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The Silesian Language in the Early 21st Century: A Speech Community on the Rollercoaster of Politics[1]

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Abstract

Languages are made and unmade, as nations are. The vagaries of history and politics that create the fluctuating framework in which human groups exist, influence these groups' thinking about their own speech. Over the course of history Upper Silesia's Slavophones (a group who, in the modern period, were predominantly bilingual in German) were divided up at different times between Prussia, Austria (that is, the Habsburg lands), Germany, Czechoslovakia (today, the Czech Republic) and Poland, and they had to adapt to these changes. During the last two centuries, with the rise of ethnolinguistic nationalism in Central Europe, it meant either accepting a dominant ethnolinguistic national identity, complete with its specific standard language (especially in the dark period of authoritarianisms and totalitarianism between 1926 and 1989), or inventing a Silesianness, frequently buttressed by the concept of a Silesian language. Against this backdrop, the article considers the emergence of the Silesian (regional, ethnic, national?) movement during the last two decades, with the main focus on efforts to standardize Silesian and have it recognized as a language in its own right.

Key words: codification, concept of a language, ethnolinguistic nationalism, Lachian language, language recognition, northern Moravia, Prussian language, Silesian language, Upper Silesia

Language: What a Language?

The settlement of Hungarian (or Finno-Ugrian) speakers in the Carpathian basin at the turn of the 10th century created a wedge of non-Slavic speakers in what had until then been a single Slavic dialect continuum across Central Europe. Since that time, from an areal point of view, the lects[2] of Slavic-speakers have been split into Northern and Southern dialect continua (Trudgill 2003, 96-97, 124-125). Over time, the political and administrative divisions that emerged (especially when they were relatively permanent) were gradually transposed onto people's thinking about the lects ('vernaculars') spoken in particular polities and administrative regions. Until the late Middle Ages, when Latin (alongside Greek and Church Slavonic in the Balkans) had dominated the rather scant literate tradition(s) across Central Europe, the speech of Slavophones was quite uniformly referred to as 'Slavic' (Stankiewicz 1984, ix). Then, with the rise of written languages based on vernaculars during the 15-16th centuries, especially in the wake of the Reformation, separate linguonyms (language names) developed for referring to different varieties of Slavic employed for written purposes. Where political and administrative divisions were unstable, as in the post-Byzantine Balkans, numerous linguonyms arose, disappeared and replaced one another in quick succession. (cf Fine 2006) Looking at them from the vantage of today's extant languages and polities may appear confusing and counterintuitive, as if people at the time didn't know what they were talking about (cf Peti-Stantić 2008).

Obviously, the confusion largely disappears when we look at and analyze how people imagined and named languages in the contemporary terms they used for this purpose in a given place. Criteria for discerning – or, perhaps more aptly, imagining (cf Preston 1989) – languages have differed throughout time and space, though I propose that in Central

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[2] I use the term 'lect' for referring to a language variety, irrespective of its sociolinguistic or political status (including, whether or not the variety is endowed with a graphic system of representation or writing), mainly to avoid the opposition between 'language' and 'dialect,' an issue that is fraught with ideological dangers.

Europe, extant polities and administrative regions have tended to dominate this process. In the area of historical Upper Silesia, which is of most interest to us in this article, by the mid-19th century, it had become popular to classify the speech of Slavophones as Bohemian (Czech), Lusatian (Sorbian), Moravian and Silesian, when the speakers lived in the Kingdom of Bohemia, the Margravate of Lusatia, the Margravate of Moravia, or the Duchy of Silesia, respectively (cf Anonymous [Kollár] 1846; Šafařjk 1837, 483). At that time, these regions were strong loci of identification, though all were submerged in the German Confederation, and then respectively in the Austrian Empire, the Kingdom of Prussia and the Kingdom of Saxony. The cases of Silesia and Lusatia were further complicated; the former was divided between the Austrian Empire and Prussia, the latter between Saxony and Prussia.

But who remembers the Bohemian, Lusatian, Moravian, or Silesian languages today? The political and social changes in the second half of the 19th century[3] and in the first half of the following century did away with long-established points of reference, and replaced them with, in most cases, brand-new ones. The overall socio-political engine of these changes was the novel ideology of ethnolinguistic nationalism. It appealed as a political philosophy capable of leading to the replacement of traditional non-national polities by the nation-states that seemed to be the harbingers of the future. On this ticket, first, the German Empire was founded in 1871 as a German nation-state.[4] The Austrian Empire transformed itself into Austria-Hungary in 1867, and this new 'dual monarchy' tried walking the middle ground between the old and the new, opting for qualified ethnolinguistically defined, quasi-national autonomous regions. The compromise was shattered in 1918, when

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[3] It is important to remark that the age of nationalism had already begun in the Balkans in the first half of the 19th century, but the developments in that region were not of direct influence on the area discussed in this article. (cf Rychlík et al 2009, 83-270)

[4] A decade earlier, in 1861, the Kingdom of Italy had been founded as an ethnolinguistic Italian nation-state, but this event, too, was of no immediate influence on the events presented in this article.

'Kakania'[5] was broken into a plethora of nation-states (Křen 2006, 101-417; Magocsi 2002, 77, 119, 175).

The winners of the nation-building and nation-state-building projects in Silesia and its vicinity were the nations of the Czechoslovaks,[6] Germans and Poles. Upper Silesia was split among the national polities of these three nations. But the desire for ethnolinguistically homogenous nation-states could not be fully, categorically and absolutely fulfilled, because people move across borders and individuals tend to be multilingual. (cf Nikolova 2006; Paić-Vukić 2007) Thus, especially following World War II, people speaking a 'wrong language' (or professing a 'wrong religion,' which was frequently seen as a marker of ethnicity or race, often subsuming language[7]) were exterminated, 'repatriated' (that is, expelled) to their 'home' nation-states, or subjected to forced assimilation. (Sienkiewicz and Hryciuk 2008; Snyder 2011) The two totalitarianisms of national-socialism and Soviet-bloc communism (1933/39-1989/91) facilitated these processes, delivering – in the official view – a Central Europe of ethnolinguistically homogenous nation-states. (cf Asher and Moseley 2007, 256; Breton 2003, 14)

But 'of the making of nationalities there is no end' (Magocsi 1999), as tellingly illustrated by the political bi-nationalization

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[5] 'Kakania,' a popular and literary (sometimes, pejorative) sobriquet for Austria-Hungary, derived from the official adjective applied to the Dual Monarchy's institutions, that is, *kaiserlich und königlich* for 'imperial and royal.

[6] The Czechoslovak nation (with its national language of Czechoslovak) is now forgotten, but it was a political and a near-social reality in interwar Czechoslovakia. However, which after 1945, and especially after 1968, it was decisively split into the two separate nations of Czechs and Slovaks.

[7] For instance, in Belarus, the population of a single village, speaking the same local Slavic lect, rationalizes about their language as 'Belarusian' or 'Polish,' depending on whether they profess Orthodoxy or Uniatism (Greek Catholicism), on the one hand, and Roman Catholicism on the other (cf Engelking 1999). The situation is similar in Northern Ireland, where speakers of the same regional Germanic dialect see it as '(Hibernian) English' when they are Catholics, thus perceived to be Irish, or as 'Ulster Scots' in the case of those who profess Protestantism, and as such are identified as British. (cf Breton 2003, 30)

of Czechoslovakia after 1945 and its 1993 split into the national polities of the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The breakup of Yugoslavia, similar in its nation-creating (or reaffirming) character, was followed by the division of Serbo-Croatian into (thus far) the Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin and Serbian[8] languages (Greenberg 2004). The processes are illustrative of the ethnolinguistic character of nationalism in Central Europe, which equates language with nation. In this part of the continent, language and nation are desired to be topographically co-extensive; they should not overlap with others and nor shade into each other.

To be considered a legitimate nation-state in this part of Europe, polity must be for one nation *only*. In turn, the nation is defined in linguistic terms, as *all* the speakers of a given national language, and the area more or less contiguously populated by them is perceived to be the 'natural' territory of the nation's nation-state. This ethnolinguistic definition of 'nation' comes with several qualifications. The national language cannot be shared with any other nation or nation-state. No other language can function in an official or auxiliary capacity alongside the national one. By default, this normative political monolingualism also requires that no autonomous regions with their own specific languages may exist on the territory of the nation-state concerned. And by the same token, no autonomous entities with the national language as their official language may be extant outside the nation-state (Kamusella 2005a).

These quite onerous requirements of ethnolinguistic nationalism are met (or are almost fulfilled) in a surprisingly large group of polities from Scandinavia to the Aegean and from the Oder to the Crimea. Hence, seeing – not to mention

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[8] Interwar Yugoslavia's official language was Serbocroatoslovenian, though in reality Slovenian continued to function separately from Serbo-Croatian (Ramet 2006, 51). In 1944, the south Serbian (south Serbo-Croatian, or south Serbocroatoslovenian) dialect was recognized as a language in its own right under the name of Macedonian, much to Bulgaria's chagrin, which continues to see it as a dialect of Bulgarian. (cf Dzhukeski 1981, 293)

officially recognizing – the lect of a speech community as a language is highly political and sensitive in Central Europe. In line with the logic of ethnolinguistic nationalism that equates language with nation, the recognition of another language as indigenous to the nation-state's territory, simultaneously means recognizing the language's speech community as a nation in its own right. And if the speech community is a nation, by default they have a legitimate claim to the area where they live as the territory of their would-be national polity.

In turn this entails the truncation or division of the extant nation-state. In light of this popularly espoused interpretation of ethnolinguistic nationalism as the ideology of nationhood and national statehood legitimization, there is an understandable reluctance to recognize such indigenous languages, which tend to be subsumed under the wing of the national language as its dialects, whatever the actual wishes of the speech community might be. However, the dynamics of democracy are steeped in mass politics, and the voice of a speech community when loud, numerous and persistent enough cannot be disregarded forever. And as happened in the case of the Kashubs in Poland, in 2005 Warsaw officially recognized their lect as a language. But the Polish government refused to define the Kashubs as a national or ethnic minority,[9] and regards them as an ethnographic group of the Polish nation; the majority of Kashubs concur[10] (Ustawa 2005; Wicherkiewicz 2011, 145-164).

This proves that it is not impossible to change the pattern of political thinking about what nations are. It seems that the ethnolinguistic kind of nationalism may not be the wisest

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[9] Interestingly, in Western Europe some advocacy groups define the Kashubs as a 'nation without a state' (Bodlore-Penlaez 2010, 102-103).

[10] The recognition of Kashubian as a language in its own right, when looking at it through the lens of the logic of ethnolinguistic nationalism, means that since 2005 the Polish nation has enjoyed two national languages of its own, namely, Polish and Kashubian. Understandably, this ideological paradox is not noticed, let alone commented upon on the official plane.

ground for the legitimation of statehood and nationhood. The conclusion was reached earlier in Western Europe (with the tentative and paradoxical exception of France [cf Żelazny 2000]), where one nation may enjoy several national languages (vide the Swiss or the Luxembourgers) or several national polities may share the same language, as in the case of German, which is *the* (or one of *the*) official / national language(s) in Austria, Belgium, Germany, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg and Switzerland. Likewise, in the east, most post-Soviet states have more than one official / national language, or sport on their territories a plethora of autonomous entities with official / national languages other than the state language.

One of the surprises in Central Europe after 1989, following the democratization that brought a total of seven decades of totalitarianism in this region to a close, was the resurfacing of ethnolinguistic groups in the nation-states that had been seen as ethnolinguistically homogenous after the 1950s (when most of the population expulsions had already been completed). The Czech Republic and Poland followed two different paths when it came to dealing with this phenomenon. In the former state, with no official or national language mentioned in the constitution (Kořenský 1997, 262), the expression of the regionally and linguistically defined ethnic identity of Moravianness or Silesianness, as declared by many in the last Czechoslovak census of 1991 and the two subsequent ones in the Czech Republic (2001 and 2011), was accepted with no further ado. Moravian and Silesian parties and associations were registered and Moravian deputies sat in the Czech parliament until 1996 (Siwek 2007). However, the practice, developed of subsuming census declarations of speaking the Moravian and Silesian languages under the rubric 'Czech language' (cf Nekvapil et al. 2009: 15). The Czech authorities promised to discontinue this practice in 2011 (Ujištění 2011), but because the full results of the 2011 census have not yet been published, it is at the time of writing impossible to ascertain if the promise has been kept.

This stance contrasts sharply with Warsaw's approach to ethnoregional and ethnolinguistic movements in post-1989

Poland. Despite the patient canvassing of Kashubian organizations and activists to this end, begun immediately after World War II (Borzyszkowski 2011, 69-71), it had taken sixty years before Kashubian was recognized as a language in Poland. On the other hand, the Silesians, despite strenuous endeavors, have not yet managed to convince the Polish authorities either to register their organizations or to recognize their language. The Związek Ludności Narodowości Śląskiej (ZLNŚ, Union of the People of the Silesian Nationality), founded in 1996, has repeatedly been refused registration (cf Pszon 2011). This is so due to the ZLNŚ's use of the word 'nationality' in its program, something never insisted upon by the Kashubian organizations. This insistence is seen by Warsaw as a pernicious attempt to breach the constitutionally guaranteed uniformity and indivisibility of Poland's territory (*Konstytucja* 1997, Articles 3 and 26).

At the same time, ethnic Silesian leaders see the situation as an instance of undemocratic oppression, because the *vox populi*, revealed in the first-ever census in postcommunist Poland in 2002, showed that today the Silesians at over 173,000 declarations are Poland's largest national minority. The state refuses to accept this result. Furthermore, the census also showed that 57,000 people communicate in the Silesian language at home, and 53,000 in the Kashubian language (Wyniki 2012). Three years after this census, the Polish authorities recognized Kashubian as a language, but so far, such recognition has been refused to Silesian.

This reluctance is connected to the logic of ethnolinguistic nationalism. From this perspective it was 'safe' for Warsaw to recognize Kashubian, because although over 50,000 people declare an active command of this language, a mere 5,000 persons declared Kashubian nationality in the 2002 census (Wyniki 2012). The national option looks passé among the Kashubs, whereas it is much stronger among the Silesians. The Kashubian cause, as is anecdotally remarked, was also helped by the fact that in 2005, the current Polish Prime Minister, Donald Tusk, had already been one of the 'movers and shakers'

in Polish politics. And he is a self-declared Pole of Kashubian origin (Tylko u Nas 2011).

Having been frustrated by recurrent failures to register their organizations and having observed the Kashubian success at obtaining official recognition for their language, most ethnic Silesian activists and politicians decided to follow the Kashubian example. They resigned themselves to the status of an ethnographic group of the Polish nation for the Silesians, and in return want Warsaw's official recognition of Silesian as a language in its own right (Język śląski 2011).

'When' is a Language?

The concept of a language, in the sense of 'one language among many,' as opposed to 'language' in general with no article preceding the word, is an artefact of culture, so much internalized by centuries of unreflective use that it appears to most of us to be 'natural.' This perceived naturalness of the concept of a language is ingrained to such an extent that it (or its general counterpart of 'language') did not make an appearance either among Immanuel Kant's categories of the understanding (Kant 1781) or in the eight volumes of the authoritative *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe - Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache* (Brunner et al 1972-1997). But because language is the very medium of culture and communicating ideas from person to person, there is an urgent need to probe into the history of this concept and into the history of its social, intellectual and political functioning. With the dynamics of this functioning explicitly uncovered (or 'denaturalized'), it may become clear why we tend to rationalize about languages in one way or another. Below I attempt a brief – and thus, by necessity, simplified – overview of the history of this concept.

In the Western tradition, resoundingly imposed on the rest of the world during the age of high imperialism and in the course of the Cold War that coincided with decolonization, lects are classified either as languages or as dialects. This quite

confusing opposition of dialect vs language arose in Graeco-Roman antiquity.[11] In Ancient Greek the world *glossa*, first of all, meant the organ (muscle) of the 'tongue.' This meaning is attested in Greek writings from the eighth century BCE. Three hundred years later, in the fifth century BCE, the word began to be employed for denoting 'a language or dialect' (that is, a lect). In the third century BCE this new meaning was deployed for referring to peoples speaking different languages. Thus, the equivalence between the concepts 'a people' and 'a language' made its first recorded appearance (Liddell and Scott 1940, 353).

Later, but in parallel with the former term, the Greek word *dialektos* was coined. First, in the early fourth century BCE, it was intended to denote 'discourse' or 'conversation,' especially in the context of learned discussions conducted among philosophers and scholars. In the middle of this century the term also began to stand for 'speech,' 'language,' and 'common language.' In the second century BCE *dialektos* came to mean 'a language of a country,' thus becoming synonymous with *glossa* in this semantic field. And importantly for the rise of the current distinction between language and dialect, in the late first century BCE, *dialektos* was intended to denote 'a spoken language,' as opposed to 'a written language,' that is, *glossa* (Liddell and Scott 1940, 401).

These semantic distinctions gradually brushed off onto the Latin language of imperial Rome. The native Latin word *lingua* was attested, in the early second century BCE, to mean 'the organ of tongue' and 'the particular mode of speech in a given country or region' (Glare 1982, 1032-1033). These meanings corresponded closely to those of the Greek *glossa*, so with the rise of the intensifying Latin-Greek bilingualism among Rome's literati, in the late second century BCE, *glossa* was marginalized in Latin as a term for 'a collection of unfamiliar words' (that is, a 'glossary'). And the neologism *glossema* was

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[11] It would be interesting to check the ways in which people and scholars classified lects outside the confines of the Graeco-Roman world and the West. The task, however, falls outside the article's remit.

coined for 'an unusual word requiring explanation' (Glare 1982, 767).

In the 30s of the first century BCE the Greek loanword *dialectos* was attested in Latin for 'a dialect, a form of speech' (Glare 1982, 536). Thus, almost immediately, the Greek distinction of the late first century BC, between 'spoken language' (*dialektos*) and 'written language' (*glossa*) was adopted by Latin writers, and duly reflected in the opposition between *dialectos* and *lingua*. The distinction was consolidated in the Greek texts of the first and second centuries CE that frequently were translated into Latin. The prime example of this Graeco-Latin bilingualism was the New Testament, composed in Greek during the first century CE and translated into Latin in the late second century CE, before the canonical Latin translation of the entire Bible (or Vulgate) was completed at the turn of the fifth century CE.

In this way, in the world of Western Christianity, where Latin dominated for written purposes throughout the Middle Ages until the Reformation, the terminological distinction between those lects endowed with a written form and those without one became part and parcel of the Western intellectual tradition, alongside the equation of a lect with a people. A *lingua* ('language') was associated with a *natio* ('people,' 'race,'[12] 'set of people,' 'the people of a country, or state') (Du Cagne 1885, 116; Glare 1982, 1158), and at times with a *gens*. This term, in addition to the aforementioned meanings shared with *natio*, also came to be used for referring to 'a region of a country, occupied by a people,' and in medieval Latin was also used to denote such a distinctive people, living in a polity's region, and differing from the rest of the country's inhabitants in language, customs, religion, or, as we would say today, in ethnicity (Glare 1982, 759).

Interestingly, medieval authors writing in Latin shunned the word *dialectos* and in its stead, at the turn of the 13th century,

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[12] 'Race' in this sense is an obsolete world in English, today usually replaced with the term 'ethnic group.'

developed the neologism *linguagium* for a regional lect or a lect with no written form[13] (Du Cagne 1885, 117). The word 'dialect' re-entered Western discourse in the Renaissance, though authors disagree as to whether this was by way of the renewed study of Ancient Greek or that of Latin mediated (or not?) by French (cf Ciorănescu 2005, 291; *Dizzionario* 2004, 152). For instance, in the 1570s, in the case of English, 'dialect' was deployed to mean 'a subordinate form of a language, a manner of speech peculiar to a group of people' (Dialect 2012, 2; Murray 1893, 307-308).

With this development, the modern understanding of a dialect appeared: a lect not endowed with a written form, spoken in a region of a polity, by the region's inhabitants, or by an ethnic (ethnolinguistic) group living in the region. Interestingly, this lect, defined as 'a dialect,' must be subjected to, or subsumed into, the (written) language of the polity as the language's 'subordinate form.' On the one hand, this relationship is a reflection of the antique and medieval tradition of equating peoples (ethnic groups) with their lects (languages). On the other, it is a reflection of the modern concept of exclusive (absolute) sovereignty that became one of the basic principles of modern statehood originating with the rise of the territorial state (or the direct precursor of today's nation-state) after the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) (Krasner 1999: 11). In this line of thinking, only one monarch, or one government, has the sole right of ruling the subjects living on the territory of a given polity, unfettered by any legitimate interference from any external authority. And in the case of making the decision that only one language could be official for the polity (as became prevalent among the Protestant states following the Reformation and become the norm during the age of nationalism that was ushered in by the French Revolution in

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[13] Perhaps this term was an inspiration for Greek Catholics (Uniates) conversant in Latin who coined the derogative term *iazychie* (roughly 'quasi-language,' or 'corrupted language') from the Slavic word *iazyk* ('language') for referring to the written language of eastern Galicia, a langauge based on the regional Slavic lect and on Church Slavonic, with an admixture of Russian and Polish words. This language was employed in writing in the second half of the 19th century, and was reviled at that time as much as was Yiddish, known derogatively as 'jargon' (cf Rusinko 2003, 234; Weinreich 2008, A309).

Europe), other lects spoken and written on the territory of a polity had to be either suppressed or at best redefined and demoted to being just dialects of the polity's official or national language.

In the 1920s, linguists, building on this politically and emotionally charged classification of lects, proposed that languages are mutually incomprehensible lects, whereas dialects are mutually comprehensible (Bloomfield 1926, 162). However, this approach raised many difficult questions. It could not explain why mutually incomprehensible Arabic lects should be dialects of standard Arabic (cf Ferguson 1959), nor suggest what to do about differing degrees of and asymmetric (in)comprehensibility among Scandinavia's Germanic lects (Haugen 1966). It could not decide if Romanian and Moldovan (being identical) are one language or two, nor explain why Low German, which is incomprehensible to speakers of standard German, should be a dialect of this language rather than of Dutch, with which it is largely mutually comprehensible.

After World War II the coalescing field of sociolinguistics proposed that extralinguistic factors, usually political decisions, are involved in deciding which lect is a dialect and which a language (Weinreich 1945). Thus, mutually comprehensible dialects may be made into separate languages (so-called 'Ausbau languages' or 'languages by extension') through planned dissimilation or administrative fiat. On the other hand, absolute or considerable incomprehensibility between lects may be reconfirmed by recognizing them as separate languages in their own right (so-called 'Abstand languages' or 'languages by distance') (Kloss 1967). In the latter case mutually incomprehensible (Abstand) lects may be made into dialects of a single language with the help of widespread diglossia, as in the case of Arabic or Chinese (Ferguson 1959).

This clearly political nature of the concept of 'a language,' well understood by sociolinguists, has not yet percolated from the scholarly domain to the general public. As a result, ethnolinguistic nationalism remains the sole ideology of statehood and nationhood legitimization in Central Europe. This

is based on the seemingly 'natural' belief that in order to be nations, nations must enjoy their own specific languages, and that there cannot exist 'true' languages not spoken and 'possessed,' each by one nation. Should such lects crop up, they must be redefined as dialects of extant national languages, or – which is an option to be resisted by existing recognized nations – the lects' speakers should be fashioned (or ought to fashion themselves) into nations of their own. This logic leads to the observed reluctance, on the part of the state, to recognize Kashubian and Silesian as languages in their own right in Poland, or Moravian and Silesian in the Czech Republic. And by the same token, languages other than French, though indigenous to the territory of France, cannot be ethnic or minority languages; they may be only 'regional languages,' if the traditional, though now perceived as pejorative, term *patois* cannot be applied to them any longer (Żelazny 2000, 302-313).

A Brief History of the Concept of the Silesian Language

As mentioned above, the speech of the Slavophones in historical Upper Silesia tended to be referred to as the 'Silesian language.' But the division of the land between the Habsburgs and Prussia in 1740-1742 resulted in variegated policies applied in different sections of the region. In addition, the new political frontier was also bisected by the ecclesiastical boundary between the Breslau (Wrocław) Diocese with its see in Prussia's Silesia, and the Olmütz (Olmouc) Archdiocese with its see in the Habsburgs' Moravia. In the latter case, Upper Silesia's Slavophones living in the Archdiocese spoke of and had their language recorded in documents as 'Moravian,' while those in the Diocese were recorded as 'Silesian speakers,' notwithstanding the fact that the inhabitants of neighboring villages near the ecclesiastical boundary actually spoke identical local lects (Pallas 1970, 27-30). In German-language sources the Slavic lect of Upper Silesia in the Diocese was also referred to as *Wasserpolnisch* ('Water Polish,' perhaps on the account of the involvement of the region's Slavophones in river transport on the Oder), or *Plattenpolnisch* ('Low Polish'), by

drawing on the distinction between *Hochdeutsch* (standard German) and *Plattdeutsch* (Low German) (Rospond 1948). The linguonym '(Upper) Silesian language' made an appearance in German- and Polish-language sources in the first half of the 19th century (Mayer and Rospond 1956). By the late 1840s, the British and Foreign Bible Society considered a translation of the Bible into the Silesian language (Czesak 2011).

With the liquidation of the remnants of the institution of serfdom and the actual implementation of free and compulsory elementary education for all children in 1848-1849 in Prussia and the Habsburg lands, it was decided to employ Slavic languages as the media of education in Upper Silesia's Slavophone areas. The choice was made to use Polish in the Breslau Diocese and the local lect, Moravian, in the Olmütz Archdiocese. Obviously, in the higher grades German was introduced because it was the state language. In the wake of the founding of the German Empire (1871) as an ethnolinguistic nation-state, languages other than German were replaced by German as the sole medium of instruction in 1873, though the process was not fully completed until the turn of the 20th century. (Pallas 1970, 36-44; Plaček 2000, 17; Świerc 1990) After 1867 in Austrian Silesia (the Habsburgs' section of Upper Silesia), local Slavic lects, then subsumed into or labelled as Bohemian / Czech, Moravian / Czech and Polish / Silesian entered education and local administration, which could be bi- and even trilingual (Hlavačka 2005, 810; Žáček 1995).

In the second half of the 19th century it became the practice to ask about language in censuses as the indicator of a respondent's nationality (that is, the fact of belonging to this or that nation, ethnolinguistically defined) (Böckh 1866; Trampe 1908). On the basis of the census takers' differing individual interpretations of their language, Upper Silesia's Slavophones were classified variously as Bohemians, Moravians and Poles, both in Prussia (the German Empire) and in Austria-Hungary (cf Triest 1864). What surprises, in the case of the Prussian / German censuses, is the redefinition of Silesian-speakers exclusively as Polish-speakers, or Poles (even though the

majority of the Slavophones did not consider themselves to be Poles, and actually saw this ethnonym as a slur when applied to them). This was mainly due to the introduction of Polish as the language of instruction for Slavophones in the Breslau Diocese (Snoch 1991, 141). However, in the Province of West Prussia, the local Catholic Slavophones were recorded in censuses as Kashubs or Kashubian-speakers, and their Protestant counterparts in East Prussia as Mazurs or Mazurian-speakers. Both Kashubian and Mazurian, like Silesian, were closer to Polish than to German. However, in both provinces declarations of Polish as a person's language first appeared only with the rise of the Polish national movement at the turn of the 20th century. They were soon countered by successful appeals from German administrators and organizations to the overwhelmingly bilingual Kashubs and Mazurs to declare German as the language of their (national) choice (Blanke 2001, 83-87; Borzyszkowski 2011, 42-43).

The different policies and varying results of these policies in regard of the choice of languages declared stemmed from the fact that both the state administration and the population at large were then actually internalizing the equation of language with nation. This occurred in this region before it became the popularly accepted norm prior to World War I. Decisions taken by non-nationally-minded bureaucrats in the mid-19th century came to have unforeseen national ramifications half a century later. And the decisions once made could not be unmade. In Prussia's Upper Silesia, the (Upper) Silesian language was a minority pursuit. Briefly, the Catholic clergy threw their support behind it in the 1870s, as a counter-measure to the state's oppression of the Catholic Church at that time, or the *Kulturkampf*, when Berlin sought to fashion a German-speaking Protestant nation from the population of the German Empire (Vochala 1948: 88; Wanatowicz 1992: 51). Between 1867 and 1910 around 20 Silesian translations of popular German ballads were published and frequently reprinted as broadsheets sold at fairs. Interestingly, the language into which they were translated was never explicitly named (Obrączka 2002).

In Austrian Silesia, Silesianness found its expression in local politics, but not on the linguistic plane. In 1909 the Silesian National Party was founded there (Honka 2005, 122). In the wake of World War I, as a result of the economic and social collapse in the German Empire and Austria-Hungary, a space opened for the reorganization of the political shape of Central Europe. The aforementioned Silesian party allied itself with the then-strongest and largest political force in Upper Silesia (that in 1919 took the form of the bilingual Związek Górnoślązaków / Bund der Oberschlesier (Union of Upper Silesians)). It appealed for the transformation of Upper Silesia and Austrian Silesia into independent Silesian nation-states or autonomous regions within postwar Germany (or also within Czechoslovakia, in the case of Austrian Silesia). The aim was to prevent the division of the two Silesian regions among the nation-states that were vying for their possession, primarily for economic reasons. In the case of Upper Silesia, the second largest coal and industrial basin in continental Europe was at stake, while Austrian Silesia was Austria-Hungary's largest industrial region (Schmidt-Rösler 1999).

The grassroots mobilization by these groups did not lead to their achieving their aims and the geopolitical realities as played out by the great powers took the precedence. Upper Silesia was split among Czechoslovakia, Germany and Poland; Austrian Silesia was divided between Czechoslovakia and Poland. Because all three polities were self-conscious nation-states, the populations of the two previously existing Silesian regions were actively Czechized, Germanized or Polonized. In Poland it meant blanket suppression of any regional or linguistic *Silesianness*, though after 1926 Silesian made an appearance in a few publications and on radio, as a dialect of Polish 'cleansed of ugly Germanisms and Bohemianism' (Kopeć 1980). In Germany, linguistic Silesianness was encouraged as a counterbalance to the Polish national movement. Silesian was emphatically defined as a Slavic language or dialect, but which was *not* Polish. Some proposed to see Silesian as a 'cultural dialect' (*Kulturmundart*) of the German language, that is united with this language through a common German culture shared

by Silesian- and German-speakers[14] (Eichenberger 1994, 34-36). However, the category of the 'Upper Silesian language' was made available in Germany only once, in the 1939 census (Kneip 1999: 137-138).

On the other hand, though in the context of what could be called 'managed democracy' (Orzoff 2009) (the term used for referring the system of government in today's Russia), Silesian organizations survived and even thrived in interwar Czechoslovakia (Jerczyński 2011). In 1934, the socialist poet, Óndra Łysohorsky (*nom de plume* of Erwin Goj) forcefully entered Czechsolovakia's literary scene with a collection of poems written in Lachian[15] (followed by two more in a quick succession in 1935 and 1937); this was the Slavic language of southern Upper Silesia, eastern Austrian Silesia and northern Moravia. These lands surround the Silesian town of Friedeck-Mistek (Frýdek-Místek), where the poet was born in 1905, and raised speaking both the local Slavic lect and German. In order to reflect the phonemic specificities of Lachian in writing, Łysohorsky used diacritical letters from both Czech (for instance, [č], [š]) and Polish (for instance, [ł], [ś]) (Hannan 2007). Łysohorsky's example of literary writing in Lachian was followed by other authors, but they tended towards the Czech system of writing (cf Hannan 1996: 149; Hanys 1941; Šinovský 1940; Stunavsky 1940).

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[14] This idea may not sound as strange as it appears at the first glance. In the case of Chinese, the Abstand lects, defined as dialects of Chinese, may be as different from one another as German is from Polish, but they are made into the dialects of a single language through the shared system of Chinese writing and through common Chinese culture (cf Künstler 2000).

[15] This linguo- and ethnonym of 'Lachian' as coined by Łysohorsky stems from the tradition, widespread in eastern Austrian Silesia and the adjacent Moravian areas, of referring to lowlanders as 'Lachs.' Originally, this was a pejorative term, but ethnographers (especially Czechs) took it up to denote the area of eastern Austrian Silesian and northern Moravia. Thus, the purely ethnographic concept of 'Lachia' was born, with no relation to any historical region. This concept's complete divorce from the past was well-suited to Łysohorsky's ethnolinguistic-cum-political project of building a Lachian nation (Hannan 1996, 65-70).

In Poland, at the same time, Feliks Steuer began to publish his studies of the Slavic lects from the southern section of Upper Silesia contained within the Olomouc Archdiocese (1934). In a spelling system parallel to that of Łysohorsky's, he employed exclusively Polish diacritical letters, with the sole exception of the Czech [ů]. In 1935 under a pseudonym, Steuer published two booklets of stories in this writing system (Res 1935a and 1935b).

During World War II, when all of historical Upper Silesia found itself in Germany, this incorporation was followed by the suppression of Polish, as well as of the Silesian language that was associated with it, and of Moravian outside the territory of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. The German political priority was the construction of an ethnolinguistically homogenous German nation. But the idea of the Silesian language, and actually of a Silesian nation, was revived under the linguonym and ethnonym of Lachian, spearheaded by Łysohorsky in the Soviet Union, where Joseph Stalin himself lent his ear to the poet's ideas. He was a founding member of the All-Slavonic Committee in Moscow, addressed its meetings in Lachian, had his Lachian poems published in Russian translations (cf Łysohorsky 1946), and appealed for the creation of an independent, or autonomous, Lachian nation-state after the war. With the reestablishment of Czechoslovakia and Poland in 1945, the linguistic and cultural difference of the Silesian-speakers from the majority populations of both states was suppressed in both countries. The priority was the building of the ethnolinguistically homogenous nation-states of Czechs and Slovaks, and of Poles; this was uncannily reminiscent of the *Volksgemeinschaft* policies of national socialist Germany. As a result, Łysohorsky was prohibited from publishing in Lachian in postwar Czechoslovakia. In frustration, he began to write poetry in his 'second mother tongue,' German, and published it in East Germany (Łysohorsky 1961). But, however rare, references to the 'Silesian language' continued to occur in publications appearing the West (Davies 1996, 1233; Osers 1949).

In communist Czechoslovakia and Poland, Silesian was a taboo. Ethnically Czech, Slovak and Polish settlers and administrators arriving after the expulsion of millions of people who had been classified as Germans, saw Silesian as 'corrupted' Czech or Polish. Some even saw it as a dialect of German, on account of the numerous lexical and syntactical loans from German(ic) and because of Slavic/Silesian-German bilingualism with associated diglossia and code-switching. Due to these processes, certain forms of Silesian could be classified as a creole or mixed language, as in the case of the Germanic-Romance language of English (Catto 2003; Kamusella 2011a; Reiter 1960).

Some Silesian-language texts of poetry, folk songs, humorous anecdotes and fairy tales began to appear in Czechoslovakia and Poland, especially during the 1970s (cf Marek 1954; Ondrusz 1977; Simonides and Ligęza 1975; Strzałka 1975), but their language, unequivocally defined as a dialect of Czech or Polish, was heavily Czechized or Polonized in the two states respectively. The division of the so-called 'transitory Lachian subdialects,' bisected by the Czechoslovak-Polish border, between Czech and Polish was a matter of political and scholarly contention, the lects of the speaker on both sides of the border being either the same or more similar to one another than to the standard Czech of Prague or to the standard Polish of Warsaw (cf Hannan 1996; Šrámek 1997).

Research, not so much on Silesian, but on the speech of Upper Silesia's Slavophones was undertaken in Czechsolovakia and Poland, and continued in (usually, West) Germany, too. In Czechoslovakia and Poland Silesian was analyzed as a dialect of Czech or Polish, respectively, or by the way of context, when the history of the multilingual relations in the history of Upper Silesia was probed into (cf Knop et al 1967; Lubaś 1978-1980). Despite this ideological limitation, the Polish linguist Władysław Lubaś published three valuable volumes of phonetically transcribed conversations with and between Silesian-speakers (1978-1980), though he had to 'balance out' the 'nationally suspect' focus of this publication by including in it conversations with the inhabitants of an ethnically Polish area

northeast of Upper Silesia, that is, the Dąbrowa industrial basin (Zagłębie Dąbrowskie).

The research on Silesian in West Germany (cf Reiter 1960), flowered in the form of the first-ever full-fledged two-volume dictionary of Silesian, based on the lect of the pilgrimage town of Sankt Annaberg (Góra św. Anny) and its vicinity (Olesch 1958-1959). Reinhold Olesch, the dictionary's author, referred to this lect as a 'dialect of Polish,' but previously in his interwar work on Upper Silesia's Slavophones (1937) he had classified it as a 'Slavic dialect.' The 1945 change in the German-Polish border that left Sankt Annaberg (Góra św. Anny) in Poland seems to have influenced his subsequent choice of ethnonational adjective.

From an Idea to a Language

The end of communism and the breakup of the Soviet bloc in 1989 ushered in democracy. This allowed citizens to form their own grassroots associations and projects without the fear of immediate or direct suppression, should they fall foul of the central authorities' wishes. The rise of the Moravian-Silesian parties and associations in the Czech Republic[16] (Pernes 1996) was mirrored by the founding of the Ruch Autonomii Śląska (RAŚ, Silesian Autonomy Movement) in 1990. But language did not play a role in any of these endeavors in the Czech Republic or in Poland. It came to the fore when RAŚ's leadership, frustrated by the impossibility of winning parliamentary elections in Upper Silesia (which was mostly inhabited by ethnically non-Silesian population after the postwar expulsions), founded the Związek Ludności Narodowości Śląskiej (ZLNŚ, Union of the People of the Silesian Nationality)

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[16] The Moravská národní strana (MNS, Moravian National Party) and the Hnutí za samosprávnou demokracii - Společnost pro Moravu a Slezsko (Movement for Self-Governmental Democracy – the Association for the Sake of Moravia and Silesia) were founded in 1990. Seven years later, the two parties (with some others) merged into the Moravská demokratická strana (MoDS, Moravian Democratic Party). Following another round of mergers, MoDS became part of the party Moravané (M, Moravians) (Historie 2012).

in 1996. While RAŚ is open to all the inhabitants of Upper Silesia, irrespective of origin, the ZLNŚ aims to attract members who speak Silesian or are of Silesian ethnolinguistic origin or sympathies.[17] The hope was that with this ethnolinguictic program the ZLNŚ would be recognized as an organization of the Silesian national minority, thus allowing it to be exempted from the five-per cent threshold in parliamentary elections, as in the case of other recognized national minorities in Poland. But such registration has been repeatedly refused to the ZLNŚ, even after the 2002 census, which revealed the Silesians to be the largest national minority in today's Poland (Kamusella 2005).

Recognizing the impossibility of a political solution in the face of Warsaw's staunch opposition and continued denial of the existence of the Silesians and their language, RAŚ concentrated on local elections and politics, while the still unregistered ZLNŚ focused on promoting Silesian history and language. The harbinger of the latter trend was the publication of the first-ever Silesian-language play (Bartylla-Blanke 2000). This was followed by the first-ever popular overview of Silesian history, language and culture, which shrank from taking any national or ethnic side (Kamusella 2001), and then the facsimile publication (with its Polonized transcription) of a Silesian-language diary from the interwar period (Jeleń 2002). Furthermore, the ground had already been prepared, because a number of dictionaries of Silesian, though held out to be a dialect of Polish in the politically correct manner, had been produced previously for mass consumption (Czajkowski and Klukowski 1994 and 1996; Cząstka-Szymon et al. 1999; Lischka 1997; Wronicz 2000). There had also been a popular collection of stories in Silesian (Musioł 1989), and Łysohorsky's

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[17] To this day the Moravané has not included the issue of either the Moravian or Silesian languages in their program (Program 2012). The Ústav jazyka moravského (Institute of the Moravian Language) was registered in 2006, but has not produced any substantive document or publication on this language yet (Bláha 2005; Ústav 2012; Zemanová 2008), though work on an internet Moravian-Czech dictionary was begun in 2000 (Jurásek 2000-).

entire Lachian-language poetic oeuvre both in the original (1988) and in a German translation (1989).

It is also necessary to mention the phenomenon of Marek Szołtysek from Rybnik, who, beginning in 1997, publishes his own books written in a slightly Polonized variety of Silesian with the exclusive use of the Polish writing system, including the letters [ą] and [ę] for nasal vowels that do *not* occur in Silesian. Szołtysek invariably refers to Silesian as a dialect of Polish. His publications, which are produced in 'coffee-table book' form and are rich in color illustrations, sell well as gifts all across Upper Silesia, and are constantly reprinted (cf Szołtysek 1998 and 1999). Interestingly, he also published a selection of Old Testament stories in Silesian (2000) and a primer of Silesian (2001).

In 2003, Andrzej Roczniok, one of the leaders of the ZLNŚ and RAŚ who had been incarcerated in 1981-1982 as a Solidarity dissident, founded the Ślōnsko Nacyjno Ôficyno (ŚNÔ, Silesian National Publishing House, officially registered in Polish as the Narodowa Oficyna Śląska) in Zabrze. It specializes in books on Silesian topics (published in Polish, German and English) and in the Silesian language. He entered the market with the first-ever history of Upper Silesia written from the regional-cum-ethnic Silesian point of view as a reaction to earlier histories of the region that had made it a mere adjunct to the mainstream of the Czech, German or Polish national master narratives (Jerczyński 2003). In the two subsequent editions, this book grew to be an extensive and respectable monograph (Jerczyński 2006 and 2012) that can be usefully read in tandem with the first-ever joint Czech-German-Polish history of this region and its inhabitants (Bahlcke et al. 2011).

In late 2003, PolBLUL, the Polish branch of the Dublin-based EBLUL (European Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages, which became defunct in 2010) was founded in Gdańsk. Roczniok liaised with it and had Silesian inscribed on the list of the recognized minority languages in Poland that PolBLUL proposed to protect (Roczniok 2011). Following this success, in 2006 he and Grzegorz Kozubek applied for an ISO 639-3 code element

szl for Silesian. Their request was granted a year later (Documentation 2012), and was followed by the official translation of the linguonym 'Silesian' into over two hundred other languages (Resource 2012). In Poland the decision was contested, and presented as a 'recognition of the Silesian language in the United States' (Język 2007), as if the ISO 639 standard of worldwide language recognition itself was not to be observed in Poland (Kamusella 2012). In 2008 the Silesian Wikipedia, or Wikipedyjo, went online (Śląska 2008), and among the currently extant 283 Wikipedias, the Silesian one scores the respectable 184th place with over 2000 articles (List 2012). Łysohorsky's oeuvre apart, it is the most substantial extant book – or 'resource' as the IT *Newspeak* has it – in Silesian. Thus, in the face of Poland's staunch opposition to the idea of the Silesian language – not to speak of the existence of a Silesian nation or nationality –, cyberspace provides a partial solution, since it is not controlled by the state, or at least not yet. People correspond, publish and blog there in Silesian, without the necessity of obtaining a permission from Warsaw.

The scholarly discourse was slow to catch up with these developments, weighed down, especially in Poland, by the necessity of bowing to the official line that neither the Silesian language nor the Silesian ethnic group (or nation) exists. While they notice that the 'Silesian dialect' marks out its speakers as, to a degree, un-Polish vis-à-vis other speakers of the Polish language, Polish scholars, with a measure of predictability, usually maintain that this difference does not amount to a communication barrier. They tend to conclude that a Silesian language is unnecessary and brand it negatively brand as a 'political project' (Lubaś 1998). German scholars, in contrast, tend to approach the issue descriptively, respecting how users of Silesian themselves think about this lect and how they may wish to classify and employ it (Hentschel 2002; Reiter 1985).

The younger generation of Polish scholars tends to follow this approach, and do not exclude the possibility of a Silesian translation of the Bible in the (near) future, which still is seen as the litmus test of a 'real' language in Europe and in the West (Czesak 2003 and 2006; Kamusella 2009). However, a

scholar's age is not always indicative of his or her approach to the researched subject matter. For example, the established historian Maria Wanda Wanatowicz (2004) recently took a rather objective probe of the Silesian national movement, while the young sociologist Lech Nijakowski (2004) denied the existence of the Silesians and their language. In 2009 the best interdisciplinary monograph on the Silesian ethnolinguistic and regional movement published to date, by the anthropologist Elżbieta Anna Sekuła came off the press. Earlier, the present writer devoted an entire interdisciplinary study to the sociolinguistic history of Upper Silesia (2005/2006), while the linguist Jolanta Tambor covered most of the same ground, but with an emphasis on the purely linguistic aspects of the situation (2006). The difference is that Tambor, following the path of her teacher, the previously cited Władysław Lubaś, did not employ the term 'Silesian language' in her monograph. Revealingly, the substantial subsection on the very possibility of codifying the language and on some recent concrete attempts to codify Silesian as a written language (2006, 87-96) was removed from the German translation of her monograph (2011). Perhaps an academic career as a linguist of the Polish language at a Polish university is still seen as incompatible with research on a closely related Slavic language, native to Poland but (still) not recognized officially in this polity.

Meanwhile, various grassroots initiatives for the use and codification of Silesian as a written language unfolded. In 2005 Egmont Polska published Roczniok's translation of a popular comic book (Christa 2005), which was the first book in postwar Poland with its title given in Silesian. Two years later, Roczniok started publishing the first-ever bilingual, Polish-Silesian, journal, *Ślůnsko Nacyjo*, though this ceased publication in 2010. Silesian was rapidly disappearing as the language of everyday communication as more than half a century of relentless Polonization became even further intensified by the effects of radio and television only in Polish (cf Nie wystarczy 2010). To counter this onslaught, the practical and symbolical need for writing and reading in Silesian was supported by the appearance of several extensive bilingual dictionaries of the language, (Kallus 2007; Podgórska and Podgórski 2008;

Roczniok 2007-2008), including one multilingual dictionary of Silesian, German and English (Czajkowski et al. 2006).

At the same time in Czech Silesia, similar dictionaries – though rather smaller in scope and ambition –began to appear. In these cases, they tended to conform to the opinion that Silesian, as spoken there, is a dialect of Czech, or their focus was on the lect of a locality, by terming it, for instance, the 'Ostrava speech', thus silently eluding any need to take a position on whether the language was Silesian or Czech (cf Janeček 2005; Záruba 2007). An interesting development was the appearance of collections of poems, anecdotes and stories written in the lect of the Hlučínsko (Hultschiner Ländchen). This area was part of Germany's Upper Silesia until 1920, when the Allies handed it over to Czechoslovakia. Because, like much of southernmost Upper Silesia, this territory also belonged to the Olomouc Archdiocese, the population of the area referred then to their own language as 'Moravian.' In interwar Czechslovakia, despite their Slavic lect, they identified with the Germans, and hence became known as the 'Hultschiners,' from the German version of the name of their region. In the wake of the Munich Agreement, they warmly welcomed the reincorporation of their homeland into Germany in 1938. In 1945, however, the Hultschiner Ländchen was handed back to Czechoslovakia, and the Hultschiners were retained in the country as 'ethnic Czechs unaware of their Czechness' (Plaček 2000). In this latter condition, their treatment was similar to that of Silesians or Slavophone Germans from interwar Germany's section of Upper Silesia in post-1945 Poland (Linek 2000 and 2001).

Today most of the indigenous inhabitants in the Hlučínsko identify themselves as Germans, though most do not speak German, due to forced Czechization of the population during the communist period. They use the local lect, invariably written in the Czech writing system, as the instrument of pointing up the ethnic difference between themselves and the Czechs. And to this end they also call their lect 'the Prussian language' (cf Rumanová 2005; Schlossarková 1998). This trend resulted in a small Czech-Prussian dictionary in 2009 (Rumanová 2009).

While both of Łysohorsky's Lachian and the literature in this language were suppressed after the war in communist Czechslovakia, the end of communism brought about a tentative revival of interest in and of acceptance of his work in the Czech Republic. Certainly instrumental to this was the widespread reception and appreciation of Łysohorsky's poetry, which in 1970 earned him Switzerland's nomination for the Nobel Prize in Literature (Hannan 2005: 485-488; Lubos 1974: 622-624). After his death in the highly symbolic year of 1989, Łysohorsky's manuscripts were deposited in the Muzeum Beskyd in his native town of Frýdek-Místek. In 2005 a bilingual volume of his poems in the Lachian originals and Czech translations was published in Prague, and recently his fame has even reached Japan (cf Nomachi 2012).

Łysohorsky is, thus far, the best and most renowned writer in Silesian, and the only one translated into other languages. But is Lachian a Silesian language or part of the Silesian language? There is no other way to answer the question but to listen to what users of Silesian may think about it. In 2009 (Lysohorsky), in a very symbolic act Roczniok re-published Łysohorsky's debut poetic volume in parallel orthographies (Lachian and standard Silesian), claiming the poet's oeuvre for Silesian. Importantly, it is the first-ever book published in this standard orthography. At present Roczniok is working on another volume of Łysohorsky's poetry, to be published exclusively in the standard Silesian orthography (Roczniok 2011).

Standardizing Silesian

What is the point of standardizing Silesian, coming up with another Slavic language? Who would speak or write it anyway? As mentioned above, in the 2002 census almost 60,000 people claimed it as their home language. The group has been large and active enough to spawn a middling-sized, but not entirely symbolic, Wikipedia in this language. Hentschel (2002, 437) estimates that 1.5 million people speak this language in Poland

among Upper Silesia's population of 5 million, at present split between the voivodeships (administrative provinces) of Opole and Silesia.[18] Obviously, many, if not most, speakers of Silesian see their speech as Polish or as a dialect of Polish,[19] much as many Scots tend to perceive their speech to be English.

That is the nature of Aufbau languages developing within the same dialect continuum. There is no clear border between them: they actually merge or diverge, creating a broad plateau of linguistic borderland between them. At times, administrative measures may cause such interstitial zones to be engineered into a sharper divide between languages or, alternatively, extended to sprawl over an even wider region (cf Kay 2006; Kloss 1967). Estimates may vary, but judging by the returns of the 2002 census, close to 200,000 passive and active speakers of Silesian may see it as a language in its own right. For them it is an ethnic, national language, which makes the Silesians different from the Poles and other Slavophone nations. However, with time, the overbearing pressure of the Polish state has been making them accept a 'Kashubian solution', accepting that Silesian is a regional language and the Silesians a regional group of the Polish nation. But the second part of this formulation does not work as well when applied to Silesian as it has in the case of the Kashubian original.

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[18] The names of the *województwo opolskie* (Opole Voivodeship) and the *województwo śląskie* (Silesian Voivodeship) are quite confusing. Before 1999 the latter was known as the *województwo katowickie* (Katowice Voivodeship), and was renamed as 'Silesian,' on the account of the fact that it comprises interwar Poland's section of Upper Silesia, which was then known as the autonomous Silesian Voivodeship. RAŚ, when appealing for autonomy for Upper Silesia, draws upon the legal and political tradition of this interwar Silesian Voivodeship. However, while the Opole Voivodeship is almost exactly coextensive with interwar Germany's section of Upper Silesia, the territory of what was the interwar Silesian Voivodeship amounts to no more than a sliver of today's much larger Silesian Voivodeship, which comprises areas taken also from Austrian Silesia, Galicia and the Kielce region, including the Dąbrowa industrial basin.

[19] Because the results of the Polish 2011 census have not been published yet, it is difficult to say how many people feel themselves to be speakers of Silesian or members of the Silesian nation. However, RAŚ and sociologists estimate their number at 200 to 300,000, or at 46 per cent of the indigenous population living in the Upper Silesian section of the Silesian Voivodeship (Ślązacy 2011).

Today, the Kashubs living in their traditional region are close neighbours of the Poles only, whereas the Silesians live in close proximity to the Poles, the Czechs (or the Czech Republic's Silesians and Moravians) and the Germans concentrated in the eastern half of the Opole Voivodeship. Research conducted on the German minority in the Opole Voivodeship in a joint 2009-2010 poll by the University of Osaka and the Haus der Deutsche-Polnischen Zusammenarbait / Dom Współpracy Polsko-Niemieckiej (House of German-Polish Cooperation) in Opole and Gliwice, revealed that almost half of them consider Silesian to be their native language and 80 per cent of them speak it at home. A complex situation has developed, where the population distinguishes itself from Polish linguistic identity on the one hand, and, through other means, asserts a commonality with a common cultural German identity on the other. Hence, the Silesian language functions as the primary marker of the minority's *un*-Polishness, while German history, culture and tradition are emphasised as the basis for their common culture with the German nation; this is apart from the recent overt political fact of the German citizenship which most of the minority's members have acquired since 1991 (Kamusella 2003).

The policy of forced Polonization of this minority did lead to the disappearance of German as the community's preferred language of communication within the span of a single generation after 1945.[20] But contrary to the intentions of the

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[20] One would not know about the utter disappearance of the German language from the everyday life of Upper Silesia's German minority, if one depended on official statistics. The 2002 Polish census recorded 205,000 self-declared speakers of German as their home language. But in reality these speakers are nowhere to be heard; there is not a single German-speaking locality in today's Poland. I interpret this surprisingly high number of the declarations of German as a complex reaction on the part of a community traumatized by forced Polonization during the communist years, to the introduction of a census question about nationality and language in the Polish census when this question had *never* been asked between 1946 and 2002. In 2002 153,000 respondents declared German nationality, and 102,000 of them German as their home language, whereas 51,000 Polish (and a few – Silesian). 101,000 self-declared speakers of German declared Polish nationality, and a further 2,000 did not declare any nationality. Bascially, these respondents were afraid, when dealing with the state apparatus, to assert their

Polish authorities, the minority acquired neither the Polish language nor Polish national identity. Most preserved their German national identity, and the majority interpret their Slavic speech as 'Silesian' (Kamusella 2011b). The prevalence of the use of Silesian over Polish or German among the community's members can be observed in the insightful interviews recorded by the Archwum Historii Mówionej (Archive of Oral History), which is an initiative of the aforementioned House of German-Polish Cooperation (Archiwum 2012). The undeniable reality of Silesian as a joint marker of Germanness and un-Polishness in Upper Silesia is such that the official weekly of Poland's German minority regularly publishes Silesian-language texts (cf Karolin 2012).

Silesian being an Ausbau (North) Slavic language, it can be said to be equidistant from standard Czech and standard Polish. Łysohorsky's orthographic choice of using Czech and Polish diacritical letters symbolically emphasized this equidistance. But today, the vast majority of Silesian-language texts and publications are produced in Poland; most, until 2009, used Polish orthography, with the exception of the Czech [ů] in the case of the Steuer orthography. But this graphic closeness of written Silesian to Polish is misleading. Silesian-speakers find the speech of Czech-speakers across the Polish-Czech border (that cuts through historical Upper Silesia) more comprehensible than that of Polish-speakers. Several factors account for this situation.

Germanness by declaring their nationality as German. Consequently, they settled for indicating it more obliquely by declaring German as their home language. Bearing this in mind, the number of declarations of Germanness in this census could be calculated as follows: 102,000 speakers of German and declarers of German nationality + 51,000 speakers of Polish and declarers of German nationality + 101,000 speakers of German and declarers of Polish nationality + 2,000 speakers of German and declarers of no nationality, altogether amounting to 256,000 persons. This number corresponds well to over a quarter of a million German grants of citizenship and passports issued by German consulates to Germans who are Polish citizens residing in Poland, between 1992 and 2003. Hence, the declaration of German as home language in the overwhelming number of cases was the declaration of 'ancestral,' 'identificational' or 'ideological' language, not the language of everyday use (Kamusella 2003; Wyniki 2012).

First, Polish developed as the sociolect of the nobility of Poland-Lithuania, but in the modern period, salient for the argument here, many urban centers of the polity (apart from Cracow) were located far away from Upper Silesia, namely in Warsaw, Grodno (today, Hrodna in Belarus), Wilno (today Vilnius in Lithuania), or Lwów (today, L'viv in Ukraine). In the 19th century this sociolect became the language of those sections of the intelligentsia and of the upper classes across the Polish-Lithuanian lands, who chose to identify themselves as Poles. In the Polish nation-state, founded in 1918, the male draft to the army, state administration, compulsory popular elementary education and the mass media spread this previously noble Polish to practically all the population, especially during the communist period. Thus Polish became the national language of the Polish nation and state, with no space left for regional lects (dialects) or minority languages, commonly seen as a danger to the unity of the polity (Bajerowa 2003, Klemensiewicz 1999, 35-62, 495-600).

Unlike Polish, Czech is a polycentric, or diglossic, language. It consists from two varieties that must be used in tandem, but that are of starkly different origin, namely, *spisovná čeština* (written, official Czech) and *obecná čeština* (colloquial Czech). The former, modelled on the then newly standardized Polish, was created in the mid-19th century on the basis of the Czech used in 16th-century Protestant literature; Czech children learn this at school. On the other hand, *obecná čeština* was the speech of Prague and its vicinity that became the model of 'elegant language' across Bohemia (or the western half of today's Czech Republic). The situation in Moravia and Czech Silesia (or the eastern half of the polity) differs from that in Bohemia. At home and with friends people speak in local lects, they acquire *spisovná čeština* at school and they become fluent in *obecná čeština* from exposure to radio, television and fiction.

Thus, Silesian has more similarities to the tripartite Czech language of Czech Silesia and northern Moravia than it has to Polish, especially when Czech-speakers in those areas choose to talk in their local lects. Basically the local lects on both sides of the Czech-Polish frontier, in an area extending from the

confluence of the Czech, Polish and Slovak borders to Opava, are the same, because after 1945 the populations living there were not expelled from either side of this frontier, unlike those farther west, to today's confluence of the Czech, German and Polish borders. In addition, the closeness of Czech Silesia's Czech to the Polish-influenced Silesian of today is deepened by the continuous existence of the Polish-language minority educational system in the Czech section of the eastern half of Austrian Silesia (that is, in the area between Český Těšín and Ostrava) since the late 19th century (cf Eckert 1993).

The sociolinguistic situation of the Silesian-speaking community presented above, together with the discourse on what the language is or is not in relation to Czech, Polish and German in the context of nation and nation-state building, and changing political borders in Central Europe, constituted the basis from which the idea emerged to standardize Silesian as a language in its own right. A significant, though unintentional (at least initially), contribution to this process has been the multivolume dictionary of [Upper] Silesia's subdialects, whose initial ten volumes were published between 2000 and 2008 (Wyderka 2000-). If completed, the dictionary may count thirty to forty volumes, and as such will become the repository of the corpus of the Silesian language (Słownik 2012). Although its editor, Bogusław Wyderka, explicitly posed the 'Silesian subdialects' as part of the Polish language (and reinforced this stance by distinguishing in the dictionary Bohemianisms and Germanisms, but *not* Polonisms from Silesian terms and usages (Kamusella 2002; Prof. Wyderka 2008)), nowadays he canvasses for the founding of a state-approved and -supported committee for the standardization of Silesian in the Instytut Śląski (Silesian Institute)[21] in Opole, where he is employed (Semik 2012).

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[21] Ironically, this institute was founded in Opole in 1957 to facilitate the Polonization of interwar Germany's section of Upper Silesia included in Poland after 1945, alongside its German- and Slavic-speaking population, officially classified as 'autochthons' (*autochtoni*), or 'ethnic Poles unaware of their Polishness.'

The waiting game is for the state's decision to recognize Silesian as a regional language so that it could fall under the provisions of Poland's 2005 Act on National and Ethnic minorities and on the Regional Language (which confers the status of regional language on Kashubian) (Ustawa 2005) and the Council of Europe's European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, which Poland ratified in 2009. The grassroots pressure for this solution has been mounting palpably since 2007-2008. (A significant inspiration for these initiatives was the second edition of an essay on Upper Silesia by the present writer (Kamusella 2006), published jointly in 2006 by the Opole branch of RAŚ and Roczniok's Ślōnsko Nacyjno Ôficyno.) Then the first bill on the recognition of Silesian as a language was sent (but never debated) to the Polish parliament by a group of MPs from the Silesian Voivodeship (Posłowie 2010), Silesian received an ISO 639-3 code, and the Silesian Wikipedia went officially online. Furthermore, two organizations for the cultivation and development of the Silesian language were founded in 2008, namely, *Pro Loquela Silesiana* (in Latin, 'For the Silesian Language') in Mikołów and the Tôwarzistwo Piastowaniô Ślónskij Môwy "Danga" (in Silesian, Society for the Cultivation of the Silesian Language 'Rainbow') in Cisek (Danga 2012; Pro Loquela 2012). And in the same year arguably the best-ever literary prose work in Silesian was published, though regrettably with its title given in Polish (Kadłubek 2008).

In 2008 Roczniok proposed to organize a conference on the status and codification of Silesian. Tambor helped him in this task, and regional politicians also took an interest in the issue. On June 30, 2008, under the auspices of Krystyna Bochenek, a Deputy Speaker of the Polish Senate, a conference 'Is Silesian Still a Dialect or Already a Language?' was held in Katowice, quite symbolically, in the assembly room in the building of the interwar Sejm (regional diet) of the 1922-1939 autonomous Silesian Voivodeship.

The event commenced with four plenary papers delivered by Artur Czesak, Kamusella, Tambor, and Wyderka. The two former speakers emphasized that, in a democracy, it is through

the asserted will of a given speech community that its lect becomes a language, while the two latter speakers disagreed, according the language-making privilege to the state alone. Czesak also pointed to the well-defined and established category of 'Slavic literary micro languages' into which Silesian could easily fall (cf Dulichenko 1981). The conference took the decision that Roczniok, Tambor and the representatives of Pro Loquela Silesiana and the Tôwarzistwo Piastowaniô Ślónskij Môwy "Danga" would work out the principles of Silesian spelling and would jointly write a primer of the Silesian language for elementary schools, *Ślabikorz* (Katowice 2010). This was an ideal example of the 'first congress' phenomenon in making or codifying languages (cf Fishman 1993).

The proceedings of the conference were published twice, in a volume edited by Tambor (2008) and in another under Roczniok's editorship (2009); the disagreement between them in relation of the preferred form of the Silesian language was clearly evident in the impossibility of producing a joint publication. Obviously, the volumes are not identical. Differences are anything but big, though Roczniok's is a faithful reflection of the conferenceThe changes reflected the initial disagreement on whether Silesian should become a written dialect within the sphere of the Polish language or a language in its own right, be it national or regional. Another point of discontent was whether to treat German/ic elements in Silesian as part and parcel of this language and its cultural heritage – the approach propounded by Roczniok and the present writer, or as a 'foreign element' that should be limited (if not altogether expunged, as the approach was in Poland between 1922 and 1989) in standard Silesian – which is Tambor's and Wyderka's view.

Soon, many parties, associations and individuals began to perceive the former pariah of a language as a project that might be of political or cultural value. Therefore, on January 6, 2010 Wyderka brought about the founding of the Unit for the Study of the Linguistic Relations in Silesia (Pracownia Badań nad Stosunkami Językowymi na Ślasku) in the Silesian Institute, Opole. The unit's obliquely referred to subject of

research is, of course, the Silesian language. Shortly before the decision to establish this unit, Wyderka delivered a speech on Silesian as a regional language. He hopes that if Warsaw accords such a status to Silesian, his unit may be upgraded to an Institute of Silesian Language and Culture, similar to the University of Gdańsk's Kashubian Institute (Institut Kaszëbsczi / Instytut Kaszubski) that is officially entrusted with the cultivation of and research on the Kashubian language (Linek 2010).

On July 13, 2009, another conference on the codification of the Silesian language was held in Katowice, this time organized by the MP Marek Plura from the Silesian Voivodeship. The participants reiterated their support for a standard Silesian spelling, a project for which was presented in outline by Tambor on behalf of the group who had worked it out (Ślōnsko 2010). In November 2008, the Polish Sejm had made this into *the* prerequisite before Silesian might be recognized as a regional language in Poland (Informacja 2010). Meanwhile, it became even more apparent that the Silesian language had already acquired a form of cultural and political capital. Pro Loquela Silesiana decided to produce separately its own Silesian primer, and was supported by Tambor. As a result, Roczniok took over the formerly joint project of *Ślabikorz*.

On August 10, 2009 the principles of standard Silesian orthography were finally promulgated at a meeting of the orthography committee in Cieszyn. It was a highly symbolical event. Although the idea of the official recognition and standardization of Silesian coalesced in the Silesian Voivodeship, or the eastern half of Prussia's Upper Silesia, as exemplified by the two aforementioned conferences held in Katowice, the achievement of this very practical first step on the way to the standardization of Silesian was made on the territory of the former Austrian Silesia, which is nowadays split between Poland and the Czech Republic, in the town of Cieszyn / Český Těšín straddling the border.

Jadwiga Wronicz's (2000) scholarly dictionary of the lect of the region could become a basis for a Cieszyn / Těšín linguistic

project, given a long (though not extensive) tradition of publications in this lect since the 18th century, but so far it has not. Most see it as a dialect of Polish or Czech (cf Teshen 2012; Witejcie 2012), though Czech linguists, in a consensual manner, are prone to speak of it as a 'transitory' or a 'mixed, Czech-Polish, dialect' (cf Davidová et al. 1997, 100-115).

Likewise, there is no movement in the Czech Republic for reclaiming the defunct tradition of Łysohorsky's Lachian language or creating a Czech Silesian language. The nascent grassroots support for the Prussian language in the Hlučínsko has not moved yet beyond using it for regional (folkloristic) poetry and collections of stories. In a way all the traditions remain unclaimed for a language-building project, and are thus 'fair game' for the builders of the Silesian language, as indicated by Roczniok's repossession of Łysohorsky as a (national?) Silesian poet. The problem is that in the Czech Republic, Těšín Silesian and Prussian are written using Czech spelling, while the newly developed standard Silesian orthography follows Polish orthography, although diacritical letters not occurring either in Polish or Czech (for example, [ō] and [ô]) are employed. It may hinder the acceptance of standard Silesian and its spelling system among the Czech Republic's Těšín Silesian- and Prussian-speakers.

All the main participants in Poland's Silesian-language cultural life approved the standard spelling of Silesian, and promised to switch in the production of their books and other publications to the new standard, though it was decided that individual writers may follow their own idiosyncratic ways of spelling, if they so choose (Kanōna 2009). Roczniok was the first to move to this new spelling, which necessitated the alteration of his Silesian-language monthly's title from *Ślůnsko Nacyjo* to *Ślōnsko Nacyjo*. He also published the first-ever book in the standard spelling (Lysohorsky 2009) and the last, third, volume of his Polish-Silesian dictionary appeared in this orthography, too (Roczniok 2010). Now he is busy recasting the first two volumes in the standard spelling (Roczniok 2011).

In 2009, an Upper Silesian journalist, Dariusz Dyrda (2009), active in RAŚ, published his textbook of the Silesian language, complete with a Silesian-Polish and Polish-Silesian dictionary, a grammar and primer of the Silesian language, and a new proposal concerning Silesian orthography. Hence, there is a slight possibility of the emergence of a new manner [? system?] of Silesian spelling that could compete with the one that is intended as the standard. This possibility was strengthened by the fact that RAŚ threw its weight behind the textbook, as this organization is clenched in conflict with the ZLNŚ over the leadership of the Silesian (national or regional) movement. The ZLNŚ supports the now-obtaining standard Silesian spelling. But the new textbook's publisher, the self-proclaimed Institute of the Silesian Language (Instýtut Ślůnskiej Godki), is not an official organization, let alone being a genuine institute.

In early May 2010 it was announced that the society Pro Loquela Silesiana's Silesian primer, *Ślōnski ślabikorz*, would be published in July that year, so that children could start using it in Silesian schools beginning in September 2010, when the new school year commenced. The Tôwarzistwo Piastowaniô Ślónskij Môwy "Danga" and Pro Loquela Silesian collaborated on this primer, and Tambor was entrusted with its editorship (Powstaje 2010, Ślonski 2010). The primer, entitled *Gōrnoślōnski ślabikŏrz* (The Upper Silesian Primer) (Adamus et al. 2010) was published immediately before the summer holidays, and after the summer was followed by Barbara Grynicz and Roczniok's (2010) *Ślabikorz ABC* (The ABC Primer).[22] Interestingly, in a slight breach of the 2009 Cieszyn agreement on the standard Silesian orthography, Tambor introduced to *Gōrnoślōnski ślabikŏrz* the diacritical letter [ã] for the Silesian inflectional ending [on] thus in writing making it similar to its Polish counterpart of [ą]. Importantly, the latter grapheme, denotes the nasal vowel /õ/, which does not occur as a single sound in Silesian, in which it is reflected as two separate phonemes

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[22] This primer was co-published by the Przymierze Śląskie (Silesian Alliance) that groups together RAŚ, Upper Silesia's German minority and the Związek Górnośląski (Upper Silesian Union) (cf O nas 2012).

/an/. This is one of the most important phonemic-cum-inflectional differences between Silesian and Polish.

The Tôwarzistwo Piastowaniô Ślónskij Môwy "Danga" and Pro Loquela Silesian adopted Tambor's variety of the standard spelling with [ã], while Roczniok follows the original standard without this addition. After *Gōrnoślōnski ślabikǒrz,* Pro Loquela Silesian published a bilingual, Polish-Silesian primer of Silesian (for adults) in Tambor's standard spelling (Syniawa 2012), but Roczniok's production of Silesian-language books (without [ã]) has been more dynamic (cf Gorczek 2012; Łysohorsky 2012; Makula 2011a and 2011b; Ptaszyński 2011; Stronczek 2010, 2011a and 2011b). Recently, also, a popular dictionary of Silesian in Polish orthography was published for the interested reader across Poland (Frugalińska 2010), while a young poet has stuck to the Steuer orthography (Gwóźdź 2010).

The situation is anything but surprising, taking account of historical precedent. For instance, in the Netherlands, where Dutch has been employed as the official and national language since the turn of the 17th century, different authors and printing houses tended to employ widely varying orthographies through the 19th century (cf Rutten and Vosters 2012). Likewise, the Silesian Wikipedia sticks to the Steuer orthography, whose principles are explained in Silesian on its website, bestowing on it the honor of being the very first text on linguistics in this language (Wikipedyjo: Prawidła 2012). However, in 2011 the standard orthography began to be encouraged among Wikipedyjo's contributors, though regrettably, its principles are given on the website only in Polish (Wikipedyjo: Ślabikǒrzowy 2012). But this development, with Wikipedyjo being the largest Silesian-language book, sways the tide in favor of the standard spelling.

The story of the Silesian language continues. At present, the main actors involved in contributing to the formal shape of this language wait to see whether Marek Plura and other parliamentarians from Upper Silesia interested in this issue will manage, as since 2007 they have repeatedly endeavored, to

convince the Polish Sejm (Parliament)[23] to recognize Silesian as a regional language in Poland (Jedlicki 2010, Posłowie 2010). On October 19, 2010 a conference 'In the Sphere of Silesian Tradition, Culture and Dialect' took place in the Polish Senate, as a direct official reply to the aforementioned grassroots initiatives and conferences to have Silesian recognized as a 'regional language.' The conference was led by the established scholars of Silesian origin, Jan Miodek and Dorota Simonides, who concluded that it is important to cultivate the entire range of Silesian subdialects and dialects rather than to undertake any efforts aiming at standardizing a Silesian language, let alone at obtaining any official recognition for it. The dissenting voice was that of the famous film director and senator Kazimierz Kutz, also of Silesian extraction, who appealed for swift recognition for Silesian (Mowa 2010).

Ten days after the conference, on October 29, 2010 Plura, supported by 51 other parliamentarians, submitted a bill aiming at making Silesian a regional language in Poland. The Parliament accepted this bill for debate, but it has not yet been discussed (Druk 2010). Interestingly, once again cyberspace is more responsive to grassroots needs. The Polish branch of Wikimedia usefully offers an integrated search across the Kashubian, Polish and Silesian Wikipedias (Wyszukiwarka 2012). A vibrant grassroots Silesian-language cultural life develops and thrives on the web (cf Jezyk 2012; Jynzyk 2012; Ślonzoki 2012; Slovník 2012; Słownik 2012). There are also initiatives to broadcast radio programs in Silesian (cf Slonsky 2012) and to stage plays in this language (cf Polterabend 2012).

The latest development was the founding and successful registration of the Stowarzyszenie Osób Narodowości Śląskiej / Stŏwarzyszyniy Ôsobŏw Narodowości Ślōnskij (SONŚ,

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[23] The current Polish Parliament consists from two chambers, the Sejm and the Senate. The former being more important than the latter, the Polish parliament is often simply referred to as the Sejm. The usage became popular in communist Poland, when between 1946 and 1989, with the liquidation of the Senate, the Polish parliament was unicameral, thus identical with the Sejm.

Association of People of the Silesian Nationality) in Opole in 2011 by the leaders of the Opole branch of RAŚ (Pszon 2011). A move to revoke the legal status of this organization failed (SONŚ 2012), and SONŚ seems set to stay. In recognition of the fact, Poland's German minority organizations, earlier opposed to the ideas of Silesian language and nationality, began to accept this multicultural reality on the ground and to ponder cooperation with SONŚ (cf Schlesiertum 2012). And, perhaps, the success of SONŚ may also facilitate opening the way for the eventual registration of the ZLNŚ, nowadays led by Roczniok (Kobieta 2012). But unlike the ZLNŚ, SONŚ has not included the Silesian language in its program yet, though it plans to rectify this error soon (Długosz 2012).

There cannot now be any clear conclusion to this description and analysis of the rise of the Silesian language and the organizations vitally interested in this linguistic project. Neither the results of the Polish 2012 census nor those of the Czech 2012 census have been made public yet. The Polish state authorities still have to adopt a clear stance on whether to recognize Silesian as a language or not; similarly, a decision has not been made on whether or not to register the ZLNŚ, following the successful registration of SONŚ.

In Lieu of a Conclusion: Toward Standard Silesian Orthography

Not to leave the reader unsatisfied with the necessarily loose ending of the story of the social and political history of the Silesian language, below I provide some illustrative material on the different orthographies employed for writing in this language. Prior to the promulgation of the standard spelling in 2009, there were at least ten distinctive spelling systems used in publications and on websites, as exemplified below by the ten varying renderings of the Silesian sentence 'You are to take [or buy] eight safety pins.'

    (1)   Mož uoźym zixerek vźůńś.
    (2)   Moš uožjym zicherek vžjůňšj. (Czech spelling)

(3)   Moš uoźym zicherek wźůńś.
(4)   Moš uoźym zicherek wźůńś.
(5)   Mosz łosiym zicherek wzióńś. (Polish spelling)
(6)   Mosz łoziym zicherek wziůńś.
(7)   Mosz łoźym zicherek wźůńś.
(8)   Mosz uosiym ziherek wz'oon's'.
(9)   Môsz òziym zicherek wzióńś.
(10) Mosz uozjym zicherek vzjoonjsj.
(Wybjer 2012)

It is also possible to write the sentence with the use of German spelling, namely

(11) Mosch uosiym sicherek wsionsch.

It was not often that Silesian was written down in German orthography, but the occurrence was not unusual either. Silesian words and sentences tended to be written in this manner in German-language stories and novels taking place in Upper Silesia (cf Kaluza 1935).

And obviously, the sentence can now be also written in the standard orthography of Silesiaian, as

(12) Mosz ôsiym zicherek wziōnś.

In 2011 the first-ever scholarly article was published in Silesian.[24] Not surprisingly it is a brief overview of the current standardization of Silesian in the sphere of spelling (Kamusella and Roczniok 2011). The text is in the language's standard orthography, and its fragment is given below in the Silesian original followed by the English translation.

We rokach 90. XX wieka napoczynto wydować piyrwo literatura świadōmie szrajbowano bez autorōw po ślōnsku. Niykere anknifowali ku tradycyje pojstrzōdwojynnyj godki laskij, jako

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[24] However, in the same year the Silesian translation of the lengthy abstract was published in Jerczyński's (2011) biography of Józef Kożdoń. This translation can be also interpreted as the first-ever scholarly article in Silesian.

tyż ku badaniōm dijalektelogikowych Feliksa Steuera. We pojstrzōdwojynnyj Polsce zrychtowoł ôn piyrwo w miara sztandardt (na potrzeba badaniōw godkoznawcowych) szrajbunek ślōnski godki, we keryj wydoł dwa hefty. Wroz ze rozwojym interneta na szwele XXI wieka przioloz boom używanio ślōnski godki na tematikowych zajtach internetowych, a przde wszyjskim na forach, blogach i we brifach mailowych. (Kamusella and Roczniok 2011, 291-292)

Translation:

In the 1990s the first texts, consciously written by authors in the Silesian language, began to be published. Some, in their efforts, fell back on the interwar tradition of the Lachian language, others on Feliks Steuer's dialectological research. In interwar Poland he created (for the sake of linguistic research) the first, more or less, standard orthography of the Silesian language, and published in it two small books. Following the development of the internet, the turn of the 21st century witnessed a veritable boom in the use of Silesian on various websites, and especially on discussion forums, in blogs and in email correspondence.

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