

Presentations of Romanies in the Czech media: on category work in television debates



Discourse & Society
 Copyright © 2000
 SAGE Publications
 (London,
 Thousand Oaks, CA
 and New Delhi)
 Vol 11(4): 487–513
 [0957-9265
 (200010) 11:4;
 487–513; 014081]

DR IVAN LEUDAR
 MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY

DR JIŘÍ NEKVAPIL
 CHARLES UNIVERSITY, PRAGUE,

ABSTRACT. This article concerns categorizations of Romanies in Czech media. We analysed four television debates which were broadcast in the Czech Republic between 1990 and 1995. All of them concerned Romanies, and Czechs and Romanies participated in each of them. The analytic technique we used was membership categorization analysis (MCA), associated with Sacks (1992), and with contemporary ethnomethodology. Our analysis focused on how descriptions of Romanies were used and warranted, and how the membership categorizations both changed in arguments and resisted change. We found that participants did not simply describe Romanies, they warranted the descriptions and, in doing so, presented some of the descriptions as matters of common knowledge and others as facts. Not all 'common knowledge' of Romanies was, however, held in common by both Czechs and Romanies. Czechs know Romanies as those who do not live like normal people, who create problems and commit crimes, but the facts about Romanies as unique people with a valid form of life are only known to Romanies.

KEY WORDS: *category change, Gypsy, membership category, Romany, TV debates*

Introduction

In 1997, Romanies became an emotional topic in the British national news. Many declared that they could no longer tolerate the racism in Central and Eastern Europe, and there was an 'exodus' of Romanies from the Czech Republic and Slovakia to Canada, the United Kingdom, and elsewhere to Western Europe.¹ The controversy in the British media concerned whether they were indeed escaping persecution, or were they rather 'economic migrants'. Their dominant categorization was 'asylum seekers', sometimes with the word 'bogus' prefixed. This article is one in a series of papers in which we analyse how the Czech media presented Romany people in the years prior to the 'exodus' and the effects these presentations had (see also Gál, 1999a, 1999b; Homolá, 1999a, 1999b; Karhanová,

1999; Nekvapil and Leudar, 1999; Ondrejovi, 1999; Šabatová, 1999; for a review see Nekvapil et al., 1998).² We use membership categorization analysis (MCA below for short) as a tool but one of our concerns is how the membership category Romany is subject to change. This issue has not in general been a regular interest in MCA which commonly starts by taking particular membership categories for granted (see Sacks, 1992, part 1, lecture 6; Sharrock, personal communication).³ In our materials, however, membership category change is sometimes demonstrably of concern to the participants'. We conclude that MCA, as it stands, is a useful technique in analysing category change.

The materials we use come from four TV debates, all broadcast on Czech television between 1990 and 1995, in which Romany–Czech coexistence was discussed. Such programmes only became possible following the 'Velvet Revolution' and at the time many of them were considered not just an entertainment but important political events in their own right.⁴ They were highlighted in the TV news and reported subsequently in Czech newspapers (see Leudar and Nekvapil, 1998; Nekvapil and Leudar, 1998). The four debates considered here were held at sensitive points in the recent history of the Czech Republic – one, for example, took place just a week after the division of Czechoslovakia in January 1993, another in 1995 only a few days after the killing of a Romany youth by a group of skinheads. Most participants were Czech politicians (the Minister of Justice took part in one debate, and the leader of an extreme right wing populist party in another) but Romany activists also took part. We provide more detailed background information on the participants and the programmes as it becomes relevant.

We focus here on how the participants in the four debates described Romanies and how they used the descriptions in arguments. Take for instance the following 16 examples:⁵

1. Romanies have a different mentality than white people, they express themselves differently, they look different.
2. They do not behave themselves like normal people.
3. They create hassles everywhere.
4. Gypsies have a distaste for work.
5. Gypsies should live like we do, following the laws, the rules of the game.
6. What interests them is money, sex and enough food.
7. They take as much as possible from the other.
8. The Gypsy ethnic group accounts for seventy, eighty percents of criminality, and therefore they are immense burden for this uh for this country.
9. Fifty to sixty percent of those criminal acts are really committed by the members of this ethnic group.
10. The Romany ethnic group accounts for a considerable share of crimes like pick pocketing or pimping.
11. Romanies simply commit a certain part of banal criminality.
12. People only knew about us that we steal, rob, murder.

13. Romany in the media equals thief, thug, jail bird, simply criminal element.
14. One pimps, steals, makes living pick-pocketing but the majority of Romanies are trying to look for work.
15. What is commonly said about us – incompetent, no know-how, they can't read, they do not have the intelligence.
16. Most Romanies are religious.

This list is not a fiction – it contains descriptions which were actually used by the participants in the TV debates. We have, perhaps unwisely, already set our problem to be an investigation of how 'the category Romany is subject to change'. The list though contains two nouns, 'Romany' and 'Gypsy'. Both of these (and the pro-terms such as 'they' and 'us') can be used to refer to Romanies and this is not a matter of careless translation. There are two words for Romany in Czech; one is 'Rom', the other is 'Cikán' and we have used systematically the word 'Romany' for the former and 'Gypsy' for the latter, even though these translations do not quite capture the pragmatics of the two words: 'Gypsy' is not always used in a derogatory way, but 'Cikán' almost always is. So how many categories are there really in Czech for Romanies? Perhaps two, corresponding to each word, or, as Watson would argue, just one, with the words 'Rom' and 'Cikán' used either to raise or to depress the status of the membership category incumbents (this also depending on who uses the word, as with English terms such as 'nigger'; see Hughes (1971) and Watson (1983)). So how do we decide how many categories there are for Romanies? Before rushing to answer this question, we should clarify how we use the term 'membership category'. In linguistics and in linguistic philosophy, context-invariant concepts and categories are postulated, among other things, to 'correct' the indexicality of language and to account for ambiguity and homonymy. A word can mean more than one thing, and two words can mean the same, and these facts are explained by representing the word in an unambiguous, context-free and technical language of concepts, propositions and logical structures (see Fodor, 1975; Chomsky, 1980). The point about such representations which is relevant here is that they are set in technical terms and used to explain ordinary language. We work in a very different paradigm and this is not how we use the term 'membership category'. MCA provides technical terminology which could be used as a resource for a technical gloss on ordinary language. Our concern is, however, with the membership categorization as a situated language activity – here we are concerned in particular with how the words 'Romany' and 'Gypsy', as well as pro-terms and descriptions of the incumbents are used by the participants in specific encounters. The problem of how many categories for Romanies there are in a language is therefore not our proper research issue but it can arise locally in arguments and for the participants themselves. We shall see that the participants themselves give accounts of membership categories, contrast them and sometimes even enumerate them, but they do so using their everyday language. We could try to list different membership category terms pertaining to Romanies but the following question seems more pertinent: Which

membership categories operate in this particular encounter, and what mutual dialogical relationship are they in?

There is another way to think of the list. You could structure it, perhaps around themes such as criminality, mental inferiority and so on, and say that it is the Czechs' stereotype of Romany, or at least a fragment of it. You could even collect such lists repeatedly to see whether the stereotype is changing (Stangor, 1995). Simplifying the matter greatly, a stereotype in social psychology is a belief structure, which is held in common by members of a group, and which resists personal experiences and good arguments.

In a sense stereotypes in cognitive social psychology are akin to delusions in psychiatry. Delusions are beliefs which are not corrected to take account of inconsistent personal experiences or good counter-arguments (see for example, Hamilton, 1976: 39–48). Both stereotypes and delusions can be held about someone despite their evident skills, dispositions or conduct. Can we therefore talk about stereotypes as collective delusions and say that the populations using them are deluded? Not quite, because there are also important differences between the two concepts – one of them being that stereotypes are beliefs which are held in common whereas delusions belong to individuals. False beliefs which are widely accepted (such as some religious or scientific ones) do not count as delusions in psychiatry.⁶ Delusions are by definition pathological, they indicate a break with reality, and result in pathological conduct. Stereotypes, on the other hand, have a positive cognitive function (to decrease the 'information processing load', at least according to some cognitive social psychologists (e.g. Macrae et al., 1994). Does this mean that we cannot say that using stereotypes in the face of evidence and adjusting the social world to fit them is pathological? As the concepts of 'stereotype' and 'delusion' are technically defined we certainly cannot make this claim. In fact, as shown in this article, questions of whether beliefs about Romanians are held in common or individually, whether they are true or false, socially adaptive or socially pathological, concerned the participants in our four debates. The line between a stereotype and a delusion can be situation contingent and should not be set theoretically.

In fact, it is not difficult to argue that the cognitive concept of 'stereotype' does not reflect what actually happens in ordinary social interactions and for that reason it is misleading. The list we provided consisted not of mental beliefs – these are postulated by analysts – but of descriptions which were produced by specific individuals, at particular points in the television debates and for particular purposes. It is also unlikely that *all* of the descriptions in the list would be ever asserted – or considered privately – at any one time, by any one person. It has been proposed elsewhere, that instead of talking in technical terms about the process of 'attribution', social psychologists should study empirically how participants actually ascribe particular motives, intentions and beliefs to each other in conversations (Antaki and Leudar, 1990, 1992) and why do they do this. This work tried to return 'attributions' to everyday life by studying them as moves in conversations such as ordinary explanations or backings. Antaki and Leudar

found that attributions have conversation-contingent properties which are lost in transcribing them from ordinary talk to technical discourse (not just in cognitive social psychology but also in discourse analysis – see Leudar and Antaki, 1996). The problem is that the research informed by the cognitive notion of stereotype, just like that on attribution, steps away from such dialogical particulars and treats them as irrelevant and incidental. Billig (1985) noted this 15 years ago and proposed a dialogically based concept of stereotype. However his strategy at the time was, to complement one technically formulated social process ('stereotyping') by another ('individuation') and the empirical study of mundane conversational stereotyping remained a programme.

In this article, we are not aiming to produce a better technical concept of 'stereotype', even though this could be done, perhaps, by defining it as a mutual and socially distributed cognition (see for example, Clark, 1996). We do not want to research cognitive social psychology or cognitive linguistics better than they are done at present. Instead we are interested in descriptions of Romanies in Czech media and the uses to which they are put. Our starting point is that descriptions are produced by particular people, at specific points in conversations, and for specific purposes – in a word, they are situated (see Costall and Leudar, 1996). Descriptions can, of course, be implicit in talk and sometimes they will be a part of doing something other than describing; for instance, accusing someone or rejecting someone (cf. Drew, 1978). One of our interests here is how descriptions of Romanies are used to reject them – as fellow citizens and people – or to counteract the rejection. All this, of course, does not mean that we cannot use the word 'stereotype'. It is an ordinary English word and there is no reason to shun it in its mundane sense, especially if the participants gloss some descriptions as being stereotypic – that is, not paying attention to the individual qualities of a person and describing them, so to speak, with a stencil.⁷ This being so, 'stereotyping' can be approached as members' situated and reflexive verbal activity.

Let us prepare the ground further by explaining our main concerns here. One of them will be the category work routinely done by the participants in the four television debates. The research in MCA implies that in very general terms this work is likely to be of two kinds (Eglin and Hester, 1992; Hester and Eglin, 1997; Jayyusi, 1984; Sacks, 1992). First, into which collections of membership categories do participants put Romanies and from which collections do they exclude them? (In our list of descriptions, Romanies were treated as an ethnic group and as a criminal fraternity, and they were not 'normal people'.) The second kind of work involves which predicates participants attach to the category or categories used for Romanies. (In the list of descriptions we have provided, the predicates included 'they are religious' and 'they steal'. We should stress again, however, that we are interested in the category work not as a technical abstraction, but as ordinary talk – how is it actually done in situ, when and for what purpose?)

Not all the descriptions in the list we have provided can possibly be treated as aspects of the Czech stereotypes of Romanies. Take description 6 for instance – 'What interests them is money, sex and enough food'. This is hardly what many

Czechs would say about Romanies. (We shall see that it is an individual rejection of Romanies by a young Christian.) So while many descriptions of Romanies are possible, only some are held in common. We are concerned with how participants warrant the descriptions of Romanies they produce. Sometimes they might formulate them as being common knowledge (or a common way of speaking), at other times as matters of personal experience or expertise, and yet others might simply be asserted as facts (cf. Widdicombe, 1998). The technical problem is whether the relationship between a membership category and the qualities attributed to its incumbents should be represented by a formal and technical term (perhaps as an 'entailment' or a category-predicate 'tie' as in Eglin and Hester (1992: 248–9)) or whether it should be treated as a dialogical connection which is occasioned and defeasible, as Drew [1978] and Watson [1987] did.) If the participants are regularly concerned with the epistemic status of the relationship between membership categories on the one hand and the qualities of their incumbents on the other, and if they warrant that relationship on different occasions in terms of different kinds of knowledge, then the formal term 'category-predicate tie' could come between the analyst and the conversation. We therefore focus on how the participants describe Romanies and warrant their descriptions and, as we have already indicated, our approach is to treat descriptions as situated activities.

One aspect of situatedness we are particularly concerned with, as stated already, is the function of descriptions in arguments (see Quasthoff, 1978), another is participant positioning (cf. Clayman, 1992). The materials we use in this article are debates in which both Czechs and Romanies participated.⁸ The positioning involves categorization of the participants – who is speaking: a parliamentary deputy, a poet, a criminal, an extremist, and whom is he or she addressing – a colleague, a peer, or enemies? The participant positioning of Romanies in particular may be a problem for some participants – not only is the category 'Romany' the participants' concern, but it may also be a position from which a Romany speaks in the debate. But why should there be a problem? Incumbents of a membership category are by default treated as representative of the category (Sacks, 1992). When Romany participants speak as Romanies they should therefore be representative of it, but this is typically not the case – as explained later, they contradict without fail the predicates attached to the category. Moreover, cognitive approaches formulate stereotypes as the beliefs of one group of people which they project onto another group. The members of this group are seen as the objects of stereotypes and they do not participate in the stereotype management and use. When we treat stereotyping as a conversational activity, this stance becomes impossible. Why? Membership categories are prior resources for talking about people but the descriptions in which they are used are joint conversational accomplishments – they need not be simply applied to Romanies by Czechs. In other words, mundane stereotyping may need to be treated as participants' joint conversational accomplishment. A similar point has been made with respect to the conversational stigmatization of individuals with

learning disabilities by Brewer and Yearley (1989). Stigmatization is not a matter of perception but of social interaction, as Goffman argued some time ago (Goffman, 1963 [1986]). This does not mean, as explained later, that the participants in a conversation cannot make obvious who is doing the stereotyping and who is being stereotyped, though not in so many words.

Romanies in TV debates

The following extract (1) comes from a religious programme in which Romany activists, Catholic priests and students discussed the problems of Romany-Czech coexistence. One of them, JH, said 'everybody knows that Romanies have a different mentality than white people and that they express themselves differently, they look different' (Extract 1, lines 81 to 82).

Extract 1

KVRP90/73–82

- 73 JH: well I would (.) follow on a bit from (.) the words of (.) of Mr Reichert (.) here, who very
 74 correctly said that we are representatives of Romany nation, I liked that because until the recent
 75 times one did not speak about the Romany nation at all, (.) eh still recently or actually
 76 before the seventeenth of November Romanies were not really recognized as anything, not even
 as an ethnic group, (.)
 77 and this is actually only beginning to develop in present times, or we have wider
 78 space for action, that eh we are beginning in fact to be considered a nation, an ethnic group,
 79 well and I think that this is very important for us because (.) eh in the past (.) we were not as
 80 I said considered to be (.) anything (.) eh unique, even though we were actually something
 unique
 81 because everybody knows that Romanies have a different mentality than white people, and that
 they express themselves differently,
 82 they look different, but eh even so they have to abide by all the (.) same (.) eh rules of the
 society with which they do not identify themselves.

To understand JH's description of Romanies in lines 81 to 82 we have to note several points. The first one concerns the position from which she spoke. Earlier in the debate she was introduced by the host of the programme (R) as somebody who works for the 'Romany Civic Initiative' (Extract 2, lines 17 to 18). This is an organization of Romany activists who work on behalf of Romanies. She is also introduced as a doctor (Extract 2, line 17).

Extract 2

KVRP90/16–64

- 16 R: I would like to eh introduce to you more closely these last two participants, who have not
 17 (.) joined us before: (.) eh doctor Jana Holomková (.) eh she works for the Romany Civic
 18 Initiative, so does Mr Horvath, who I can introduce to you as a poet of the Romany
 19 nation.
 ((44 lines omitted))
 61 ... it is clear that none of us eh are (.) disqualified before the god, what does it mean
 62 disqualification, disqualification I looked in the dictionary, means (.) to declare somebody in
 some respect

- 63 unsuited (...) eh you know (.) we (.) have here for that reason eh these two friends eh from
 Romany
 64 nation, because they were many times declared not to be fit (.) to live with others.

Later in the interview, but before Extract (1), JH is introduced as a 'friend from the Romany nation' (Extract 2, line 63).⁹ So when JH was introduced to the viewers, she was offered three dialogical positions from which to speak: as a Romany activist, as a professional and as a Romany friend. (Visually her dress does not differ in style from the other participants but ethnically she is clearly a Romany.)¹⁰ It would be a mistake, however, to think that participant positions are unilaterally allocated at the beginning of a debate, without needing to be affirmed and without possibly changing as the programme moves on. It is noticeable that JH enters the debate by first attending to her participant position, and that she uses the introductions by the host as a resource to establish her local participant position. How does she do this? She quotes the host who, according to her, 'very correctly said that we are representatives of Romany nation' (Extract 1, line 74). In fact, she was presented as a *friend* from Romany nation and she changes it into a 'representative' (line 74). So she does not simply fill a position given to her, she accomplishes the participant positioning with the resources offered previously.¹¹

The result is that when she describes Romanies at this point, she speaks not just as herself (and she clearly does not lose her individuality) but also as a Romany and for Romanies.¹² Her individuality and her role (representing Romany nation on the programme) are intertwined – note her use of pro-terms in 'we were not as I said considered to be anything unique' (Extract 1, lines 79 to 80, our emphasis). The problem though is, who are the Romanies that she is one of and speaks for? As we noted in the introduction, her position is expressed in terms of a membership category which is not consensual but is contested in the programme.

JH attends to this problem in two ways. One is to establish into which collection the category Romany belongs. JH observes that this is historically contingent – in the past 'Romanies were not really recognized as anything, not even as an ethnic group', now the TV host R speaks of 'Romany nation' and she approves.¹³ So Romanies *should be* treated as a nation, alongside Czechs, Slovaks and others. This is for JH the *correct* categorization, and note that she presents it as a new categorization. According to her, this is not how Romanies were thought of ('recognized' was her actual word) in the past. The change in the category Romany is clearly one of her concerns in the debate. At this point she is trying to accomplish such a change by proposing a new collection for the membership category Romany.¹⁴

That Romanies are a nation is not just JH's individual view – she does not simply assert this but bases her argument on the categorization of Romanies by the programme host. The category work is then a collective matter, and certainly not a private mental representation. The sequence is as follows: R opposes two categorizations of JH and H: one is 'friends from Romany nation', the other is (those who are) 'not fit to live with others', and he clearly opts for the former.

What is implicit is that Romanies are a nation. JH foregrounds this categorization, approves and as we shall see, provides a warrant. That warrant is actually the first statement in our list – she says ‘everybody knows that Romanies have a different mentality from white people, and that they express themselves differently, they look different’ (Extract 1, lines 81 to 83). The aspirations of Romanies to nationhood is supported in terms of unique mentality, body and conduct.

This means that, as a part of her argument, JH manages the category Romany in a second way – she associates with it unique mentality, conduct and looks. She does not actually specify what these are – it is sufficient for her argument to assert that Romanies are different from ‘white people’.¹⁵ So the description (1) in the list we began with, which could easily have been taken in a negative way – for instance as ‘these are strange, alien people’ – is actually positive. JH is using it to support Romanies’ aspirations to nationhood. Conversationally, associating a predicate with a category is here supporting a claim.

What epistemic status does JH assign to the assertion that Romanies ‘have a different mentality’, ‘express themselves differently’ and ‘look different’? She presents this description as a matter of common knowledge – ‘everybody knows’ it, she says. Contrast this to the following extract (3) which comes slightly later in the same debate.

Extract 3

KRP90/108–109

108 JH: [(well I)] I would only add to that it is very little known that most Romanies
109 are eh religious, even though their relationship to the faith is not traditional.

Here JH is asserting a fact about Romanies – they are religious albeit in a non-conformist way. This description is presented as a fact which is explicitly not common knowledge. Contrast this to JH’s other description of Romanies which was marked epistemically by ‘everybody knows’.¹⁶ So some predicates characterizing the category Romany are then matters of common knowledge, others are facts not generally known. Were we to ask ‘little known to whom?’, the answer could not sensibly be ‘to Romanies’, so JH presumably implies that the category Romany is different for Romanies and for non-Romanies (sometimes referred to as ‘Gaja’). So there are two points to be noted. One is that a membership category may differ for different collectivities and so they can be relative to knowers. The other point is that the distinction between two ways in which membership categories and predicates are associated is not our invention but participants’ resource.

So the category work JH engages in is of two sorts – establishing a new collection for the membership category Romany and associating new predicates with it. So far then, membership category change can be dealt with using the MCA as it stands. Both kinds of category work are in effect a Romany activist’s attempts to change Czech’s membership category Romany in a period of social change. Now is her category work unique to her? In Extract 4 another Romany activist speaks. He was introduced in the same way as JH, as ‘a friend from Romany nation’, but also as the ‘poet of the Romany nation’ (Extract 2, line 19). He says:

Extract 4

KRP90/250–254

250 R: [friends]

251 H: [the first task] I would should be according to me to get to know each other. for forty years they were writing about us.

252 people only knew about us that we steal, rob, murder. but in every society there are (.) good and bad people.

253 and it would be good (.) to learn to divide people not into black and white [(.) but into good] and bad

254 R: [of course]

Note H's use of pronouns. He invokes the category Romany through his use of the pronoun 'us' and he associates with it the predicates 'steal', 'rob' and 'murder'. But he does not invoke the category Romany in an impersonal way, but specifies his relation to it – in effect, 'I am not talking about Romanies, but about *us*.' So he speaks for himself, but as a Romany, and the characteristics attributed to us, Romanies, are attributed by 'them', but this is not how 'we' know ourselves. In other words, H makes use of the description of Romanies as those who engage in specified serious criminal acts, but presents this tie as something that journalists write and the majority population (by implication) know about Romanies. H is certainly not asserting as a fact that Romanies rob, steal and murder – in lines 252 to 253 he rejects the proposition that all Romanies are criminals, that is, using MCA terms, the association between the *category* Romany and criminality. He is saying, perhaps with some irony, that this is what people 'knew about us'.¹⁷

H is, however, not concerned with Czechs' beliefs about Romanies as abstract knowledge. The debate is about what prevents Czechs and Romanies from living together. He acknowledges Czech 'knowledge' of Romanies, but as a barrier to mutual understanding and reconciliation. Being an activist he tries to change this 'knowledge', and as we have seen he does this by dissociating a predicate from a membership category. So both JH and H are concerned with changing Czechs' membership category Romany.¹⁸

So to take stock so far – JH and H have engaged in two kinds of membership category work. One was concerned with selecting the collection into which the membership category 'Romany' *properly* belongs. The other was to characterize that category by either associating to it new predicates or by dissociating old ones from it. (Presenting some of predicates as facts not generally known and others as matters of common knowledge which is, however, false are two respective ways of doing this.) The relationship between a membership category and predicates for participants can be not a semantic matter but a claim in need of a justification. At least in this domain of talk, it is then somewhat problematic to talk in general about membership category-predicate binding. Category-predicate binding in MCA cannot be treated as simply a semantic matter. The participants themselves are concerned with whose knowledge and conventions warrant the relationship and the category work is done in and as a matter of ordinary argumentation.

ES speaking in Extract 5 is not an activist. He is a student with aristocratic aspirations – he refers to himself as Eugen von Sokol which sounds comical even in Czech. He is speaking on a religious programme and characterizes Romanies (using ‘us’–‘them’ pro-terms only) as people who are materialistic and selfish. What are their values? Mostly they just care about money, sex and enough food. He claims that their disposition is to take as much as possible from others. None of these are very Christian qualities and so he is denying that the incumbents of the category Romany have the characteristics normally associated with Christians – caring for others, being spiritual.¹⁹ Bearing in mind the character of the programme, these are desirable qualities and the rejection is serious.

Extract 5

KRP90/231–236

- 231 ES: [here] what is concerned is basically their way of thinking. (.) what is values, (.) what is are money (.)
- 232 sex (..) and (sim)ply en- fo- enough food
- 233 R: Eugen and is it not just the same with us? do you know our soc[iety as better]
- 234 ES: [but when I see for instance]
- 235 those (..) whenever he wants to take (..) as much as possible from another, I am not saying everybody yeh, (.) but mostly well I
- 236 do not know on those streets so (.) for instance I don't know (..) to take as much as possible from the other.

How does ES warrant the attribution of those particular negative and excluding qualities to Romanies? He does this by reference to his own personal experience – to what he ‘sees’ on ‘those streets’ (Extract 5, line 236). This experience is personal but it is also made relevant to the situation in which he speaks. His description of Romanies is then a negation of what is held to be a desirable quality in that situation, a religious programme. Note how the programme host reacts. He does not deny that qualities ES attributes to Romanies are undesirable and he accepts the seriousness of rejection but he asserts that these negative qualities apply also to Czechs. ES’s *particular* rejection of Romanies is rejected by the host and it is not defended by any other participant. It remains his own and cannot be glossed as stereotypic. In fact, the characteristic ascribed to Romanies which is typically used to reject and exclude them is criminality.

Our concern now will be with how ascriptions of criminality to Romanies are occasioned and used. We have so far considered one such ascription. H presented Czechs’ ‘knowledge’ that Romanies ‘rob, steal and murder’ as his explanation for the lack of mutual understanding between the two ethnic groups. H is a Romany activist but S (see Extract 6) is the Czech equivalent of Le Pen – at the time the leader of a far right nationalist and populist party. His description was the eighth item in our list; he said that the ‘Gypsy ethnic group, (.) accounts for seventy eighty percents of criminality, and therefore they are an immense burden for this (.) uh for this country’ (Extract 6, lines 255 to 257). The television programme is *Aréna* and it was broadcast in 1995.

Extract 6

Aréna 95/253–260

253 S: we [don´t judge any]one, (.) we don´t judge [anyone (.)] according to (.) their origin.(.) colour of the skin and so on. in no case. we judge citizens only from the way, they behave. whether they follow or don´t follow the law.

254 X: well (.)

255 S: and it is not my fault, that the Gypsy ethnic group, (.) accounts for seventy eighty percents 256 of criminality, and therefore they are an immense burden for this (.) uh for this country. so I

257 think that for Gypsies it should be either they will live (.) like we do, following the laws the 258 rules of the game and so on, or after all they do not have uh (.) to be there with us, I would not force anyone to stay here with us, cause our country nothing much, lots of work,

259 Audience: ((laughing)) [((laughing))]

260 S: [any time it is raining,] snowing heavily and so on, I think let´s say in Spain it would be considerably (.) better.

S associates criminality with the ‘gypsy ethnic group’, not just with particular individuals or a subgroup (line 255). He talks about crimes in general and the expression he uses is almost an extreme case formulation – ‘seventy eighty percent’ would comprise a considerable part of all the criminal activity in the Czech Republic. How does he warrant this rather extreme ascription? He does not present it as something known to ‘people’ – the phrase ‘it is not my fault that’ sets up the complement as a fact – their criminality is quite simply a background *fact* about Romanies which can be presupposed. Now how does this ascription fit in the conversation? We need to consider S’s positioning at this point in talk – from what position is he asserting the ‘fact’ about Romanies?

B, who was at that time the only Romany parliamentary deputy, presented S with a disjunction: how do you judge people – according to the colour of their skin, or according to their conduct (Extract 7, line 239)? The disjunction contrasts a proper and an improper way to assess a person. The hearable implication is that S judges Romanies on the basis of their colour (the improper way) and rejects them because they are not white. This would mean that the views of Romanies which S expresses are those of a racist.

Extract 7

Aréna 95/238–246

238 H1: mister deputy.

239 B: (.) I (.) mister chairman, (.) have for you uh: one (.) just one question: , so far, (.) and this I think that we´ll drop these exchanges of fire and come to the merits of the thing. (.) citizens they are interested, and I am personally too, (.) how you judge, Czechoslov–Czech citizen. (.) if sa, so to say according to the colour of the skin, (.) according to proper manners, or according to political, (.) orientation. (.) how you judge that citizen and what (type of a citizen) you simply choose.

244 S: mister deputy you are the only representative of Gypsies in the parlia [ment.]

245 B: [of Ro]manies.

246 Audience: ((more people laughing))

In fact, later in the programme, B calls S a racist *explicitly* (Extract 8, line 671)

from the Czech Republic. (S in fact proposed this solution to the Romany problem more than once in the *Aréna* (Extract 6, lines 258 to 260, and Extract 9, lines 630 to 633). This proposal is not personal but for his party – note the self repair of the pronoun he uses (Extract 9, lines 630 to 631).

Extract 9

Aréna 95/630–634

- 630 S: I do not force anybody, I said, attention, we do not force anybody, to be here with us, there are better countries, with milder climate, aren't there and so on.
- 631 Audience: ((laughing))
- 632 where one maybe even works less, because the bananas ripen there three times a year
- 633 Audience: ((laughter))
- 634 S: and so on.

So two participants opposed ethnically and politically both oriented themselves at crime conventionally associated with Romanies. H, who is a Romany himself, presented this association as a false common knowledge which stands in the way of rapprochement between the two ethnic groups and should be changed (see Extract 4). S, who is an extreme Czech nationalist, on the other hand presented the criminality as a background fact about 'Gypsies' and used it to warrant the aim of his own party – to expel 'Gypsies' from the Czech Republic. He clearly did not want to change the membership category – he spoke of *facts* about 'Gypsies' and no change in the membership category would change these facts – it would constitute a delusion. The change he seeks is not that of the membership category but the exclusion of its incumbents, so implicit in how S argues is a stance *against* a membership category change. Membership category change is therefore not here something to do with the logic of categories – immanent, effortless and possibly necessary – it is rather a matter of participants' effort and contingent argument.

The next participant we shall consider is U (Extract 10). The following background ethnographic information is relevant: U was a Charta 77 prisoner and the only famous member with leanings towards Trotsky. He is now a parliamentary Ombudsman for human rights – at the time of the *Aréna* TV debate he was in this position informally.

Extract 10

Aréna 95/604–611

- 604 U: [eh I] would rather formulate it this way.
- 605 it is above all necessary to protest against what, you said, it is not true, that seventy to
- 606 eighty percent of criminality is committed by the Romany ethnic group. it is not true with respect to any ((particular))
- 607 crime, and even in the case of those like pick pocketing or pimping, where (.) the Romany
- 608 ethnic group accounts for a considerable share, for reasons which are very complicated, and which stem from mainly from their
- 609 social position. and not from that they would be genetically different from [us ()]
- 610 S: [or in] the distaste
for work =
- 611 U: = or in the distaste for work. that is not it. ...

U denies categorically S's assertion that the Romany ethnic group in fact accounts for 70 to 80 percent of criminality (Extract 10, lines 604 to 606). He, however, does not deny outright the association between the membership category Romany and *some* criminal activity. He concedes that the 'Romany ethnic group' accounts for a 'considerable share' of crimes like 'pick pocketing or pimping' (Extract 10, lines 607 to 608). He clearly does not use this concession to reject Romanies as is indicated by his explanation which in effect shifts responsibility for the deeds he ascribes. The ascription of the less serious crimes to Romanies is instead a part of his protest against accusing Romanies of *all* the crime in the Czech republic. Protesting by means of this concession, however, expresses U's assessment at what Romanies mean to the Czechs. The point is that he associates 'a considerable share' of this kind of crime with Romanies as a group, not with individual Romanies who live in the Czech Republic. He does not split the category Romany in the way H did (Extract 4, lines 253 to 254); instead he splits the category crime. F, who was at the time the Secretary at the Czech Ministry of Interior does so too (on a different television programme). He argues that only particular sorts of crimes are committed by Romanies. These he categorizes as 'banal crimes' as opposed to organized crimes (Extract 11, lines 222 to 224).

Extract 11

Debata95/218–229

- 218 F: ((responding to B)) but mister mister deputy, if you had read the materials which we have submitted properly, there
- 219 was no list of extremists never existed, and moreover it will not exist. we are not going to go this way.
- 220 but I want to repeat, that simply eh Romanies are not for us extremists.
- 221 of course on the other hand to sort of to complete an objective view of this matter it is
- 222 necessary to say, eh that eh Romanies commit a certain part of the banal criminality. I deliberately say
- 223 banal, because according to my information where the organised crime is concerned, there their share is
- 224 actually a minority one, minimal, and we need not fear it so much. so to be objective it is necessary to say
- 225 that Romanies simply commit certain part of banal criminality, and this irritates the [public.]
- 226 H2: [and what sort,] what sort of criminality.
- 227 F: it is the criminality which for instance concerns [thefts,]
- 228 H2: [right of course.]
- 229 F: I think people know this very well, there is no point in explaining this any further here.

F associates the tendency to commit banal crimes with the membership category Romany in two ways. First it is his objective view of the matter (and he should know, he is the Deputy Interior Minister) and then it is a matter of common knowledge, which does not need explaining (Extract 11, lines 221 to 222 and 224 and Extract 11, line 229 respectively). He therefore distinguishes between the facts about Romanies and the people's common knowledge of Romanies. We have seen this use of a different epistemic connection between

Romanies and banal criminality already. In general, the ascriptions of characteristics to Romanies are warranted as matters of common knowledge, as matters of specialist individual knowledge based on the participant's social position, and, as we shall see, with reference to incumbents taken to be representative of a membership category.

Note however, that the *same predicates* can be presented by some participants as facts and by others as common knowledge (about Romanies). It is not the case that all participants mark some predicates as common knowledge and other predicates as facts. This means that epistemic marking cannot by itself be used to classify some knowledge as stereotypic generalities and some as individual and situation contingent. The epistemic marking is used strategically. We shall return to this point later in this article.

But what occasions F's ascription of banal criminality to Romanies? He says he is doing this to be objective. But where is the lack of objectivity at that point in the debate? F is commenting on a claim that Romanies have been put on a list of extremist groups compiled by the Czech interior ministry. The participant U glosses this categorization as being racist – Romanies should be 'looked at as citizens like us' (Extract 12, lines 195 to 196 and 194 respectively). In other words he advocates category change and sees the need for change to be a moral and political matter.

Extract 12

Debata95/192–196

192 U: ... but Romanies are not at all an eh extremist group, =

193 X: =()=

194 U: =and it is not possible to look at them in this way. they are citizens like us, and he who can't see this, and who groups them with problematic groups,

195 and the police does that, often, even in the reports, he de facto approaches

196 the position of racism, and that the state organs cannot be allowed to do this. we have to challenge this.

F who represents the Czech Ministry of Interior is in effect forced to express a view on to what collection the membership category Romanies belongs (Extract 11, line 220) and he denies that it is the collection 'extremist groups'. This denial is a concession which is, however, balanced by an immediately adjacent attribution of banal crimes to Romanies. This in effect maintains the rejection of Romanies, and note that F is not just describing Romanies as perpetrators of banal crimes. He also says what effects such criminality might have on the public (Extract 11, line 225). It is feared (even though possibly less than the 'organised crimes') and it irritates the public (Extract 11, lines 224 to 225). In other words F ascribes banal criminality to Romanies partly to account for some of the social disorder in Northern Bohemia.

The participant V is mayor of another city in northern Bohemia which has been also plagued by conflict between Czechs and Romanies. Extract 13 comes from another Czech television debate *Debata*, which took place in 1993.

Extract 13

Debata93/171–176

- 171 V: and the third thing is, that in our place
 172 the things escalated to such an extent, that and please of course (.) and I want to say where I
 come from
 173 one is in general not concerned with Romanies as such. but of course what is at stake is public
 order and safety.
 174 it is true, (.) that the majority of those where I come from perhaps fifty to sixty percent, of those
 criminal acts
 175 are really committed by the members of this ethnic group. but I beg of you (.) this of course
 often
 176 darkens i- i- in the eyes of ordinary people that problem, so that they hold it against Romanies.

The participant V claims that he is ‘not concerned with Romanies as such’ but with ‘public order and safety’. He claims that the majority of criminal acts in his area are committed by Romanies and he presents this as a fact (these crimes are *really* committed by Romanies [line 175]). But how does he resolve the apparent inconsistency – he is saying both that 50–60 percent of crimes are committed by Romanies and yet he is ‘in general not concerned with Romanies’? If he is honouring consistency as a conversational obligation he must mean that there is a minority of Romanies who commit a majority of crimes in his city. He thus implicitly splits the membership category Romany into criminals and those who are law abiding.²³ We have seen a Romany activist doing this and the argumentative strategy is not uncommon (Leudar and Thomas, 2000, Ch. 8). It is, however, sometimes accompanied by a second step, whereby the negative sub-category is set to represent the category as a whole. V indeed continues by arguing that ‘ordinary people’ attach the criminality to the whole category Romany (Extract 13, line 176). The category Romany is therefore different for him, as an expert on the issue, than for ordinary Czechs. So there seem to be some membership categories that participants do not treat as mutually known but as belonging to particular social groups (cf. Sacks, 1979). The membership category *Romany* is one of them. (Clearly not all membership categories are or have to be like this.)

Let us return to the programme *Debata* broadcast in 1995. At the start of it the participant B (whom we have already encountered in Extracts 7, 8 and in the Extract presented in Note 22) claims the right to speak for Romanies.

Extract 14

Debata95/69–73

- 69 B: we, Romanies, now I have mandate and the right to speak for all the Romanies, immediately
 after the funeral in
 70 ár nad Sázavou all the groups or the representatives of Romany civic associations
 71 met and they authorized me in writing, and they gave me the possibility, to speak in the name of
 all Romanies today on
 72 the television, about this case, and not only about this case, but about the totl- total situation in
 the state with
 73 respect to Romanies.

B also partitions the category Romany. Speaking about the social situation of Romanies he says 'he does anything possible, one pimps, one steals, one makes a living pick- pick pocketing' (Extract 15, lines 647 to 648). He may seem to be attaching these petty crimes to the category Romany (as the participants U and F did) through a representative hypothetical incumbent, but then he continues saying that the 'crashing majority of Romanies, (.) is trying to look for work' (Extract 15, lines 648 to 649). So he acknowledges that there are indeed some Romanies who commit crimes, but he denies that they are representative of Romanies.

Extract 15

Debata95/639–653

- 639 B: so today in the present times that a Romany tries to find
 640 a use ((for himself)), so that he could feed his family.=
 641 H1: = and how does he do this?=
 642 B: now, now, I am going to [()] say it now
 643 H1: [and how does he do this?]
 644 B: today, well they will steal, or or they will commit (criminality), he does (it) anything
 645 possible. (anything) I say anything possible.=
 646 H1: =that is,=
 647 B: =legal, illegal things, he does anything possible, one pimps, one steals, one
 648 makes a living pick- pick pocketing, but the majority of Romanies, crashing majority of
 Romanies, (.) is trying to look for
 649 work, and find a use ((for themselves)) in this society, no matter in what area, and now I'll give
 an example, there is
 650 a tremendous economic and political transformation taking place in the Czech Republic. I do
 not know of one instance
 651 (.) when a single Romany or a Romany businessman privatized something, took part in the
 privatization, or when,
 652 if he did participate, then what is commonly said about us ((will be said)), incompetent, they
 are not
 653 competent, no know-how, they can't read, they do not have the intelligence, this is what is said
 when it suits ((when it is)) functional.

But why is B saying that some Romanies steal, pimp and pick pockets? (No Czech participants said this about Czechs, even though it must be true.) Why should he, a representative of Romanies, dwell on the criminality of some of his fellows?²⁴ To understand, we need to consider the sequential position of what B had said. He started his turn by considering the social and economic pressures on Romanies (Extract 15, lines 639 to 640, and 651 to 653). How can a Romany man 'feed his family', he asked and in effect he presented Romany men as victims of racism and economic discrimination, which make it difficult for them to discharge duties to their families. At that point, however, one of the two programme hosts asked pointedly 'how does he do this?', and did so not once, but in fact three times (Extract 15, lines 641, 643 and 646). The host can be heard to be shifting the talk from Romanies as family members and victims of racism and discrimination to Romanies as criminals, and B indeed saw him doing this.²⁵ His ascrip-

tion of petty criminality to Romanies is presented as a fact but it is a concession drawn out of him – it is marked as a dispreferred utterance (Extract 15, lines 642 and 644). This concession needs to be offset (imagine a headline ‘Romany MP admits that Romanies steal, pimp and pick pockets!’) and B does this by splitting the category – the conduct is not to be attached to the category but only to some Romanies and even then it is mitigated as a necessity. B’s category work in his argument is then two-fold. He concedes that *some* Romanies engage in petty crimes but in saying so he dissociates those crimes from the membership category Romany. Instead he associates with it a positive quality – ‘the crashing majority of Romanies are trying to look for work, and find a use in this society’ (Extract 15, lines 648 to 649). So again, a Romany participant attempts to change the conventional membership category Romany. B makes use of another aspect of the Czech stereotype of Romanies when he says ‘what is commonly said about us ... they are not competent, no know-how, they can’t read, they do not have the intelligence’ (Extract 15, lines 652 to 653). Note that here he aligns himself with Romanies – this is said about ‘us’, he says (not ‘about Romanies’). What in a cognitive paradigm would be a mental stereotype, he presents as something which is said, and said for a purpose – to exclude Romanies socially and economically.

Our analysis so far has treated the four debates almost entirely as extended conversational arguments. The descriptions of Romanies produced by the participants might just as well not have taken place on television (cf. Holšánová and Nekvapil, 1995). One thing about television as a medium, however, is that it can connect events in the studio with events that happened elsewhere and do so in a very concrete manner – visual images and speech from the outside can be brought into the studio to contextualize the debate. The makers of the *Debata* in 1993 did precisely this – they framed the debate in the studio with the following introduction which included a brief street poll (Extract 16, lines 29 to 48).²⁶ The participants in the poll were five Czech men and women living in Northern Bohemia and one Romany man.

Extract 16

Debata93/23–48 + the street poll

- 23 H1: good afternoon. eh during the last few days the general procurator of the Czech Republic
 24 Jiří Šetina has been eh in the spotlight because he submitted to the Czech Parliament a
 25 proposal of the law concerning exceptional measures to safeguard public order.
 ((2 lines omitted))
 28 eh this law relates closely eh specifically to northern Bohemia so lets go and have a look there.
 ((goes to street poll))
 29 Rep: Romanies in the north of Bohemia. your opinion [on] this matter.
 30 Res 1: [()] well they don’t really
 belong here. when they do not behave themselves like normal people, then they do not belong
 here.
 31 Res 2: mostly they should return back to Slovakia.
 32 Res 3: yeah they should gid out of ‘ere. yeah.
 33 Rep: why.
 34 Res 3: why. well (.) they create hassles everywhere.

- 35 Res 4 ((A Romany)): I don't see any problem.
 36 Rep: nevertheless people protest.
 37 Res 4: I don't know who.
 38 Rep: Jirkov, Chomutov, Ústí nad Labem.
 39 Res 4: depends on how they live.
 40 Rep: do you think that they all live as they should.
 41 Res 4: I think in me opinion they should live this way.
 42 Rep: isn't it eh expelling Romanies.
 43 Res 1: in my opinion no: in my opinion no. they came from there. (.) they gotta go back
 44 Res 5: for them an independent village. (.) you understand.
 45 Rep: but that sounds a bit like a concentration camp.
 46 Res 5: no it doesn't s- it doesn't s- they have a freedom of movement.
 47 Rep: eh Romanies in Ústí nad Labem. ehm how do you look at this theme.
 48 Res 6 ((policeman)): well the Romanies. (.) ehm. that is a problem in itself, yeah but sort of (.) we are trying get'em out o'here. in some way. in some proper ((way.)) ((back to the studio))

The area where the poll was conducted was one of those worst affected by the Czech–Romany conflict. The informants were interviewed in the street and visually they were ordinary working-class Czechs. This being so, the sentiments which the poll respondents expressed were representative of ordinary Czechs rather than just simply their own individual views. All the sentiments expressed concerned Romanies. The programme host referred to problems with public order in Northern Bohemia, but the actual question the reporter put to the informants specifically mentioned Romanies. The presence of Romanies in Northern Bohemia was set up as the problem by the programme makers and the Czech poll participants specify that problem. What is noticeable is the ordinary Czech's uniform rejection of Romanies (lines 30, 31, 32, 43 and 44) as well as the grounds for it (line 30). Note also the attitude of the municipal police (48). The consensus that Romanies do not belong in the Czech Republic²⁷ and should be expelled is demonstrated through a subtle sequential turn completion – the first three Czech poll respondents speak as one: 'they do not belong here, mostly they should return back to Slovakia, yeah they should get out of here' (lines 30 to 32). The change of the speaker only stresses that this is a common view of 'ordinary Czechs'. What is linguistically achieved in the debate with epistemic markers such as 'as everybody knows', and 'what they say about us' is achieved here through a direct visual impact. In other words the poll constructs visually the common belief that the conduct of Romanies disqualifies them from being Czechs' fellow citizens, and the lone Romany respondent was presented as not understanding this problem. It is important to bear in mind that this 'poll' preceded the studio debate and framed it.

Concluding Remarks

We started this article with a list of descriptions, some of which could be taken to express the mental stereotype Czechs have of Romanies. Our strategy, however, was not to investigate cognitive representations of such descriptions but rather to

analyse their use in arguments. Our analysis focused on how they were used and warranted, and how the membership categorizations of Romanies were changed in arguments and resisted change. We noted that participants did not simply describe Romanies, they warranted the descriptions and, in doing so, presented some of them as matters of common knowledge (or as common ways of speaking and writing) and others as facts. This does not mean that epistemic marking can be used to categorize descriptions into those which are socially stereotypic and those which are individual. This happens because, depending on the argument, the same information could be presented as a fact, or as something people know in common. Participants used epistemic marking strategically. One point about marking descriptions as common knowledge is that, in Goffman's terms, their user voices them but is not their principal owner. The knowledge belongs to a collectivity and so it cannot be changed locally. This possibly explains why so-called stereotypes resist inconsistent personal experience and factual arguments to the contrary – these are simply not relevant. We have, however, also seen that negative descriptions of Romanies are not made in order to tell the truth about Romanies – they instead accomplish their social and economic rejection. Which comes first – rejection or negative description?

It is also clear that not all 'common knowledge' of Romanies is actually held in common – the category Romany is not consensual and there were indeed occasions on which participants explicitly contrasted alternative membership categories termed by one word, 'Romany'. Czechs know Romanies as those who do not live like normal people, who create problems and commit crimes, and the facts about Romanies as unique people with a valid form of life are only known to Romanies. The Czechs' membership category Romany was contested by Romany activists and by their allies, who tried to change it. They did this by associating new predicates to it, by dissociating old ones and by changing the collections into which the category belongs. We have, however, observed no instances of anybody changing their image of Romanies in an argument – the attempts to change the category typically resulted in indexing its new version to a particular collectivity or to an individual knower.

What is striking is how very little we have learned about Romanies and their lives by studying Czech television debates. Most of the predicates were negations of what Czechs find desirable in themselves and Romanies were often characterized by the absence of positive qualities (see also Holšánová and Nekvapil, 1995). This is of course not unique to *Czechs'* perceptions of Romanies – according to Hancock, it used to be common for ethnographers to claim that Romanies lacked certain virtues and so the Romany language lacked words such as 'property' or 'duty' (see Hancock, 1997).

NOTES

1. The word 'exodus' was used to represent the increased Romany emigration both in the Czech republic and in the United Kingdom.

2. These publications stem from a project supported by the grant No. 125/1997 from the Research Support Scheme of the Open Society Foundation.
3. One of our concerns is with the persistence and change of some membership categories. Membership categories are clearly inferentially productive. They imply qualities (or their lack) in those to whom they are applied, which may not otherwise be obvious, and so they warrant expectations. This means that a membership category must have some features which it does not derive from the immediate situation and participants clearly treat membership categories as given. Membership categories, however, may also change, for instance when some participants object to them. Both the fixed and changing aspects of membership categories can, however, be specified using H. Sacks's terms as 'category bound activities or traits'. The system of membership categories is appropriated in the first place as a system of linguistic expressions for those categories. This is particularly so in basic collections of categories, such as, for example, 'age', 'gender', 'religion', 'nation'. Social categories can, however, be in the stage of being formulated and so their tie to linguistic expressions is not so obvious (Nekvapil, 1997). There is therefore a tension between the use of categories as they are given and the participants' demonstrable attempts to change them. Maintaining a category and changing it are, however, unlikely to be two utterly different matters – changing a membership category presupposes that it is given and if the change does not simply mean abolishing it, it involves proposing a new category which is to be treated as given (see also the note 21 below). The problem is empirical but to appreciate it one must pay attention to implicative and inferential use of membership categories by the participants as well as to the attempts by some participants to change the membership categories.
4. The term 'velvet revolution' refers to the political changes in Czechoslovakia in November 1989. Note that this event is mentioned as important in Extract 1.
5. The texts in the body of the article are translations of the originals which are available at [<http://www.psy.man.ac.uk/staff/ILeuda/>]. They were translated by Ivan Leudar (who is English/Czech bilingual) and revised jointly by him and Jiri Nekvapil. The translations are as literal as possible. The analysis was conducted using the originals.
6. But this caveat is really not much more than a convention which makes the life of psychiatrists easier.
7. The verb 'to stereotype' has several meanings. In the domain of printing it means reproducing an image with a stencil. The extension to membership categorization is obvious but the Concise OED does not mention the psychological use of the word.
8. All the debates took place on Czech TV. Three of them were broadcast live; *Debata* in 1993 and in 1995; and *Aréna* in 1995; one was obviously edited – *Kdy v Ráji Pršelo* (When it Rained in Heaven', in 1990.
9. Note that R contrasts his introduction of Romanies as friends to what he indicates is a common categorization – people 'not fit to live with others'. So simply in introducing the guests, R contrasts two categorizations of Romanies, his own and a commonplace one. The irony is that some of the other Czechs in the studio indeed did not treat the two Romany participants exactly as friends.
10. It is a moot point whether the colour of skin just invokes a membership category, or whether it is a constitutive aspect of it. It certainly does the former but then many category bound activities also invoke membership categories (cf. Watson, 1995). One good reason for treating colour of the skin as *partly* constitutive of ethnic membership categories is that it provides for their embodiment.
11. There is a sequential regularity but not a structure. The manner in which R introduces JH affords her a discursive possibility to categorize Romanies as a nation but it

does not make it conditionally relevant. Consistency rule may, however, also operate here (cf. Sacks, 1992: vol. 1, p. 246).

12. Exactly the same manner of positioning was adopted by Martin McGuinness, the spokesman for Sinn Fein on his first appearance on BBC (see Leudar, 1998).
13. JH presents historical change in Czechoslovakia as an opportunity to change the membership category Romany.
14. There is, however, also an element of category selection involved. Remember that when the host R introduced JH as a friend from Romany nation, he implicitly contrasted categorizing her as a friend as opposed to 'one of those who are not fit to live with others'.
15. The use of the category 'white people' is revealing: even though Romanies are included in the collection 'nations' they are also contrasted, as a nation, to 'white people' – the nationhood and racial considerations are then conjoined.
16. It is of course *logically* possible that even though every Romany knows that he is religious, he or she does not know that other Romanies are. Then one could say that even Romanies do not know that Romanies are religious. This is simply not so.
17. The interesting thing is the juxtaposition of what is written in media, and what is known by a population – is H implying that the media are the source of common knowledge?
18. The word 'knowledge' is not in quotes here because we ironize what Czechs believe about Romanies but because it is a quote from what H said 'people only knew about us that ...' (Extract 4, line 252).
19. Remember also that ES is doing this *after* the programme host has introduced the Romany participants as friends.
20. The comment also works as a reminder that while B is the only representative of Romanies in the Czech parliament there are many there with views like those of S.
21. Following November 1989, Romany activists and their allies tried to introduce the expression 'Romany' into Czech public discourse and to remove 'Gypsy'. This did not involve just changing labels but also work on the category 'Romany'. This meant explaining to the public what features a 'Romany' has, but which a 'Gypsy' does not, and vice versa. Romany activists like H and JH were saying implicitly: the public knows us as Gypsies, but we are Romanies with definite qualities. Czechs gloss this with some cynicism as follows: Romanies are reformed, improved Gypsies. We have, however, seen in many of our Extracts that 'Romany' is now associated with the same features as 'Gypsy' was.
22. It is sometimes assumed that it is possible for an analyst to resolve completely what the participants' positioning in a piece of talk is. The following Extract indicates that even for the participants this is not necessarily so and they themselves may have a problem working out a footing. The piece was written three years prior to the debate we are analysing and the journalist reported asking B, after seeing him argue in public then, 'who did you represent?', 'you spoke in plural'. B responded that he spoke for Romanies and explained how this was possible. (B here is the same person as B whom we encountered in *Aréna* – see also Extract 14.)

A huge migration of Romanies to the Czech Republic is being prepared (an extract from a newspaper interview)

Who did you represent during the negotiations? You spoke in plural.

I am a member of the KSM and on recommendation of Democratic Union of Romanies I got to be a candidate of the Left Block. I cannot speak for all the Romanies,

that is understandable. ... They understood that I am the only Romany parliamentary deputy and that Left Block is willing to concern itself with Romany problems. ...

But nevertheless – who do you represent?

I work for those Romanies, who ask me to and want me to represent them. This is important. Party political affiliation must be put aside. If I have time, I even go to Slovakia. Romanies have already sobered up from the post-revolutionary euphoria and they see that the present-day ruling parties are somehow not interested in solving the Romany question as it seemed in the past. I want to stress that the premier Klaus looked at me as a parliamentary deputy, who was trying to defend Romany, and not as a member of a particular party. I consider this correct from him. ...

Rudé Právo, 16 February 1992: 1, 25

The point is that at the time of his public appearance, his participant position was important but not clear to all participants and the journalist attempted to resolve it subsequently.

23. The problem is of course that when one applies the partitioned category to an individual one has to decide to which subcategory he or she belongs – the law abiding majority or the criminal minority. This makes the predicate 'criminal' relevant to the individual.
24. That B speaks as a Romany at this point is displayed by his use of the pronoun 'us' in line 652.
25. There is possibly a certain degree of competition as to how Romanies should be categorized – the problem of category selection.
26. As a matter of fact, this programme *Debata* contained three parts, each of which was introduced by a street poll (for the analysis of another part, see Leudar and Nekvapil, 1998, Nekvapil and Leudar 1998).
27. The Czech Republic consists of three historic parts – Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia with Bohemia being the largest.

REFERENCES

- Antaki, C. and Leudar, I. (1990) 'Claim Backing and other Explanatory Genres in Talk', *Language and Social Psychology* 9: 279–92.
- Antaki, C. and Leudar, I. (1992) 'Arguing and Explaining in Conversation', *European Journal of Social Psychology* 22: 181–94.
- Billig, M. (1985) 'Prejudice, Categorization and Particularisation: From a Perceptual to a Rhetorical Approach', *European Journal of Social Psychology* 15: 79–103.
- Brewer, J.D. and Yearley, S. (1989) 'Stigma and Conversational Competence: A Conversational-Analytic Study of the Mentally Handicapped', *Human Studies* 12: 97–115.
- Chomsky, N. (1980) *Rules and Representations*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Clark, H.H. (1996) *Using Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Clayman, S.E. (1992) 'Footing in the Achievement of Neutrality: The Case of News-interview Discourse', in P. Drew and J. Heritage (eds) *Talk at Work: Interaction in Institutional Settings*, pp. 163–98. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Costall, A. and Leudar, I. (1996) Special Issue on Situated Action. *Ecological Psychology* 8.
- Drew, P. (1978) 'Accusations: The Occasional Use of Members' Knowledge of Religious Geography in Describing Events', *Sociology* 12: 1–22.
- Eglin, P. and Hester, S. (1992) 'Category, Predicate and Task: The Pragmatics of Practical Action', *Semiotica* 88: 243–68.

- Fodor, J. (1975) *The Language of Thought*. New York: Crowel.
- Gál, E. (1999a) *Romové v ma arském tisku – p ípad Tura a Kétegyháza* (Romanies in the Hungarian Media: On the Affairs in Tura and Kétegyháza). Prague: Department of Linguistics and Finno-Ugric Studies, Charles University.
- Gál, E. (1999b) *Mediální obraz Rom v ma arském deníku Új Szó* (Images of Romanies in the Hungarian Daily Új Szó). Prague: Department of Linguistics and Finno-Ugric Studies, Charles University.
- Goffman, E. (1963 [1986]) *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. London: Penguin.
- Hamilton, M. (1976) *Fish's Clinical Psychopathology: Signs and Symptoms in Psychiatry*. Bristol: Wright and Sons.
- Hancock, I. (1997) 'Duty and Beauty, Possession and Truth: Lexical Impoverishment as Control', in T. Acton and G. Mundy (eds) *Romani Culture and Gypsy Identity*, pp. 182–9. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.
- Hester, S. and Eglin, P. (1997) *Culture in Action: Studies in Membership Categorization Analysis. Studies in Membership Categorization Analysis*. Washington, DC: International Institute for Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis, University Press of America.
- Holšánová, J. and Nekvapil, J. (1995) 'Menschen "fünfter" Klasse: Reden über Abwesende in der Alltagskommunikation am Beispiel tschechischsprachiger Daten', in M. Czyzewski, E. Gülich, H. Hausendorf and M. Kastner (eds), *Nationale Selbst- und Fremdbilder im Gespräch*, pp. 145–79. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.
- Homolá, J. (1999a) *Jedna podoba mediálního diskurzu o Romech – na p íkladu zpráv o událostech v Klatovech v únoru 1991* (One Form of the Media Discourse about Romanies: On the Reporting of Klatovy Affair in February 1991). Prague: Department of Linguistics and Finno-Ugric Studies, Charles University.
- Homolá, J. (1999b) *Ukázková rasová vra da – psaní o vra da Tibora Berkiho ve áru nad Sázavou v kv tnu 1995* (An Exemplary Racial Murder: Writing about the Murder of Tibor Berki in _ár nad Sázavou in May 1995). Prague: Department of Linguistics and Finno-Ugric Studies, Charles University.
- Hughes, E.C. (1971) *The Sociological Eye: Selected Papers*. Chicago, IL: Aldine Atherton.
- Jayyusi, L. (1984) *Categorisation and Moral Order*. London: Routledge.
- Karhanová, K. (1999) *Respekt – jiná podoba mediálního diskursu o Romech* (Respekt – A Different Form of the Media Discourse about Romanies). Prague: Department of Linguistics and Finno-Ugric Studies, Charles University.
- Leudar, I. (1998) 'Who is Martin McGuinness? 1: On Contextualizing Reported Political Talk', in S. Mejrková et al. (eds) *Dialogue Analysis 6*, vol. 2, pp. 217–24. Tübingen: Niemeyer.
- Leudar, I. and Antaki, C. (1996) 'Discourse Participation, Reported Speech and Research Practices in Social Psychology', *Theory and Psychology 6* (1): 5–29.
- Leudar, I. and Nekvapil, J. (1998) 'On the Emergence of Political Identity in the Czech Mass Media: The Case of the Democratic Party of Sudetenland', *Czech Sociological Review 6*: 43–58.
- Leudar, I. and Thomas, P. (2000) *Voices of Reason, Voices of Insanity*. London: Routledge.
- Macrae, N., Milne, A.B. and Bodenhausen, G.V. (1994) 'Stereotypes as Energy Saving Devices: A Peek inside the Cognitive Toolbox', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 66*: 37–47.
- Nekvapil, J. (1996) 'Varieties and Levels of Positioning: Troubles of a Romany MP in Czech Political Debate, paper presented to the conference Dialogue in the Heart of Europe, Prague, 17–20 April.

- Nekvapil, J. (1997) 'O komunikaci v rámci etnické polarizace' (Surmounting of Czech-German Ethnic Polarisation in Communication), in *Pednášky z XL. bhv LŠSS*, pp. 43–57. Praha: Univerzita Karlova.
- Nekvapil, J. and Leudar, I. (1998) 'Masmediální utváření dialogických sítí a politické identity: případ Demokratické strany Sudety' (Emergence of Dialogical Networks and Political Identity in Mass Media: The Case of Democratic Party of Sudetenland), *Slovo a Slovesnost* 59: 30–52.
- Nekvapil, J. and Leudar, I. (2000, forthcoming) 'K utváření dialogických sítí v českých masmédiích na počátku roku 1993: spor o migrační zákon' (On the Emergence of Dialogical Networks in Czech Mass Media at the Beginning of 1993: Dispute over Migration Law).
- Nekvapil, J., Gál, E., Homoláč, J., Leudar, I. and Sabatová, A. (1998) 'Presentations of Romanies in Mass Media,' In G. Sokolová and O. Šrajerová (eds) *Národnostní menšiny a majoritní společnost v české republice a v zemích střední Evropy v 90. letech XX. Století*, pp. 265–70. Opava: Slezský ústav Slezského zemského muzea/Praha: Dokumentační a informační středisko Rady Evropy.
- Ondrejovi, S. (1999) *Médiá na Slovensku o Rómoch – prípad Polichno* (How Slovak Media Write about Romanies: The Affair in Polichno). Prague: Department of Linguistics and Finno-Ugric Studies, Charles University.
- Quasthoff, U. (1978) 'The Uses of Stereotype in Everyday Argument', *Journal of Pragmatics* 2: 1–48.
- Šabatová, A. (1999) *Smrt Tibora Danihela – Zlo in a trest aneb je trestné topit Roma?* (Death of Tibor Danihel: Crime and Punishment or is it Punishable to Drown a Romany?). Prague: Department of Linguistics and Finno-Ugric Studies, Charles University.
- Sacks, H. (1979) 'Hotrodder: A Revolutionary Category', in G. Psathas (ed.) *Everyday Language: Studies in Ethnomethodology*, pp. 7–14. New York, Irvington.
- Sacks, H. (1992) *Lectures on Conversation*. Cambridge, MA and Oxford: Blackwell.
- Stangor, C.G. (1995) 'Stereotyping', in A.S.R. Manstead and M. Hewston (eds) *Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Social Psychology*, pp. 628–33. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Watson, D.R. (1983) 'The Presentation of "Victim" and "Motive" in Discourse: The Case of Police Interrogations and Interviews', *Victimology: An International Journal* 8: 31–52.
- Watson, D.R. (1987) 'Interdisciplinary Considerations in the Analysis of Pro-terms', in G.R. Button and J.R.E. Lee (eds) *Talk and Social Organisation*, pp. 261–89. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Publishers.
- Watson, D.R. (1995) 'Angoisse dans la 42^e Rue', in P. Paperman and R. Ogien (eds) *La couleur des pensees*, pp. 197–216. Paris: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales.
- Widdicombe, S. (1998) '"But you Don't Class Yourself": The Interactional Management of Category Membership and Non-membership', in C. Antaki and S. Widdicombe (eds) *Identities in Talk*, pp. 52–70. London: Sage.



IVAN LEUDAR was born in Czechoslovakia, educated at London University and at present he is a Reader in Psychology at the University of Manchester. His work is influenced by Pragmatics and Ethnomethodology. His main current concern is with how membership categories are produced, maintained, embodied and contested, and with how they influence individual action and experience. He is also interested in the history of psychiatric

categories and his book *Voices of Reason: Voices of Insanity* was recently published by Routledge. ADDRESS: Psychology Department, Manchester University, Manchester M13 9PL, UK. [email: I.leudar@manchester.ac.uk]

JIŘÍ NEKVAPIL teaches sociolinguistics, conversation analysis and pragmatics at the Department of General Linguistics at Charles University, Prague. He has published extensively in these areas and his edited volumes include *Reader in Czech Sociolinguistics* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1987) and *Studies in Functional Stylistics* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1993). Recently he has published a number of papers dealing with the Czech mass media and the interethnic relationships in the Czech Republic. ADDRESS: Department of Linguistics, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic, CZ-11638. [email: nekvap@prahal.ff.cuni.cz]