

János Imre Heltai: Everybody should mind their own business

Translated from the Hungarian by Eszter Tarsoly and Sára Szakál

János Imre Heltai is Associate Professor at Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary and a managing editor of Duj Džene – Two Together. He has been conducting ethnographic research in Tiszavasvári since 2016, collaborating with a local school to develop a translanguaging approach to Roma children's bilingualism in education. In 2020, he published a Hungarian-language monograph on the translingual practices of the bilingual Roma living in Tiszavasvári. In 2023, he co-edited a multi-authored monograph, Translanguaging for Equal Opportunities: Speaking Romani at School (Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton), to which he contributed several collaboratively written chapters. He is principal investigator of the Enhancing Linguistic Citizenship Through Participatory Research Project (2024–2027).

Members of our editorial team meet once a month for two afternoon workshops. These afternoons serve to get the work started: we discuss what each member of the research group wants to write about and where they will look for inspiration. A month later, everyone brings their own writing and we read it together. At our next, third, meeting, we discuss the details of editorial concerns. But there is more to the journal than writing and reading. Authors look for people to conduct interviews with, they discuss the current topics of interest with others. The authors themselves spend days thinking about writing – before and after completing the articles. We all weigh up ethical questions: can we write what we want to write? Do we cause harm to anyone, ourselves or others, by writing it? Can we really say what we think? Is it appropriate what we write, and what do we achieve by writing it? Where will it lead us? These are questions that all members of our editorial team face, and our meetings abound in discussions scrutinising ethical considerations. Readers will find traces of these shared and individual reflections in the texts of our second issue.

Meanwhile, members of our community with an academic research background share the outcomes of our work with local researchers in journal articles written for a broader academic audience. In February 2024, we published an article in English, in which we looked at how local members of our editorial team relate to other citizens of Tiszavasvári: whether the opinions expressed during our workshops have an impact on other opinions circulating in the city (János Imre Heltai & Eszter Tarsoly 2024. Local participants and uninvolved citizens: Life beyond participatory research. Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development). An online version of our journal is also available at <https://btk.kre.hu/linguisticethnography/>. The name of our website is in English and some

of the papers also appear in English version. Our aim is to attract broader, international attention to our work. Such broader interest may be based on the same questions as the root of our ethical dilemmas: Roma and non-Roma work together in our team; our editorial board is tripartite (local non-Roma participants; local Roma participants; university-based non-Roma participants – with some exceptions). There are international examples of a university-based research team working together with members of a vulnerable minoritised group. However, in the Hungarian context we are not aware of collaborations which aim to invite members of the local majority to enter into dialogue with members of the minoritised group. This is precisely the main goal of our project: we not only support members of the minority group to speak for themselves so that they are heard by the members of the majority; we invite members of both groups for a dialogue. We are not looking for culprits. Instead, we encourage everyone to reflect on their own attitudes – to mind their own business but with the other person in mind. Transformation is thus not expected to come only from a change in the attitude of the majority or minority alone, but from their dialogue with each other.

The second issue of the journal focuses on livelihood. Among the authors of this issue, we find members of the Roma Girls Youth Club initiated by Erika Kerekesné Lévai, former headteacher of the Magiszter Primary School attended mainly by Roma pupils from the Romani-Hungarian bilingual neighbourhood. The writings are organised into thematic units or columns. Our column entitled **Working for the benefit of others, working for a living** deals with the ways in which voluntary work for the community, for a “good” cause, can be intertwined with the necessity of earning one’s daily bread. In the **New pathways to the world of work** column, we look at snippets of various employees’ journeys. As most of our editorial team are women, we have dedicated a special section to issues and difficulties that affect mostly them – this is the column entitled **Challenges of Everyday Life**. One of our columns focuses specifically on the plight of Roma people. Although the articles are written in Hungarian, with one exception, we have given the column a Romani title: **Búcsi te keren** (‘to work’). Among the texts included here, some are about Roma people finding their place in new jobs, and others describe life paths that have led them from the state-sponsored work scheme to the labour market. In a separate section, entitled **Shared workplaces**, we have included texts on how Roma and non-Roma meet in the workplace, what makes it difficult to find common ground, and how they finally come to understand each other. Due to space constraints, some of the articles are available only online. On 10 December 2024, our editorial team organised a roundtable discussion on the potential pathways to employment and making a living. This discussion was exciting because it gave a voice to those who seldom have the opportunity to speak for themselves, if at all. We collected some reflections on this discussion in the **Dialogue** column.

The desk review and peer-review of the articles takes place within the editorial board – all texts are reviewed by at least two members of the team. This is followed by a discussion with the author before the final draft of the texts is prepared. The articles undergo in-house proofreading for spelling and typographical accuracy. The Romani text was proofread by an external language editor (Dr. Péter Lakatos, HUN-REN Hungarian Research Centre for Linguistics). In contrast to the first issue of the journal, this time we did not make any amendments concerning either the style of writing or the forms of expression which divert from the so-called normative language criteria. This editorial decision was made to ensure that everyone could speak in their own personal voice to the community of Tiszavasvári and the wider public. The editors of the journal agree, particularly those not based in Tiszavasvári, that language practices usually identified as non-standard, which express participants' individual voice, can and should be conveyed not only orally but also in writing.