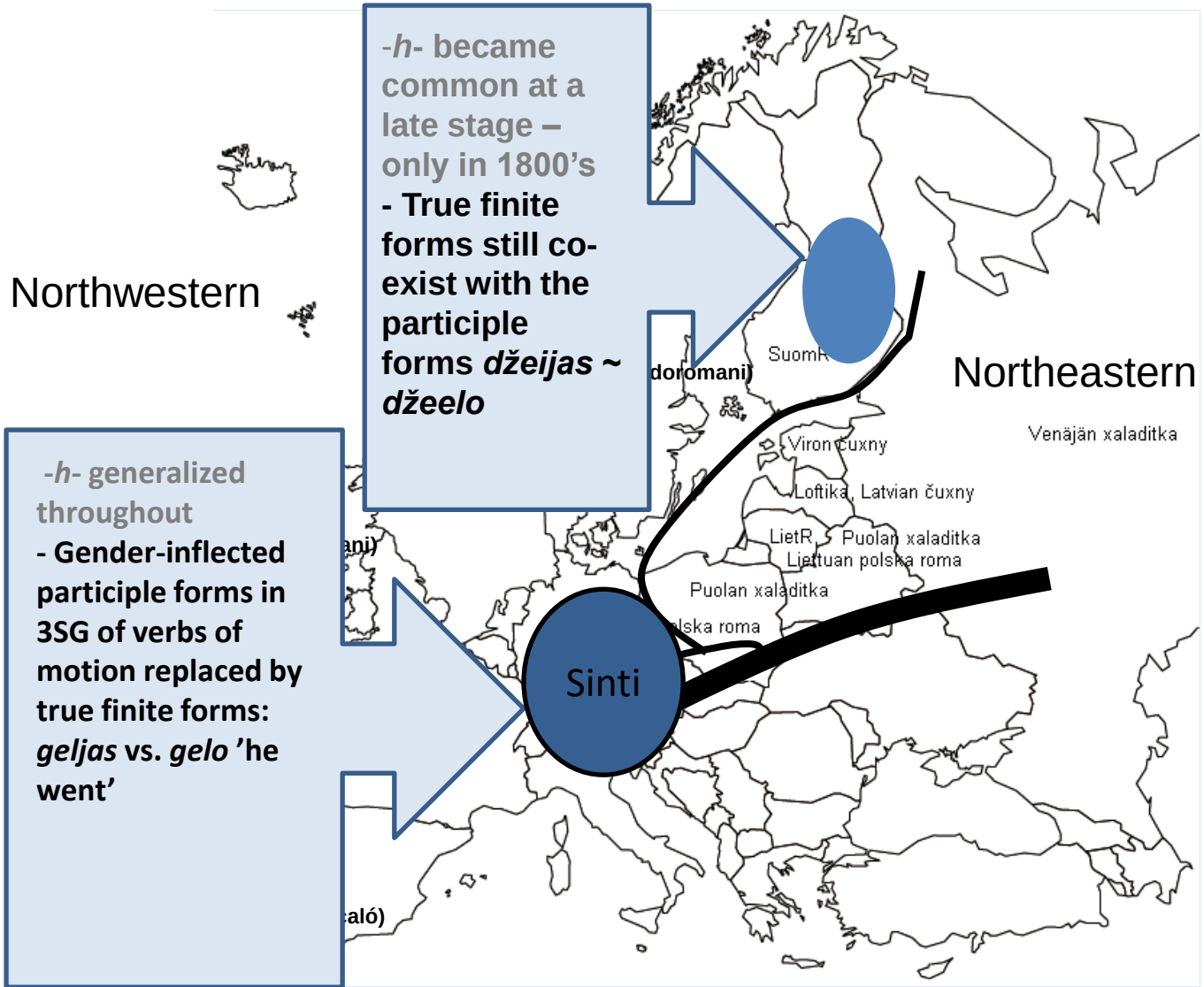
German Sinti Innovation Center– Finnish Romani



German Sinti Innovation Center– Finnish Romani as periphery



German Sinti Innovation Center– Finnish Romani as periphery



Participle vs. Regular Perfective 3SG

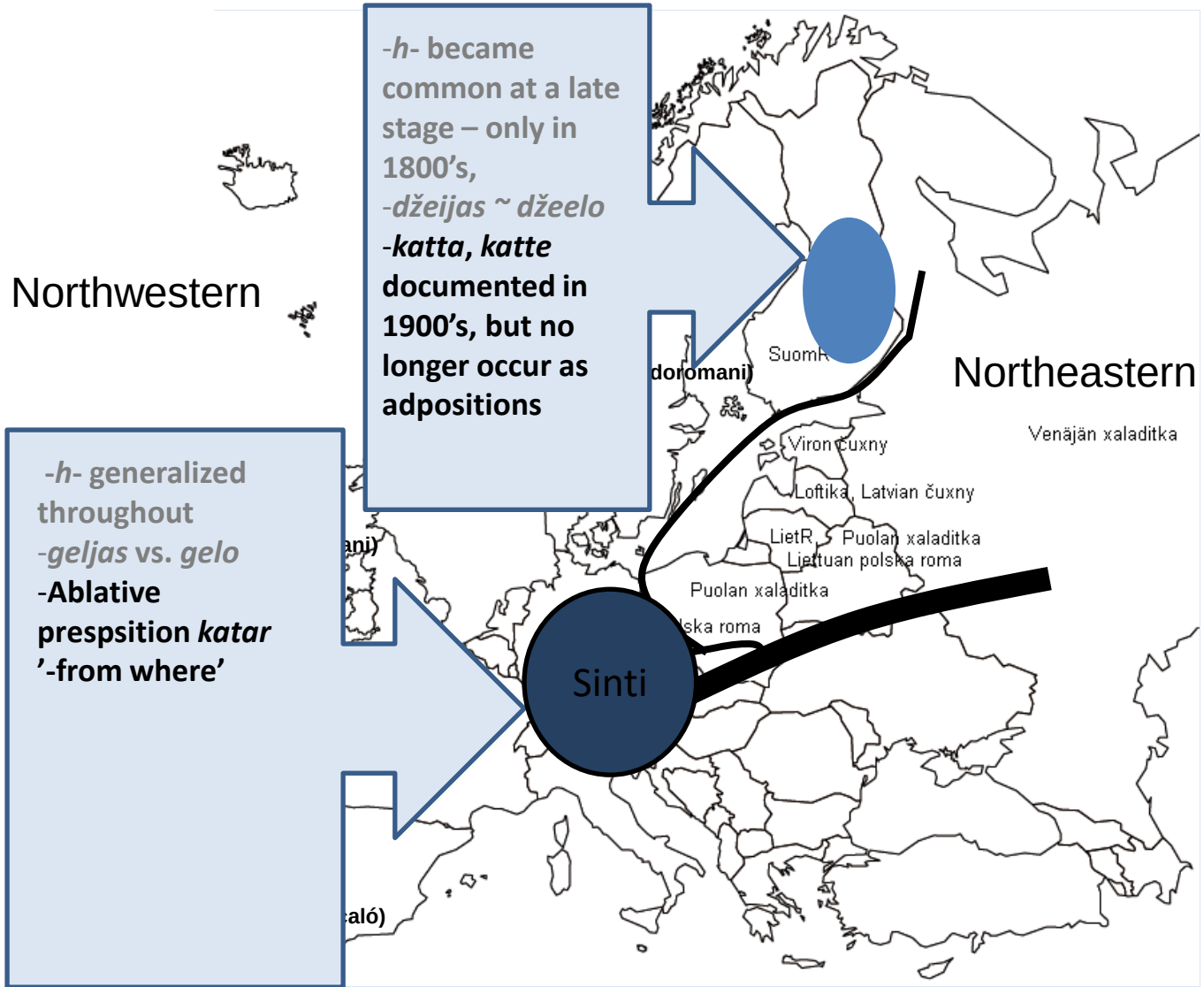
- Finite form in **–as** always possible.
- Hierarchy: motion verbs> **meer-** ‘die’ > other verbs
- Sources:
  - Spoken (2000-2001)
  - Written sources (1960s-**2001**)

Verb	Past participle	Non-participle
(a)v- come’	345 (**aulo**: 330, **auli**: 2, **veelo** 13)	9 (**aujas**: 6, **avjas** 1, **veijas** 1)
dža- ’go’	217 (**džeelo**: 216, **džeeli**: 2)	1 (**veijas**)
meer- ’die’	87 (**muulo**: 85, **muuli**: 2)	72 (**muulidas**: 13, **multas**: 1, **merdas**: 58)
d- ’give’	5 (**diilo**)	138 (**diijas**)
l- ’take’	2 (**liilo**)	112 (**liijas**)
pi- ’drink’	1 (**piilo**)	6 (**piijas**)

Participle vs. Regular Perfective 3SG

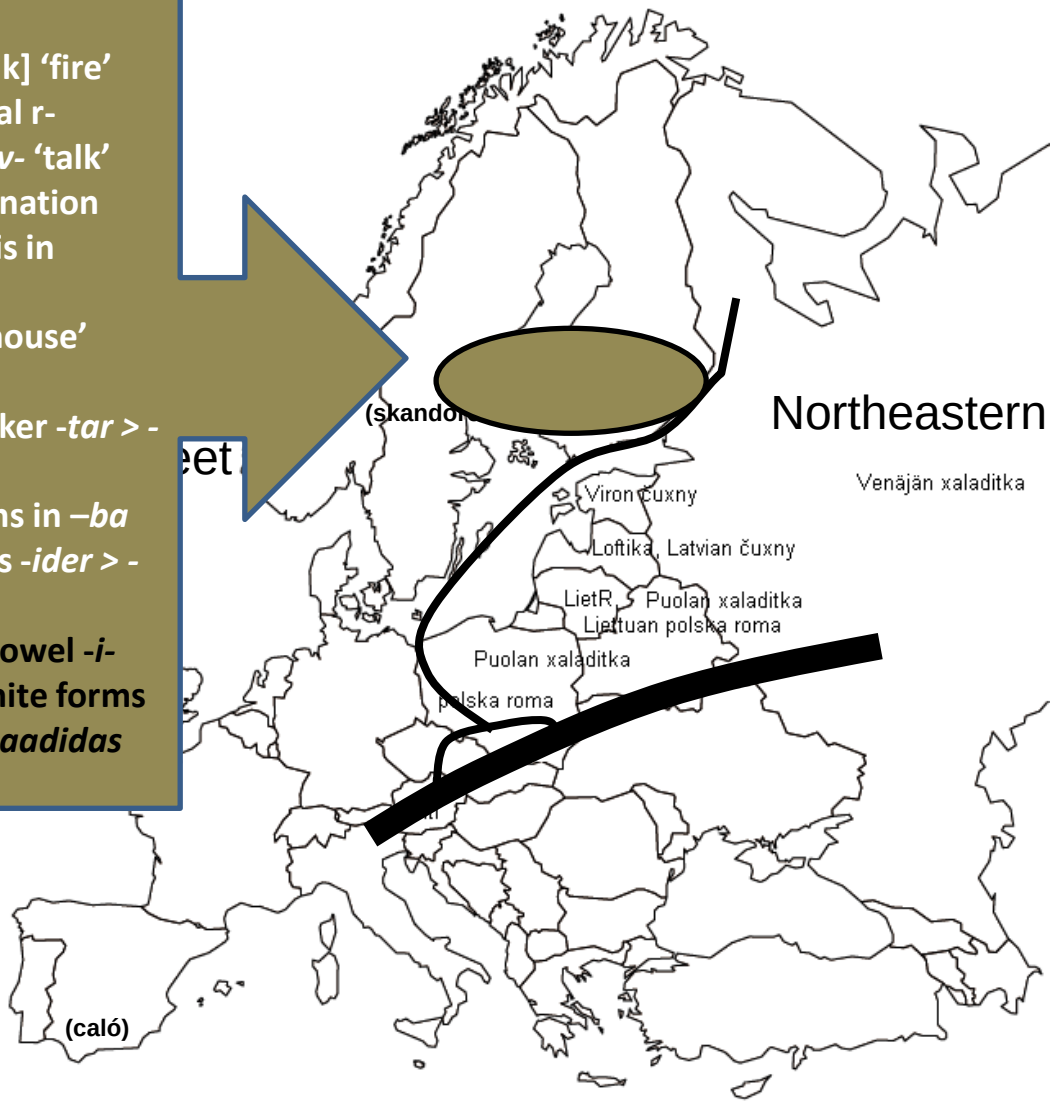
- It is unusual for Northern dialects to have participle forms for 3SG perfective verbs (e.g. **gelo/geli** ‘he/she went’) (Matras 2005: 15)
- In Finnish Romani this exists as an option:
  - Verbs of motion (**aulo** ‘(he) came’ (sometimes **veelo**) and **džeelo** ‘(he) went’)
  - A number of other verbs (**diilo** ‘gave’, **liilo** ‘received’, **piilo** ’drunk’, **muulo** ‘died’),
  - Forms **aahto** ‘was’, **behto** ‘sat’ ja **nahto** ‘fled’ are only used as adnominals, and not perfective verbs
  - **pelo** ‘fallen’, **rundlo** ‘cried’ and **suto** ‘slept’ are not used
  - **Hierarchy: verbs of motion > meer- ‘die’ > other verbs**

German Sinti Innovation Center– Finnish Romani as periphery



Innovations in Finnish Romani

- Pre-nasalisation of voiced stops
jag > jang [jaŋk] ‘fire’
- Word initial r-
rakkav-/akkav- ‘talk’
- *kh*:n affrikatination and metathesis in ‘house’
kher > škeer ‘house’ idiolects.
- Ablative marker *-tar > -ta*
-Abstract nouns in *–ba*
- Comparatives *-ider > -ide*
- Connecting vowel *-i-* occurs with finite forms in preterite: *traadidas*



- Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics

- Typically and historically a means of oral communication and interaction (Matras 1999: 482).
- Romani is mainly used for interaction with family members, friends and acquaintances Identity or boundary marker, emblem
- Secret language

Sociolinguistics

- Most Roma are multilingual
- Many migrant Roma also have an extensive linguistic repertoire and are proficient not only in various Roma dialects, but also in national and minority languages in their countries of origin
  - such as Albanian, Czech, Finnish, Polish, Serbian, Slovak, Turkish, and in the various variants spoken in the host country.
  - Czech Lovari have said that in their everyday life in Sweden they use Czech, Slovak, Hungarian, Romani, English and Swedish;
  - Arli-Roma from Macedonia again Macedonian, Serbian, Romani, English and Swedish;
  - Ursari från Rumänien använder rumänska, romani, engelska och svenska.

Sociolinguistics

- Swedish example:
  - the language choice within the family seems to vary depending on the generation and nature of kinship:
  - most Roma from the Arli, Lovari and Kalderash groups have stated that they speak Romani and sometimes Swedish with their parents,
  - slightly more Swedish with their siblings and partners,
  - either Romani or Swedish with their children and either Romani and / or Swedish with other relatives,
  - National languages of the Roma's countries of origin such as Serbian and Romanian are in use in parallel with Romani and Swedish.

Sociolinguistics

- Not all Romani groups speak Romani:
  - Beaš/ Rudari
  - Aškali
  - Egyptians
- Pararomani:
  - Angloromani
  - Scandoromani
  - Caló, Calão, Erromantxela
- Artificial Romani:
  - Romanó-Caló
  - Kalderaš-mixed Finnish Romani in Sweden

Sociolinguistics

- In recent decades, however, the language has undergone a transformation and also become a written language.
- Roma migration and transnational networks - not least social media - have opened up opportunities to interact with other Roma speakers throughout virtually the world.
- Despite the fact that few Roma read literary texts published in Romani, a large number of novels and poetry have been published in Romani in recent decades
- for example, in Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Russia

Sociolinguistics

- Printed collections of oral folklore have been published in Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Norway, Serbia and Ukraine
- Pushkin, Shakespeare, and Tolstoy have been translated from world literature into Romani
- New Testament Romani texts in several dialects of the Romani language

Sociolinguistics

- The Roma greatly influenced the development of the Karagöz Shadow Theater
- There have been Romani-language theater groups, especially in the Soviet Union and the Balkans
- Many professional Roma groups and choirs sing both in Romani and in the languages of their countries of residence
- Developing movie industry
- Romani-language radio and television broadcasts are increasingly available in various countries

Sociolinguistics

- The teaching of the Romani language in many places in Europe has been sporadic and experimental
- In Czech Republic and Slovakia, the Romani language is taught regularly in a few schools
- In Finland, Roma culture and language have been taught more widely in some primary schools since 1989
- University teaching subject: Finland, Sweden, Czech Republic, Romania etc.

Sociolinguistics

- Used in some international political and cultural meetings, sometimes with interpretation
- But: rarely a language of administration

- Constitutional status in several European countries
  - In Finland, the 1995 fundamental rights reform safeguarded
  - In 1999, Sweden recognized it as one of the country's five national minorities and Romani Chib as one of its national minority languages

- Standardisation and codification

Standardisation and codification

- IRU: 1990, ”Cortiade alphabet”- did not succeed to gain ground except Romania and Spain
- Standardisation has failed:
  - Romani society has traditionally lacked a fixed hierarchical, social structure
  - There is therefore no dominant class that has been able to decide for the whole group
  - Relations between different Roma groups are also not the best possible
  - There is no form of spoken language that is acceptable to everyone
  - The geographical spread of Roma groups = > the spread of a standard cannot be controlled by the imposition of sanctions or exclusion measures on those who do not use the correct language.

Standardisation and codification

- The Roma prefer pluralism, that is, written Romani that shows regional codification with a certain international focus.
- A new generation of Roma intellectuals today uses various forms of language, both orally and in writing.
- Meetings with Roma around the world at international conferences, seminars and the like, regular e-mail communication and text messages:
- Roma today encounter a number of different forms of their language.

Standardisation and codification

- The semi-formal, oral, conference communication between Roma has contributed to a semi-formal written communication
- strengthened in digital communication
- Romani is widely used in digital communication, such as in various mailing lists or in social media
- The written exchange of thoughts in Romani is spontaneous and not uncontrolled by spelling rules or other norms or grammatical constraints.

Standardisation and codification

- More successful local standards
  - First attempts in Soviet uninion during Stalin's period
  - Czech Republic, Slovakia, Macedonia, Hungary, Austria, Finland

- Resources

Resources

- RomLex, dictionaries of various dialects:

http://romani.uni-graz.at/romlex/lex.xml

- RMS – morphosyntax, maps

http://romani.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/rms/

- Fact sheets on Roma – language and culture

http://romafacts.uni-graz.at/

Thank you!