

ESTONIAN LOTFITKA ROMANI AND ITS CONTACT LANGUAGES

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Abstract. The Estonian Lotfitka dialect is a Romani dialect whose speakers have migrated from Latvia to Estonia. This article provides an overview of the recent and current contact languages of the Estonian Lotfitka dialect – Latvian, Russian and Estonian – and draws attention to some of the contact-induced language changes. To provide a comprehensive insight into the intensity and scope of borrowing I have applied Thomason and Kaufman’s borrowing scale to categorize the contact languages. The relevant features behind the contact-induced changes that appear in Estonian Lotfitka dialect are listed.

Keywords: Romani linguistics, language contact, language change, Estonian Romani, Latvian Romani

Introduction

This article will focus on the Lotfitka Romani dialect (also known as Latvian Romani) in Estonia and its language contact situation. The language’s speakers have migrated from Latvia to Estonia for couple of generations and refer to themselves as Lotfitka or Laloritka Roma.

Romani has not gained much attention as a minority language in Estonia and this article tries to shed light on the situation of Romani in Estonia. The emphasis is on its recent and current contact languages: Russian, Latvian and Estonian. The language contact situation is analyzed within the framework proposed by Thomason and Kaufman (1988). The contact-induced changes are listed and the languages are categorized according to Thomason and Kaufman’s borrowing scale. The borrowing scale has been applied to provide a

more easily graspable classification of the Lotfitka Romani contact situation.

The article is based on material analyzed in the scope of the author's Master's research on the the language, the focus of which is to describe the dialect in more detail and compare it to the Lotfitka spoken across the border in Latvia.

I. Roma and Romani language in Estonia

The Romani language is an Indic language belonging to the Indo-Aryan branch of the Indo-European languages. The speakers migrated from the territory of India and reached Europe though the Balkans from where they migrated all over Europe.

According to the Estonian Population and Housing Census held in 2011 (Statistics Estonia), 456 Roma live in Estonia, of which 361 name Romani as their mother tongue. The data on Romani spoken as a second language is not publicly available, but would surely complement the data as some of the Romani speakers report other languages as their mother tongue. According to *Third report on Estonia* carried out by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, around 1,100 to 1,500 Roma live in Estonia (ECRI 2006: 35).

In the classification of the Romani dialects I follow that suggested by Matras (2002: 10), which is also followed by Tenser (2008) in his dissertation on the Northeastern Romani group. According to this classification the Romani dialects spoken in Estonia belong to the Northeastern sub-branch of the Northern group of Romani dialects. According to Tenser (2008: 12) dialects belonging to the Northeastern group are also spoken by Ruska Roma (also known as Xaladytka), Polska Roma (in northern areas of Poland), Litovska Roma and Lotfitka Roma. The dialects spoken in Estonia are Lotfitka (Latvian) and Xaladytka (Russian) Romani dialects.

Romani is a language that has been taught across generations without disrupt (Matras 2002: 191) and therefore classifies as a maintained language in Thomason and Kaufman's framework. Romani is

still common as a first communication language in Estonian Roma families.

Roma who have retained Romani as their mother tongue are commonly multilingual (Matras 2002: 191). Roma children in Estonia often learn Russian or Estonian in kindergarten or school as a second language. In a survey on educational issues which involved 88 Roma origin children (up to 17 years old) (Lutt et al. 2011), 28 were reported to speak Romani, Estonian and Russian. Even when attending schools where Estonian is the main language of instruction, Roma children still often learn Russian and use the language in every day communication. The reasons for their multilingualism, according to the Estonian Roma themselves, are family relations, the working environment, interactions with locals and involvement in small business (Ross 2013).

2. Research on Lotfitka Romani as part of the Northeastern dialect group

Out of Northeastern Romani dialects, the grammar of Russian Romani has been described by Ventzel (1980), that of Polish Romani by Matras (1999) and that of Lithuanian Romani by Tenser (2005). A short grammatical description of Latvian Lotfitka is part of the etymological dictionary of Latvian Romani (Mānušs et al 1997). In Estonia Ariste has collected data from Lotfitka speakers, and has published several articles on Lotfitka, e.g. Estonian loanwords in Lotfitka (Ariste 1983); loanwords in Lotfitka that give evidence of the migration route through Europe (Ariste 1958); Latvian verbal prefixes in Lotfitka (Ariste 1973), and on the Latvian noun derivation suffix *-uma* in Lotfitka (Ariste 1969).

A comparative study on Northeastern Romani dialects was conducted by Tenser (2008). In his dissertation Tenser (2008: 282) refers to Estonian and Latvian Romani as isolates in the Northeastern group. Some of the features differentiating Estonian and Latvian Romani from other Northeastern dialects are those shared with

Northwestern and Central dialects, e.g. masculine singular loan noun marker *-os* instead of *-o* as in other Northeastern dialects, and plural reflexive noun base *pen-* instead of *pes-*. Contraction of personal markers *ker-av-as* > *ker-âs* is only shared with Northwestern dialects. Interrogative ‘which’ *saj-* instead of *sav-* and contraction in ‘day’ *dyis* instead of *dyves* is shared only with the Sinti dialect (belonging to the Northwestern dialects). As unique features to Estonian and Latvian Romani, Tenser lists metathesis of *pð* > *ðp* (and *kð* > *ðk*), which are derived from aspirated consonants *ph* and *kh*; voicing of *ph-* in *phuè-* ‘ask’ as *buè-*; and loss of participles in *-ime(n)*. These features seem to be relevant only in Latvian Lotfitka and have not spread to Estonian Lotfitka.

3. Language interference in a situation of language maintenance

Thomason and Kaufman (1988: 37–39) divide the interference of languages into two basic types – borrowing situation in the case of language maintenance, and interference through shift. In the case of borrowing, foreign features are incorporated into the native language by the speakers. Borrowing is denoted as the transfer of features from one language to another in the areas of phonology, morphology, syntax and lexicon. Interference through shift, on the other hand, appears due to imperfect group learning. In that process the target language is learned imperfectly by new speakers. The features of this emerging variant are then adopted in the speech of native speakers and spread among all speakers of the language, thus forming a new *shifted* variant.

For the borrowing situation Thomason and Kaufman (1988: 73–95) propose a borrowing scale divided into five categories. These categories are based on two factors: the intensity of the language contact situation and the cultural pressure. This article uses these five categories to visualize the stage of borrowing from contact languages by Estonian Lotfitka Romani.

The first and lowest category in the scale describes casual contact that affects only the lexicon. The second and the third categories describe more intense contact in which slight structural borrowing is present. The changes in the second category might include borrowing function words such as conjunctions and adverbial particles, and in structure minor phonological, syntactic, and lexical semantic features. In the third category borrowings can include adpositions, and borrowed derivational affixes, phonemicization of previously allophonic alternations and syntactic changes. The fourth category is characterized by moderate structural borrowings under strong cultural pressure. The phonological changes can affect the native vocabulary; in the scope of syntax extensive word order changes can occur; concerning morphology, borrowed inflectional affixes and categories might be added to native vocabulary. In the fifth category, heavy structural borrowing happens under very strong cultural pressure. Thomason and Kaufman (1988: 74–76) describe these changes as ‘major structural features that cause significant typological disruption’.

4. Data Collection

Data collection utilized the Romani Morpho-Syntactic (RMS) Questionnaire devised by Elđík and Matras (2001). The interviews were recorded in the informants’ homes over the course of one to a number of days. For the interviews in Estonia either Estonian or Russian were used as the language of elicitation. In Estonia altogether 11 linguistic RMS interviews were elicited, four of them with speakers of Xaladytka Romani, and 7 of them with speakers of Lotfitka Romani. In Latvia 14 interviews were elicited with Lotfitka Romani speakers.

The data on Estonian Romani dialects and the rest of the North-eastern Romani group was collected as part of the project *Finnish Romani and other northern dialects of Romani in the Baltic Sea area* lead by the University of Helsinki. The Estonian data was collected by Anton Tenser, Roman Lutt, Zalina Dabla and Anette Ross in

2013 and 2015. The Latvian data was collected by Anton Tenser and Dainis Krauklis in 2013, and transcribed by Dainis Krauklis, Anton Tenser and Anette Ross. The Estonian Lotfitka data has been transcribed or reviewed by the author of this article. The sociolinguistic background is based on the author's personal observations and interaction with Estonian Roma from 2013 to 2016, including work for her Bachelor's thesis at the University of Tartu on the language use of Estonian Roma (Ross 2013). The data collection included conversations with informants during interviews and events organized by the Roma community or Estonian state institutions concerning language and culture issues.

5. Contact languages

Matras (2002: 191) points out that Romani speakers have been multilingual for centuries and Romani has been in contact with other languages at least since the Early Romani. This has given Romani a layered structure of borrowings as the dialects have been in contact with different languages at different times. The borrowed lexicon is subject to being replaced with items from new contact languages, but the layer of stable lexical and grammatical borrowings from previous contact language will stay in the dialect. The previous contact languages usually continue to play a role in family interaction after the actual migration. The importance of the previous contact language might be increased, because the migration of Roma often involves migration of extended families and several generations. Matras (2002: 191–196) emphasizes that the contact languages' stratification profiles vary in numerous ways.

In order to classify the contact languages I use the distinction provided by Matras. Matras (1998: 300) proposes a distinction of three layers in order to stratify the grammatical borrowings. The layers are: older, recent and current contact language. The older L2 has had a considerable impact on the dialect, but is not spoken anymore. The recent L2 is spoken by the older generation and the

current L2 is spoken by all members of the community and plays a key role in communication with non-Romani people.

The older contact languages that have had an impact specifically on the whole Northeastern group are German and Polish (Tenser 2008: 221). Tenser lists Latvian as the recent L2 and Estonian and Russian as the current L2s for Estonian Romani (p. 222). This situation is plausible for the Estonian Lotfitka dialect as Latvian is still known to some extent by the Estonian Lotfitka speakers. Verification can also be found in the Estonian Census in 2000 (Statistics Estonia), which lists Latvian as a known foreign language for 120 of 542 Roma in Estonia.

The author finds that the Northeastern Romani dialects are not greatly affected typologically by the contact languages, since generally the contact languages and the conservative Romani share basic typological profiles. He adds that 'some of the contact-induced changes, however could be analyzed as forms of slight typological drift' (Tenser 2008: 236). Some of the more prominent contact-induced changes in Northeastern dialects are loss of articles, and use of aktionsart prefixes to modify verbs.

6. Russian Influence on Estonian Lotfitka Romani

Russian has had a stronger influence on the Estonian Lotfitka dialect when compared to Latvian and Estonian. Russian has been a contact language for Lotfitka both in Latvia and Estonia and we can see similar contact-induced changes in Latvian and Estonian Lotfitka. Another aspect strengthening the pressure of Russian is the close interaction with Xaladytka Roma. The strategy of replacing Latvian borrowings with Russian borrowings in communication with Xaladytka Roma was described by some of the Estonian informants.

Tenser (2008: 223) points out that the phonology of Northeastern Romani dialects is conditioned to a large degree by the contact languages with which Roma come into contact. The Russian language has affected speakers of Northeastern Romani dialects to the

extent that the Romani speech of some speakers show palatalization of consonants. This is certainly true for some of the Lotfitka speech, but as the currently dominant contact language and time of migration from Latvia varies among Estonian Lotfitka, the research on phonology would need a detailed speaker specific approach. Another borrowed feature that Tenser points out is the velar fricative /ɣ/ (ibid.) that is present in the speech of Estonian Lotfitka, e.g. *yaning* ‘well’, *yuèò* ‘tall’. The sound exists in Ukrainian and southern dialects of Russian. Tenser also mentions velarization of aspirated phonemes, but the extent of this phenomenon needs to be investigated for Estonian Lotfitka.

In Latvian and Estonian Lotfitka there are shared contact-induced changes due to contact with Russian. In addition, there is also a layer of features in Estonian Lotfitka not shared with Latvian Lotfitka. The Estonian Roma population is approximately 10 times smaller than the Latvian Roma population, which is listed at 5,388 by the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia (the number marks residents of Roma ethnicity). The relatively small Roma community in Estonia leads to stronger inter-group communication between Lotfitka and Xaladytka Roma, while Latvian Lotfitka Roma can continue with cultural practices in their own community.

In Latvian and Estonian Lotfitka in the category of indefinite pronouns the Russian specific marker *-mo* is combined with inherited relativizers forming the indefinites *so-ta* ‘something’ (Russian *что-то*), *kidi-ta* ‘sometime’ (Russian *когда-то*), and *kaj-ta* ‘somewhere’ (Russian *где-то*). In the free choice category only Estonian Lotfitka speakers have borrowed the Russian marker *-нибудь*, e.g. *kon-n’ibut* ‘anyone’, *so-n’ibut* ‘anything’, *kidi-n’ibut* ‘anytime’, *kaj-n’ibut* ‘anywhere’. The free choice marker *-n’ibut* is very rare in Latvian Lotfitka, but is commonly used in other Northeastern Romani dialects influenced by Russian (Tenser 2008: 108). The following table (Table 1) shows the distribution of the indefinite pronouns in specific and free-choice category. The additional marker *vari(var/vaj)*- is added to provide a more reliable picture as the suffix

is also commonly used by speakers. The Romanian origin prefix *vari-* appears in a few examples in Estonian and Latvian Lotfitka with indefinite pronouns in the specific or free-choice categories.

Table I. Indefinite pronouns: specific and free-choice category

Category		Latvian Lotfitka	Estonian Lotfitka	Estonian Xaladytka
Specific	'something'	so-ta var-so-ta	so-ta vari-so	so-ta
	'sometime'	kidi-ta	kidi-ta	kagda-ta
	'somewhere'	kaj-ta var-kaj-ta	kaj-ta vari-kaj	kaj-ta
Free-choice	'anything'	so-na-so var(vaj)-so-ta	so-n'ibut'	so-n'ibut'
	'anytime'	kidi-na-kidi	kidi-n'ibut'	kagda-n'ibut' koli-n'ibut' kidi-n'ibut'
	'anywhere'	kaj-na-kaj	kaj-n'ibut'	kaj-n'ibut'

Another borrowed Russian marker in Estonian and Latvian Lotfitka is the diminutive adjectival suffix *-in'k-*; this is in fact found in all Northeastern Romani dialects except Polish Romani (ibid.: 66). Russian verbal prefixes are common with both borrowed verbs and inherited Romani verb stems, e.g. the Russian prefix *raz-* and Romani stem *phen-* 'to say' are combined as *ras-phenel* to express the meaning 'to tell (a story)' modeled after Russian *рассказать* 'to tell (a story)' < *сказать* 'to say'. Occasionally Russian verbs are left unintegrated in 3rd person singular and plural, and in the imperative form in Estonian Lotfitka. This is well attested in Xaladytka Romani (Tenser 2008: 121) in all persons and seems to appear in Estonian Lotfitka due to contact with Xaladytka Romani, not as a new strategy developed from within the dialect itself. The strategy is not attested for verbs borrowed from Latvian nor Estonian. The strategy to borrow verbs from contact languages retaining the conjugation of the contact language is apparent in more dialects (Elđík, Matras 2006: 135), e.g. the borrowings from Turkish into Romani dialects spoken in the Balkans retain the Turkic

conjugation (*ibid.*). The verb forms of 3rd person left as in the Russian conjugation is also supported by the tendency recognized by Elđik and Matras (2006: 102), namely that the 3rd person is most prone to borrowing and is most differentiated.

Concerning syntax, Estonian Lotfitka speakers sometimes omit the copula as in Russian. Absence of the copula in Estonian Lotfitka speech is probably not triggered only by Russian, but also by interaction with Estonian Xaladytka speakers that also tend to omit the copula. Another feature is the incorporation of Russian conditional/irrealis particle *ǒbi*, which has been borrowed into Xaladytka Romani (Tenser 2008: 143). The particle *ǒbi* is unsystematic, but used quite often in irrealis and conditional structures in Estonian Lotfitka. The particle is used mostly with remoteness marker *-as* added to perfective verb form, and more rarely added to verbs present tense as is common in Xaladytka. In Latvian Lotfitka the particle *ǒbi* is not used, and only the remoteness marker *-as* is added to perfective verb forms as in Early Romani, or to present tense personal marker as in Xaladytka.

The influence of Russian can be placed between level three and four in the borrowing scale, showing intense contact and strong cultural pressure. Level four is reached due to the phonological changes. Tenser (2008: 237) comments that phonology seems to be influenced more by contact languages in Northeastern Romani dialects than the morphology, and this contradicts Thomason and Kaufman's (1988) borrowing scale. Still, many distinctive features remain, such as aspirated consonants. The contradiction can be seen also in the influence of Latvian and Estonian on Lotfitka Romani.

7. Latvian Influence on Estonian Lotfitka Romani

Latvian is a recent, and to some speakers of Estonian Lotfitka also current contact language. In Latvia the Lotfitka dialect is under strong cultural pressure from Latvian and as a result is expected to develop in directions different from those expected for Estonian Lotfitka. Estonian Lotfitka is no longer affected by these changes,

because the cultural pressure from Latvian is low, and the interaction with Latvian Lotfitka is not sufficiently intense.

Due to Latvian influence a distinction between long and short vowels has appeared in the Lotfitka dialects (Tenser 2008: 223). It is maintained in Estonian Lotfitka as the new contact language, Estonian, makes this distinction as well. Latvian nouns and verbs are integrated into Lotfitka. Nouns are given feminine ending *-a*, e.g. Lat. *puīe* 'flower' becomes Lot. *puèèa*, or masculine ending *-os*, e.g. Lat. *vilks* 'wolf', Lot. *vilkos*; *-us*, e.g. Lat. *laiks* 'time', Lot. *lajkus*; *-is*, e.g. Lat. *bullis* 'bull' retaining its form in Romani as *bullis*. Verbs are adapted with loan verb adaptation marker *-in-*. This is followed by a personal marker, e.g. Lat. *rakstīt* 'write', Lot. *rakst-in-*, but occasionally the loan marker is followed by Greek-derived 3rd person singular and plural marker *-i*, e.g. Lat. *brauc* 'drives' becomes *brauc-in-i* 'he/she drives, they drive'.

Latvian influence on the lexicon includes adpositions such as *blakam*, *blakus*, *blaku* 'next to' and *preèu* 'opposite', which is according to Mânuðs (1997: 104) a contamination of Latvian *pret*, *pretī*, *pretim* and Polish *przeciw*, *przeciwko*. Estonian Lotfitka speakers have retained the Latvian superlative prefix *vis-* beside Russian adjective *сам-* 'most'. Some Latvian contrastive conjunctions are borrowed, e.g. *bet* 'but', *vaj - vaj* 'either or', *ne - ne* 'neither nor'. In the case of *vaj* 'or' the inherited Romani form and the Latvian conjunction are identical, so it is hard to say if the conjunction is preserved or borrowed. In the class of utterance modifiers, proposed by Matras (1998), are some Latvian borrowings, e.g. conjunctions, *pat* 'even', *īstes* 'really'.

In morphology, Latvian ambipositions such as *blakam* 'next to' are borrowed as prepositions and postpositions into Latvian Lotfitka, occurring in both positions, as is possible in Latvian. In Estonian Lotfitka they occur only as prepositions, which is similar to the behavior of the inherited Romani adpositions.

A sign of a stronger language contact situation is the presence of Latvian verbal prefixes. Many Latvian verbal prefixes are borrowed

into Estonian Lotfitka, e.g. *aiz-*, *ap-*, *at-*, *ie-*, *no-* and *pâr-*, e.g. *ajz-del* ‘to lend’ calqued from Latvian *aiz-ðemties*; and *pâr-dþal* ‘pass, overpass’ calqued from Latvian *pâr-iet*. Ariste (1973: 80) recorded three Latvian verbal prefixes: *uz-*, *no-* and *ie-*. Compared to Latvian Lotfitka, the frequency of Latvian verbal prefixes is currently quite low in Estonian Lotfitka and their use is not systematic. That said, some inherited verb stems are systematically used by Estonian Lotfitka speakers, e.g. Lat. verbal prefix *no-* in *nuo-peja pe* ‘to happen’. It is a combination of the Latvian aktionsart prefix *no-* on the base of Latvian verb *notikt* and Romani verb *peerel* ‘to become’ as an analogy with Latvian *tikt* ‘to become’. The borrowing of Latvian verbal prefixes is preconditioned by Slavic verbal prefixes that existed in the dialect before the contact with Latvian. The typological shift towards aktionsart prefixes has possibly happened already under the influence of Polish. Under the influence of Latvian the replacement of morphological material, i.e. replacement of the prefixes, has taken place.

Another morphological feature that is mentioned by Ariste as an influence from Latvian is the nominalization suffix *-uma* in *farðuma* ‘jail’, *perðuma* ‘beginning’ (Ariste 1969: 179). Ariste does not believe that the suffix derives from the nominalization suffix *-imol-ima*, as it is also present in Lotfitka and the sound change from *-im* to *-um* has not happened in any other context (1969: 181). He believes that the suffix is formed along the lines of the Latvian *cietums* ‘jail’, GEN *cietuma*, as the Latvian basis *ciets* ‘hard’ complies with Romani *fardo* ‘hard’; and Lot. *perðuma* ‘beginning’, Lat. *sâkums*, GEN *sâkuma*. Tenser (2008: 46), on the other hand, considers the suffix *-ima* and *-oma/-uma* as variants of the Greek-derived suffix *-ima*, as the suffix is applied to lexicon of non-inherited origin in both cases (ibid.: 47). Also, the suffix *-oma* is present in Lithuanian Romani (ibid.: 46), e.g. *èemnoma* ‘darkness’, *radoma* ‘joy’ and therefore does not seem to be direct due to influence from Latvian.

The Latvian influence on Estonian Lotfitka dialect could be marked under category two and three in the borrowing scale, describing more intense contact and therefore some structural borrowing.

Table 2. Suffix *-ima/-uma**

	Lithuanian Romani	Latvian Lotfitka	Estonian Lotfitka	Xaladytka
'darkness'	čėmnoma	čėmn'uma	čėmnuma	(Estonian Xaladytka) t'omnyma t'omnuma
'light'	švjtatlīma	švatluma	gajšuma svetloma	svētlīma
'joy'	radoma	raduma		radīma
'quiet, silence'	čixoma	čixuma		tixima

*(The data on Lithuanian Romani and Xaladytka dialect (North Russian Romani) are from the ROMLEX database)

8. Estonian Influence on Lotfitka Romani

Estonian influence on Estonian Lotfitka Romani is mostly limited to the lexicon. Lexical borrowings are integrated into Romani. Estonian verbs *jalutama* 'to walk', *kasutama* 'to use' and *reisima* 'to travel' are all integrated with Romani loan-verb adaptation marker *-in-* as *jalut-in-*, *kazut-in-* and *reiz-in-*.

The nouns are adapted into Romani feminine or masculine class, e.g. Estonian nouns get a feminine ending *a-* as Estonian *sild* 'bridge' > *silta* and *ploom* 'plum' > *ploomā*, *pirn* 'pear' > *pirna*; masculine nouns get the endings *-os*, *-is*, e.g. Estonian *juust* 'cheese' > *juust-os*, *hunt* 'wolf' > *un't-is*. For integrating masculine loan nouns, use is rarely made of the markers *-as*, and *-us*, but see e.g. *maagus* 'stomach (internal organ)' from Estonian *magu*, and *täxtas* 'star' from Estonian *täht*. According to Tenser (2008: 47), Latvian Lotfitka has retained three masculine markers on loan nouns: *-os*, *-us* and *-is*.

Tenser (2008: 48) writes that in Latvian Lotfitka the masculine markers are distributed in accordance to the source language, *-os* is for Russian and *-is* for Latvian borrowings. In the current data Latvian masculine nouns in Latvian Lotfitka are dominantly integrated with *-os/-us* and rarely with *-is*, mostly only when the Latvian noun ends in *-is*, and so fully corresponds to Romani masculine loan marker *-is*, e.g. *trusis* 'rabbit', *kuņģis* 'stomach'. In Estonian Lotfitka

Estonian nouns tend to get either ending. The choice of the marker is connected to the Estonian stem vowel, as the genitive of *juust* ‘cheese’ is *juustu* > *juustos*; *kaev* ‘well’, GEN *kaevu* > *kaevos*; *loom* ‘animal’, GEN *looma* > *loomos*; *direktor* ‘director’, GEN *direktori* > *direktoris*, and genitive of *hunt* ‘wolf’ is *hundi* > *unt’is*. According to Elšik (2000: 19), one of the criteria for assigning gender and class to a loan in Romani is phonological shape of the noun in the source language, i.e. the final phonemes. For adaptation, the internal morphological structure of the given noun in Romani and in the source language are taken into account, and the stem of the source noun is adopted (Elšik 2000: 20). The pattern of adaptation of the nouns into Estonian Lotfitka is in accordance with the pattern provided by Elšik, i.e. the stem of the noun in the source language is the basis for adaptation.

Some Estonian adverbials are in use: *äkki*, *järsku* ‘suddenly’, *tavaliselt* ‘usually’ and *liiga* ‘too much’. Estonian vowels /x/, /æ/, /ø/ and /y/ are found in the loanwords *tähta* ‘star’, *sünnipääv* ‘birthday’, *küla* ‘village’ and also diphthongs that are not common for Romani as *lõuna* ‘lunch’. There is one semantic shift that is widespread in the Estonian Lotfitka dialect and is modeled after Estonian. The verb *dol-* ‘to receive, to get’ has taken on the meaning of ‘to be able to, can’ (Example 1) from Estonian *saama* ‘to receive, to get’ and ‘to be able to’. The more conservative forms to express the meaning ‘can’ and ‘cannot’ are inherited non-inflected *ašti* (Example 2) and *našti*, respectively, which are still in use, but being replaced by inflected *dol-* and *na dol-*, *na* being the common negation marker. In Latvian Lotfitka there are no examples of *dol-* attested with the meaning of ‘be able to’ and only the conservative inherited forms are present.

- (1) *Tu dolesa manca te jees?*
 you can.2SG me.INST COMP come.2SG
- (2) *Tu ašti manca te jees?*
 „Can you come with me?“

Estonian has had a relatively small influence on Estonian Lotfitka Romani dialect. This is due to Estonian being a contact language of Romani only in recent generations. In the borrowing scale of Thomason and Kaufman the Estonian impact on the Romani dialect could be estimated to belong in Category One, limiting the borrowing to lexical items only. However, the casual contact seems to be moving towards Category Two with changes being observed in cases of slightly more intense contact as relationships become more intimate and more Roma speak Estonian on a daily basis.

9. Xaladytka Romani influence on Estonian Lotfitka Romani

Lotfitka Romani and Xaladytka Romani both belong to the North-eastern group of Romani dialects. The dialect classification that this article is based on – Matras (2002) and Tenser (2008) – takes into account the genetic model and the geographical diffusion model. The genetic model divides the Romani dialects into branches after migrating from the Southern Balkans during the Early Romani period (roughly the Byzantine period) (Matras 2002: 215). According to the geographical diffusion model innovation is introduced in one location and then spreads gradually (ibid.: 265).

Lotfitka and Xaladytka in Estonia show mutual interference. At this stage we can attest variation in Estonian Lotfitka that is present due to contact with Xaladytka Roma. This article only describes Xaladytka influence on Estonian Lotfitka, and not vice versa. The variation is speaker specific, but the listed features appeared in the speech of more than one informant.

A change taking place in Xaladytka that is described by Tenser (2008: 67–68) is agreement between head noun and adjectives, numerals and demonstratives. In conservative Romani (Example 3) only the head noun would take the case marker and modifiers would take the oblique case marking. In Estonian Lotfitka, numerals normally do not take oblique case, unlike in other Northeastern dialect, in which numerals take the oblique marker *-e*, e.g. *trin* vs. *trin-e*

‘three’. In the Estonian Lotfitka data, some examples of case agreement (Example 4) of adjectives with head nouns was present due to Xaladytka influence. It has not yet been observed with demonstratives and numerals.

(3) *trin tern-e murš-en*
 three young-OBL men-ACC.PL
 ‘with three young men’

(4) *trin tern-en murš-en*
 three young-ACC.PL man-ACC.PL

NE dialects calque the Russian and Polish way of constructing with reflexive enclitic the passive voice of the verbs, intransitivize verbs, and making reflexives from the transitive verbs, e.g. *garavel* ‘to hide (something)’ > *garavel pe* ‘to hide oneself’. In Xaladytka there exists the impersonal reflexive enclitic *pe(s)*. Latvian Lotfitka has personalized markers of reflexiveness on verbs: 1sg. *man*, 2sg. *tut*, and 1pl. *men* and 2pl. *tumen*; 3pl. is marked with reflexive pronoun *pe(s)* and 3pl. with *pen*. In Estonian Lotfitka verbs are often calqued into Romani from Russian, Polish or Latvian with the reflexive enclitic, but in Latvian Lotfitka the personalized enclitic is used instead of impersonalized *pe*, e.g. in Estonian Xaladytka ‘to meet’ *udykhel pe* is marked with clitic *pe* in all persons, e.g. *ame udykhasa(m) pe* ‘we will meet’, while in Latvian Lotfitka in 2pl. the enclitic would be *men*, e.g. *ame dikhasam men* ‘we will meet’.

In Estonian Lotfitka we see variation in all speakers’ samples – sometimes only the impersonal reflexive pronoun *pe(s)* is used and in some cases personal enclitics are used. The strategy of not integrating Russian verbs, seems to be influenced by Xaladytka as well.

Some Estonian Lotfitka speakers have replaced Lotfitka epistemic complementizer *si* (from *sir* ‘how’), modeled after Latvian, with Xaladytka complementizer *so* ‘what’, modeled after Russian. In these cases Estonian Lotfitka speakers vary between the forms of Latvian Lotfitka and Xaladytka or prefer only the Xaladytka feature as with the epistemic complementizer. The existence of both features

in the speech of Estonian Lotfitka, and the tendency to prefer the shared features with Xaladytka allows us to consider these features as recent influence on Estonian Lotfitka from the Xaladytka dialect.

10. Conclusion

This article draws attention to the contact situation of the Lotfitka dialect in Estonia and points out the degree to which the recent and current contact languages – Latvian, Russian and Estonian – have influenced Estonian Lotfitka, using Kaufman and Thomason's borrowing scale classification which describes intensities of contact and levels of interference. The classification was employed as a more comprehensible tool to observe the situation and relevant features of Estonian Lotfitka.

Russian has had a great influence on most of the dialects in the Northeastern group and has triggered contact-induced changes in Estonian Lotfitka the most when compared to Estonian and Latvian. Estonian Lotfitka exhibits borrowings from Russian of verbal prefixes, adjectival suffixes and indefinite pronouns, as well as heavy influence from Russian on phonology. These changes lead us to evaluate the Russian contact intensity and level of borrowings as being the Category 3 or 4.

Lotfitka has had intense contact with the Latvian language and some structural borrowing has taken place into Estonian Lotfitka. The layer of lexical borrowings is now narrowing and giving way to Russian and Estonian. In the borrowing framework the situation is between Categories 2 and 3.

Estonian has not influenced Estonian Lotfitka to the extent that Latvian and Russian have. There are semantic shifts and borrowing of lexicon. The lexical borrowings from Estonian into Romani also retain their phonetic structure and introduce Estonian vowels into Estonian Lotfitka. The language contact situation can be seen as casual contact moving towards slightly more intense contact, described by the borrowing scale as moving from Category 1 to

Category 2. As Latvian is losing its importance in the community, Estonian is replacing it as a strongest current L2.

Beside the three local contact languages, Xaladytka Romani spoken in Estonia has an effect on the Estonian Lotfitka dialect. There is a variation in the speech of Lotfitka speakers in Estonia that is triggered by contact with Xaladytka Roma.

For future research, samples of casual speech should be collected in order to evaluate the state of tendencies that are currently based solely on the translated questionnaires. There are currently no up-to-date material of narratives or dialogues that could complement the data presented here.

Although the samples were collected from different localities in Estonia, in the current research samples from the Estonian-Latvian border town of Valga/Valka are missing. The town has the biggest population of Roma (around 180 Roma inhabitants) and it is also known as a migration destination for Latvian Lotfitkas. Therefore, samples from the area would be important in order to investigate the interaction between Latvian and Estonian Roma and observe whether the innovations from Latvian Lotfitka are spreading. It would furthermore give a more rounded picture of the state of Estonian Lotfitka.

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