50

SOCIOLINGUISTICS IN EAST CENTRAL EUROPE

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Introduction

In his *Historical Atlas of East Central Europe*, Magocsi (1993, p. ix) defined "East Central Europe" as the region between the eastern frontier of German- and Italian-speaking peoples on the west, and the political borders of the former Soviet Union on the east. This territory is now divided between Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic (or Czechia), and Poland. Soon after the fall of the Iron Curtain, in 1991, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland formed an alliance called the Visegrád Group, which also became known as the Visegrád Four (V4) countries after the dissolution of Czechoslovakia into Czechia and Slovakia in 1993. These former member states of the Warsaw Pact are now members of NATO, and, on 1 May 2004, they became member states of the European Union.

Sociolinguistics in the post-1960 Anglo-American sense did not have an easy ride in the Soviet satellite countries of East Central Europe (see Harlig & Pléh, 1995). Nevertheless, Trudgill (2000) in his review of this book recognized "a number of thriving indigenous eastern European sociolinguistic traditions prior to 1989" (p. 190). This chapter concentrates on sociolinguistics in the four East Central European countries – Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic (Czechia), and Poland – in their regional contexts.[1]

Pluricentricity

The borders of the countries of East Central Europe were established after WWI along other than linguistic lines. Accordingly, significant populations of the speakers of local languages found themselves outside the territory of the state in which the language became official.

Hungarian as a pluricentric language is analyzed in Vančo et al. (2020) by authors living in Hungary, Slovakia, Ukraine, Rumania, and Slovenia. *Slovak* as a pluricentric language was first analyzed by Dudok (2002) with respect to a "half-center" for Slovak in Vojvodina, Serbia, and the traditional Slovak-speaking localities in Hungary and Rumania. *Rusyn*, a stateless language is analyzed by Kushko (2007) as a pluricentric language with four variants of the standard variety in Ukraine, Poland, Slovakia, and Serbia; see also Magocsi (2018) for a recent analysis.

Hungary and Hungarian abroad

In the third decade of the 21st century, about one in four native speakers of Hungarian live outside Hungary (see Tóth, 2018). Genetically a Uralic language, Hungarian is unrelated to German, Rumanian, and the Slavic languages it has been in contact with since the Hungarian Conquest of the Carpathian Basin in 895. For a millennium prior to WWI, historic Hungary extended over the entire central Danubian Basin, with a largely multilingual and multiethnic population. Following the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Peace Treaty of Trianon in 1920, Hungary lost about two-thirds of her territory and more than half of her population to Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Yugoslavia, and Austria, and millions of ethnic Hungarians became citizens of another state overnight. According to the census of 2011, Hungarian is the mother tongue of all but 1.5% of Hungary's total population of 9,937,000. Among L1 speakers of Hungarian must be counted the indigenous Hungarian national minorities in Slovakia (458,000), Ukraine (141,000), Rumania (1,216,000), Serbia (251,000), Croatia (8,000), Slovenia (4,000), and Burgenland, Austria (10,000). In the 21st century, indigenous Hungarians belong to one cultural nation and eight political nations. Compared to the previous censuses (in 2001), these minorities decreased by more than 10% in most neighboring countries. In 2011, L2 speakers of Hungarian in Hungary included 54,339 people who claimed Gypsy or Boyash (an archaic dialect of Rumanian) as their mother tongue, 38,248 who claimed German, 13,716 who claimed Croatian, 9,888 who claimed Slovak, 13,886 who claimed Rumanian, 3,708 who claimed Serbian, and 1,723 who claimed Slovene. For a recent survey of research in the Carpathian Basin, see Kontra (2022).

Sociolinguistic stratification and intralingual linguicism[2]

The first serious study of the social stratification of Hungarian in Hungary (see Kontra et al., 2010, pp. 360–361) was carried out when the communist regime fell in 1988, see Cseresnyési (2005) for a review in English and Kontra (2006). One remarkable finding of the study is that Hungarian language cultivators and schoolteachers promulgate a set of rules adhered to by only 8% of the country's adult population, even when they are on their best linguistic behavior, as they are when answering questions on linguistic correctness posed by a social scientist. The oral sentence completion data reveal that Hungarian language cultivators and schoolteachers strive to change the speechways of two-thirds of the country's population. Kontra (2018) believes that this serious linguistic discrimination in education could at least be reduced by changing pre-service teacher education, promulgating additive, rather than subtractive, language pedagogy. Fehér (2020) is a useful investigation of developing linguistic prestige of the standard vs. local dialect varieties in bidialectal kindergarteners.

Urban dialectology

Based on Labov (1984), the Budapest Sociolinguistic Interview project ran from 1985 through 2010. A comprehensive volume was published in 2021 (Kontra & Borbély, Eds.); see also Kontra and Vargha (2014). Another similar project was conducted in 2012–2016 in the city of Szeged with 165 respondents (370 hours of recordings); see Németh et al. (2015). The third project to mention is The Budapest University Dormitory Corpus (http://bekk.elte.hu/index.php/in-english/); see Bodó et al. (2019) for an insightful analysis of men's talk in Hungarian university dormitories.

Historical sociolinguistic studies have had a slow start in Hungary. First, Németh (2008) must be mentioned, a study of variation and change in the 18th-century Hungarian used in the city of

Szeged. Dömötör et al. (2021) is a recent collection of papers on variation and change in 16th- to 18th-century Hungarian.

Computerized Hungarian dialect atlases (see, e.g., Vargha, 2018, and Presinszky, 2020) embrace ever larger Hungarian-populated regions in the Carpathian Basin.

Code-switching

Janurik (2017) provides a structural analysis of intrasentential code-switching between the Uralic language Erzya and Russian. Kovács (2018) is an optimality-theoretical analysis of Hungarian–English code-switching in North Carolina, USA. Németh (2010) examines the patterns and evaluation of German–Hungarian code-switching among dialect speakers of German shifting to Hungarian.

Romani

In research on Romani, Szalai (2014) analyzed ideologies of social differentiation in Transylvanian Gabor Roma communities, while Kádár and Szalai (2020) provided a case study of ritual cursing as a form of teasing in Romani.

Slang

Almost all Hungarian research on slang has been published in Hungarian, with the exception of Fenyvesi (2001) in Russian, Kis (2006) in English, and Szabó (2004) in French.

Hungarian language contact outside Hungary

Despite the fact that millions of indigenous Hungarians have lived in daily contact with Slovak, Rumanian, Serbian, and other languages in the neighboring countries since 1920, Hungarian contact linguistics in the modern sense of the word began only around the fall of the communist regime in the late 1980s. (The only exception to this generalization is Gal, 1979.) In the mid-1990s, The Sociolinguistics of Hungarian Outside Hungary project was launched by linguists in Hungary and the neighboring countries. A quota sample was used (N=739) with a control group in Hungary (N=107).[3] Questionnaire data were systematically gathered in a replicable fashion to answer such questions (see Kontra et al., 2010, p. 361), which were not even asked before the 1990s, let alone answered. Based on data from this project, Kontra's (2001) statistical analyses of 24 variables provided substantial empirical verification of Thomason and Kaufman's (1988) two crucial parameters of intensity of contact in a borrowing situation: time and level of bilingualism. He showed that the 250 years of contact between Hungarian and Serbian has resulted in much more limited contact effects than the thousand-year-old contact of Hungarian with the northern Slavic languages, Slovak and Ukrainian.

In a book edited by Fenyvesi (2005), seven chapters detail the contact varieties in the neighboring states, one each Hungarian in the USA and Australia, and two chapters (by Sarah Grey Thomason and Casper de Groot) summarize the typological and theoretical aspects of contact-induced change in Hungarian.

For more recent studies and reviews of Hungarian in Transylvania (Rumania) see Némethy (2015) and Biró and Laihonen (2021); on Hungarian in Austria and Slovenia see Laakso et al. (2016); on Hungarian in Slovakia see several studies in Issue 1 of *Hungarian Studies* Volume 34

(2020); and on variation in the Hungarian used in Transcarpathia, Ukraine, see Csernicskó and Fenyvesi (2012).

The Csángós

In Trudgill's words (2003, pp. 32–33), the Csángós are a Hungarian or "Hungarian"-speaking minority in Moldavia in eastern Rumania. They

> are a mostly ignored linguistic minority rapidly going through a process of language shift to Romanian and who are distinguished from other Romanians by their poverty, isolation and Catholicism. Romanian governments have sometimes denied their Hungarianness. Now the Csángós are faced with the reverse kind of *Ausbau* problem. Since 1989, Hungarian official bodies have been concerned to "save the Csángós". They assume that Csángós are Hungarian-speakers and that young people will benefit from being offered education in Hungary or Transylvania. There is, however, too much *Abstand* for this to work easily. Csángó is also widely regarded in Hungary as "corrupt Hungarian", which gives the Csángós an additional reason to switch to Romanian.

Thanks to a number of fairly recent studies, several of them in English, the Csángós and their linguistic plight are better known today. Sándor (2005), Tánczos (2012), and Laihonen et al. (2020) are useful overviews, while Bodó and Fazakas (2018) is an extremely insightful analysis of authenticity (or authentic language) in a Csángó revitalization program directed from Hungary.

Language policy and rights

Language policy analyses loom large in Hungarian sociolinguistics. In Hungary, Kontra has been calling attention for decades to the linguistic genocide of those Roma whose mother tongue is not Hungarian but Romani or Boyash (over 50,000 people according to census data). The mother tongues of these people are invisibilized by the Hungarian Census, which appears to be the purposeful policy of Hungarian governments for over two decades.

The recent spread of English in Hungary has been analyzed by Kontra, who noted that "in Hungary, passivity and incompetence in dealing with language policy can be successfully sold as an apparent 'fightback' against the spread of English", and this "helps the insidious expansion of English due to market forces and does so in a way that does not directly criticize the forces behind its spread" (2016, p. 240). Benő and Péntek (2016) is a detailed review of language policy and ideologies concerning Hungarians in Rumania. The Linguistic Human Rights plight of Hungarians in Transcarpathia, Ukraine, perhaps the worst example of linguistic genocide in education in present-day Europe, is analyzed by Csernicskó and Kontra (2023).

For an example of administratively gerrymandering a compact Hungarian territory in order to reduce language rights in Slovakia, see Kontra (2011, pp. 51–52). Orosz (2012) is a rich quadrilingual (Hungarian, English, French, and Slovak) history of language rights in Slovakia between 1918 and 2012.

For a brief review of Szilágyi's highly original theoretical and practical propositions (based on *universal language rights* rather than minority rights) to solve the language rights problems of all the linguistic minorities in Rumania, see Kontra et al. (2010, pp. 362–363).

Hungarian language contact inside Hungary

Bartha and Borbély (2006) conducted truly pioneering research on six linguistic minorities in Hungary: Boyash, German, Romani, Rumanian, Serbian, and Slovak.

A pioneering translanguaging education program for Romani-speaking school children has been conducted by Heltai (2020). Also important is Csizér and Kontra's (2020) paper on deaf and hard-of-hearing learners' motivation to learn English in Austria, the Czech Republic, and Hungary.

Borbély (2014) is a monumental Hungarian monograph on variation and change in bilingual communities in Hungary, which provides a Sustainable Bilingualism Model (SBM) based on longitudinal and comparative analyses carried out in Hungary's six national minorities. Also relevant are the author's papers on language shift and the SBM (Borbély, 2015).

Slovakia

Slovakia with its population of 5.5 million is smaller than its neighbors: Hungary, Austria, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Ukraine. Unequal relations with Hungarians and with Czechs, whose language is mutually intelligible with Slovak, are major incentives for sociolinguistics in Slovakia. Another incentive is the country's internal heterogeneity (the population consists of 82% Slovak, 8.5% Hungarian, 2% Romani, and 2% Rusyn, Czech, and other mother-tongue speakers; 5.5% were undocumented in the 2021 census). A third incentive comes from fundamental political changes: regime change after the fall of communist rule in 1989 and the country's 1993 independence after the break-up of Czechoslovakia (on sociolinguistic aspects of this, see Sloboda et al., 2018). An important feature of sociolinguistics in Slovakia is that it has been mobilized and is effective in addressing practical issues of language policy (see more later in the chapter).

Research traditions and institutionalization

Sociolinguistics in Slovakia draws primarily on domestic and Czech traditions. Traditional dialectology, particularly its practice of fieldwork in rural areas, is one of them. A decisive impetus for sociolinguistic research thus came with post–WWII urbanization resulting in the expansion of the standard variety of Slovak within the population, which raised the question of the form of the standard language in use. In 1963–65, leading Slovak linguist Eugen Pauliny organized nationwide research into the spoken form of standard Slovak in cities (Pauliny, 1964). Since the purpose of the research was to serve further cultivation of the standard language, the social differentiation of respondents was carried out only according to their level of education and the need to use the standard variety at work. The research was carried out by linguists and teachers of various theoretical backgrounds, so the implementation of fieldwork and the interpretation of results were sociolinguistically oriented to varying degrees. The outcomes and the discussion thereof were merely mimeographed in 1972 (printed by Ondrejovič only in 2007) and this line of research has been virtually discontinued.

A second tradition of Slovak sociolinguistics is represented by the functional structuralism of the Prague Linguistic Circle, which evinced sociolinguistic interests from its inception (Neustupný, 1999). These have mainly taken the form of concerns with the theory of standard language and of language cultivation which have also developed in Slovakia (especially Kačala, 1979). An important theoretical postulate of the Prague School favorable to the sociolinguistic approach is that language codification should record the language norms actually operating among speakers themselves. This created the need to examine genuine language use and awareness in order to compare these with the language's current codification.

Sociolinguistics as such developed in Slovakia only in the 1980s in connection with linguists' efforts to learn about the population's competence in the standard variety and their evaluation of individual variants (Šikra, 1991). Not everyone was sympathetic to the sociolinguistic approach in the 1990s, since the hierarchy of codification criteria (custom vs. systemicity) was still unresolved, which led to the split in the linguistic community between "sociolinguists" (prioritizing custom) and "normativists" (prioritizing systemicity) (Bosák, 1995). However, sociolinguistics has gradually gained ground and it is now a normal part of linguistic research in Slovakia.

University programs in Slovak studies include courses on sociolinguistics, even though there still is only one textbook, or rather, a teachers' guide in Slovak (Tóth, 2019). Its rationale is to complement textbooks of Western provenance by suggesting sociolinguistic studies on the Slovak context as readings for university courses in Slovakia (ibid.).

At the major research institution in the country, the Ľudovít Štúr Institute of Linguistics of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, a department of "social linguistics" was established in 2017. Other centers of sociolinguistic research are located at the universities in Prešov (with advanced research into social registers, such as child-directed speech, Slančová, 2018), in Banská Bystrica (study of slang and of urban language, starting with seminal work by Vladimír Patráš, partly available in English in Patráš, 2016), and in Nitra (sociolinguistics of Slovak–Hungarian contact, Vančo, 2011, 2012). These centers are located in several regions of Slovakia, which gave hope to the main proponent of sociolinguistics in Slovakia, Slavomír Ondrejovič (esp. Ondrejovič, 2008), that the nationwide research of the 1960s could be replicated. As of 2022 this idea has not materialized, but Ondrejovič has successfully launched a sociolinguistic book series, *Sociolinguistica Slovaca*.

The themes of the volumes of *Sociolinguistica Slovaca* emblematically capture the shifts of attention in sociolinguistic research in Slovakia over the years. The first, 1995 volume presents previous research that concentrated on language awareness and attitudes, on sociolinguistic situations of Slovakia's regions, and on Slovak in contact with other languages. The second volume deals with areal linguistics; the third and the fourth reflect the linguistic, communicative, and language-policy effects of post-communist transition on Slovak and on interlingual relations. While the fifth and sixth volumes continue to deal with the traditional research topic of the urban language, the seventh and eighth volumes move on to more recent issues, such as discourse and its (inter-)cultural, political, and ideological contingencies (a full list and online versions of the volumes are available at www.juls.savba.sk/sociolinguistica_slovaca.html).

Language variation

In Slovakia, research on language variation has not operated with the Labovian classification of linguistic variables. Possibly thanks to the *Zeitgeist*, however, Jozef Muránsky used a very similar approach as early as 1965 (Muránsky, 2007 [1965]). Muránsky (1971) represents a quantitative study of phonetic variation between the alveolar [l] vs. palatal [ʎ] in eight cities. It is based on recordings of two unrehearsed ten-minute narratives from each respondent representing one of three "social strata" defined by educational level and the need for standard language use in the workplace. Muránsky subsequently published a series of articles on individual cities and towns that considered further phonological variables, apparently without being inspired by Labov and with reference only to the methodology of Pauliny (1964). Lanstyák (2002) is a rare variationist study inspired by Western sociolinguistics on standard vs. non-standard variants among Hungarian schoolchildren in Slovakia and Hungary. It used sentence completion tasks in the framework of a questionnaire survey, which is the usual method applied to the study of language variation in Slovak sociolinguistics.

Language contact and multilingualism

Czech borrowings and attitudes to Czech have received continuous attention due to their importance for Slovak national identity and language cultivation (Dolník, 2010, pp. 74–93). Nábělková (2016) is an extensive study on the linguistic boundary between Czech and Slovak. Slovak outside Slovakia received book-length treatments in Nábělková (2008) on Czechia and in Uhrinová (2011) on Hungary, while Dudok (2008) presents a generalizing and theory-building approach.

Hungarian in Slovakia is a major theme in Slovak sociolinguistics. It is studied by Slovak authors, who attend more to Hungarian–Slovak relations (Dolník & Pilecký, 2012; György, 2017; Satinská, 2016), as well as by Slovakia-based Hungarian authors, who concentrate on language minority issues (for a representative volume, see Szabómihály & Lanstyák, 2011; in English, Vančo, 2011, 2012). The topics covered include features of Hungarian in Slovakia, code-switching, and language maintenance and shift; but as a result of Slovak–Hungarian tensions in the post-independence period, attention is directed mostly at language policy implementation, the exercise of language rights, language use in schools and in administration, personal and place names in official contexts, as well as terminology and translation issues (for recent treatment of these issues in English, see Misad, 2020; Vančo et al., 2020). More recently, linguistic landscapes in bilingual localities have started to attract attention (see Szabómihály, 2020 and references therein). There are far fewer studies on Romani, Rusyn, and other minority languages (see, e.g., Lanstyák et al., 2017).

Language standardization, policy and planning

Slovak language standardization and cultivation has traditionally been a central theme in Slovak sociolinguistics, as mentioned earlier. An original thinker in this area is Juraj Dolník, who, building on philosophy and cultural studies, has theorized the concepts of the "real" vs. "ideal", "normal", "natural", and "foreign", which he and other scholars apply to Slovaks' relationship to Czech and Hungarian, to migrants, as well as to language standardization and cultivation, a theory of which was synthesized in Dolník (2010). Historical sociolinguistics of standard Slovak has been developed by Gabriela Múcsková (e.g., Múcsková, 2017).

Official language policies have been discussed not only in connection with Hungarian, but also with reference to the codified form of Slovak required by law for public communication. Language management in actual communicative practice has been considered mostly in relation to Hungarian (for an overview of minority language problems, see Lanstyák & Szabómihály, 2009). Language Management Theory (Nekvapil & Sherman, 2015) has not only been applied in the Slovak context, but István Lanstyák has also substantially developed it by integrating work from general theories of planning and of problem management (Lanstyák, 2018, 2021). A 2018–2022 project under his leadership has brought together research on Slovak, Hungarian, Romani, and German (Lanstyák et al., 2022).

Language ideologies

The Slovak sociolinguistic community has been receptive to the linguistic anthropological concept of language ideologies (Lanstyák et al., 2017), possibly thanks to the traditional interest in language awareness. Lanstyák (in Lanstyák et al., 2017, pp. 280–307) has worked out an analytically useful catalogue of language ideologies.

Discourse analysis

In addition to the strong tradition of functional stylistics related to the Prague School, some work has been carried out from other perspectives, e.g., on politeness in relation to globalization

and social change (Ferenčík, 2018, 2020) and on gender-specific discourse (Dolník et al., 2015; Orgoňová & Piatková, 2015).

Language and gender

As elsewhere in Europe, gender-sensitive language use has become an important research topic in Slovakia too. Additionally, the (non-)use of female forms of surnames according to the morphology of Slovak and Hungarian has become the subject of scholarly debate (Molnár Satinská & Valentová, 2016).

Czech Republic (Czechia)

History, bibliographies, institutions

A history and a brief description of sociolinguistics in Czechia are available in Nekvapil and Ondrejovič (1993) and Nekvapil (2008, 2012). Sociolinguistics in Czechia is understood broadly, as evidenced by the extensive bibliography published annually in the international yearbook of European sociolinguistics (Kaderka, 2007–2019). The broad concept of sociolinguistics aspires to interdisciplinary cooperation, especially with sociologists: as a result, sociolinguistic contributions also appear in the *Czech Sociological Review*, starting with the special issue on *Sociolinguistics and the Sociology of Language* (Nekvapil, 2002). Sociolinguistics is now an established field in Czechia: it is a compulsory element of the bachelor's degree in linguistics at Charles University, and it has finally established a foothold in the Czech Academy of Sciences. Since 2019 a *Department of Stylistics and Sociolinguistics* has existed in the Czech Language Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences; the coexistence of (functional) stylistics and sociolinguistics in a single department is not surprising – it is in the spirit of the intellectual traditions of the Prague School, which is still very much alive in Czechia (Kraus, 1971/1986; Hoffmannová et al., 2016). The *Language Management Research Group*, based at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University, contributes significantly to the development of sociolinguistics in Czechia through its regular sociolinguistics seminar. The group also administers a multilingual website <http://languagemanagement.ff.cuni.cz>, where its *Working Papers in Language Management* are available (e.g., Dovalil, 2018; Sloboda, 2020).

Book series

Sociolinguistics in Czechia has two book series at its disposal. The first one, *Sociolingvistická edice: Jazyk, společnost, interakce* (Sociolinguistics Series: Language, Society, Interaction), appears in Czech in the Prague publishing house NLN. Its scope is wide, ranging from "language autobiography" (Vasiljev, 2011) to an overview of theories of language interaction (Auer, 2014/2019), and the analysis of spoken language (Müllerová, 2022). Its sister book series, *Prague Papers on Language, Society and Interaction*, published by Peter Lang (Berlin), appears in English. This series comprises mainly studies on language management (e.g., Fairbrother et al., 2018; Nekula et al., 2022), but also gives room to works devoted to the language situation in Czechia (Wilson, 2010) and in the wider Central and East European region (Sloboda et al., 2016).

De-provincialization

A striking feature of contemporary sociolinguistics in Czechia is its internationalization. This process, which has taken place over the last 10 or 15 years, manifests itself mainly through multiple

joint publications of Czech and international sociolinguists. This is evident from a number of titles in the aforementioned edition of *Prague Papers on Language, Society and Interaction*, but also from individual titles outside this series (Smakman et al., 2022), or from numerous special issues of international journals (e.g., Marriott & Nekvapil, 2012; Nekvapil & Sherman, 2015). Exceptionally, internationalization may not take place on the basis of English (Podhorná-Polická, 2015). A high degree of internationalization can also be seen in conferences, most visibly in the organization of the regular bi-annual *International Language Management Symposium*, where the Czech experts also act as co-organizers of symposia held abroad (see recent symposia in Regensburg, Kyoto, and Zagreb). The organization of the *Third International Conference on Sociolinguistics*, whose third iteration has moved from Budapest to Prague, is also part of this trend.

Thematic areas

Variationist studies

Variationist studies are still rare, and J. Wilson's research dealing with the linguistic behavior of speakers from Moravia living in Prague (Wilson, 2010) has remained their most significant achievement in Czechia. In his more recent study, the author uses data from his previous research and investigates to what extent salience is a reliable predictor of second dialect acquisition (Wilson, 2018). In other research, Havlík and Wilson (2017) applied variationist methods to analyze the pronunciation of Czech loanwords in relation to age, education, sex, and regional background. The development of variationism in Czechia might be positively affected by Chromý (2017), whose work in some chapters has a textbook-like character, though the study itself is rather narrow in scope.

Discourse

Discourse-based studies revealing the role of varied social aspects in communication are among favorite topics of empirical research and include studies inspired by conversation analysis and multimodality in conjunction with Bakhtinian and Prague School traditions (Čmejrková & Hoffmannová, 2011), or politeness research (Chejnová, 2015). Kaderka (2013) is an original theoretical study on the communicative situation which still awaits wider application. The concept of the dialogical network designed to study complex communication that typically occurs in mass and social media has gained international reach (Leudar & Nekvapil, 2022; Nekvapil et al., 2021).

Language management

Internationally, studies on language management, that is "behavior toward language" both of individuals and institutions, have become the most prominent feature of sociolinguistics in Czechia, and Prague currently functions as a hub for Language Management Theory (LMT) worldwide. Nekvapil (2016) and Dovalil and Šichová (2017) provide general overviews of this field, while Sherman (2020a) reports on specificities of LMT as practiced in Central Europe. LMT is used as a framework for the analysis of multiple social areas, such as law (Dovalil, 2015), education (Sherman, 2020b), the family (Özörencik & Hromadová, 2018), or multinational companies (Nekvapil & Sherman, 2013); some studies also contribute to the development of LMT itself (Kopecký, 2014). However, management of the linguistic presentation of gender would deserve more research than has been conducted so far (see Valdrová, 2018).

Standard languages, language cultivation, and slang

Language standardization and cultivation, not only of Czech but also e.g., Romani (Červenka, 2014) have remained at the forefront. Recent developments in the theory of language cultivation in the vein of the Prague School are presented in the Croatian anthology edited by P. Vuković (2015). A major contribution to this field is the theory of language correctness (Beneš, 2020) drawing on the emic notion of correctness. Like LMT, the theory includes not only the macro level of institutions but also the micro level of particular interactions. In contrast to the traditional notion of language cultivation, the new theory strives to systematically employ social variables (Beneš, 2016). Also worth mentioning here are studies analyzing various kinds of slang (or argot), as these phenomena in Czechia are defined and perceived traditionally in opposition to the standard language (Podhorná-Polická, 2009; Radková & Rausová, 2015; Radková, 2016).

Multilingualism and superdiversity

The presence of Slovak, Polish, German, and Romani continues to attract considerable attention (Nábělková, 2008, 2014; Bogoczová, 2018; Nekula, 2021; Kubaník, 2012, 2020) and recently this has also been true for Vietnamese (Sherman & Homoláč, 2017, 2021). A closely watched issue is the role and functions of English (Kaderka & Prošek, 2014). Most visibly, multilingualism stands out in the linguistic landscape, the analysis of which is gaining momentum (Sloboda, 2009; Sloboda et al., 2010; Marx & Nekula, 2015; Bermel & Knittl, 2018; Nekvapil, 2020). An original introduction to the current sociolinguistic situation is the extensive study by Sloboda (2016) who demonstrates how superdiversity manifests itself in Czechia, a country largely perceived as monolingual just a few decades ago. Nekvapil and Sherman (2018) deal with superdiversity in multinationals. Finally, Cope and Eckert (2016) provide valuable information on Czech sign language and Czech communities outside Czechia (in the USA, Rumania, and Russia).

Poland

Polish sociolinguists have researched the process of transition from a society perceived as predominantly monolingual and linguistically homogeneous to one participating in global and translingual processes. Over the past 15 years, speaker attitudes and researchers' orientations have become increasingly open to linguistic diversity and interest in variation.

National and ethnic diversity

The past decade has witnessed a dynamic increase in population mobility and a resultant demographic diversification in Poland. This was already evident in the 2002 National Census, reflecting an array of nationalities and ethnic identities claimed by respondents (see Kontra et al., 2010, p. 366). The results of the latest edition of the Census, conducted in 2021, are being released in installments. Strikingly, the results published in April 2023 (on ethnic identities and languages) indicate that 98.4% of the Polish population claims Polish to be the language they use at home, and for as many as 94.3% Polish is the *only* language spoken at home (*Wstępne wyniki NSP,* 2023). However, it is obvious that in recent years Poland has been a receiving as well as a sending country for a large number of migrants. Increased geographical mobility has given many Polish people authentic and everyday experience of language contact.

Language and migration dynamics

Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004 marked the beginning of a migration surge. Polish speakers' L1 came to coexist with other languages, and they discovered that bi- and multilingualism is the norm rather than the exception in the world at large. In particular, substantial migration to the UK and Ireland put many Polish people in direct contact with the English language or, rather, with many different Englishes that they had never heard of.

Polish migrants became accustomed to situations of intense language contact and brought this experience back home – when visiting or upon their return – as a form of social remittance (see White, 2018a[4]). They also learned to have greater appreciation for the (linguistic) diversity in their home country (White, 2018b, p. 223). As inhabitants of "transnational social spaces", today's migrants – thanks to communication technologies, even without traveling – live in both the receiving and the sending societies. They bring back to their heritage society what may be dubbed as "(socio)linguistic remittances" (cf. White, 2018b, p. 225): exposure to multilingualism, experience of foreign language learning and of communicating across language and ethnic groups.

The study of the use of Polish by Poles outside Poland is being taken up with increasing frequency. Polish sociolinguists, some based and educated abroad, have addressed topics directly related to Polish migrants. They studied not only the migrants' L1 and its maintenance. Newlin-Łukowicz (2015, 2016) investigated how Polish speakers' ethnic identity and their L1 affects their adoption of regional features of English in migrant communities in New York City and in the UK (see also Drummond, 2012; Koźmińska, 2021; Koźmińska & Hua, 2021; Kędra et al., 2021).

Languages in Poland: varieties of Polish and minority languages

The increased awareness of demographic and linguistic diversity has shifted the attention of ordinary speakers and linguists alike away from the prestigious standard toward non-standard varieties of Polish and other languages spoken in Poland. If Poles have always been convinced that (standard) Polish should be protected and treasured, many now also feel that it is time to focus on non-standard varieties as well as minority languages and languages that are marginalized, or even endangered. This orientation was tellingly reflected when, in 2016, the VIth World Congress of Polonists for the first time included a panel devoted to minority (and minoritized) languages in Poland,[5] with Gerd Hentschel, Motoki Nomachi, Roland Marti, Ewa Michna, and Tomasz Wicherkiewicz invited as leading experts on the topic.

Varieties of Polish include the languages of ethnic groups that have long inhabited Poland. They vary in size and status: from one officially recognized as a regional language (Kashubian in 2005[6]), through others still striving for such status (e.g., Silesian), to very small ones which, therefore, get much scholarly attention as endangered varieties (e.g., Wymysorys).[7] Wicherkiewicz (2018, 2021) has published on the minority language situation in Poland, Walkowiak and Wicherkiewicz (2019) on Lithuanian in Poland, Kamusella (2013, 2016) on Silesian, and Hornsby (2015, 2016) on Lemko. Also noteworthy is the research by Nicole Dołowy-Rybińska (on linguistic minorities in Poland), Pavlo Levchuk (on Ukrainian migrants' trilingualism in Poland), Ewa Golachowska (on Polish in Belarus), and Anna Zielińska (on Polish–German bilingualism).

More recently, since 2014 and particularly in 2022, Ukrainians have rapidly become by far the largest minority group in Poland as a consequence of a massive population influx, whose size is difficult to estimate (see Jarosz & Klaus, 2023). Since the onset of Russian military aggression in Ukraine in February 2022, over two million refugees have fled from Ukraine into neighboring Poland, joining an estimated two to three million immigrants who arrived in preceding years.

Varieties of East Slavic, including Ukrainian, Russian, and the so-called mixed language *surzhyk*, have thus dramatically taken the lead among Poland's minority languages. The data on home languages other than Polish spoken in Poland before the war in Ukraine have just been published as the preliminary 2021 census results (*Wstępne wyniki NSP*, 2023).

Weakening of the "cult of the norm"

Despite enduring social concern for the standard language norm, the approach to the norm itself now seems relatively less rigid. This is apparent in dictionaries of "correct Polish", where the labels assigned to some lexical variants (e.g., "permissible" [*dopuszczalne*]) suggest a more liberal attitude. On the whole, usage is defined in dictionaries and normative publications in terms of *norma wzorcowa* and *norma użytkowa*, which might roughly be translated as "ideal norm" and "everyday norm".[8]

The "standard language question" has been less and less frequently the background for investigating varieties of Polish. We are now witnessing more of a balance between the pervasive power of prescriptivism and standard language ideology vs. the acknowledgment and appreciation of linguistic diversity.

Language and politics

Poland's political transition has turned its speech communities into a fascinating research ground to trace the linguistic processes that accompany the fundamental social transformations and ongoing political change. Ever since George Orwell's term "Newspeak" came to public attention as aptly describing the realities of manipulation in communist Poland, researchers have been keen to spotlight how politics affects language, but also how politicians exploit language for their purposes. For instance, the current ruling coalition capitalized on the presidential election slogan *dobra zmiana* (lit. "good change"): this and numerous other catchphrases have been discussed by language experts (Kłosińska & Rusinek, 2020).

Language and gender studies

One domain which has received much attention is the way language refers to gender identities. How to refer to and address women and men has in recent years become the subject of heated debate, engaging linguists and non-linguists alike, not only in the media but also in everyday conversations, thus raising the awareness of how language may have an impact on social relations (Kiełkiewicz-Janowiak, 2019). The Polish language has been studied in the context of gender equity and, in particular, how its relatively complex system of grammatical gender provides for or, crucially, impedes the fair representation of people with reference to their gender identities (Pakuła et al., 2015; Małocha-Krupa, 2018; Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2019, 2021). Whether occasional or systematic use is made of feminine forms, these debates will contribute to the spread and impact of these forms, if only through raising awareness, for the sake of gender equality (see Formanowicz et al., 2015 on language and gender activism). However, discussions of the striking asymmetry in labels for men and women in the Polish language have to some extent overshadowed calls to represent gender as an array of identities rather than in binary terms (see Misiek, 2021).

Empirical studies of variation: conversational data and corpora

With growing awareness of the relevance of language variation, Polish sociolinguists have taken up research beyond dialect documentation, i.e., recording local and at-risk varieties. Much

sociolinguistic research is now solidly data-based, drawing from naturally occurring speech and corpora. Corpus studies on Polish were notably initiated in 2010 by the creation of the National Corpus of Polish (http://nkjp.pl, Przepiórkowski et al., 2012). Currently researchers draw on smaller, more specialized reference corpora as well as large monitor corpora such as Monco PL, a corpus of web-based Polish of well over seven billion words (in March 2022), which has quickly grown since 2010, and makes it possible to monitor current trends in usage[9] (Pęzik, 2020). The spoken parts of the corpora are now being expanded. Linguists are also taking the opportunity to explore and digitize existing archives of recorded spoken language.[10] Overall, researchers have come to appreciate how such databases of naturally occurring speech afford a more nuanced understanding of variation as a means by which speakers construct and reconstruct identities in particular situations.

Variationist sociolinguistic studies: language change

Even though much research on language in context can be traced back to the relatively strong tradition of (rural and urban) dialectology, current research efforts have mostly been focused on documenting local dialects or varieties used in different communities of practice. On the other hand, not enough attention has been given to the study of variability with a view to capturing ongoing language change. A great deal of such work on Polish has been carried out by linguists educated (whether in Poland or abroad) in the spirit of empirical inquiry into highly heterogeneous sociolinguistic research areas. Łukasz Abramowicz's dissertation (2008) on antepenultimate and penultimate stress in nouns of Greek and Latin origin (e.g., *matemátyka*), which made use of quantitative methods of variationist sociolinguistics, was completed at the University of Pennsylvania under the supervision of William Labov. Other significant variationist studies of Polish dialectology have been conducted by scholars who derive from English studies in Poland. For example, a team of sociophoneticians headed by Małgorzata Kul from the Faculty of English at Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, compiled in the years 2013–2017 a corpus of spoken Polish from the province of Greater Poland (Wielkopolska) (Kul et al., 2019; Kaźmierski et al., 2019).[11]

Publications

Władysław Lubaś, who helped to introduce sociolinguistic thinking to Poland (inspired by the ideas of F. de Saussure and J. Baudouin de Courtenay), died in 2014, leaving as his legacy the journal *Socjolingwistyka*.[12] Published since 1977, it was initially dedicated to language policy and urban dialectology, but has gradually come to encompass a multiplicity of topics on language in its social context, from an interdisciplinary and intersectional perspective.

In addition to the yearly bibliographies in *Sociolinguistica*, much research in sociolinguistics in Poland, as well as in Czechia, Hungary and Slovakia, is available via CEEOL (Central and Eastern European Online Library),[13] providing access to academic e-journals and e-books in the humanities and social sciences from and about Central and Eastern Europe.

Acknowledgments

Notes

1 Kontra wrote the piece on Hungarian sociolinguistics, Sloboda on Slovak, Nekvapil on Czech, and Kiełkiewicz-Janowiak on Polish sociolinguistics.

2 The term *linguicism*, first introduced by Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, describes the processes and policies of linguistic discrimination or social discrimination between groups of people defined on the basis of language. Linguicism refers to the stigmatisation and (social, economic and political) marginalisation of speakers of non-standard varieties and minority languages.

3 The original fieldwork was carried out in 1995/96 in all the neighboring countries except Croatia (due to the Yugoslav Civil War). Fieldwork in Croatia was carried out in 2014 with a quota sample of 116 respondents and a control group of 97 persons in Hungary. Six volumes in Hungarian were published between 1998 and 2020. Fenyvesi (Ed. 2005) is the best collection of studies in English.

4 See: White (2018a, p. 230) referring to "the emerging literature on social remittances circulating between countries with regard to attitudes to diversity".

5 The panel was called *Języki regionalne i mniejszościowe: implikacje polityczne – kodyfikacja – aspekty strukturalne*.

6 See: Act of 6 January 2005 on national and ethnic minorities and on the *regional language* [Ustawa z dnia 6 stycznia 2005 r. o mniejszościach narodowych i etnicznych oraz o języku regionalnym, Dz.U. z 2005 roku, nr 17, poz.141.] at http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=wdu20050170141.

7 See: Poland's Linguistic Heritage – documentation base for endangered languages (*Dziedzictwo językowe Rzeczypospolitej – Baza dokumentacji zagrożonych języków*) at www.inne-jezyki.amu.edu.pl, a resource created by a team headed by Tomasz Wicherkiewicz of Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań.

8 Similarly, the Council for the Polish Language (*Rada Języka Polskiego*), an influential norm-setting institution, has been seen to be changing its pronouncements on many language issues over the last decades. For example, the Council issued two quite different statements on the use of feminine gender forms of nouns naming occupations and titles in 2012 and 2019, thus testifying to changes in both linguistic practices and social attitudes.

9 The Monco PL search functions are accessible at http://monco.frazeo.pl.

10 One fascinating ongoing project by Anna Majewska-Tworek and her colleagues (2020) juxtaposes current data collection standards with those of the 1980s.

11 The corpus contains partly annotated recordings (read sentences and interviews) and is accessible to researchers at (http://wa.amu.edu.pl/korpuswlkp/english).

12 https://socjolingwistyka.ijp.pan.pl/index.php/SOCJO

13 www.ceeol.com

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